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## WEB WATCH

### Children and adults bereaved of a pet

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**IN THE LAST ISSUE** of *Bereavement Care*, Tania Woods reviewed two books about bereavement of a companion animal. Undoubtedly some people suffer intense grief after such a loss, for a variety of reasons, and may seek support. However, for many children losing a pet may be sad but not devastating and if, as is often the case, this is their first experience of death, it can provide an opportunity for the adults involved to increase a child's awareness and understanding of grief.

In either case, the internet is ready with some excellent resources. One of the very best is [www.griefhealing.com](http://www.griefhealing.com) created by Marty Tousley, a hospice bereavement counsellor and mental health consultant to Arizona's Pet Grief Support Service. Pet loss is treated equally with human loss here, but a major reason I selected this site is that, in addition to its comprehensive coverage, it also provides links to a vast array of other online resources.

Blue keys towards the end of the home page take you around the site. Click on 'Articles and Books' and scroll down to find a drop-down menu of 'Articles Related To Pet Loss And Grieving'. Many interesting items here could be used to help clients explore their thoughts and feelings, including a consideration of 'Anticipatory grief', 'Helping children cope with a pet's euthanasia' and 'Loss and the burden of guilt'.

Scroll down further to the Books section for outlines of two publications about pet loss by Marty Tousley entitled *The Final Farewell: Preparing For and Mourning the Loss of your Pet and Children and Pet Loss: a Guide for Healing*. The latter is described as a practical tool for physicians, veterinarians, teachers, counsellors, parents and grandparents as well as for anyone supporting children through the grief of losing a pet. Also on this page the **Suggestions For Further Reading** section provides an extensive book list for adults

and children on human and pet loss. Click on any book title for a brief description and to buy online. Although linked to the USA version of Amazon.com, visitors from other countries can order titles by clicking on the appropriate box at the bottom of the Amazon page.

A unique feature of this website is the email courses. These are linked to Self Healing Expressions, a 'provider of self-paced holistic e-learning courses' for which Marty Tousley is a content provider. Two courses are designed to help with pet loss, one focusing on adult and one on children's grief. Click on the 'Subscribe Now' button for course details and reviews. These courses appear to be quite comprehensive and are reasonably priced at \$24.95, with material delivered directly by email at a frequency chosen by the client. There is also an option to study with a friend or supporter at no additional cost.

This site includes a long section of poems and quotes relating to pet loss (click on another blue key on the home page to access these) and visitors can leave their own comments in a well-used guest book. Membership is free to a number of online forums, each specific to a different type of bereavement, including pet loss. Site users must register a name and password as a safety measure to access the forums, which are moderated by professional grief counsellors.

Back on the homepage, the Links button, and then Pet Loss Links, connects you to some of the very best sites on the internet, well worth visiting. Also under Links is Memorializing, leading to an extensive section on memorial services and products including Sally Logue's UK-based Pet Portraits. A large number of animal welfare organisations, veterinary sites and sanctuaries can also be accessed here. Although the majority of these are based in the USA, many offer information on pet loss that will be relevant to the bereaved and their supporters in any location worldwide. ●