

## Tips for Dealing With the Death of a Dog

**The California Veterinary Medical Association offer ways to help dog owners cope after the loss a pet.**

Losing a dog can be a very hard process for many dog owners, according to the California Veterinary Medical Assn., which offers grief guidance on its website, [www.itsaboutpets.net](http://www.itsaboutpets.net). The website covers different ways dog owners can deal with their feelings of shock, anger, depression, and denial.

CVMA, which released the tips shortly after the passing of Alex, an African Grey Parrot well-known for his language skills, also suggests these tips for children, surviving pets and dog owners:

**Children:** Give children permission to go through the stages of grief. Tell their teachers about the dog's death. Encourage children to talk freely about the dog. Give children hugs and reassurance. Discuss death, dying, and grief honestly. Include children in everything going on.

**Other Pets:** Keep surviving pets' routines as normal as possible. Try not to unintentionally reinforce behavioral changes. If the pet has a picky appetite, don't change foods. Don't overcompensate for the loss with extra attention to the surviving pet. Don't rush out and get a new pet to help with the grieving process; wait until the pet and family are ready.

**Healing:** Give yourself permission to grieve. Memorialize your pet. Surround yourself with people who understand your loss. Accept feelings that come with grief. Indulge yourself in small pleasures. Don't be afraid to get help. Consider calling a grief-support hot line.

Children may need extra care after the death of a dog, according to CVMA. The association also suggests that families pay attention to the reactions of other animals in the household, particularly to signs of restlessness, anxiety, and depression.