



Red Bank Veterinary Hospitals is pleased to offer free pet loss support group meetings at our Tinton Falls location to make it easier for pet owners to have access to our team of counselors.

## 2023 Meeting Schedule

January 4 & 18	May 10 & 24	September 13 & 27
February 1 & 15	June 7 & 21	October 11 & 25
March 1, 15 & 29	July 5 & 19	November 8 & 22
April 12 & 26	August 2, 16 & 30	December 6 & 20

**MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7PM**

### SUPPORT GROUP LEADERS

**Alissa Gilmartin** is a certified bereavement counselor through the Association for Pet Loss & Bereavement. She currently serves as the After Care Coordinator at Red Bank Veterinary Hospitals in Tinton Falls and has worked in veterinary medicine for 21 years.

**Heidi Housechild** is a certified bereavement counselor through the Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement. She currently serves as a Client Service Concierge at Red Bank Veterinary Hospitals in Tinton Falls and has worked in veterinary medicine for 16 years.

**Kim White, MSW**, is certified in Thanatology (grief and bereavement) and is a member of the Association for Death, Education and Counseling and the Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement.

### HOSPITAL COUNSELORS

Our pet bereavement counselors are available to help pet families cope with the emotions associated with anticipating the loss of a pet, coming to a decision to euthanize, and preparing for what lies ahead. They offer counseling on the phone, in person, or through email. Contact your local Red Bank Veterinary Hospitals location for more information.

**TF Tinton Falls** | 197 Hance Avenue, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724 | **732-747-3636**

**Robyn Smith, DVM**, is a certified bereavement counselor through the Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement, and has also completed the Animal Hospice and Palliative Care Certificate Program through the American Animal Hospital Association. Dr. Smith has 19 years of experience as a general practitioner and currently works exclusively doing House Calls. Almost half of her time is spent assisting families with end-of-life care, which gives her a unique perspective on pet loss and the grieving process.

## We all want to express our deepest regrets for your loss.

You have started on a personal journey.

Showing strong emotions after losing a loved one, human or animal, is normal and to be expected. Denial, anger, guilt, crying, and depression are all part of the grieving process.

You may experience several, if not all, of the above-mentioned stages of grief as you journey through the emotions that can follow the loss of a pet.

Time alone will not do the healing, but in time you will be able to work through the emotions so that healing may take place.

Letting go of your pain and keeping the happy memories alive is the goal. Your beloved pet wouldn't want you to suffer. If he/she could, your pet would tell you that it's okay to feel better and enjoy the warmth of the memories you have. Allow the joy to replace the grief.

Crying is normal and healthy. It helps release stress and provides relief. Feeling sadness, anger or even guilt is normal as long as it doesn't occur for an extended period of time.

Your pet was special, your pet loved you and lived a good life because of you, and that is important to always remember. You gave love and received love and those are the greatest of gifts.

Will you get over these feelings of loss completely? Probably not, but it will become easier as time goes by. You may feel a twinge of sorrow from time to time as memories come and go but that is normal.

In time, you may find yourself thinking about bringing another pet into your life. Your beloved pet would want you to give love to another creature in need! Rejoice in this new start and remember that by bringing a new pet into your life, you are not replacing your beloved pet. That wouldn't be possible. This new relationship will be different, yet it will become as special in its own way as the one that ended.



– Red Bank Veterinary Hospitals Staff

