

Pet Therapy





Pet therapy provides hospice patients a much-needed opportunity to give affection, as well as receive it. Animals can be used to help alleviate symptoms, or to become companions who will sit and listen to a patient work through strong end of life emotions.

There is a certain unconditional love that only a pet can give to a person. Patients can speak freely to animals, and share some of their deepest feelings and emotions. Patients no longer feel alone. Patients feel comfortable and at ease knowing no matter what happens, the pet will not leave their side.

A patient with dementia can experience positive validation just by petting an animal. A patient with Parkinson's disease who has limited range of motion can reach out just to pet an animal. Children sometimes respond better to animals than they do to people, especially in a hospice circumstance. An animal can help a child open up about his/her feelings, and give the child a sense of control by using commands to play with the animal.

Pet therapy can be helpful for hospice patients who have had to leave pets behind because they can no longer care for them. Being able to talk to and pet an animal brings a sense of joy that can overcome the feelings of loss. Pet therapy can help with the depression that many experience during end of life care.

Our volunteer trainers and their animals, typically dogs, are happy to serve patients in the place they are most comfortable. The animals can cuddle in the patient's lap, or just sit by their bedside. Our trainers work to provide the most appropriate experience for each and every patient.