

## Preparing for Euthanasia

There are many things to think about when you work with clients making euthanasia decisions. You may feel heightened responsibility to make the event as smooth and peaceful as possible for both your patient and your client. The following ideas may help you plan ahead and feel confident about supporting your client during the euthanasia.

Discuss with the client:

- Where it will occur (in comfort room, outside)
- Whether or not they want to be present, and who else may be present (family, friend for support, other pets)
- What memorializing items a client wants (clay paw, hair clipping, collar)
- How the client wishes for the body to be cared for (private cremation, group cremation, hospital cremation with no ashes returned, take body home to bury)
- The euthanasia procedure
- What body reflexes may occur (muscle twitches, bladder and bowel release, deep exhale, vocalization, eyes remain open)

Prepare for the euthanasia:

- Asking someone to work the case with you (vet tech, another clinician)
- Prepare the chosen site for the euthanasia (pad with blankets on the floor or ground, Kleenex box, clay paw materials)
- Gather resources to send home with the client (crematorium, grief handouts, your contact information)
- Place the catheter
- Offer client time alone with the pet.
- Facilitate signing of forms and payment prior to euthanasia while the client has time with the pet. Offer to make payment to business office on behalf of client.

During the procedure:

- Review the process and what reflexes to expect
- Announce each injection as it is being given
- Check for a heartbeat with your stethoscope and pronounce the death
- Ask if the client wants to spend some time with the pet afterwards.
- Offer to make a clay paw or cut hair clipping with the client.

After the euthanasia:

- Walk the client to the car. Have someone stay with the body if possible.
- Offer grief resources.
- Prepare the body for transport.
- Complete body disposition forms.
- Write condolence card and include anyone who worked with the client.
- Make follow up phone call to the client.
- Debrief experience or carry out stress management strategies as needed.