

HARBOURSIDE

PET & EQUINE CREMATIONS

SUPPORT DIRECTORY

Finding Professional Support

A practical directory for Australians grieving a pet



INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- Crisis helplines (GriefLine, Lifeline...)
- How to find a therapist in Australia
- Medicare Mental Health Care Plan explained
- Peer community groups
- What to expect from a first session

4 PAGES

FREE TO DOWNLOAD, PRINT & SHARE

Written for the families we sit with.

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Finding professional support

Grief for an animal is real grief, and it is a perfectly legitimate reason to see a professional. You do not need to be in crisis to be entitled to help.

IF TODAY IS BAD — FREE, IMMEDIATE, AUSTRALIA-WIDE

- Lifeline — 13 11 14 — 24/7 crisis support, phone, text and web chat.
- GriefLine — 1300 845 745 — grief specialists, including pet loss. 6am–midnight AEST.
- Beyond Blue — 1300 22 4636 — 24/7 counselling and referral.
- 13YARN — 13 92 76 — 24/7 support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Kids Helpline — 1800 55 1800 — free, 24/7, ages 5 to 25.
- MensLine Australia — 1300 78 99 78 — 24/7.
- Emergency — 000, or your nearest hospital emergency department.

If you are thinking about harming yourself, please call 000 or Lifeline now. This is not an overreaction.

Finding a therapist in Australia

1. Book a longer GP appointment and say you would like to discuss a Mental Health Treatment Plan.
2. Your GP assesses you and, if appropriate, writes the plan and refers you to a psychologist.
3. The plan gives Medicare rebates on a number of sessions each calendar year (currently ten).
4. You may still pay a gap. Ask the clinic what their out-of-pocket cost is before you book.
5. Bulk-billing psychologists exist but often have waiting lists. Ask to go on more than one.

WHERE TO SEARCH

- Australian Psychological Society — psychology.org.au — “Find a Psychologist” directory.
- Australian Counselling Association — theaca.net.au.
- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement — grief.org.au — grief-specific practitioners.
- Head to Health — headtohealth.gov.au — government service finder.
- Telehealth is widely available and is a good option in regional areas.

WHAT TO ASK WHEN YOU CALL

- Do you have experience with grief, and specifically with the loss of an animal?
- What is your fee, and what is the gap after the Medicare rebate?
- How long is the wait for a first appointment?
- Do you offer telehealth?

What a first session is actually like

Fifty minutes, usually. You will be asked what brought you in and a little about your history. You do not have to perform grief, and you do not have to cry. Nothing is diagnosed on day one.

If it is not the right fit, you are allowed to try someone else. Fit matters more than credentials, and no reasonable practitioner is offended by this.

PEER SUPPORT

- GriefLine runs free moderated online forums and support groups.
- Local pet-loss support groups are often hosted by vet hospitals — ask your clinic.
- Online communities help many people; leave any group that makes you feel worse.

SIGNS IT IS TIME TO GET HELP

- Several months on, with no easing at all.
- Unable to work, eat, or sleep normally for weeks.
- Drinking or using substances more than you would like.
- Withdrawing from everyone.
- Any thoughts of not wanting to be here.

Australian services and phone numbers correct at time of publication. Please check current details on the relevant website.