



HEALING AFTER LOSS

This is a trying time for us all. We are worried about our health, our families, and our pets. Thanks to 24/7 news cycle, and social media, we are now treated to an unrelenting play-by-play of shocking, distressing and upsetting daily stories about the Covid-19 pandemic.

To all grieving FIP parents, the relentless mention of the word “coronavirus” can bring a wave of emotions extremely difficult to deal with. To the vast majority of the public, coronavirus is something that just recently has come to their attention. To all of us, touched and changed by FIP, the mere mention of the virus sends chills down our spine. As both diseases are caused by coronaviruses, even if many years has gone by, the constant coverage of this latest pandemic could become a trigger to reignite the pain, the grief, and other feelings related to the loss of a cat to Feline Infectious Peritonitis.

Grief is the normal, natural process of adjusting to the loss of a loved one. We cannot go through life without being touched by grief. Contrary to popular belief, grief does not unfold in clean, linear stages, nor does it have a timeline.

The loss of a beloved cat is often just as difficult, if not more so, than losing a human family member because our relationships with our animals are remarkably intimate and mutually supportive – they love us “no strings attached”, hold our secrets, and accept us as we are. When daily routines center around caring for an animal, their death can also disrupt our sense of home, our sense of safety, our sense of purpose, and our sense of identity.

It is important to remember that grief is a full body experience that can impact our mind, our feelings, our social relationships, and our beliefs about the world.

Grief symptoms can include:

Physical

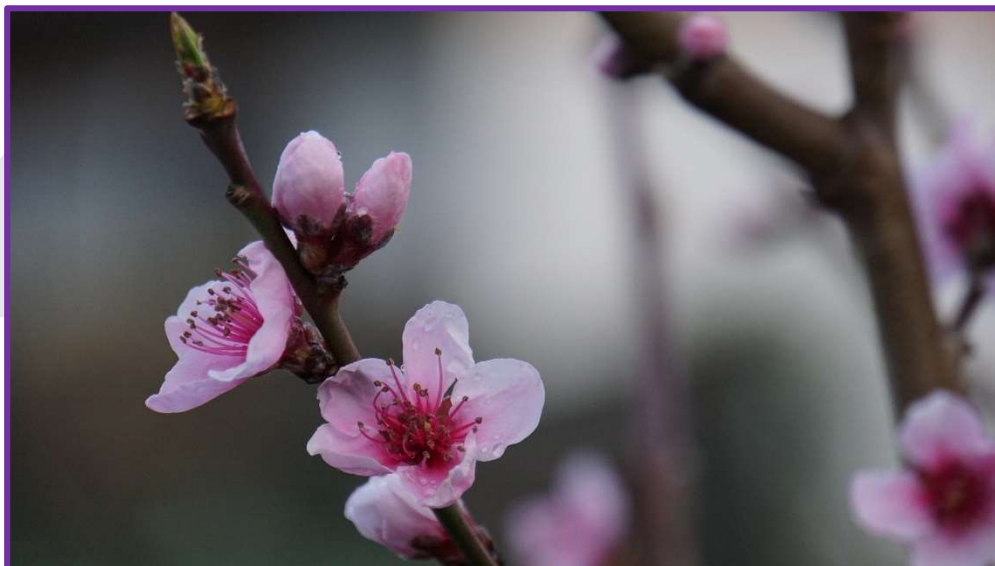
Aches and pains
Exhaustion and insomnia
Dehydration
Nausea or loss of hunger

Emotional

Guilt
Anxiety
Rage
Despair
Yearning

Spiritual

Anger at Higher Power
Searching for meaning



Questioning what happens after death

- Is my animal OK?
- Where is my animal now?
- Do animals have souls?

Social

Isolation from friends, social circles, and loved ones

Using work to avoid going home

Avoiding social situations

Cognitive

Preoccupation with an animal's illness and death

Distraction

Rigidity/lack of flexibility

Confusion



What can I do to help myself heal?

After a loss, it is important to tend to your broken heart, and in whatever way it feels safe to you, allow yourself to feel the pain of the loss. Most people find comfort in maintaining daily routines and creating rituals to honor their cat's memory. When humans die, the process of mourning often includes obituaries, funerals, and public memorials. Doing the same for a loved animal honors their life while also giving others a chance to support you. Talking to others who can listen to your stories and feelings without judgment can help – most griever want to know that they are normal, their feelings are valid, and they are not alone.

When will I get over this?

It is common for people to want to feel better. On the other hand, it is also normal for griever to fear feeling better because that might mean letting go of - or betraying – a loved one. Keep in mind, that **grief is not something we get over, but something we move through**. When we lose someone, whose presence changes us (often for the better), we can't help to be changed, too, by their death. The process of coming to terms with a death can take a long time, but you will eventually find your way to a place where the pain of your cat's absence is less of a focus than the positive, loving, memories that come to mind when you remember them.

Would talking to someone help?

If you are significantly preoccupied with questions or guilt about your animal's death, have witnessed the acute injury or traumatic death of your animal, or are feeling "stuck" in any aspect of your grief, it might be useful to connect with people who can provide extra support.

EndFIP® aims to inspire hope and work in partnership to help alleviate the human suffering and deep grieving caused by FIP. We are here to help, **REACH OUT** to us at: griefsupport@endfip.com

These are extraordinary times, and EndFIP® is no ordinary organization. Since our launch in 2018, EndFIP® has remained a resilient and spirited organization. Our approach, is never to retreat but to find a way forward, guided by science, with swiftness and compassion, and above all with kindness towards all animals.

If you haven't done it already, please consider joining our Facebook groups at:

www.facebook.com/groups/EndFIP www.facebook.com/groups/EndFIPInvictus



www.endfip.com

