



Animals In Our Hearts

Animal Communication & Grief Support

Loving Resources of Healing
for People and the Animals They Love

with *Teresa Wagner*

Animals In Our Hearts.com

Since 1991

831-236-4080

Animal Loss and Grief Support Professional Program of Study

Application Questionnaire for Interested and New Participants

Thank you for your interest in the program and in supporting people who grieve the loss of their animal loved ones. I am very pleased to begin a dialog with you about how this program may be a beneficial fit for your educational needs, desires and professional development.

Because this is a distance learning program, it is important to me that from the beginning there is personalized contact between program participants and class instructors. It begins with this questionnaire and the follow up phone conversation. In addition, there is a one hour coaching and mentoring one on one session after every required and elective class to continue this personalized communication and support.

The questions below and our follow up discussion are not in any way meant to be as assessment of your abilities, but rather a spring board for us to begin to understand how you want to develop and serve in this field, to help us learn how we can support you in achieving your goals with the program, answer any of your questions and concerns about the program and to begin to get to know each other.

When you've completed the questionnaire please email to teresa@animalsinourhearts.com. When we receive it, we will confirm receipt, email you directions to pay the \$25 application fee and will schedule a time to talk by phone.

Thank you again for your interest in the program. Thank you for loving animals and for your desire to support others through their grief of losing them. I look forward to hearing from you again soon.

With blessings and love,
Teresa



1. Tell us about your **education and professional background**.
2. **What is it that attracts you to this program of study?**
3. Describe your **current and or planned work with animals and or people** and how you would most want this program of study to serve you in your work?
4. What **roles are you typically in while supporting grievers** (personal friend, family member, veterinary professional, shelter professional or rescue group worker, animal communicator, energy healer, other healing arts professional, pet sitter, etc.). Feel free to describe any particular experiences.
5. How would you describe what you see as your **strengths** when supporting people or animals who are grieving. What feels natural and comfortable for you when in this role?
6. How would you **describe areas where you would want to increase your knowledge or skills** in supporting those who grieve? Are there any areas that feel challenging and perhaps uncomfortable for you when in this role?
7. The following statements represent the **values inherent in this program**. What are your thoughts about and experiences with these values?
 - The life of an animal is as important and significant as the life of a human.
 - The death of an animal is as important and significant as the death of a human.
 - The grief of those who mourn the loss of beloved animals is as important and significant as the grief of those who mourn the loss of beloved humans.
 - Grief is indifferent to the species lost ~
8. One of the major underlying philosophies of this program is that **a client centered, empathy based approach** to grief support and all helping or healing consultations is optimal. [Click here](#) to read an article about this approach. Also, scroll to the last page of this document to see the The Helping Practitioner's Pyramid--Four Elements of Effective Facilitation of Healing which defines the client centered, empathy bases approach in a graphic. After reading the article and and looking over the The Helping Practitioner's Pyramid describe:
 - Your thoughts and opinions about this approach
 - In what ways does this approach compare with your own philosophies, beliefs, practices or experiences?
9. A second underlying philosophy of this program is that **grief (including anticipatory grief) is both an emotional and spiritual experience and that these aspects both need to be considered and addressed when supporting others**. The program curriculum reflects this with required and elective classes that include both psychological perspectives about grief and grief counseling and spiritual perspectives about death, the afterlife, healing our own grief and helping others who grieve.
 - What are your thoughts and opinions about this integrative approach?
 - In what ways does this fit in, or not, with your own philosophies, beliefs, practices or experiences?

10. A third major underlying philosophy of this program is that **it is a serious responsibility of grief support practitioners to honor and uphold the right of clients to clarify and embrace their own opinions and beliefs and to make their own decisions, especially regarding end of life decisions, unimpeded by a grief support practitioner's personal values.**

The emotional vulnerability, sometimes acute, of clients currently facing or reflecting upon past end of life decisions for their beloved animals can make them more susceptible than usual to others' opinions and suggestions. Because of this it is imperative that those of us in grief support roles be steadfast in supporting clients to clarify what is true for them, not impose what is true for us regarding moral beliefs and personal values.

Upholding a key professional boundary ethic of the counseling professions, it is the position of the program that it is both disempowering and potentially emotionally harmful to clients for grief support practitioners to impose their own moral views. The relationship between clients and helping professionals involves a sacred trust in which clients must feel safe in the security that helping professionals are there to support them in finding their own way, not to preach or proselytize. To violate this trust by attempting to make clients take actions based on our personal values is one of the most egregious and unethical things that anyone in a grief support role can do.

This program does not support, promote or impose specific positions such as "euthanasia is wrong" "unassisted death is ideal," or "euthanasia is best." What is taught and promoted regarding the emotional challenge faced by animal guardians when making or reflecting upon choices surrounding end of life of animal companions, is that **it is the responsibility of grief support practitioners to:**

- **Help clients clarify** what they feel, believe and ultimately decide what is best for their animals in their unique circumstances regarding decisions about euthanasia or unassisted death. While practitioners may have important and relevant information (such as medical information from veterinary professionals), resources or ideas to share with clients, it should always be shared in the context and spirit of helping clients make their own decisions.
- **Communicate respect for their clients' values and decisions** regarding end of life choices regardless of whether the clients' values and choices are the same choices they would make.
- **Offer empathic, nonjudgmental emotional support** to clients as they face and work through such challenging decisions, or reflect upon past decisions.
- **Refrain from proselytizing or in any way attempt to impose** their own personal values and beliefs.
- What are your own thoughts, opinions and experiences about these issues?
- In what ways does this fit in, or not, with your own philosophies, beliefs or practices?

11. Please describe any questions, concerns or comments you may have about the program.

NOTE: When you submit your responses, please include the question itself before each of your responses for easier reading on our end. Thank you.

The Helping Practitioner's Pyramid

Four Elements of Effective Facilitation of Healing

