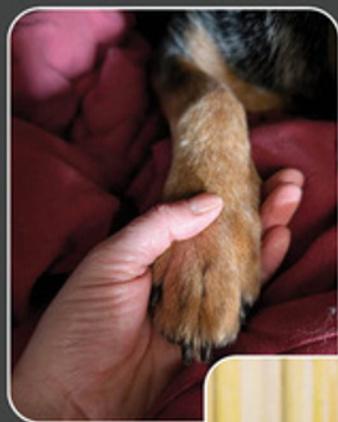


Companion Animal End of Life Care for the Veterinary Technician

Edited by **Alyssa Eslinger** and **Joye Sears**



WILEY

Contents

List of Contributors	<i>xvii</i>
Acknowledgments	<i>xix</i>
Introduction	<i>xxi</i>
About the Companion Website	<i>xxv</i>

Part I Overview of Hospice and Palliative Care 1

1 Introduction to Animal Hospice and Palliative Care 3

Alyssa Eslinger

- 1.1 Introduction 3
- 1.2 Terminology and Definitions 4
- 1.3 Psychosocial Considerations 5
- 1.4 The Interdisciplinary Team 5
 - 1.4.1 Role of Veterinary Technicians 8
 - 1.4.2 Role of Veterinary Social Workers 8
 - 1.4.3 Effective Use of Interdisciplinary Teams 9
- 1.5 Hospice Care Approach 9
- 1.6 End-of-Life Care Delivery Models 10
 - 1.6.1 Role of Telemedicine 11
 - 1.6.2 Informed Consent and Liability Considerations 13
- 1.7 Takeaways 13
- References 13

2 Pain Recognition and Assessment 15

Alyssa Eslinger and Amy Birchall

- 2.1 Introduction 15
- 2.2 The Physiology and Classification of Pain 15
 - 2.2.1 Somatic and Visceral Pain 17
 - 2.2.2 Acute vs Chronic Pain 17
 - 2.2.3 Neuropathic Pain 17
- 2.3 Pain Recognition 18
 - 2.3.1 Fear, Anxiety, Stress, and Pain Recognition 19
- 2.4 Pain Assessment Tools 20

- 2.4.1 Simple Pain Scales 20
- 2.4.2 Multidimensional Acute Pain Scales 21
- 2.4.3 Multidimensional Chronic Pain Scales 22
- 2.5 Practical Pain Assessment 28
- 2.6 Caregiver Communication and Education 29
- 2.6.1 Caregiver Myths and Misconceptions 29
- 2.7 Takeaways 30
- References 31

3 Pain Management 33

Alyssa Eslinger

- 3.1 Introduction 33
- 3.2 Role of Veterinary Technicians and Approach to Pain Management 33
- 3.3 Pharmaceutical Pain Management 35
 - 3.3.1 NSAIDs 35
 - 3.3.2 Opioids 36
 - 3.3.3 Corticosteroids 38
 - 3.3.4 Gabapentinoids 38
 - 3.3.5 NMDA Receptor Antagonists 39
 - 3.3.6 Other Adjunctive Analgesics 40
 - 3.3.6.1 Local Anesthesia 41
 - 3.3.6.2 Monoclonal Antibody Therapy 41
 - 3.3.6.3 Bisphosphonates 41
 - 3.3.6.4 Cannabidiol 41
- 3.4 Physical Modalities 42
 - 3.4.1 Manual Therapy Techniques 43
 - 3.4.2 Thermotherapy 43
 - 3.4.3 Therapeutic Laser 43
 - 3.4.4 Electrotherapy 44
 - 3.4.5 Therapeutic Ultrasound and Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy 45
 - 3.4.6 Acupuncture 47
- 3.5 Nutrition, Nutraceuticals, and Herbal Medicine 47
 - 3.5.1 Nutrition 47
 - 3.5.2 Chondroprotectants 48
 - 3.5.3 Herbal Medicine 48
- 3.6 Pain Management Case Studies 48
 - 3.6.1 “Leo” – Canine Osteosarcoma 48
 - 3.6.2 “BB” – Feline Osteoarthritis and Intestinal Lymphoma 49
- 3.7 Exotic Pet Pain Management 50
- 3.8 Caregiver Education and Communication 51
- 3.9 Takeaways 51
- References 52

4 Hospice and Palliative Nursing Care 55

Alyssa Eslinger

- 4.1 Introduction 55
- 4.2 General Comfort Care 56
 - 4.2.1 Environmental Modifications 56

4.2.2	Mobility	57
4.2.3	Hygiene and Toileting	60
4.2.4	Nutrition	61
4.2.5	Mucous Membrane Comfort	63
4.2.6	Fluid Support	63
4.2.7	Medication and Treatment Administration	64
4.2.8	Mental and Emotional Wellbeing	65
4.3	Sign-Specific Nursing Care	65
4.3.1	Recumbency	66
4.3.2	Wounds	66
4.3.3	Gastrointestinal Signs	67
4.3.4	Respiratory Distress	67
4.3.5	Musculoskeletal Signs	68
4.3.6	Neurological Signs	68
4.3.6.1	Neuromuscular or Spinal Disease	68
4.3.6.2	Intracranial Disease	69
4.3.6.3	Cognitive Dysfunction (CD)	69
4.3.7	Neoplastic Signs	69
4.4	Comfort Kits	70
4.5	Takeaways	73
	References	74

5 Understanding and Assessing Quality of Life 75

Alyssa Eslinger

5.1	Introduction	75
5.2	Quality-of-Life Assessments	76
5.2.1	Effective Use of Quality-of-Life Assessments	76
5.3	Components of Quality-of-Life Assessments	78
5.3.1	Physical Wellbeing	78
5.3.2	Social Wellbeing and Mental Stimulation	79
5.3.3	Emotional Wellbeing and Autonomy	80
5.3.4	Other Considerations	80
5.3.4.1	Global Score	80
5.3.4.2	Caregiver Burden	80
5.4	Selected Quality-of-Life Assessment Tools	80
5.4.1	Selected Quality-of-Life Assessments	81
5.4.2	Individualized Quality-of-Life Questionnaire	83
5.5	Role of Telemedicine	85
5.6	Large Animal and Exotics Considerations	87
5.7	Takeaways	87
	References	88

Part II End-of-Life Communication and Decision-Making 91

6 Building Essential Communication Skills 93

Joye Sears and Becky Taylor

6.1	Introduction	93
-----	--------------	----

- 6.2 Core Communication Skills 93
 - 6.2.1 Nonverbal Communication 94
 - 6.2.2 Asking Questions 95
 - 6.2.3 Active Listening 97
 - 6.2.4 Showing Empathy 100
- 6.3 Emotional Intelligence 101
 - 6.3.1 Self-Awareness 102
 - 6.3.2 Self-Management 103
 - 6.3.3 Social Awareness 104
 - 6.3.4 Relationship Management 104
- 6.4 Team-Based Communication 104
 - 6.4.1 Getting the Team on Board 104
 - 6.4.2 Building Skills Within the Team 105
- 6.5 Takeaways 105
- References 105

7 Supporting Difficult Conversations 107

Joye Sears

- 7.1 Introduction 107
- 7.2 Difficult Clients vs Difficult Situations 107
- 7.3 Applying Communication Skills to Difficult Conversations 108
 - 7.3.1 Partnership Statements 108
 - 7.3.2 Warning Shots 108
- 7.4 A Model for End-of-Life Conversations 109
 - 7.4.1 Setting 109
 - 7.4.2 Perspective 109
 - 7.4.3 Invitation 109
 - 7.4.4 Knowledge 109
 - 7.4.5 Empathize 110
 - 7.4.6 Summarize and Strategize 110
- 7.5 Conflict Resolution 110
- 7.6 Types of Difficult Conversations 112
 - 7.6.1 Grief 112
 - 7.6.2 Delivering Bad News 112
 - 7.6.3 Anger 113
 - 7.6.4 Financial Conflict 114
 - 7.6.5 Disagreement Within the Team 116
 - 7.6.6 Disagreement Among Caregivers 119
- 7.7 Assess for Success 121
- 7.8 Takeaways 121
- References 121

8 Ethical End-of-Life Decision-Making 123

Alyssa Eslinger

- 8.1 Introduction 123
- 8.2 Communication in EOL Decision-Making 124
- 8.3 Caregiver Perspectives on EOL Decision-Making 124

- 8.3.1 Conflicting Caregiver Perspectives 127
- 8.4 Factors for Veterinary Team Consideration in EOL Decision-Making 128
 - 8.4.1 Quality-of-Life Assessments in EOL Decision-Making 128
 - 8.4.2 Caregiver Burden and EOL Decision-Making 129
 - 8.4.3 Caregiver Preferences and Euthanasia Timing 130
- 8.5 Considerations for Hospice-Supported Natural Death 131
- 8.6 Ethical Dilemmas and Moral Stress 132
 - 8.6.1 Convenience Euthanasia 133
- 8.7 EOL Decision Documentation and Debriefing 134
- 8.8 Takeaways 134
 - References 134

9 Death and Dying 137

Alyssa Eslinger

- 9.1 Introduction 137
- 9.2 Animal Experience of Dying 138
 - 9.2.1 Signs of Dying 138
 - 9.2.2 Signs of Death 140
- 9.3 Natural Death vs Hospice-Supported Natural Death 140
- 9.4 Informed Consent for Hospice-Supported Natural Death 142
- 9.5 Ethical Challenges in Hospice-Supported Natural Death 143
- 9.6 Nursing Care in Hospice-Supported Natural Death 145
 - 9.6.1 Environment and General Comfort 146
 - 9.6.2 Anxiety 146
 - 9.6.3 Pain 146
 - 9.6.4 Nutrition and Fluids 147
- 9.7 Takeaways 147
 - References 148

Part III Euthanasia 149

10 Providing a Compassionate Euthanasia Experience 151

Kathleen Cooney

- 10.1 Introduction 151
- 10.2 Defining Euthanasia and Dysthanasia 152
- 10.3 Meaningful Components of the Euthanasia Appointment 154
 - 10.3.1 Grief Support Materials Provided 155
 - 10.3.2 Outline Caregiver and Pet Preferences 155
 - 10.3.3 Offer Privacy Before and After Death 156
 - 10.3.4 Deliver Proper Technique 156
 - 10.3.5 Establish Rapport 156
 - 10.3.6 Use Pre-euthanasia Sedation or Anesthesia 157
 - 10.3.7 Thorough, Complete Consent 157
 - 10.3.8 Helpful and Compassionate Personnel 157
 - 10.3.9 Adequate Time 157
 - 10.3.10 Narrate the Process 158

- 10.3.11 Avoid Pain and Anxiety 158
- 10.3.12 Safe Space to Gather 158
- 10.3.13 Inclusion of Loved Ones 158
- 10.3.14 Assistance with Body Care (Aftercare) 158
- 10.4 Technicians in the Role of Euthanasia Provider 159
- 10.5 Communicating Effectively Before, During, and After Euthanasia 160
 - 10.5.1 Establish Rapport 161
 - 10.5.2 Find Comfort with Silence 162
 - 10.5.3 Use the Basics of Good Communication 162
 - 10.5.4 Offer Praise 162
 - 10.5.5 Piece It Out 163
 - 10.5.6 Create Partnership 164
 - 10.5.7 Attend to Emotional Intelligence 164
- 10.6 Medical Records 165
- 10.7 Takeaways 165
 - References 166

11 Anatomy of a Humane Euthanasia 167

Kathleen Cooney

- 11.1 Introduction 167
- 11.2 Technicians as Euthanasia Attendants 167
- 11.3 Euthanasia Methods and the Physiology of Death 168
 - 11.3.1 Methods of Euthanasia 168
 - 11.3.2 Body Changes 169
- 11.4 Pre-euthanasia Sedation and Anesthesia Protocols 171
 - 11.4.1 Effects of Pre-euthanasia Sedation and Anesthesia Protocols 173
 - 11.4.2 Administration of Pre-euthanasia Sedation or Anesthesia 174
- 11.5 Euthanasia Room Comforts 177
 - 11.5.1 Euthanasia in the Hospital Setting 177
 - 11.5.2 Euthanasia in the Home Setting 179
- 11.6 Balancing EOL Work and Well-Being 180
- 11.7 Takeaways 181
 - References 181

12 Euthanasia Techniques in Companion Animals 183

Kathleen Cooney

- 12.1 Introduction 183
- 12.2 Euthanasia Injection Techniques 185
 - 12.2.1 Intravenous (IV) Injections 186
 - 12.2.2 Intracardiac (IC) Injections 188
 - 12.2.3 Intrarenal (IR) Injections 190
 - 12.2.4 Intrahepatic (IH) Injections 191
 - 12.2.5 Intraperitoneal (IP) Injections 193
- 12.3 Alternative Euthanasia Administration Techniques 194
 - 12.3.1 Oral Administration of Euthanasia Drugs 194
 - 12.3.2 Intrathecal Anesthetic Euthanasia 194
 - 12.3.3 Physical Methods of Euthanasia 194
 - 12.3.4 Euthanizing Fetuses 195

- 12.4 Physical Changes During Death and Pronouncing Death 195
- 12.5 Exotic Pet Considerations 197
- 12.5.1 General Considerations for Patient Comfort 198
- 12.6 Unique Circumstances 199
- 12.7 Takeaways 200
- References 201

13 Respectful Deceased Body Care 203

Kathleen Cooney

- 13.1 Introduction 203
- 13.2 Aftercare Ordering Models 205
 - 13.2.1 Veterinary Aftercare Ordering Model (VAOM) 205
 - 13.2.2 Client Aftercare Ordering Model (CAOM) 205
- 13.3 Respectful Body Containment 205
- 13.4 Moving a Deceased Body 208
- 13.5 Modern Options in Aftercare 209
 - 13.5.1 Cremation 211
 - 13.5.2 Burial 212
 - 13.5.3 Aquamation 214
 - 13.5.4 Body Preservation 215
 - 13.5.5 Educational Memorial Body Donation 216
- 13.6 Minimizing Aftercare Mistakes and Exceeding Expectations 217
- 13.7 Expected Postmortem Changes and Decomposition 218
 - 13.7.1 Decomposition 219
- 13.8 Takeaways 221
- References 221

Part IV Grief and Memorialization 223

14 Introduction to Grief 225

Sarah Bernardi

- 14.1 Introduction 225
- 14.2 The Fundamentals of Grief 225
- 14.3 The Human–Animal Bond: A Unique Loss 227
 - 14.3.1 Guilt and Regret 229
 - 14.3.2 Anger 231
- 14.4 Recognizing Grief Responses 231
 - 14.4.1 Uncomplicated Grief 231
 - 14.4.2 Disenfranchised Grief 232
 - 14.4.3 Anticipatory Grief 232
 - 14.4.4 Prolonged Grief Disorder and Suicidality 234
- 14.5 Factors Impacting Grief Responses from Pet Loss 234
 - 14.5.1 Euthanasia 235
 - 14.5.2 Sudden Loss 236
 - 14.5.3 Loss of Service Animals 236
 - 14.5.4 Culture and Spirituality 237
 - 14.5.5 Perceived Social Support 238
 - 14.5.6 Age 239

- 14.6 Considerations for a Grieving Pet 241
- 14.7 Takeaways 241
- References 243

15 Pet Loss Support 245

Sarah Bernardi

- 15.1 Introduction 245
- 15.2 Language Sensitivity in Grief Support 246
- 15.3 Providing Grief Support and Memorialization 246
 - 15.3.1 Aftercare Services 246
 - 15.3.2 Memorial Activities and Keepsakes 249
 - 15.3.3 Follow-Up Care and Support 252
 - 15.3.3.1 Post-Death Phone Call 252
 - 15.3.3.2 Sympathy Cards 253
 - 15.3.3.3 Picking Up Remains 255
- 15.4 Developing a Pet Loss Resource Guide 255
 - 15.4.1 Essential Components of a Pet Loss Resource Guide 255
- 15.5 Addressing Specific Grief Responses 256
 - 15.5.1 Anticipatory Grief: Preparing Caregivers 256
 - 15.5.2 Integrating Cultural Sensitivity in Grief Support 258
 - 15.5.3 Integrating Spiritual Sensitivity in Grief Support 259
 - 15.5.4 Supporting Grieving Pet Owners with Suicidal Ideation 259
- 15.6 Takeaways 260
- 15.A Pet Loss Resource Guide Template 262
- 15.B Suicide Response Guidelines for Veterinary Practices 263
- References 264

16 Children and Pet Loss 267

Sarah Bernardi and Amy Sugar

- 16.1 Introduction 267
- 16.2 The Role of Technicians in Supporting Families with Children 268
- 16.3 Children's Perceptions and Age-Specific Advice 269
- 16.4 Talking to Children About Death and Loss of a Pet 272
 - 16.4.1 Use Simple and Direct Language 272
 - 16.4.2 Validate Feelings 272
 - 16.4.3 Be Patient and Nonjudgmental 274
 - 16.4.4 Avoid Euphemisms 275
 - 16.4.5 Avoid Lying 275
 - 16.4.6 Avoid Blame 276
 - 16.4.7 Spiritual and Religious Considerations 276
 - 16.4.8 Parent/Caregiver Resources for Children of All Ages 277
- 16.5 Supporting Children Through Diagnosis and Treatment of a Pet's Serious Illness 278
- 16.6 Involvement of Children Through Euthanasia 279
 - 16.6.1 Preparing the Family for Euthanasia 279
 - 16.6.2 Explaining Euthanasia to Children 280
 - 16.6.2.1 Why Is This Happening? 280
 - 16.6.2.2 What Does It Mean? 280
 - 16.6.2.3 How Does It Happen? 281

- 16.6.3 The Presence of Children During Euthanasia 281
- 16.6.3.1 Children Under the Age of Five 282
- 16.6.3.2 Middle to Late Childhood (6–13 Years) 283
- 16.6.3.3 Teens and Young Adults (14–21 Years) 283
- 16.6.4 Preparing the Veterinary Team for Children-Present Euthanasia 283
- 16.6.4.1 EOL Comfort Kits for Children 284
- 16.7 Preparing for the Unexpected 286
- 16.8 Supporting Children’s Grief Through Memorialization 287
- 16.9 Considerations for Getting a New Pet 289
- 16.10 Takeaways 289
- References 291

Part V Team Wellness and Growth 293

17 Empathic Strain and Veterinary Team Wellness 295

Sarah Bernardi and Kathleen Dunbar

- 17.1 Introduction 295
- 17.2 Empathic Strain in Veterinary Practice 295
- 17.2.1 Causes of Empathic Strain 297
- 17.2.2 The Role of Moral Distress in Empathic Strain 297
- 17.3 Personal Approaches to Mitigating Empathic Strain 298
- 17.3.1 Empathic Strain Personal Warning System 298
- 17.3.2 Mindfulness Practices 299
- 17.3.3 Professional Support and Mentorship 300
- 17.4 Organizational Strategies for Enhancing Well-Being 300
- 17.4.1 Leadership’s Role in Ensuring Psychological Safety 300
- 17.4.2 Developing Policies and Procedures 301
- 17.4.3 Peer Debriefing 302
- 17.4.4 Integrating Veterinary Social Work 303
- 17.5 Takeaways 303
- References 304

18 The Future Is Bright 307

Alyssa Eslinger and Joye Sears

- 18.1 Technician Utilization and Lifelong Learning 307
- 18.2 Meaningful Purpose and Leadership 307
- 18.3 Business Considerations 308
- 18.4 Veterinary Social Work 309
- 18.5 Specialization and Collaboration 309
- 18.6 Quality of Life Perspectives 309
- 18.7 Research Priorities 310
- 18.8 Conclusion 310
- References 310

Index 311