You Don't Have to Wear All the Hats:

Grief, Collaboration, and the Evolution of Behavioral Care



Valerie Bogie, MSSW, Veterinary Social Worker

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Evolving Together



Joint Standards of Practice and Professional Code of Ethics

Mission: To promote excellence in the animal training and behavior profession through science-based, humane practices, guided by industry collaboration and commitment to animal well-being.

Developed By: This document was created by the steering committee of the Joint Standards of Practice Coalition, a group of animal training and behavior organizations committed to the above mission. These organizations include:

- Association for Professional Dog Training International (APDT International)
- International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC)
- IAABC Foundation (IAABC-F)
- Karen Pryor Academy (KPA)

Developed For: All signatories of the Joint Standards of Practice (JSOP) and those professionals who seek membership and/or credentialing within those organizations.

These Standards of Practice and Professional Code of Ethics have been adopted by all signatory organizations of the JSOP Coalition. These organizations are responsible for ensuring their members and certificants uphold both in their conduct and the delivery of professional services, and that all educational programs they offer are developed in alignment with these standards.

Joint Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice provide a shared foundation for how professionals conduct themselves. The purpose is to establish clear expectations for ethical practices and professional conduct. These Joint Standards are put forward to provide all organizations with minimum standards, such that each organization can have higher

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How Many Hats Are You Wearing?



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Which Hats are Actually Yours?



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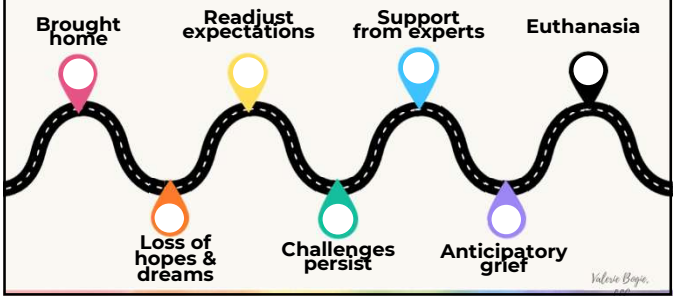
Letting Go ≠ Abandoning Clients





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The Long & Winding Road



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Resources



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Canine Caregiver Burden Assessment Tool (CCBAT) or Zarit Burden Interview (ZBI)

Response Format:

1=Strongly Disagree
2=Disagree
3=Neither Agree nor Disagree
4=Agree
5=Strongly Agree

In the PAST FOUR WEEKS:

Caring for my dog has been tiring.	1 2 3 4 5
Caring for my dog has limited the time that I have to myself.	1 2 3 4 5
My dog has interrupted my sleep because of its health problems.	1 2 3 4 5
My health has been negatively affected by caring for my dog.	1 2 3 4 5
Caring for my dog has been stressful.	1 2 3 4 5
Caring for my dog has negatively affected my social life.	1 2 3 4 5
I have to do more household chores (e.g., cleaning, laundry, preparing food)	1 2 3 4 5
I have had to make several changes to my home (e.g., installing gates, limit access to areas of the home, raised food bowl) because of my dog's health.	1 2 3 4 5
I have missed time at work because of my dog's health.	1 2 3 4 5
I have felt embarrassed by my dog's health.	1 2 3 4 5
I have been uncomfortable having guests (e.g., family, friends, neighbors) visit my home because of my dog's health.	1 2 3 4 5
My dog's health has negatively affected the relationship I have with my dog.	1 2 3 4 5
My dog's health has frustrated me	1 2 3 4 5
I have been unable to care for my dog as much as I would like to.	1 2 3 4 5
I have felt guilty that I should be doing more to care for my dog.	1 2 3 4 5
I have had difficulty caring for my dog the way my veterinarian recommended	1 2 3 4 5
I have found that it is difficult to give my dog its treatment or medication.	1 2 3 4 5
I have found it difficult to cover the financial costs of caring for my dog's health.	1 2 3 4 5
I have worried that my dog will need more care in the future.	1 2 3 4 5
I have been afraid of what the future may hold for my dog.	1 2 3 4 5
My dog has required more care than I expected when I first got my dog.	1 2 3 4 5
I have felt that I could no longer care for my dog.	1 2 3 4 5
I have considered euthanizing my dog due to its health.	1 2 3 4 5
Overall, I have felt burdened by the care I provide for my dog.	1 2 3 4 5
	Total

SCORING: Sum circled numbers. A score ≥56 suggests elevated caregiver burden

What Caregiver Burden Actually Looks Like

- "I can't leave my house."
- "I'm constantly on edge."
- "This is affecting my job/ relationships."
- "I don't know how much longer I can do this."



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3 Questions You Can Ask in Practice

- "What does a typical day look like right now?"
- "What has changed most in your life?"
- "How sustainable does this feel?"



Words Matter

Behavioral euthanasia → **Euthanasia for behavioral reasons**

Grief is a natural reaction to loss.

Types of Grief

Disenfranchised Grief → grief that isn't socially recognized or validated

Ambiguous Grief → grieving a relationship that has changed or ended without a death

Anticipatory Grief → grief prior to an anticipated loss

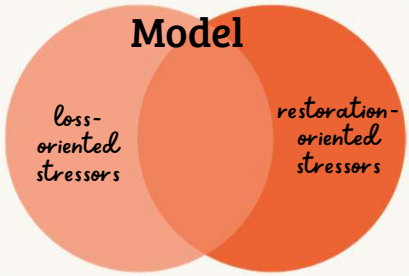
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Kubler-Ross Model (5 Stages)



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Dual Process Model



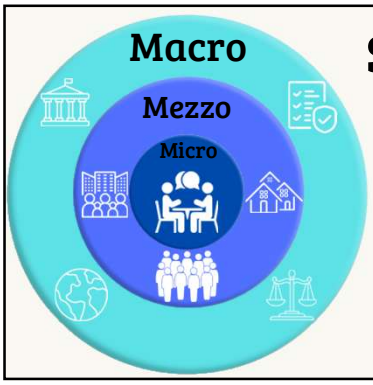
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Veterinary Social Work





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Social Work

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Supporting the human emotional needs & well-being within human-animal interactions



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When a Client Needs More Support

- "It sounds like you're carrying a lot right now."
- "Would you be open to connecting with someone who specializes in supporting people through these experiences?"
- "We can continue working together on your dog's behavior while you have additional support for yourself."
- "If you would like, I have a Veterinary Social Worker I collaborate with that we could meet with together."

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Boundaries Increase Resilience



Strengthening Policies & Procedures

- Do our policies protect our staff's well-being?
- Where can we advocate for our staff's needs?
- What grey areas can we clarify?



Do Less

- Back to basics
  - Food
  - Water
  - Sleep
  - Movement



Individual Support

- Veterinary Social Workers
- Pet Loss Grief Specialists
- Licensed Mental Health Professionals



Your Community

- Veterinary Hope Foundation
  - www.veterinaryhope.org
- Not One More Vet
  - nomv.org
- Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement
  - www.aplb.org/veterinary-and-rescue-support-group/

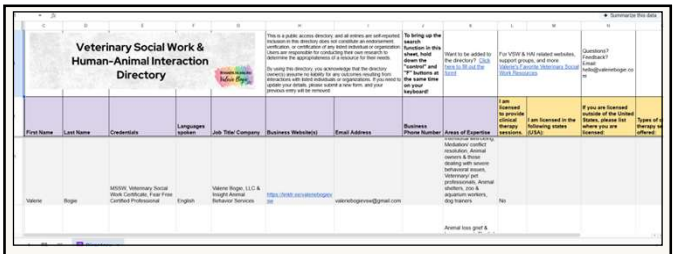


Pet Owner Community

- Insight Support Groups
  - www.insightfulanimals.com/human-support-services
- Losing Lulu
  - www.losinglulu.com
- Handlers & Humans
  - www.handlersandhumans.com



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- Over 100 individuals internationally
- Different levels of support- from coaching & support sessions to therapists
- Connect with a few to build relationships

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Which hats are you going to keep, which can you share, and which were never yours to wear?"



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Resources & Support

Caregiver burden • Human-animal bond • Grief & loss • Professional and community support

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INSIGHT