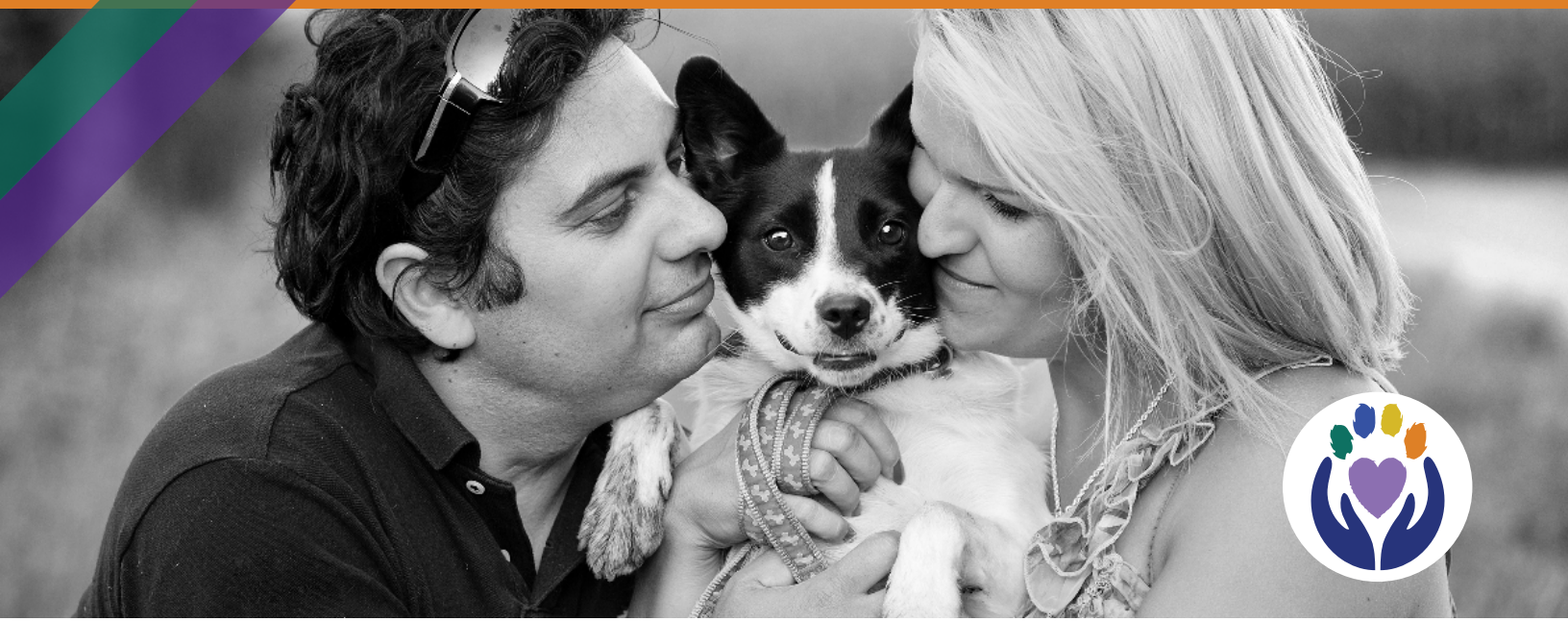

How to Memorialize a Beloved Pet

It's hard to imagine life after a beloved pet dies, but when that time does come, it helps to find ways to honor your special bond and celebrate the love you'll always share. Here are many ideas for memorializing your furry friend – feel free to modify any to fit your companion animal's unique personality and your cherished memories.

Ideas For Before or After Death

- Chronicle your favorite experiences with your pet in a gratitude journal.
- Collect anecdotes from friends, neighbors and family.
- Write a poem, story or song dedicated to your pet.
- Make a piece of artwork inspired by your pet.
- Have a professional portrait or sculpture made of your pet. This can be done from a photograph.
- Have your pet's photo transferred to a keepsake, such as a pendant, pillow, blanket, ornament, or mug.
- Make a donation in your pet's name to an animal-related organization or charity.
- Establish a fund in your pet's name to help other pet parents who can't afford necessary vet treatment.
- Support research on the illness your pet experienced.
- Volunteer your time at a rescue or help find homes for strays and abandoned pets.

Ideas For Before Death

- Arrange for a special photo session or collect lots of existing shots. Place them in your pet's favorite spots in the house, fill an album, create a collage or multi-picture frame, or carry pictures in your wallet.
- Videotape your pet doing anything and everything normal and routine, like eating, sleeping, playing, interacting with you or other pals. It's often the daily routines we miss the most after our pets are gone.
- If time and their physical capacity allows, create a bucket list of what you believe might be your pet's last wishes such as favorite activities, visits with close friends, gourmet treats, and experiences such as a picnic in a park, or going-away party. You'll find lots of other ideas online.

Ideas For After Death

- Keep a few whiskers or tuft of fur in a special place like a cloth pouch, locket or memory box.
- Place your pet's tags on a key ring you always carry.
- Ask your vet for a paw or nose print in either clay or ink.
- Conduct a funeral or memorial service.
- Prepare an obituary for your local newspaper.
- Post a tribute on a pet memorial website.
- Send out death announcements to your close community.
- Write a letter to your pet expressing your love, gratitude, and any feelings you want to share.
- Place your pet's belongings in a special display or altar.
- Create a daily ritual — light a candle before meals, say an evening prayer, or place a photo in a place where you can say hello each morning.
- Have your pet's fur spun into yarn and knit or crochet something in their memory.
- Have a memorial plaque made for a special place.
- Dedicate a park bench in your pet's memory.
- Put your pet's collar around a flowering potted plant.
- Plant a shrub, tree, or flowers at or near the location where your pet's body is buried or ashes are scattered.
- Place your pet's ashes in an urn alongside fresh flowers.
- Place a bit of ashes in a pendant and wear it as a necklace near your heart.
- Toast their memory on holidays and special occasions.
- Seek training and education so you can help others grieve and heal through pet loss.
- Create a RemembeRing, especially if your family includes children.
- And finally, one of the best ways you can honor the memory of your dear pet is by taking care of yourself and healing through your loss. Your wonderful friend would want you to be happy.