At Home and At Peace Veterinary Euthanasia Services

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***General Physical Exam Findings***

Appearance/Attitude: Bright Quiet Depressed Unresponsive

Pulse/Respiration: Normal Abnormal Distressed Compromised

Eyes/Vision: Normal Normal-Geriatric Abnormal Absent

Dental Health: Normal Normal-Geriatric Painful Decreased appetite

Muscle Tone: Normal Normal-Geriatric Weak Unable to rise

Skin: Normal Cosmetic Only Painful Debilitating

Mobility: Normal Normal-Geriatric Restrictive Unable to rise

Hygiene: Normal Normal-Geriatric Restrictive Poor quality of life

***Quality of Life Checklist***

The decision to pursue additional medical treatments or consider euthanasia for a sick or chronically ill pet is a hard decision to make for many pet owners. This handout has been designed to help you consider the quality of life of your pet. Answer each of the questions in each section with a yes or no.

**PAIN**
Pain control is essential. Many animals do not complain in obvious, visible ways
when they hurt. Many animals will hide their discomfort. Consider the following:

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet hurts.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet limps.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet pants frequently, even at rest.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet’s respirations are forced, exaggerated, or otherwise not normal.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet licks repeatedly at one site on his/her body or at a site of a cancer/tumor.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet guards or protects and area of his/her body and may snap if that area is
 approached or touched.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My animal’s posture is abnormal or different than normal.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet shakes or trembles sometimes during rest.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet is on pain medication and it doesn’t work.

Possible interventions: start pain medication, change pain medications, combinations of pain medications from different drug classes, surgical intervention, non-traditional medicine (acupuncture, etc.), treat the underlying disease/condition.

Comments:

**APPETITE**

Appetite is one of the most obvious signs of wellness. Most animals are normally
vigorous eaters. Consider the following:
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet doesn’t eat his/her normal food anymore.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet picks at his/her food now but never used to do this.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet walks over to his/her food but won’t eat or walks away from the food.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet doesn’t even want “good stuff” (treats, human foods, snacks) anymore.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet acts nauseated or vomits.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet is losing weight.

Possible interventions: hand feeding, heating food, adding moisture
by soaking food or using canned varieties, careful addition of human foods, syringe
feeding, stomach tube placement, medications for appetite stimulation, medications
for nausea.

Comments:

**HYDRATION**

Hydration status is equally important as appetite. Without adequate water consumption, your pet can become dehydrated. Dehydration can contribute to weakness and not feeling well.
Consider the following:
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet doesn’t drink as much as he/she used to.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet frequently has dry, sticky gums.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet is vomiting or has diarrhea

Possible interventions: add moisture to the diet, subcutaneous fluid administration, medications to control vomiting or diarrhea.

Comments:

**HYGIENE**

Animals that don’t feel well, especially cats, do not have the energy to maintain
normal hair and skin. Consider the following:
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet doesn’t groom herself any more.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pets hair is matted, greasy, rough looking, dull, or foul smelling.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet has stool pasted around his/her rectum or in his/her hair.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet smells like urine or has skin irritation from urine.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet has pressure sores/wounds that won’t heal.

Possible interventions: regular brushing and grooming, frequent bedding changes, adequate padding for areas where the pet spends a lot of time, appropriate wound care, treat the underlying condition.

Comments:

**ACTIVITY/MOBILITY**

Changes in normal activity can be due to mobility problems, pain, illness, or aging
(arthritis). Consider the following:
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet cannot get up without assistance.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet had a hard time getting around and/or limps.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet lays in one place all day long.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet does not want to play ball, go for walks, or do the things he/she used to do.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet falls frequently.

Possible interventions: pain medication addition or adjustment, physical therapy, wheelchair assistance, modification of home/stairs, modification of where family/pet sleeps.

Comments:

**HAPPINESS/MENTAL STATUS**

Another important area of consideration is the pet’s mental status and happiness. Consider
the following:
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet does not express joy and interest in life.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet does not respond to the people that he/she used to respond to.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet does not want to play with toys or do other things that he/she used to enjoy.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet seems dull, not alert, or depressed.

Comments:

**GENERAL BEHAVIOR PATTERNS**

Changes in normal behavioral patterns are often a key indicator of how well and animal
feels. Consider the following:
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet is hiding or sleeping in odd places.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet doesn’t greet me when I come home and he/she used to.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet is overly clingy and is following me around and he/she never used to do this.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My other pets are treating this pet differently, either overly attentive or ignoring
 pet completely.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet doesn’t care about what is going on around him/her.

Comments:

**OWNER PERCEPTIONS**

Many times an owner is aware that their pet is suffering but does not want to give up on their pet. Consider the following:
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_I wouldn’t want to live if I were in a similar situation.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_I would be painful if I were in a similar situation.
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_I have made appointments for euthanasia for this pet previously
\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_My pet is having more bad days than good days.

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_I have lost sleep caring for my pet

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_The quality of my work away from home has declined due to stress about my pet

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_I have been unable to keep family obligations due to caring for my pet

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_I have been unable to keep social obligations due to my pet

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_I have made unreasonable financial sacrifices due to my pet

Comments:

**Summary**

Pain Overall: No Pain Manageable Pain Consistent Pain Suffering

Appetite: Hungry Inconsistent Uninterested Force-feeding

Hydration: Good Inconsistent Dehydrated Serious

Hygiene: Clean Inconsistent Requires Care Requires Constant Care

Activity/Mobility: Normal Reduced Restricted Recumbent

Mental Status: Alert Engaged Disinterested Unresponsive

General Behavior: Normal Interested Disinterested Unresponsive

Owner Perceptions: Acceptable Struggling Compromised Suffering

Count the number of yes and no answers that you have marked. \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

Unfortunately, there isn’t a simple point system or scale that will tell you exactly
what do for your pet. However, the more yes answers you have, the more likely it is
that your pet has a poor quality of life.