



Caring for people who care for pets
VeterinaryWisdom professionals



A Comfort Room for Clients

Laurel Lagoni, M.S.

When your clients are facing the serious illness or impending deaths of their beloved pets, there are few words that will make their emotional pain any less. However, there are ways you can help them feel they have some control over their situations. One tangible way is to provide a “Comfort Room” in your clinic.

A Comfort Room implies just that--a special place in a pet hospital where clients can spend private, quality time with their pets while dealing with heart-wrenching situations.

Special amenities in your Client Comfort Room may include:


- a private entrance to and exit from the exam room. When dealing with intense emotions, it's very helpful to have maximum privacy when visiting an ill pet or during the time of euthanasia. For many people it can be quite daunting to face a busy, crowded exam room right after euthanizing their pet.
- mini-blinds on the exam room window. This affords maximum privacy during times when emotions and grief are running high.
- lowered lighting. Most veterinary exam rooms have extremely bright lights to allow for good physical exams. However, pets that are ill and people who are distraught are likely to be more comfortable under softer lights. This lowered lighting also creates a more comforting mood during the process of euthanasia.
- comfortable seating. It's very hard to conduct emotional consultations and to process feelings when people are physically uncomfortable or when there are too many barriers between you and your client.
- floor mats or padding or large area rug. Many pet hospitals use blankets or large, soft pads placed on top of an area rug in the middle of the Comfort Room. This allows your clients and their pets to comfortably sit/lay down together during visitations or during euthanasia. When not in use, the padding can be stored in a cabinet or even hung on a wall behind the Comfort Room door.
- mobile exam tables to allow for flexibility. This allows you to move tables to the side and make as much floor space available as possible so an exam room can be quickly converted into a Comfort Room.
- CD player or a way for clients to access their own MP3 player, such as an iPhone patch cable connected to a stereo system. This allows clients to bring special music on CD with them to soothe their ill pets (and them!) and make saying good-bye even more meaningful.



Other suggested items include:

- colorful, but soothing wall hangings
- plants or greenery
- facial tissue
- animal supplies including pet food, treats, and bowls for water
- ClayPaws® Kits to make paw print keepsakes
- scissors for clipping fur and small bags or envelopes to put fur in (keeping a bit of a pet's fur often serves as a meaningful "link" between pets and pet parents)
- telephone (cordless phone or close access to a phone that can be used in privacy if cell phones don't have reception)
- "Do Not Disturb" signs for Comfort Room doors
- a dry-erase board on the outside of the exam door to enable clinic staff to reserve the Comfort Room for a certain time of day
- pet loss information and referral handouts for clients
- a lending library of pet loss support books
- a small fan in case the room becomes too warm
- laptop computer, iPad or TV/DVR to show videos on various topics (diagnosis, treatment, pet loss, etc.)
- a small mirror (clients who have been crying may want to "freshen up" before leaving the comfort room)

Client Comfort Rooms should be in low traffic areas of your pet hospital and, when possible, have access to a separate exit. Comfort Rooms may be especially effective and useful if your hospital is an emergency clinic or a specialty practice.

For more information, visit the Resource Center at www.veterinarywisdomprofessionals.com. 

***"It's very hard to
conduct emotional
consultations and to
process feelings when
people are physically
uncomfortable or
when there are too
many barriers
between you and your
client."***