



Animal Reiki for End-of-Life Support

BY ROBYN BENELLI

ONE OF THE MOST difficult parts of animal companionship is the transition at the end of their life. It can feel stressful, sad, and confusing. Caregivers always want to do what is best for their animals, which can present them with questions and difficulties in creating a plan. Luckily, Reiki can support this process and what has become more common is for Reiki practitioners to give Reiki before, during, and after an animal's transition. Reiki can help with every animal's end-of-life circumstances, such as a life-threatening injury or old age.

Animal Reiki energy and techniques provide animal Reiki practitioners with the tools, skills, and energy to guide the process and help the animal and caregiver during this difficult time.¹ The practitioner allows Reiki to guide the caregiver in the hard decisions they need to make. As a practitioner, there are things to remember about being involved with this challenging and unique time, and these tools and techniques can help.

Code of Ethics

At the end of life, Reiki is always a complementary therapy and works to support medical treatment. Trips to the veterinarian are commonplace. As a practitioner, you should never diagnose medical issues or suggest changing medications or prescribed treatments. It is not the role of an animal Reiki practitioner to give advice or have opinions about a caregiver's choices. The animal Reiki practitioner's role is to offer Reiki support, so the animal's caregiver has greater clarity of mind to manage the choices they need to make.

An animal's caregiver might ask the Reiki practitioner for advice on whether the animal is ready to transition.

It is important for the animal Reiki practitioner to stay within their role and scope of practice and allow Reiki to guide the caregiver's decisions based on the information they receive from professionals and the diagnosis of their veterinarian. Animals do not fear death in the same way humans do, and they are often ready to transition before their caregiver is ready. The animal supports the caregiver's decisions. When the animal is diagnosed as terminal by their veterinarian, it is ready as soon as its caregiver is ready. A clarifying question caregivers can ask themselves is, "Am I prolonging life, or am I prolonging death?"² The practitioner can ask Reiki to provide the caregiver with clarity and guidance. Sometimes it is appropriate for the practitioner to ask Reiki the question silently, knowing it will still provide the caregiver guidance.

Let the Caregiver Decide

You may have a different opinion than the caregiver about what choices to make concerning an animal's end-of-life care. However, it is best not to offer your opinion and allow Reiki to guide the caregiver's decisions. You may have a differing opinion about how soon or how late a caregiver chooses compassionate euthanasia. One caregiver may choose to do all the medical treatment options for illnesses such as cancer, and other caregivers may choose not to do a medical intervention. Some caregivers have financial restrictions and may have to make decisions based on their finances. There can be many differences of opinions about compassionate euthanasia when animals have injuries, chronic conditions, or aggression. Some caregivers may choose to allow their animal a natural death, and others may choose compassionate euthanasia as the end of life. As

a Reiki practitioner, it is your role to provide Reiki and allow it to guide the caregiver's decisions rather than offer your opinion. If you find yourself disagreeing with the caregiver's decisions, give yourself Reiki, or ask another practitioner for a Reiki session to help facilitate the healing you need as a practitioner to better serve the caregivers.

Reiki for the Animal

During the end-of-life and transition process, Reiki is an amazing tool. Reiki reduces their stress and supports veterinary care. Even simple Reiki techniques such as charging the animal's medications with Reiki are beneficial. When giving Reiki to animals, remember always to ask the animal for their consent; even if the animal has said "yes" in the past, they may not give consent this time. However, it is uncommon for animals to say "no" to Reiki; if they do, Reiki provides a way for the practitioner to understand.

If you are with the animal in person, it is unnecessary to use hands-on Reiki. Some animals may not prefer hands-on but would rather rest where they are most comfortable, even across the room. Simply create a Reiki zone by activating Reiki around you and the space around the animal. If you are not in the presence of the animal, you can do a real-time session via Zoom or Facetime, or you can send Reiki through a picture or just think about the animal. As an example, the animal's caregiver can send a photo to your phone, and you can hold the phone between your hands to send Reiki. You can also send continuous Reiki through your Reiki grid by placing the name of the animal on a piece of paper on your grid. You can charge your grid daily, and Reiki will continuously flow to the animal.³

Reiki is a very gentle tool for the actual transition of the animal, and HSZSN is a wonderful symbol to use. HSZSN is often referred to as a bridge of light. An animal's transition is commonly known as "Crossing the Rainbow Bridge," so sending HSZSN can help support the transition.

Here are some steps you can use to give Reiki during an animal's transition. These steps can be done in person, through a real-time distance session, or through a distance session sending for the time and place that their compassionate euthanasia or natural death is taking place.

1. Start by activating Reiki, HSZSN, and any other Reiki symbols you work with, and do your Reiki preparations.

2. Use Reiki to clear the space, stall, or room.
3. Send Reiki to the caregiver(s) and other animals in the house.
4. Send Reiki to the medical team involved.
5. Some caregivers like to have items charged with Reiki to help support the process, such as crystals or other spiritual items to place around the room, the animal's bed, or a blanket to be placed over the animal. The caregiver may choose to keep an item charged with Reiki, or an item such as a blanket may go with the animal to be buried or cremated with it.
6. Give the animal Reiki as they are being euthanized.
 - a. If you are in person, you may want to stand behind the caregivers so they can sit with their animal during this process.
 - b. If you are at a distance, you could also use Face-time/ video if appropriate.
 - c. You can also use a photo of the animal or the name of the animal on a card to send distance Reiki to the animal during the transition time.
7. If appropriate, have a follow-up appointment with the caregiver after the animal has transitioned to give them Reiki and allow Reiki to help them through their grief.
 - a. If there are other animals in the house, they may also need a follow-up session to help with their grief or confusion.

Reiki for the Caregiver

The caregiver may also benefit from Reiki during an animal's end-of-life period, the transition or euthanasia process, and afterward to help support them in their grief. The end of life is a challenging and confusing time for caregivers. Sometimes, the caregiver needs Reiki even more than the animal. Reiki can help with stress reduction, which can help them feel clear about their decisions and the next steps. It can help with their grief before and after the transition. Remember, there is nothing you can do to "fix" the fact that it is a really hard process to go through, but you can continue to fill the caregiver up with Reiki and life-force vitality, so this journey can hopefully be slightly easier than it otherwise would be. Some caregivers are too raw immediately following their beloved animal's passing and will need time, perhaps a week, before addressing their grief in a Reiki session. The caregiver's unique wants and needs determine the timing.

Caregivers can feel guilty about the circumstances of their animal's death, even in the best situations. These feelings are even more common if the death is sudden. The caregiver often wishes they could have done more and feels guilty about the outcome. You can give Reiki with the intention to help lift this burden of guilt from them, and this can greatly assist them in their grieving process. Reiki can also help connect them to the transitioned animal in the spirit realm, which can comfort the caregiver if this is what they would like.

Reiki for the Practitioner

The end of life and the compassionate euthanasia process can be beautiful for an animal Reiki practitioner. It is as if you are a midwife, helping the animal across the rainbow bridge with great love and care. This perspective can benefit both the animal and the caregiver and bring stress reduction, pain relief, closure, and comfort to all involved, which can feel rewarding because you know you have eased some of the pain. However, there can also be times when it can be difficult, and your empathy can become overactivated. If you feel this happening, remember to do self-Reiki, and you may even need a Reiki session from another practitioner.

Whether choosing compassionate euthanasia or a natural passing, the end of a beloved animal's life and transition moments are always difficult, but Reiki helps and supports

everyone involved. As a practitioner, it is important to stay within your code of ethics and allow the caregiver to decide what to do. Then, when you use Reiki and your animal Reiki skills, you can feel confident that Reiki will benefit the animals, caregivers, the medical team, other animals in the home, and yourself during this important time. ■



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Endnotes

- ¹ Robyn Benelli, Sioux Strong, Colleen Benelli, and Pamela Allen-LeBlanc, "Animal Reiki—A Gift for Animals and Humanity," *Reiki News Magazine*, Winter 2020, 13. A digital version of this issue is available at <https://www.reiki.org/store/reiki-news-magazine/reiki-news-winter-2020>.
- ² Robyn Benelli, Sioux Strong, Colleen Benelli, and Pamela Allen-LeBlanc, *ICRT Animal Reiki Training I & II Manual*, (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, 2022).
- ³ Reiki Grid Using the World Peace Crystal Grid, <https://www.reiki.org/store/prints-and-posters/reiki-grid-using-world-peace-crystal-grid>.