

Compassionate End of Life & Incapacity Planning Worksheet

An educational planning worksheet from PawsinTrust™

This worksheet is designed to help Family Animal Parents thoughtfully organize preferences, discussion topics, and planning considerations related to incapacity, serious illness, and end of life care for their Family Animal. Completing this worksheet supports clarity, continuity of care, and peace of mind for the people who may one day step in to provide care.

Educational Worksheet Purpose

The Compassionate End of Life & Incapacity Planning Worksheet is intended to help Family Animal Parents organize thoughts, preferences, discussion topics, and planning considerations.

This worksheet does not replace any PawsinTrust™ planning document and does not create legal authority, guardianship rights, decision making authority, or legally binding instructions.

Users who wish to formally document their wishes should complete the applicable planning documents included in the Legacy Care Plan.

How to Use This Worksheet

Move through each section at your own pace. There are no right or wrong answers. Use this worksheet as a private planning tool, a conversation guide with family members, or a starting point before completing formal PawsinTrust™ planning documents.

Family Animal Information

Family Animal Name

Species, Breed, Color, Markings

Date of Birth or Approximate Age

Primary Veterinarian and Clinic

Microchip or Identification Number

Family Animal Parent Name

Today's Date

Section 1. Personal Values and Beliefs

Use this section to reflect on the values that guide how you think about care, comfort, and difficult decisions for your Family Animal.

What does quality of life mean to you for your Family Animal?

Reflections

What gives your Family Animal the greatest joy and comfort?

Reflections

What values do you want guiding decisions made on their behalf?

Reflections

Section 2. Quality of Life Considerations

Think about the signs and circumstances that matter most to you when evaluating your Family Animal's wellbeing over time.

Indicators of Wellbeing

- Eating and drinking with interest
- Engaging with people or other animals
- Mobility appropriate for age and condition
- Comfort during rest and sleep
- Interest in routine activities or play
- Ability to relieve themselves with dignity
- Other: _____

Signs That May Indicate Decline

- Persistent loss of appetite
- Withdrawal from people or familiar routines
- Difficulty moving, standing, or resting comfortably
- Ongoing pain that is difficult to manage
- Loss of interest in things previously enjoyed
- Frequent distress, anxiety, or confusion
- Other: _____

Additional reflections

Section 3. Veterinary Care Preferences

Document the veterinary professionals you trust and the types of care you would want considered.

Primary Veterinarian

Secondary or Backup Veterinarian

Preferred Specialty Clinic or Hospital

Preferred In Home Veterinary Service, if applicable

Care Approaches I Would Want Considered

- ☐ Diagnostic evaluation when symptoms appear
- ☐ Conservative or comfort focused treatment
- ☐ Advanced treatment when reasonable
- ☐ Pain management and palliative support
- ☐ Hospice or in home end of life care
- ☐ Other: _____

Care preference notes

Section 4. Incapacity Planning Considerations

Incapacity may be temporary, such as hospitalization, or longer term. Use this section to think through who would step in and what they would need to know.

Trusted Individuals I Would Want Involved

Primary Person

Relationship and Contact Information

Backup Person

Relationship and Contact Information

Information They Would Need to Know

- Daily feeding and medication routine
- Veterinary contacts and history
- Location of records, supplies, and identification
- Behavioral preferences and triggers
- Comfort routines and favorite activities
- Financial arrangements for ongoing care
- Other: _____

Notes

Section 5. End of Life Care Preferences

These reflections are personal and may evolve. Use this space to record what you would want considered when the time comes.

Setting

- ☐ In home, when possible
- ☐ Familiar veterinary clinic
- ☐ Specialty or hospice provider
- ☐ No strong preference

Presence and Support

- ☐ I would want to be present
- ☐ I would want a trusted person to be present if I cannot be
- ☐ I would want a familiar object or blanket nearby
- ☐ I would want quiet, calm surroundings
- ☐ Other: _____

Comfort and Dignity

What would comfort and dignity look like for your Family Animal?

Section 6. Aftercare Preferences

Aftercare decisions are deeply personal. Documenting preferences in advance helps spare loved ones from making them in a moment of grief.

Aftercare Considerations

- ☐ Private cremation with return of ashes
- ☐ Communal cremation
- ☐ Burial at home, where legally permitted
- ☐ Burial in a family animal cemetery
- ☐ Memorial keepsake (paw print, fur clipping, photo)
- ☐ Undecided at this time
- ☐ Other: _____

Preferred Provider, if known

Memorial wishes and reflections

Section 7. People to Notify

List the people who should be informed in the event of serious illness, incapacity, or the passing of your Family Animal.

Person 1 — Name

Relationship and Preferred Contact Method

Person 2 — Name

Relationship and Preferred Contact Method

Person 3 — Name

Relationship and Preferred Contact Method

Person 4 — Name

Relationship and Preferred Contact Method

Section 8. Conversations to Have

Identify the conversations that would help your wishes be understood and honored. Check those you would like to schedule.

- ☐ Conversation with my veterinarian about quality of life and care options
- ☐ Conversation with my primary caregiver or guardian designee
- ☐ Conversation with my backup caregiver
- ☐ Conversation with my family about my wishes
- ☐ Conversation with my attorney about formal planning documents
- ☐ Conversation with a trusted friend or spiritual advisor
- ☐ Other: _____

Topics I Want to Discuss

Discussion topics

Section 9. Personal Reflections and Legacy

This optional section is a place to record memories, gratitude, and the meaning your Family Animal has brought to your life.

What I want others to know about my Family Animal

Reflections

Memories I want preserved

Reflections

A message of gratitude

Reflections

Next Steps

Completing this worksheet is a meaningful first step. To formally document your wishes, consider the following PawsinTrust™ planning resources:

- Legacy Care Plan planning documents
- Designation of Caregiver or Guardian documents
- Emergency Preparedness materials
- Care Instructions Worksheet for daily continuity of care
- Annual Family Animal Plan Review Checklist

Educational Disclaimer. This worksheet is provided for educational and preparedness purposes only and does not constitute legal, medical, veterinary, or end of life care advice. It does not create legal authority, guardianship rights, decision making authority, or legally binding instructions. Users should consult qualified professionals in their jurisdiction regarding their individual circumstances and complete the applicable planning documents included in the Legacy Care Plan to formally document their wishes.