Quality of Life, Caregiver Capacity, and Human-Animal Bond Guide

Eden Veterinary

This guide is meant to help families gain clarity about their experience and their pet's lived experience. It takes into consideration the health of the pet, the caregiver's lived experience and capacity, and the impact of the human-animal bond, because all of those things matter.

How to use this guide

Choose one response for each question from 0 to 3. Add each section separately. You can fill out this form more than once - after implementing a change, on a different day, or after receiving support - and compare whether scores stay consistent, improve, or worsen.

Scoring key

0 Not at all / rarely true	1 A little / sometimes true	2 Often true	3 Very true / severe / frequent

A gentle note

Your score is not a grade or a measure of your love or effort. It is a snapshot of what life feels like right now. Sometimes families need permission to acknowledge that suffering can include practical, physical, and emotional realities.

Important interpretation note

Sometimes high scores are more an indication of a need for support than an indication of a need to say goodbye. This tool is designed to help guide reflection and conversation, not to make the decision for you.

Record the date each time you complete it: Date _____ Pet name _____

A. Pet Quality of Life

Questions 1-8

Higher scores suggest greater compromise in comfort, function, engagement, or enjoyment.

		0	1	2	3
1	Is my pet physically uncomfortable?	○	○	○	○
2	Is my pet struggling with basic daily activities such as getting up, walking, changing position, eating, drinking, toileting, grooming, or resting comfortably?	○	○	○	○
3	Does my pet have enough good moments in the day to feel like themselves? *Reverse-scored: higher numbers reflect less comfort, connection, or enjoyment.*	○	○	○	○
4	Is my pet able to enjoy at least some of the things that normally make life meaningful to them, such as food, affection, walks, toys, resting near loved ones, or familiar routines? *Reverse-scored: higher numbers reflect less comfort, connection, or enjoyment.*	○	○	○	○
5	Are my pet's symptoms becoming more frequent, more intense, or harder to recover from?	○	○	○	○
6	Is my pet withdrawing, disengaging, or seeming less interested in their surroundings than usual?	○	○	○	○
7	Does my pet seem distressed by things that used to be neutral or easy for them, such as being touched, being moved, going outside, eating, eliminating, or nighttime?	○	○	○	○
8	Am I increasingly worried that my pet is enduring life more than enjoying it?	○	○	○	○

Pet score (0-24) ☐ 0-7: more stable | 8-15: moderate concern | 16-24: significant concern

B. Caregiver Quality of Life and Capacity

Questions 9-13

Consider the full reality of caregiving, including time, emotional energy, physical capacity, family demands, work, and finances.

		0	1	2	3
9	Is caring for my pet having a significant impact on my own day-to-day wellbeing?	○	○	○	○
10	Am I physically capable of supporting my pet's current needs without excessive strain or risk to myself or them?	○	○	○	○
11	Do I feel consistently overwhelmed, depleted, or stretched beyond what feels sustainable?	○	○	○	○
12	Has my life become organized mainly around managing my pet's decline or medical needs?	○	○	○	○
13	Do I feel like my current capacity is no longer matching the level of care my pet now requires?	○	○	○	○

Caregiver score (0-15) ☐

C. Human-Animal Bond

Questions 14-18

Higher scores suggest that illness may be affecting connection, mutual enjoyment, or the felt quality of the relationship.

		0	1	2	3
14	How much is my pet's condition affecting our ability to enjoy time together in the ways that matter most to us?	○	○	○	○
15	Does my pet still seek connection with me in ways that feel familiar and meaningful? *Reverse-scored: higher numbers reflect less comfort, connection, or enjoyment.*	○	○	○	○
16	When we are together, does it still feel like there is room for connection, not only caregiving tasks? *Reverse-scored: higher numbers reflect less comfort, connection, or enjoyment.*	○	○	○	○
17	Has illness changed our relationship so much that it now feels dominated by monitoring, worry, or crisis management?	○	○	○	○
18	Does it feel like my pet's current condition is limiting their ability to participate in the relationship the way they once did?	○	○	○	○

Bond score (0-15) ☐

Interpreting the pattern

This guide works best as a conversation tool. Look not only at totals, but at which questions are standing out and whether the pattern is changing over time.

Suggested interpretation

Pet score: 0-7 more stable, 8-15 moderate concern, 16-24 significant concern. Caregiver score: 0-4 more sustainable, 5-9 noticeable strain, 10-15 high burden. Bond score: 0-4 bond remains more accessible, 5-9 illness is affecting the relationship, 10-15 illness may be overshadowing connection.

When more support may help

A family may benefit from a conversation about hospice, euthanasia, practical support, or emotional support if the pet score is 16 or higher, the caregiver score is 10 or higher, the bond score is 10 or higher, or if there has been a clear recent change over days to weeks.

Clinical perspective

We want to keep caregiver burden from going unnoticed or unrecognized while also acknowledging that there are many factors involved in making this decision. Sometimes the next right step is not immediately saying goodbye - it may be adding support, making changes, reassessing comfort, or repeating this guide on another day.

What stands out to me right now?

You may use this space for observations, questions, or what changed since the last time you filled this out.

Completed with Eden team member (optional):

Follow-up plan or next step: