

Emotional Health and Animals

I find that animals suffer emotional upsets sadness or stress far more often than we imagine. They are, after all, living in the 'territory' of a different species (humans) and often our rules are different to theirs. Richard and Susan Pitcairn mention these emotional and behavioural problems seen in their practice.

- problems often develop after an upsetting change, usually involving loss of territory, relationship or attention.
- health can be affected by recurrent feelings of tension, anxiety, depression, anger and other emotional upsets in the home.
- the owners attitude and expectations about illness or a disturbance may affect the pet's own health.
- pet illnesses often mirror those of the primary person with whom the pets are bonded.



I think some breeds who try too hard to please their owner can become depressed. Staffies seem to predominate here, also Rhodesian Ridgebacks and sometimes German Shepherds. Cats rarely worry too much about anyone other than themselves!

I've had good results with **Arsenicum alb** for dogs that are depressed and tired, in alternation with anxiety and restlessness. **Nat mur** and **Silica** can really brighten dogs up when symptoms fit. **Silica** patients are timid, shy and withdrawn. **Nat mur** are not frightened, but self contained, aloof and like their personal space, so this is often a good cat remedy.

Many animals do not move through the grief process when a pet or human in the household has died or moved out and dramatic improvements can be seen with **Nat mur** for a quiet, withdrawn depression, or with **Ignatia** when the pet is showing gastro-enteric symptoms, especially anorexia and has more outward emotional symptoms such as restlessness, following the owner around, howling etc.

If you have a new puppy or kitten in the house it is important to minimise the stress because their behaviour pattern can be learned in these early days. **Ignatia** is a must, for the grief of leaving their animal mother and siblings. If the new arrival wakes and is fearful during the night, **Aconite** is a great remedy and the best one for treating the basic fright/flight shock response, so common in animals. If there has been bad treatment in the past of a rescued pet, or if a young animal has an accident and injures themselves, **Staphysagria** is the best remedy for releasing the 'been abused' feeling, which can cause aggression in self defence in the future. For dogs that are flown in planes, especially when young, **Argentum nit** is a great help to reduce the hyperactive, easily over-stimulated response which can follow.

For animals showing fear aggression with house mates or other dogs or humans while out for a walk, **Lycopodium** can reduce the over compensatory self defence.

If you decide to seek professional homoeopathic advice mention other contributing factors such as family stress and grief which may be impacting on the health or emotions of your pet.

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