

Quality of Life Scale

When evaluating quality of life in our pets it can be a difficult and challenging concept to attempt to evaluate objectively. Our goal with this handout is to attempt to help provide a numeric scale to help evaluate your pet's quality of life and the family's concerns at the same time. It is important to realize that quality of life not only applies to the pet but also applies to the entire family as well

Suggestions on using the Quality of life scale:

Part 1: Pet's Quality of Life

Score each section on a scale of 0-2

0 = I agree with the statement (describes my pet)

1= I see some changes

2= I disagree with the statement (does not describe my pet)

1. Social functions
 - a. Desire to be with the family has not changed
 - b. Interacts normally with family or other pets (
2. Natural functions
 - a. Appetite has stayed the same
 - b. Drinking has stayed the same
 - c. Urination habits have stayed the same
 - d. Bowel movements have stayed the same
 - e. Ability to ambulate has stayed the same
3. Mental Health
 - a. Enjoys normal play activities
 - b. Still dislikes the same things (ie. "still hates the mailman" = 0)
 - c. No outward signs of anxiety or stress
 - d. Does not seem confused or apathetic
 - e. Does not pace around the house
 - f. Overall condition has not changed recently

Results:

0-8 = Quality of life is most likely adequate. No medical intervention is required yet, but guidance from your Veterinarian may be needed to help identify signs in the future.

9-16 = Quality of life is questionable and medical intervention is needed. Your pet would benefit from veterinary oversight and guidance to evaluate his or her disease process

17-36 = Quality of life is definitely a concern. Changes will likely become more progressive and severe. Veterinary guidance will help you better understand the end stages of your pet's disease process in order to make a more informed decision of whether to continue hospice care or elect humane euthanasia

Part 2: Family's Concerns

Score each item on a scale of 0-2

0= I am not concerned at this time

1= There is some concern

2= I am concerned about this

I am concerned about the following things:

1. My pet's suffering
2. My desire to perform nursing care for my pet
3. My ability to perform nursing care for my pet
4. My pet dying alone
5. Not knowing when is the right time to euthanize.
6. Coping with loss
7. Concern for other animals in my household
8. Concern for other members of the family (children)

Results

0-4 = Your concerns are minimal. You have either accepted the inevitable loss of your pet and understand what lies ahead, or have not yet given it much thought. Now is the time to begin evaluating your concerns and limitations

5-9 = Your concerns are mounting. Begin by educating yourself on your pet's condition which is the best way to ensure you are prepared for the emotional road ahead.

10-16 = Although you may not place much value on your quality of life your concerns about your pet are valid. Now is the time to build a support system. Veterinary guidance will help you prepare for the medical changes in your pet and help prepare you for the grief ahead.