

# Retrospective Euthanasia Interviews

## OWNER INTERVIEW

TOPIC (estimated time in minutes) <i>Keywords</i>	QUESTIONS [AND PROMPTS]
<b>Introduce Interviewer &amp; Research (10)</b> <i>About interviewer and project</i>	Kat Littlewood, PhD Candidate at Massey University. Interview is part of PhD research. We would like to find out how owners and their veterinarians are currently making EoL decisions.
<i>Outline of interview procedure</i>	I will first start off with some background questions. Then I would like to discuss cats in general, before moving onto talking about your own experiences with your cat. I would be happy to explain more after the interview. I will ask number of questions - please answer what comes to mind. No right or wrong answers. Want to hear what you think. I may take notes – so I don't interrupt you if something you say I would like to hear more about later in the interview. If you think of something you think is important, but I don't ask about it, you are welcome to bring it up yourself.
<i>Opportunity to withdraw, break</i>	If I ask something you don't want to talk about, you can say you don't want to answer. You can stop interview at any time. If you need to take a break during the interview please say so.
<i>Written transcript, summary report</i>	You will have an opportunity to view the written transcript and make any corrections if you wish. This may take up to one hour of your time, and we would expect the revised transcript to be returned to us within two weeks of you receiving it. If we do not hear from you within this two week period we will assume that you have given permission to include the interview in the analysis. If, after reviewing the transcript, you are happy with it as it is you do not need to return it. You will also receive a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
<i>Consent</i>	Information Sheet & questions. <b>Consent Form signed.</b> I would like to record interview – it will be transcribed afterwards, but your responses kept anonymous. OK to record interview? Can we begin? <b>Start recorders.</b>

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**Encouraging interesting material:** 'That's really interesting', 'Then what happened?' **LEARN TO WAIT IN THE FACE OF SILENCE**

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<b>A: Warm up questions (2)</b> <i>Experience with animals and children/family</i>	<b>What is your previous experience with animals?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm/livestock experience?</li> <li>• Have you always had a cat? How many?</li> <li>• Other pets/animals they have access to or experience with?</li> </ul> <b>Who is in your household?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children? other animals?</li> </ul>
<b>B: Experiences with euthanasia and death. Expectations of longevity (2)</b>	<b>How long do you expect cats in general to live for?</b> <b>What do you consider an ‘old cat’ to be?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long did you expect your own cat to live for? [before/after diagnosis – if applies]</li> </ul> <b>Was this your first experience with putting a pet down?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever had to put a pet down before this?</li> </ul>
<b>C: About their cat (5)</b>	<b>Tell me a few things about your cat [name of cat] – cat’s background</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was your cat’s name?</li> <li>• How old was s/he? [cats gender]</li> <li>• When did you get her/him? [duration of ownership]</li> <li>• Was s/he desexed/neutered?</li> </ul> <b>We are now going to focus on your <u>experiences</u> with your cat. Tell me about what was going on with your cat.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you find out s/he was ill? [or not doing so well]</li> <li>• Do you remember when you first considered the possibility of putting your cat to sleep?</li> </ul>
<b>D: <u>Why</u> did owner decide to euthanase cat? (timing)</b> Overall factors involved in decision e.g. decline QoL, etc. Was there a major factor?  How did animal’s dx impact on owner’s life?	<b><u>Why</u> did you decide to put down your cat?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What <b>factors</b> involved in decision? – what was <b>most important factor</b>? Why?</li> <li>• How <b>long</b> did it take for your pet to go downhill? [Did you have to make a <b>quick EoL decision</b>? [why/why not]]</li> <li>• How <b>old</b> was s/he when you were given the diagnosis? Did the age of your cat factor into your decision?</li> <li>• How much were you expecting your cat’s treatment to <b>cost</b>? How much did the <b>cost</b> influence your decision?</li> <li>• What was a <b>typical day</b> like for you and your cat after s/he became ill or started to decline? How was it different?</li> <li>• Was there anything at home that you started to do differently or changed? How did you handle this?</li> <li>• Were there any <b>sacrifices made</b> by your or your family for your cat?</li> </ul> SECTION G NOW
<b>E: What was vet’s role in the EoL decision? (6)</b> <u>How</u> was EoL decision made?	<b>Who did you talk to about your decision? Whose advice did you seek?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you ask this person?</li> <li>• Do you remember any <b>reactions from other people</b> to your cat’s illness or age?</li> </ul> <b>How important was your veterinarian’s advice in your decision-making?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What <b>options</b> were you given by your veterinarian? Did they change how you decided?</li> </ul>

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Who did they consult with to make this decision e.g. friends, family, internet groups, veterinarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What <b>role</b> did they have in your decision?</li> <li>• How <b>long</b> have you known your veterinarian/practice?</li> <li>• How much did your <b>relationship</b> with the veterinarian influence your decision?</li> <li>• Do you feel that your <b>vet agreed</b> with your decision?</li> </ul>
<b>F: The euthanasia event (3.5)</b>	<b>Can you tell me about the day that [cats name] died?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about the euthanasia event</li> <li>• How did you find the euthanasia process? Any positive experiences?</li> <li>• What was the decision-making experience like? What (if anything) could have helped to make that decision easier?</li> </ul>
<b>G: How did the owner assess QoL/welfare before and leading up to this decision? (4.5)</b> E.g. not eating, not drinking, not as active. Are they making these decisions based on QoL assessments?	<b>How did you decide on/evaluate how your cat was doing? (Its QoL/welfare)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does <b>good QoL</b> for your cat mean to you? How did you assess your cats QoL?</li> <li>• What was the most important factor in your cat's QoL? [What did your cat enjoy? What was most important to him? Did this change? Did it affect decision?]</li> <li>• How would you rate your <b>cats QoL in the last 2 weeks before</b> you put him/her to sleep? Why do you say that?</li> <li>• How would you rate your <b>cats QoL in the last year before</b> you put him/her to sleep?</li> <li>• What were your expectations regarding your cat's <b>diagnosis [prognosis] or his/her age and their life expectancy?</b></li> </ul> <b>How did you discuss your cats QoL with your vet?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>When</b> did you start having these QoL discussions?</li> <li>• Did your vet give you any like things that might happen or any idea of <b>things to look out for?</b></li> </ul>
<b>H: How attached is the owner to their pet? (1)</b> Will attach affect answers?	<b>How close to your cat were you?</b> What makes you say this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did other people (friends/family) react to the loss of your cat? Did they understand your loss?</li> </ul>
<b>I: Expectations of veterinarian (1.5)</b>	<b>What were your expectations of your veterinarian in terms of managing animal euthanasia?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much knowledge and experience would you expect them to have to perform euthanasia?</li> <li>• How important is it for vets to be taught EoL management (in vet schools)?</li> </ul>
<b>J: Ending on a positive note (1.5)</b>	<b>What would be a 'good' pet euthanasia for you?</b> What does it mean for an animal to have been put down 'well'?
<b>K: Wrap Up</b>  <i>Possible additions, possible follow-up</i>  <i>Possible questions about the project</i> <i>Difficult subject</i> <i>Thanks</i>	<p>It seems like we're coming to the end of our discussion, but I just want to <b>check my notes...</b> ('Could you say a bit more about...')</p> <p>It seems we have covered main things I had in mind, but want to be sure you've told me everything you think I should know. Is there <b>anything you would like to add?</b> If you <b>remember something later</b>, please don't hesitate to contact me.</p> <p>Do you have any questions about the PhD project or the further processing of information you have provided? I understand this may have been difficult for you to talk about. <b>Are you going to be OK?</b></p> <p>You have been so helpful; I really appreciate the time you have taken to talk with me. Thank you very much.</p>

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