

# How the death of a family member affects their survivors

[Life](#), [Death](#)



How the Death of a Family Member Affects Their Survivors The loss of a loved one is a very sensitive topic for most people. Death can come in many forms; someone can be terminally ill, can get sick all of a sudden, or even a traumatic accident. Sometimes one may feel like their world is ending. The fact is each of us will die; it is just a matter of time. No matter what way a loved one dies, it is always hard on the people they left behind. Hurt is the only feeling one gets when they are told that a loved one has died. As stated in *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*, "The anguish of loss is overpowering and vast." (DeSpelder 306) Grief is something that we have to naturally go through. Coping with death is not easy, and it takes a lot of love from family and friends to get through the tough times. (Harvey 67)

Everyone grieves in his or her own way; one person may cry constantly, become too upset to eat, and even not sleep well, while another may experience grief at a lesser extent. (Shaw 98) People who study grief and death explain that the age of the person who dies relates to the intensity of grief. (Shaw 99) Not only does age of the person play a factor, but also if the death is sudden or prolonged. As anyone knows, death in all forms is traumatic. Shaw states, "Death by suicide, accident, or man made disaster can take even a greater toll on the family." (Shaw 71) With traumatic deaths, the family will be in shock, show anger, and have guilt, anxiety, and fear. (Shaw 108) When something traumatic happens suddenly, it can cause someone to feel like they have been torn apart, "An unexpected, accidental, or sudden death can be compared to having one's spirit sliced into one-inch cubes with a switchblade." (Shaw 70) This quote is so true, and anyone who has been in this situation has most likely felt this. Seeing a loved one suffer

may be hard, but letting go is sometimes the hardest thing to do. Sudden deaths do leave survivors feeling shocked and vulnerable, but death after a long illness can still leave survivors feeling numbed and exhausted. (Shaw 69) A prolonged death does not make it any easier; you just have a little more time to prepare yourself. Shaw states that, " If a prolonged illness, which results in death, is fought and unaccepted, it may seem like a slow-moving, suffocating wave of lava. " (Shaw 70) This quote explains how draining a prolonged death can be, not only on the person themselves, but the family members. Losing family can be hard, but you have to learn to cope with the death. Whether your family member dies of a sudden death or prolonged death, the way you cope does not change. Even though you don't want to accept the death of a family member, for your own personal health you need to. You have to learn that feeling alone is a part of the process of coping. " You know how crazy, angry, and horrible you can feel and you know that you can live through it. " (Shaw 279) One starts feeling alone, they get angry and push away from the ones they love, and they do not feel a bond with anyone. To help a person get through this, their loved ones need to give them security, intimacy, and make them feel a connection with others. (Emswiler 157-159) With death, usually one will stop talking about it and keep it all to themselves, but that is not safe to do. Parents, siblings, aunts, or anyone close to the grieving person should try and talk to them and get them to share their feelings, or they should see a psychiatrist to help them. (Emswiler 160-161) Though it may be hard to start the coping process, in the end one will see that it was for the best to move on. Family deaths are hard, and it takes a big toll on the family, but if you are there for one another you

can get through it. Grieving is a natural process that everyone goes through, but you cannot grieve your entire life. When it is time for someone to go, there is nothing we can do to stop it, and usually that is what we wish we could do. You will never forget your loved ones, but you usually get relief from the pain. You just have to pray to God and have faith in him, and know that everything in is God's plan for us. His grace will get you through it.

Works Cited DeSpelder, Lynne Ann, and Albert Lee. Strickland. *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005. Print. Emswiler, Mary Ann., and James P. Emswiler. *Guiding Your Child through Grief*. New York: Bantam, 2000. Print. Harvey, Greg. *Grieving for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007. Print. Shaw, Eva. *What to Do When a Loved One Dies: a Practical and Compassionate Guide to Dealing with Death on Life's Terms*. Irvine, CA: Dickens, 1994. Print. "What We Believe." United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 2011. Web. 15 Nov. 2011. .