

Research paper on differences in the ways in which widows and widowers are likely...

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



Death is the biggest and the inevitable truth of life. Death makes everyone helpless and isolated. Only time can heal the pain and the loss inflicted by the death of any person. Death of a spouse is a heart breaking experience with profound implications that affect the living spouse physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually. In this context, this essay tries to find out how widows and widowers differ in coping with the death of their spouse.

Generally, death cuts the deep, meaningful connection between the spouses. But, in order to get healed the grieving process is necessary for both widows and widowers. The five stages of grief as explained by Kübler-Ross through which all widows and widowers go through are as follows: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (45-60).

Fumia opined that, " grief is a journey, often perilous and without clear direction. The experience of grieving cannot be ordered or categorized, hurried or controlled, pushed aside or ignored indefinitely. It is inevitable as breathing, as change, as love. It may be postponed, but it will not be denied" (9-13).

However, different people react in different ways to death of their spouse. When some are easily devastated; others feel shocked and disconnected. Some withdraw from everyone and everything, while others long for support. When the initial numbness settles, the reality and despair sets in a deeper way. All the widows and widowers adopt different habits to adjust with an everyday life without the physical presence of their spouse. Widows are more likely to sigh and cry. Their health and appetite are more likely to be disturbed by the symptoms of chest pains, sleeplessness, headaches,

dreams of their spouses and nausea. On the other hand, widowers generally engage in harmful activities like excessive drinking, smoking, and staying busy to avoid thinking about the dead. And, both groups come in terms with their spouses' departure within weeks or months generally though exceptions can be expected in these symptoms.

Membership of widowers in their established religions was important in coping with their wives' deaths. Along with membership, the faith and understanding of the principles gave them hope. The love and support they received from the family, friends, other members of the church and the supreme power were instrumental in their coping process. Regularly and actively participating in the religious activities brought normality and purpose to their lives during the grieving period. Widowers reported feeling the presence of deceased wives as they made arrangements for funeral and made decisions on family life.

The worst feeling widowers experience is loneliness. Loneliness made the coping process of widowers tough. Most of the widowers who are employed during their wives' death prefer to return to work almost immediately.

Though the thoughts of dead affect their productivity, they find it better than being alone at home, because of the support of the colleagues. Widowers prefer living with family with children and grandchildren. If they weren't, they would think of going on trips to meet their children or siblings. They also attend grief groups and long for support from their best friends.

Widowers start pursuing new interests and hobbies . Usually they take up more than one method to combat loneliness. During the grieving process, men cried in private though they appeared strong in public. Some would

prefer avoiding the functions that would bring back the wives' memories. Some widowers find associating with other widowers for support and understanding. Many widowers prefer to give away their wives' belongings to children or specific individuals and many others preferred keeping them to retain their memories. Still, for many widowers around the world remarriage remains as the most common and great option. Such widowers took care of their health and preferred younger, pretty and healthy wives who can provide love, sex and companionship (Rushton n. p.) as the widowers were more sexually active than widows. Financial security and religious beliefs were not a great concern for the new partners of the widowers.

There are more widows in the world than the widowers. Women express their grief emotionally. Their spouses' death shock and paralyse them, leading to numbness and disbelief. But they better and quickly cope up with the loneliness than the widowers. They adjust and accept the truth and gradually build up their relationships to move forward. The women also seek the support of family, friends, and different other groups during grieving process. They find peace, help and support in such groups better than men, who seldom put their grief in words. Crying and other emotional break downs are more frequent than widowers, which help them to get over their agony. As women are more emotional dependent than men, they also seek new and old friendships and may even try dating. Older widows have more friends than younger widows. Widows looking for a new partner were particular about a financially independent man who sought a religious faith (Crandell et al 628-629).

Middle class windows have more time and interest to make new friendships

than working class widows. It is usually seen that widows in metropolitans are lonelier than those in small or medium sized towns due to many factors. Women who need financial support usually look for employment to help themselves. Women are more likely to keep a pet and start communicating with it forming a deep bond with it. They indulge themselves in housekeeping and other usual activities or hobbies like gardening or farming etc, to utilise time and make themselves busy, whether or not they are already employed. All these help the widows to love their loneliness.

References

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