

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WIDOWED AND
DIVORCED PERSONS

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DIVORCED PERSONS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1978 there were 12,000,000 widowed persons and 8,600,000 divorced persons living in the United States. In 1960 there were 10,600,000 widowed persons and 2,900,000 divorced persons living in the United States (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1979). There was a slight increase in the number of widowed and a substantial increase in the number of divorced persons over an 18-year time period.

Although statistics revealed the number of people who lost a spouse through death or divorce, the statistics failed to reveal the pain, depression, and sadness that accompanied the loss. Colgrove, Bloomfield, and McWilliams (1976) found that many people reported that they felt helpless, fearful, empty, irritable, angry, guilty, and restless. Other common reactions included a loss of concentration, hope, motivation, and energy. Many people also reported a tendency to be more fatigued and error-prone following the loss of a significant other. Widowed or divorced persons reported experiencing stages of grief similar to the stages of grief described by dying individuals. These five stages were formulated by Kubler-Ross (1975) during her work with dying patients. They were summarized as follows:

1. Denial--"No, not me." This is a typical reaction when a patient learns that he or she is terminally ill. Denial, says Doctor Ross, is

important and necessary. It helps cushion the impact of the patient's awareness that death is inevitable.

2. Rage and anger--"Why me?" The patient resents the fact that others will remain healthy and alive while he or she must die. God is a special target for anger, since He is regarded as imposing, arbitrarily, the death sentence. To those who are shocked at her claim that such anger is not only permissible but inevitable, Doctor Ross replies succinctly, "God can take it" (p. 10).

3. Bargaining--"Yes me, but . . ." Patients accept the fact of death but strike bargains for more time. Mostly they bargain with God--"even among people who never talked with God before" (p. 10). They promise to be good or to do something in exchange for another week or month or year of life. Noted Doctor Ross: "What they promise is totally irrelevant, because they don't keep their promises anyway" (p. 10).

4. Depression--"Yes me." First the person mourns the past losses, things not done, wrongs committed. But then he or she enters a state of "preparatory grief," getting ready for the arrival of death. The patient grows quiet, doesn't want visitors. "When a dying patient doesn't want to see you any more," says Doctor Ross, "this is a sign he has finished his unfinished business with you, and it is a blessing. He can now let go peacefully" (p. 10).

5. Acceptance--"My time is very close now and it's all right." Doctor Ross describes this final stage as "not a happy stage, but neither is it unhappy. It's devoid of feelings but it's not resignation, it's really a victory" (p. 10).

The physical, emotional, and social changes that people experienced following the loss of a significant other were very stressful. On a

table assigning point values to stressful life change events, death of a spouse was given a point value of 100 and divorce was given a point value of 73 (Holmes and Rache, 1967). This gave them a rank of first and second respectively as the most stressful life change events.

What could be done to help those experiencing the most stressful life change events? There was some research on divorce, widowhood, and widowerhood, but there was a lack of research information on the similarities and differences between the crises. Thus, there was a need to compare the crises to try to better understand their emotional impact upon people. Systematic investigation of the problems of divorce may influence the literature on widowhood and widowerhood. The study of the dynamics of grief may assist in helping those who have experienced divorce. Knowledge gained from this study can aid both those who were experiencing a loss and those professionals and others who were assisting them.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to develop insight into the problems faced by individuals who have lost their spouse through death or divorce, and to determine what specific efforts of others were most beneficial in assisting divorced or widowed persons. The objectives which guided this study were:

1. To determine the difference in problems faced by individuals who have lost their spouse by death with those who lost their spouse through divorce.
2. To gain information concerning preferred sources of help during crisis regardless of whether the loss was a result of death or divorce.

3. To determine the difference in degree of adjustment to the loss of spouse felt by divorced and widowed persons.

4. To make recommendations for further research regarding crisis situations.

5. To make recommendations to persons in helping professions about how to help individuals who experience the loss of a spouse.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be examined:

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant differences in degree of adjustment to loss of spouse through divorce or death and the following:

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Income level
4. Length of time married
5. Educational level
6. Number of children
7. Type of crisis (divorce or death)

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant differences in the financial, physical, emotional, and social problems faced by widowed and divorced persons during the crisis.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant differences in widowed and divorced persons with respect to preferred sources of assistance.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study assumed that the presence of children in the home had an

effect upon the financial, social, and emotional problems faced by widowed and divorced persons. It was assumed that the respondents recalled accurately problems they faced and the assistance they received when they were completing the questionnaire.

Definitions

The following concepts were defined for this particular study:

1. Degree of adjustment--A self rating scale designed for this study composed of 1 = have not adjusted, 2 = slightly adjusted, 3 = moderately adjusted, 4 = well adjusted, and 5 = very well adjusted. See item number 75 of the questionnaire in the Appendix.
2. Physical problems--A list of frequently occurring physical difficulties found in the research that sometimes occur following the loss of a significant other. See items 13-30 of the questionnaire in the Appendix.
3. Emotional problems--A list of frequently occurring emotional difficulties found in the research that sometimes occur following the loss of a significant other. See items 31-46 of the questionnaire in the Appendix.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The loss of a spouse brought about fundamental disruptions in living arrangements and social environment. It removed the key relationship in the individual's life and at the same time attacked one base for security. Divorce or death introduced new difficulties and left the individual to deal with those difficulties alone (Glick, Weiss, and Parkes, 1974). The person felt inadequate to know what to do about many practical responsibilities that were faced. The individual did not know what to expect in terms of emotions to be experienced, loneliness, and emptiness (Jernigan, 1976). The review of literature will cover emotional, physical, social, and other issues that must be faced by the single-again person.

Emotional Issues

In spite of the widespread occurrence of grief experiences and in spite of profound psychological and physical changes grief can cause, our society knows little about the phenomenon and talks less directly about it. (Larson, 1973, p. 1)

If people were educated to the fact that grief was normal and manifested itself in certain ways, perhaps they would be better prepared to deal with it (Steele, 1977). Despite turmoil and unpleasant side effects, grief was thought to be an essentially healthy reaction of an ordinary person struggling to master a novel and burdensome situation (Glick et al., 1974). Common emotional changes following the death of a

spouse that Ayd (1961) observed were:

1. Nearly 100 percent of bereaved persons experience feelings of sadness and low spirits.
2. 80 percent experience guilt, hopelessness, and feelings of futility.
3. 75 percent find themselves edgy and easily irritated.
4. 70 percent cry often.
5. In 60 percent of bereaved depressions there is a fear of dying oneself or of contracting the disease or malady which killed the loved one.
6. 90 percent of persons report that they have poor concentration.
7. 80 percent of persons suffering grief depression report that they have no interest in anything and that they cannot get involved in anything. Even reading a magazine is impossible.
8. 80 percent have great difficulty making decisions.
9. 60 percent have poor memory. (pp. 51-70)

In almost all cases, these symptoms fluctuated widely in intensity and duration.

The stages of grief for dying individuals formulated by Kubler-Ross (1975) were considered in Chapter I. There were similar stages of recovery for those who experienced the loss of another significant person in their lives. The common stages for those who experienced such a loss were: shock/denial, anger, depression, and understanding/acceptance. These stages were not separate entities, but subsumed one another and blended dynamically. The stages were not successive. It was not necessary to experience every stage. The intensity and duration varied idiosyncratically among those who grieved (Bugen, 1977).

Shock/Denial

Early in the mourning process there was numbness (Steele, 1977). Most reacted with shock, disbelief, or both. They were mechanical, without emotion or feeling (Glick et al., 1974). This stage took place either before or after actual physical separation occurred.

Anger

Initial shock and confusion gave way to anger and rage (DeFazio and Klenbort, 1975). The rage was sometimes unexpressed but often it was expressed with crying. Anger was felt before or after actual separation. There were differences between widowed and divorced persons regarding the emotional response of anger.

It was difficult for widowers and widows to express that they felt anger toward a loved spouse who died. They felt alone and abandoned. They sometimes felt anger toward doctors for not saving the spouse, toward others who were seemingly happy, or toward God. Many times this anger was directed at themselves in the form of guilt. It was helpful to note that:

One of the effective ways to cope with grief is to understand that the feelings of guilt, resentment of not having done enough, desertion, deprivation, anger, fear, and countless others are shared by almost all who grieve. (Mosley, 1969, p. 210)

The divorced person also felt anger at God, self, spouse, and others. The divorced person experienced rage at the partner for abandonment and loss whether he or she was left or was the initiator. There was sometimes a tendency to exonerate self and blame the mate for failure (DeFazio and Klenbort, 1975). The intense resentment was partly a way of avoiding responsibility and an accumulation of previous hurts and

disappointments. There was a sense of failure and guilt often perceived as being caused by incompetency and fault (Levy and Joffe, 1977). It was difficult for a couple who shared home, life, children, and friends to end a relationship, however painful, without anger. As difficult and undesirable as anger was to deal with, if it was not handled successfully readjustment was inhibited (Wiseman, 1975).

Depression

"Sorrow emerged and was expressed by weeping and crying. The men and women cried for their spouses and for themselves" (Glick et al., 1974, p. 51). Many wanted to remain composed in the presence of others demonstrating strength, and in the privacy of their own home to grieve freely. Some reported at least one public situation in which to their embarrassment and regret, they broke down (Glick et al., 1974).

Depression sometimes proved to be the mediating mechanism leading to death of remaining spouse through suicide, vulnerability to illness, accidents, and alcoholism (Jacobs and Ostfeld, 1977). Death of the remaining spouse was sometimes attributed to the broken heart syndrome (Larson, 1973). Lindemann (1976) stated, "In mental hospitals there are six times as many recently bereaved individuals . . ." (p. 198).

Understanding/Acceptance

Time was reported not to be healing, but happenings over time may be healing. There was a slow adjustment that for some took a long time. As griefwork was accomplished individuals readjusted, formed new relationships, participated in new activities, and reoriented to life

(Steele, 1977). Many persons reported greater independence, self-reliance, and a deep respect for their own self worth following their crisis (Kosner, 1979).

Physical Issues

Grief can cause physical and psychological changes in the body. One's physical and emotional health are closely related. Just as the body responds to physical damage and shock, so it also responds to psychological shock or damage. According to Ayd (1961), the following conditions were present following the death of a spouse:

1. Over 95 percent of grief stricken persons experience some kind of sleep disturbance.
2. 80 percent experience constipation and/or urinary frequency--some have diarrhea.
3. Over half experience nausea, irregular heartbeat, or other cardiovascular disturbances. There are usually sexual disturbances--decreased or increased libido or menstrual changes.
4. Most persons experiencing this kind of depression find themselves awakening early (80 percent) and feeling depressed.
5. There is usually weight gain or weight loss. (p. 51)

These symptoms varied in intensity and duration in almost all cases.

Many showed symptoms of identification with their former spouse. They behaved, thought, or acted like the spouse. Some widows developed symptoms of the former husband's disease (Van Coevering, 1971). Studies showed many people became sick following the death of a loved person.

Social Issues

An important aspect about mourning was not only the number and variety of response systems which were engaged, but the way they tended

to conflict with each other. Loss of a loved object gave rise to a cry for help, and occasional rejection of those who responded to it (Smith, 1975). There was a conflict between wish forces which refused to give up the spouse and reality which demanded he or she be given up (Marris, 1958). No wonder mourning was difficult to understand.

Some widows and widowers reported help from friends and kin who visited, provided food, provided child care, and gave other practical assistance during the spouse's illness. Near kin and devoted friends remained in touch offering the same practical assistance after the funeral. Distant friends, relatives, and co-workers sent cards, gifts, flowers, and money as a means of showing last respects and expressing grief (Glick et al., 1974). Most help came from females although males were sought for advice and home repairs (Marris, 1958). Widows and widowers did not intentionally avoid others but they became less active in seeking others out, less fully able to be responsive to those who called. Despite appearing indifferent to those who offered condolences and help they were generally grateful (Glick et al., 1974). Others who rallied to support the widow or widower generally returned to their own concerns.

Siegel and Short (1974) found that the situation of divorced persons was startlingly different. Instead of being met with understanding and support, they were often met with hostility, rejection, or fear. Many friends disapproved of what the divorced person had done or what had happened to him or her. There was the frequently unspoken question about ways in which the divorced person contributed to the break-up of the marriage. People did not consider it a failure or anyone's fault if the spouse died. But if there was a divorce, silent suspicions were

often present, whether they were with or without foundation. The individual who went through a divorce often suffered from a depressive sense of failure and guilt. Divorce was an important social event with no formal ritual or rite of passage (DeFazio and Klenbort, 1975).

Many persons felt that a major portion of their identity stemmed from the marriage. Their social identity sometimes was so tied to being part of a pair that their married couple friends were lost (Wiseman, 1975). Many individuals reported feeling awkward or a fifth wheel in social situations with married couples (Marris, 1958). The divorced person felt former couple friends were uncomfortable maintaining friendships with both husband and wife. Friends were confronted with a conflict over allegiances (Miller, 1971). Some couples viewed the single-again man or woman as a threat (Walker, McBride, and Vachon, 1977).

A small, dense network of homogeneous friends, though very helpful at first, did not greatly help the divorced or widowed persons make the transition to a new role. A large group of friends provided greater probability of someone who had similar experience (Walker et al., 1977). Commenting on the importance of friends with a similar experience, Start (1968) stated "my sympathy for them had come out of well-meaning but inexperienced ignorance. Theirs came from depths of understanding" (p. 113).

Many widows felt that friends, family, physicians, or clergymen were not as helpful as another widow. Other widows realized grief was temporary and had to run its course before it was possible to feel better again (Silverman, 1969). The widow-to-widow program was very beneficial. Most bereaved persons did not rely on professionals at all. They occasionally sought physical treatment from physicians for essentially

emotional distress. A few sought the help of counselors, priests, or ministers. Most believed grief was without remedy (Glick et al., 1974). Most people did not consult mental health agencies for help in a life crisis unless they had previous contact with them (Silverman, 1969).

Mental health workers were aware of the rebound phenomenon. There was a tendency to impulsively seek intimate relationships in order to avoid both the pain of mourning and the anxiety of being alone (Levy and Joffe, 1977). Those who remained emotionally dependent sometimes remarried rapidly (Aslin, 1976).

The goal of readjustment was not remarriage. The personal growth achieved provided the foundation for new, intimate, and meaningful relationships which sometimes resulted in eventual remarriage. Levy and Joffe (1977) stated "to be alone successfully involves learning to love and respect oneself and to occupy one's time in a creative and fulfilling way" (p. 5). A multitude of interactions and of sublimated activities served as a substitute for former interaction. Return to healthy functioning was possible and life was rewarding although one would never be stimulated and satisfied in exactly the same combination by any other person (Gut, 1974). After a time they were no longer actively mourning, but their loss remained a part of them, and they were occasionally caught up in resurgence of grief. This happened with decreasing frequency, but never ceased entirely (Glick et al., 1974).

Other Issues

Emotional, physical, and social issues were discussed. Other important areas researched were: financial, parental, in-laws, sexual, religious, and legal.

Financial

Every situation had its own financial circumstances. Finances were most often a problem for the single-again person. For the divorced persons there were difficulties settling the division of money and property so that neither party would feel cheated (Aslin, 1976). The widow or widower was often left with large bills from the spouse's illness and funeral (Barrett, 1977). Some persons felt inexperienced in financial affairs and received conflicting advice from others (Schultz, 1949). The financial readjustment goal was to become independent, financially self-directed, and financially skilled.

Parental

Perhaps the most difficult area of adjustment to the single-again role was the adjustment to being a single parent. The basis for much difficulty lay in the myth that children were damaged by a one-parent upbringing regardless of the quality of parenting and the outside assistance received (Aslin, 1970). It was generally agreed that a family in which there was continued marital conflict was more likely to produce children with problems of personal adjustment than a family in which there was divorce or death. Mourning and sadness were appropriate for all ages. Children handled the grief of divorce or death in different ways depending on the nature of the original relationship, the age of the child when the crisis occurred, the reaction of the parent(s), and help received in expressing feelings (Bitterman, 1968). The divorcing parents tried to refrain from using the child as a pawn or weapon in parental struggles. Children were not deprived of existing support systems (Aslin, 1976).

In-Laws

It was not the desire of the divorced persons to deprive their children of the support of grandparents and relatives (Aslin, 1976). For this reason relationships with in-laws were maintained. Continuing interaction was sometimes based upon friendship ties rather than ties with children. The friendship tie proved to be the strongest bond for continued interaction (Schoicket, 1970). Other divorced persons felt the relationship was too strained to continue any interaction. Widows and widowers who lived near their in-laws and had friendship ties with their in-laws were more apt to continue a close relationship (Weiss, 1975). With the passing of time, new interests, and new relationships, both groups saw less of their spouse's family.

Sexual

Often the individual was preoccupied with grief, health problems, financial worries, or parental worries. This preoccupation with other matters often resulted in a decrease in sexual feelings and sexual drive (Glick et al., 1974). After a time sexual feelings emerged. These sexual feelings were acted upon and spectrum ranged from celibacy to sexual variety with little emotional commitment. Many persons were able to work through this phase of adjustment based upon their own personal standards (Wiseman, 1975).

Religious

Most persons said that their faith had not been shaken. A smaller percentage was angry at God for permitting the loss, and they felt their faith had been shaken. A few individuals mixed independent thought with

religious doctrine and emerged with stronger, personal religious beliefs (Glick et al., 1974).

Legal

A person must face legal issues at a time when he or she may not feel emotionally equipped to handle such problems. This was the first time many individuals had been confronted with legal concerns. The widow or widower often dealt with such legalities as a will, probate, and settling an estate. The issues of divorced people were the settlement of money, property, bills, legal fees, and child custody. Many individuals felt intimidated by lawyers and the legal process.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to describe common problems faced by individuals who lost their spouse through death or divorce and to determine what specific efforts of others were most beneficial in assisting the divorced or widowed person. To accomplish this a research design was chosen, a sample was selected, and an instrument was developed.

Type of Research

A descriptive design was chosen for this study. Descriptive research is a strategy concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, and effects that are evident (Best, 1977). A descriptive survey research was conducted that studied a small sample to discover the factors associated with grief.

Development of the Instrument

Measurement made in this study came from a questionnaire (see Appendix) developed by the researcher. The instrument assessed the following types of information: demographic information, problems that were faced by divorced and widowed persons, and assistance received from others during the divorce or death experience. During the fall semester of 1979, the questionnaire was given to five Family Relations and Child

Development faculty members at Oklahoma State University to secure their help in creating a valid instrument. Their help was sought to determine:

1. Clarity of questions,
2. Specificity of questions,
3. Significance of questions, and
4. Appropriateness of questions.

The suggested changes were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument.

Population and Sample

Because the single-again person often had a change of address or name, it was not feasible to use public records as a means of acquiring a sample. For this reason pre-formed groups which assisted the single-again person in the large metropolitan areas of Oklahoma City and Tulsa were used to collect a sample. The leaders of these groups were contacted by the researcher. No one contacted by the researcher refused to be a part of the study. The group leader made the decision as to whether the questionnaires would be passed out by the group leader or by the researcher. The group leader was also given the option of distribution to all members in attendance or distribution only to those selected by the group leader as being emotionally ready for such a task.

The following was a description of the way the 184 questionnaires were distributed:

1. Nineteen questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to all in attendance at the Parents Without Partners meeting in Oklahoma City. Six were distributed by a group leader to members not in

attendance. There were approximately the same number of males and females at the meeting.

2. Twenty-five questionnaires were distributed by Sister Theodore Mary of the St. Ann's Home in Oklahoma City. Her discretion was used in distributing the questionnaires to widows of the parish.

3. Dr. Sunshine Atkins handed out 20 questionnaires to women who were past and present students at the Center for Displaced Homemakers at the Moore-Norman Vocational-Technical School.

4. Six questionnaires were distributed by Pearl Lonian to the women in her Women's Re-Entry Program. This class was offered at South Oklahoma City Junior College.

5. The researcher gave out questionnaires to seven women and one man at a Grief Workshop in Oklahoma City. Dr. Gene Miller led this workshop.

6. Marion Wade distributed 40 questionnaires to widows and divorcees in the Widow's Colony at Sand Springs, Oklahoma.

7. A single parenting workshop was held for men and women in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Judy Leaver distributed 30 questionnaires to all who attended.

8. Sue Carpenter passed out 30 questionnaires to both men and women at a Beginning Experiences Workshop in Oklahoma City.

The questionnaires were mailed back to the researcher. One hundred and eighty-four were distributed to individuals or group leaders. Fifty-six were returned. The return rate was 31 percent.

Analysis of Data

Frequency and percentage data were tabulated for all of the information on the questionnaire according to respondent's situation--being a

divorcee or a widow. Analysis of variance was utilized in order to examine the differences in degree of adjustment to loss of spouse through divorce or death and the following: sex, age, income level, length of time married, educational level, number of children, and type of crisis (death or divorce). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was utilized to analyze the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The major portion of this chapter is a descriptive discussion of the results derived from the questionnaire (see Appendix). The latter part of Chapter IV examines each hypothesis. Most of the findings will be in tabular form. Interesting trends and infrequent responses will be written in the text.

When reading Chapter IV the reader should bear in mind the following limitations of the study: the procedure in the selection of subjects was not random sampling; the geographic location was limited to the metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City; there was a disproportionate number of divorced persons; there was a disproportionate number of females; the respondents were members of organized groups of single-again persons; there were no controls for length of time since death/divorce occurred; and there were no remarried persons in the sample.

Of the 184 questionnaires distributed by the researcher 56 were returned. The 31 percent rate of return may be low because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Twelve of the respondents were widowed persons. The remaining 44 persons were either divorced or separated. Occasionally a respondent overlooked a question or chose not to answer a particular question. The reader should note that some categories on the tables are not complete due to missing data.

Due to the limitations of the study and small sample size, the reader probably should not generalize these findings with other populations. Chapter IV describes the findings of the questionnaires returned to the researcher.

Description of Subjects

A detailed description of the 56 subjects who participated in this study is presented in Table I. A majority (76 percent) of the sample was female. A large percentage (64 percent) fell into the 30-40 year age bracket. Sixty-six percent achieved more than a high school education. One-fourth of the sample had been married over 20 years. Eighty-eight percent of the sample were parents with 39 percent of the parents having two children. Over half (56 percent) of the respondents had children living in their home. Most of the sample (64 percent) lived in a large metropolitan area. The income levels of the respondents ranged from a low of 4 percent at less than \$5,000 to 13 percent in the over \$40,000 category. Seventy-one percent of the population were employed with 27 percent contributing more than one-half of the family income. The majority (76 percent) experienced a divorce. For many (45 percent) the crisis occurred more than two years ago.

Physical Problems Experienced

Table II categorizes the physical problems experienced by the divorced or widowed person. The areas checked as major problems by at least 10 percent of the total population were: nervousness (21 percent), insomnia (16 percent), marked increase in smoking (14 percent), and

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable and Classification	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Sex</u>						
Male	3	27.3	10	22.7	13	23.6
Female	8	72.7	34	77.3	42	76.4
<u>Age</u>						
22-29	-	-	6	13.6	6	10.7
30-39	3	25.0	21	47.7	24	42.9
40-49	3	25.0	9	20.5	12	21.4
50-59	3	25.0	8	18.2	11	19.6
60 and over	3	25.0	-	-	3	5.4
<u>Education</u>						
Not a high school graduate	3	25.0	5	11.6	8	14.5
High school graduate	3	25.0	8	18.6	11	20.0
Some college/technical training	5	41.7	13	30.2	18	32.7
College graduate	1	8.3	13	30.2	14	25.5
Advanced degree	-	-	4	9.3	4	7.3
<u>Residence</u>						
Over 100,000	7	63.6	25	64.1	32	64.0
50,000-99,999	1	9.1	5	12.8	6	12.0
20,000-49,999	-	-	1	2.6	1	2.0
5,000-19,999	1	9.1	6	15.4	7	14.0
1,000-4,999	2	18.2	2	5.1	4	8.0
<u>Income</u>						
Less than \$5,000	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	3.6
\$5,000-\$9,999	1	8.3	9	20.5	10	17.9
\$10,000-\$14,999	-	-	8	18.2	8	14.3
\$15,000-\$19,999	2	16.7	6	13.6	8	14.3
\$20,000-\$29,999	3	25.0	8	18.2	11	19.6
\$30,000-\$40,000	3	25.0	7	15.9	10	17.9
Over \$40,000	2	16.7	5	11.4	7	12.5
<u>Percentage of Income Respondent Contributed</u>						
None	5	41.7	12	27.3	17	30.4
Less than 1/4	1	8.3	8	18.2	9	16.1
1/4 to 1/2	6	50.0	9	20.5	15	26.8
Between 1/2 and 3/4	-	-	3	6.8	3	5.4
3/4 and up	-	-	12	27.3	12	21.4

TABLE I (Continued)

Variable and Classification	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Currently Employed</u>						
Yes	5	41.7	35	79.5	40	71.4
No	7	58.3	9	20.5	16	28.6
<u>Number of Years Married</u>						
Less than 2	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.1
2-4	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
5-9	-	-	12	27.3	12	21.4
10-14	1	8.3	10	22.7	11	19.6
15-20	5	41.7	8	18.2	13	23.2
Over 20	5	41.7	9	20.5	14	25.0
<u>Number of Children</u>						
0	2	16.7	5	11.4	7	12.5
1	-	-	5	11.4	5	8.9
2	4	33.3	18	40.9	22	39.3
3	3	25.0	7	15.9	10	17.9
4	2	16.7	5	11.4	7	12.5
5	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
6	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	3.6
7	-	-	1	2.3	1	1.8
<u>Where Children Live</u>						
No children	2	16.7	5	11.4	7	12.5
With me	1	8.3	19	43.2	20	35.7
With other relative	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.1
On their own	4	33.3	6	13.6	10	17.9
With me, combination	3	25.0	5	11.4	8	14.3
On their own, combination	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
With me, on their own	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	5.4
With me, on their own, combination	-	-	1	2.3	1	1.8
Other	-	-	1	2.3	1	1.8
<u>How Relationship Ended</u>						
Death	12	100.0	-	-	12	22.2
Divorce	-	-	41	97.6	41	75.9
Separation	-	-	1	2.4	1	1.9
<u>Time Elapsed Since Crisis</u>						
Less than 6 months	3	25.0	12	27.3	15	26.8
6-11 months	-	-	7	15.9	7	12.5
12-17 months	1	8.3	5	11.4	6	10.7
18-24 months	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
More than 24 months	8	66.7	17	38.6	25	44.6
Pending	-	-	1	2.3	1	1.8

TABLE II
PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED

Physical Problem*	Widowed				Divorced				Total			
	Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Nervousness	6	50.0	1	8.3	20	45.5	11	25.0	26	46.4	12	21.4
Insomnia	3	25.0	1	8.3	19	42.2	8	18.2	22	39.3	9	16.1
Fatigue	6	50.0	1	8.3	20	45.5	5	11.4	26	46.4	6	10.7
Weight Loss	4	33.3	1	8.3	15	34.1	4	9.1	19	33.3	5	8.9
Weight Gain	2	16.7	-	-	11	25.0	5	11.4	13	23.2	5	8.9
Headache	2	16.7	-	-	14	31.8	2	4.5	16	28.6	2	3.6
Marked Increase in Smoking	1	8.3	-	-	4	9.1	8	18.2	5	8.9	8	14.3
Skin Rashes	-	-	-	-	8	18.2	4	9.1	8	14.3	4	7.1
Increase in Use of Alcohol	4	33.3	-	-	8	18.2	2	4.5	12	21.4	2	3.6
Heart Palpitations	3	25.0	-	-	8	18.2	1	2.3	11	19.6	1	1.8
Menstrual Changes	-	-	-	-	7	15.9	1	2.3	7	12.5	1	1.8
Chest Pain	2	16.7	-	-	6	13.6	-	-	8	14.3	-	-

TABLE II (Continued)

Physical Problem*	Widowed				Divorced				Total			
	Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Changes in Elimination	-	-	-	-	6	13.6	-	-	6	10.7	-	-
Dizziness	1	8.3	-	-	5	11.4	-	-	6	10.7	-	-
Increase in Drug Use	2	16.7	-	-	3	6.8	-	-	5	8.9	-	-
Ulcers	-	-	-	-	3	6.8	-	-	3	5.4	-	-
Asthma	-	-	-	-	2	4.5	-	-	2	3.6	-	-

n = 56.

*Total is greater than 100 percent because respondents often identified more than one problem.

fatigue (11 percent). In addition, over one-third of the total sample checked the following areas as being some problem for them: fatigue and nervousness (tied at 46 percent), insomnia (39 percent), and weight loss (34 percent). The four most common physical difficulties reported by the divorced group were also the four most common areas marked by the widowed group (Table III). The most frequently occurring problems for divorced persons were: (1) nervousness, (2) insomnia, (3) fatigue, and (4) weight loss. The ranking for the widowed persons was: (1) fatigue, (2) nervousness, (3) weight loss, and (4) insomnia tied with increased use of alcohol.

Emotional Problems Experienced

Table IV categorizes the emotional problems experienced by the divorced or widowed person. The respondents reported experiencing emotional problems more frequently than physical problems. Designated as major problems by over 40 percent of the total population were: depression and sadness (tied at 45 percent) and anger and uncertainty (tied at 41 percent). Marked as some problem by approximately 40 percent of the respondents were: poor concentration (46 percent), depression and easily irritated (tied at 41 percent), and crying (39 percent). Many of the 10 most common emotional difficulties experienced by widowed persons were also felt by the divorced persons (Table V). The rank order for the widowed group was: (1) depression (75 percent); (2) anger, crying, easily irritated, and sadness (tied at 67 percent); (3) poor concentration, shock (58 percent); (4) uncertainty (50 percent); (5) fear of nervous breakdown, guilt (42 percent). The rank order for the divorced group was: (1) depression (85 percent); (2) uncertainty (84 percent);

TABLE III

TEN MOST COMMON PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY TYPE OF CRISIS

Physical Problem*	Widowed		Physical Problem*	Divorced	
	n	%		n	%
Fatigue	7	58.3	Nervousness	31	70.5
Nervousness	7	58.3	Insomnia	27	61.4
Weight Loss	5	41.3	Fatigue	25	56.9
Insomnia	4	33.3	Weight Loss	19	43.2
Increase in Use of Alcohol	4	33.3	Weight Gain	16	36.4
Heart Palpitations	3	25.0	Headache	16	36.4
Chest Pain	2	16.7	Increase in Smoking	12	27.3
Headache	2	16.7	Skin Rash	12	27.3
Increase in Drug Use	2	16.7	Increase in Use of Alcohol	10	22.7
Weight Gain	2	16.7	Menstrual Changes	8	18.2

*Concerns reported as "some" or "major" problems by the respondents.

TABLE IV
EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED

Emotional Problem*	Widowed				Divorced				Total			
	Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Depression	4	33.3	5	41.7	19	43.2	20	45.5	23	41.1	25	44.6
Sadness	6	50.0	2	16.7	13	29.5	23	52.3	19	33.9	25	44.6
Anger	3	25.0	5	41.7	17	38.0	18	40.9	20	35.7	23	41.1
Uncertainty	3	25.0	3	25.0	17	38.6	20	45.5	20	35.7	23	41.1
Crying	7	58.3	1	8.3	15	34.1	15	34.1	22	39.3	16	28.6
Poor Concentration	5	41.7	2	16.7	21	47.7	10	22.7	26	46.4	12	21.4
Easily Irritated	7	58.3	1	8.3	16	36.4	10	22.7	23	41.1	11	19.6
Guilt	1	8.3	4	33.3	14	31.8	12	27.3	15	26.8	16	28.6
Shock	4	33.3	3	25.0	10	22.7	11	25.0	14	25.0	14	25.0
Suicidal Thoughts	2	16.7	1	8.3	10	22.7	6	13.6	12	21.4	7	12.5
Fear of Nervous Breakdown	3	25.0	2	16.7	12	27.3	4	9.1	15	26.8	6	10.7
Apathy	4	33.3	-	-	11	25.0	4	9.1	15	26.8	4	7.1

TABLE IV (Continued)

Emotional Problem*	Widowed				Divorced				Total			
	Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem		Some Problem		Major Problem	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Numbness	4	33.3	-	-	10	22.7	1	2.3	14	25.0	1	1.8
Fear of Dying	2	16.7	-	-	4	9.1	1	2.3	6	10.7	1	1.8
Fear of Contacting Disease	1	8.3	-	-	6	13.6	-	-	7	12.5	-	-
Other--Bitterness	-	-	-	-	2	4.5	-	-	2	3.6	-	-

n = 56.

*Total is greater than 100 percent because respondents often identified more than one problem.

TABLE V

TEN MOST COMMON EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY TYPE OF CRISIS*

Emotional Problem	Widowed		Emotional Problem	Divorced	
	n	%		n	%
Depression	9	75.0	Depression	39	88.7
Anger	8	66.0	Uncertainty	37	84.1
Crying	8	66.0	Sadness	36	81.8
Easily Irritated	8	66.0	Anger	35	79.5
Sadness	8	66.0	Poor Concentration	31	70.4
Poor Concentration	7	58.3	Crying	30	68.2
Shock	7	58.3	Easily Irritated	26	59.1
Uncertainty	6	50.0	Guilt	26	59.1
Fear of Nervous Breakdown	5	41.7	Shock	21	47.7
Guilt	5	41.7	Fear of Nervous Breakdown	16	36.4
			Suicidal Thoughts	16	36.4

*Concerns reported as "some" or "major" problem by the respondent.

(3) sadness (82 percent); (4) anger (80 percent); (5) poor concentration (70 percent); (6) crying (68 percent); (7) easily irritated, guilt (59 percent); (8) shock (48 percent); (9) fear of nervous breakdown, suicidal thoughts (36 percent).

Social Changes

The single-again person often experienced many changes in relationships with others (see Table VI). A greater frequency of widowed persons reported changes in familial relationships and friendships. More divorced than widowed persons noted differences in relationships with in-laws, more parental worries, and dissatisfaction with personal decisions concerning sexual readjustment.

Fifty-eight percent of the total population experienced some type of change in their familial relationships. Three-fourths of the widowed group recorded changes. An improvement was noted by 23 percent of the population. Two of the divorced participants stated that their parents were happy that they decided to divorce. "I didn't want my family to leave me" and "the children and I had difficulty adjusting to new roles and responsibilities" were two of the detrimental aspects reported by widowed persons. Detrimental effects felt by divorced persons, but not recorded on the table because they occurred only once, were: "I felt alone," "I withdrew," "we grew apart," and "they questioned me."

Friends

Sixty-three percent of the total population noted changes in their relationships with friends. Seventy-five percent of the widowed persons noted changes. The most frequently occurring responses were "I had

TABLE VI

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING SOCIAL CHANGES ACCORDING TO TYPE OF CRISIS*

Questions and Responses	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Were there any changes in your relationship with your family?</u>						
Yes	9	75.0	23	53.5	32	58.2
No	3	25.0	20	46.5	23	41.8
<u>If yes, what were the changes?</u>						
Improved	1	8.3	12	27.2	13	23.2
Detrimental	4	33.3	10	22.7	14	25.0
<u>Were there any changes in your relationships with friends?</u>						
Yes	9	75.0	25	59.5	34	63.0
No	3	25.0	17	40.5	20	37.0
<u>If yes, what were the changes?</u>						
Distant--little in common	4	33.3	8	18.2	12	21.4
I changed to single friends	3	25.0	3	6.8	6	10.7
Ended	-	-	5	11.4	5	8.9
Avoided	-	-	4	9.1	4	7.1
<u>Did your relationship with your in-laws change?</u>						
Yes	7	58.3	27	69.2	34	66.7
No	5	41.7	12	30.8	17	33.3

TABLE VI (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>If so, how did the relationship change?</u>						
I did not see them	1	8.3	5	11.4	6	21.4
They saw only their child's side of our problems	-	-	5	11.4	5	17.9
Ended	-	-	5	11.4	5	17.9
Less in common	2	16.7	1	2.3	3	10.7
Saw one of spouse's parents, not the other	-	-	3	6.8	3	10.7
Husband gone, he important	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	7.1
Courteous for children	-	-	2	4.5	2	7.1
<u>If you have children, what is your greatest parental worry?</u>						
Discipline, parenting, control	1	8.3	8	18.2	9	16.1
How death/divorce affects them	1	8.3	7	15.9	8	14.3
Support if something happened to me	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.1
Communicate so they understand	-	-	4	9.1	4	7.1
That they are taken care of--want best for them	-	-	3	6.8	3	5.4
Raise properly--miss male influence	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	5.4
<u>Are you comfortable with personal decisions you have made concerning your sexual readjustment?</u>						
Yes	9	75.0	29	69.0	38	73.1
No	1	8.3	13	31.0	14	26.9

n = 56.

*Only those responses which occurred more than once in the total population were included in the table.

little in common with former married friends" or "I changed to single friends." A few divorced persons stated that they avoided their friends or their friendship ended. The following responses were written by divorced persons but occurred only once and, therefore, were not on the table: "I wasn't invited"; "I was a threat to married friends"; and "my friendships improved."

In-Laws

Approximately two-thirds of the entire sample experienced changes in their relationships with their in-laws. This occurred more frequently in the divorced group (69 percent). The divorced persons felt that the in-laws did not see both sides. They did not see or ended the relationship with their in-laws. A response written by both groups was that they had less in common. One widow reported that she did not have to be second in her husband's family now, and another widow reported her husband was gone and he was the one who was important to his family.

Parental

Nine of the parents in this sample felt that discipline, parenting, and control of their children was their greatest parental worry. Eight parents were concerned about how the death or divorce affected their children. Other responses which occurred only once and were, therefore, not listed on the table were: "how they manage their lives"; "I have no patience with them"; "that I will be overprotective"; "I wonder if I am giving them enough attention"; "their concern about my dating"; and "that we won't be as close."

Sexual

Seventy-three percent of all respondents indicated that they were comfortable with personal decisions they made concerning their sexual readjustment. One respondent replied both "yes and no," another checked "yes" and wrote "after some experimentation and testing," and a third replied "no--masturbation is not as much fun."

Other Issues

Table VII depicts the financial, religious, and legal issues that were concerns of this sample. The divorced group had a slightly higher frequency of financial and legal problems.

Financial

Additional financial worries were reported by a majority (65 percent) of the sample. One-half of the widowed population did not have additional financial problems. Seventeen percent of the widowed group and 18 percent of the divorced group were uneasy about supporting themselves. Having a low income or only half of the family's previous income was a concern for 16 percent of the total group. Other worries expressed were: maintaining two homes, bills, credit, and no child support.

Religious

One hundred percent of the widowed group replied positively to this question: "Do you have certain religious beliefs or philosophies that helped you?" The majority of the sample (58 percent) described a belief in God, religion, prayer, or faith. Various philosophical beliefs were

TABLE VII

PERCEPTIONS OF SINGLE-AGAIN PERSONS CONCERNING OTHER ISSUES THAT WERE FACED

Questions and Responses	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Did you have additional financial worries as a result of the crisis?</u>						
Yes	5	41.7	30	69.8	35	64.8
No	6	50.0	13	30.2	19	35.2
<u>Explain</u>						
Support self	2	16.7	8	18.2	10	27.8
Limited income--1/2 income	2	16.7	7	15.9	9	16.1
Maintain two homes	-	-	5	11.4	5	8.9
Bills	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	8.3
Credit/no child support	-	-	3	6.8	3	8.3
<u>Do you have certain religious beliefs or philosophies that helped you?</u>						
Yes	12	100.0	31	75.6	43	81.1
No	-	-	10	24.4	10	18.9
<u>If so, what were these?</u>						
Belief in God, religion	3	25.0	8	18.2	11	27.5
God watches--He will not abandon	-	-	6	13.6	6	15.0
Things work out--do your best	3	25.0	3	6.8	6	15.0
Philosophical beliefs	-	-	5	11.4	5	12.5
Prayer--faith	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	10.0
Part of God's plan--accept His will	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	5.0
I didn't let it help me	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	5.0

TABLE VII (Continued)

Questions and Responses	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Were your religious or philosophical beliefs changed as a result of the crisis?</u>						
Yes	4	33.3	13	29.5	17	31.5
No	8	66.7	29	65.9	37	68.5
<u>What legal concerns did you have as a result of the crisis?</u>						
Child custody	-	-	6	13.6	6	18.8
Home	1	8.3	4	9.1	5	15.6
Money	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	12.5
Collect child support	-	-	3	6.8	3	9.4
Probate, estate	2	16.7	-	-	2	6.3

n = 56.

described by 28 percent of the population. Almost one-third of the sample said that their beliefs were changed as a result of the crisis. Some respondents wrote the word "strengthened" beside this question.

Legal Concerns

Both groups reported experiencing legal concerns as a result of the crisis. The widowed group noted concerns about probate and the settling of the estate. Child custody was the greatest concern for the divorced group.

Discussion of Remaining Questions

Which of these persons gave you assistance? Assistance was most often received from friends and immediate family (Table VIII). Forty percent of the divorced persons received help from mental health professionals as opposed to 25 percent of the widowed group. The widowed persons reported receiving help from their minister, priest, or rabbi (42 percent) more frequently than did divorced persons (27 percent).

Who was the most helpful? Widowed persons felt that family was most helpful in supporting them through their crisis (Table VIII). Divorced persons felt their friends were more helpful. Other responses not listed were: friends and family combination, mental health professionals, minister or priest, neighbors, I helped myself, seminar, and single friends.

In what ways did people help you? The most frequently mentioned responses are listed in Table IX. Other responses which were given but are not listed on the table are: counseling, moving, food, help with

TABLE VIII

PERSONS JUDGED AS BEING HELPFUL BY THE SINGLE-AGAIN PERSON

Questions and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Which of the persons gave you assistance? **</u>						
Friends	9	75.0	39	88.6	48	85.7
Immediate family	8	66.7	32	72.7	40	71.4
Mental health professionals	3	25.0	17	38.6	20	37.5
Minister/Priest/Rabbi	5	41.7	12	27.3	17	30.4
Relatives	5	41.7	12	27.3	17	30.4
Neighbors	5	41.7	11	25.0	16	28.6
Church members	2	16.7	11	25.0	13	23.2
Other						
Professionals--lawyer/doctor	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	3.6
Seminar	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
Co-workers	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
<u>Who was most helpful?</u>						
Family	5	41.6	8	18.2	13	27.1
Friends	1	8.3	12	27.3	13	27.1
Family-friends combination	1	8.3	6	13.6	7	14.6
Mental health professionals	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.1
Minister/Priest/Rabbi	2	16.7	1	2.3	3	5.4
Neighbors	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
Self	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6

n = 56.

*Only those responses which were given more than once by the total population were listed in the table.

**Respondents could mark all that apply.

TABLE IX

ACTIONS PERFORMED BY OTHERS CONSIDERED TO BE HELPFUL BY DIVORCED AND WIDOWED PERSONS

Question and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>In what ways did people help you?</u>						
Encouragement, acceptance, understanding	1	8.3	10	22.7	11	20.4
Listen	-	-	8	18.2	8	14.8
Communicate that they care	1	8.3	4	9.1	5	9.3
Listen, no advice, involve me in activities	-	-	5	11.4	5	9.3
Financial and emotional support	3	25.0	2	4.5	5	9.3

*Only those responses which were given by at least five members of the total population were listed in the table.

tasks, not condemning, sending cards, calling on me, help with business, help with funeral arrangements, and I helped others.

What was the biggest problem that you encountered? Loneliness was the response that was most often reported by the sample as being their biggest problem. Other common responses are presented in Table X. Some of the responses which were written by one person only were: depression, feeling unloved, the ex-spouse, suicidal thoughts, explaining to children, transportation, loss, interest in life, and being alone at Christmas.

People often wonder what to say or do during a crisis. What was said or done which was most helpful or meaningful? The response given by one-fourth of the widowed group was communication--calls, letters, and visits. Fourteen percent of the divorced group felt that listening was most helpful. The responses given most often are listed in Table XI. Other responses which were written by only one person were: I thought well of your husband; start a new life for yourself; life is too short; and you did your best now bury it.

What are things people should not say or do when someone experiences a crisis similar to your own? Over 20 percent of the divorced group responded to this question with give advice. The most common response from the widowed group was talk about deceased's faults. Other frequently occurring responses are presented in Table XII. Responses given by only one respondent were: sorry to hear; I know what you're going through; wanting things back they had given the deceased; I saw your ex-spouse with someone; everything is going great with me, sorry everything isn't great for you; another man will come along; I told you so; you can't make it alone; and it's all for the best.

TABLE X
 PERCEPTIONS OF DIVORCED AND WIDOWED PERSONS CONCERNING THE BIGGEST
 PROBLEM THAT THEY ENCOUNTERED

Question and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>What was the biggest problem that you encountered?</u>						
Loneliness	4	33.3	6	13.6	10	19.2
Uncertainty	-	-	4	9.1	4	7.7
Money or credit	-	-	4	9.1	4	7.7
Relate to opposite sex--date	-	-	4	9.1	4	7.7
Accepting and understanding	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	5.8
Readjustment	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	5.8
Failure/rejection	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.8
Independence--lose married friends	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	3.8
Insecure guilt	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.8
Single parenting	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.8

*Only those responses which were given by at least two members of the total population were presented in the table.

TABLE XI

STATEMENTS OR ACTIONS CONSIDERED TO BE MOST HELPFUL OR MEANINGFUL BY THE RESPONDENTS

Question and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>People often wonder what to say or do during a crisis. What was said or done which was most helpful or meaningful?</u>						
Listening	-	-	6	13.6	6	14.3
You are O.K.	-	-	5	11.4	5	11.9
Support and acceptance	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	9.5
Communication--calls, letters, visits	3	25.0	1	2.3	4	9.5
I care	-	-	3	6.8	3	7.1
Think of yourself	-	-	2	4.5	2	4.8
I love you	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	4.8
Bible/God/Religion	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	4.8
Kept me busy	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	4.8
It hurts, but it gets better	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	4.8
God/time/seems it never happened	-	-	2	4.5	2	4.8
Express love verbally--don't put down spouse	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	4.8

*Only those responses which were given more than once by the total population appeared in the table.

TABLE XII

PERCEPTIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS CONCERNING WHAT ONE SHOULD NOT SAY OR DO
WHEN SOMEONE EXPERIENCES A CRISIS

Question and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>What are things people should not say or do when someone experiences a crisis similar to your own?</u>						
Advice	-	-	9	20.5	9	16.1
Question	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.1
Judge	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.1
Ex-spouse at fault--don't like	-	-	3	6.8	3	5.4
Question and gossip	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
Talk about deceased's faults	2	16.8	-	-	2	3.6
Shy away	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
Over involve	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	3.6

*Only those responses which were given by at least two members of the total population were listed in the table.

How long would you estimate it took you to feel like yourself again?

Twenty-six percent of the total population reported that they had not achieved this. Table XIII illustrates all responses given.

Rate the degree of adjustment you have made to the crisis. Fifty-one percent of the total population reported that they had adjusted well or very well to the crisis (Table XIV). Of those stating that they had not adjusted (9.8 percent), all were from the divorced group.

Check THREE resources which were most valuable in helping you to cope with the crisis. Friends (61 percent), relatives (48 percent), and faith (48 percent) were the three responses checked most often by the total population. The divorced group reported counseling as a valuable resource more often than did the widowed group. The widowed group was more inclined to note the minister, priest, or rabbi as a valuable resource (see Table XV).

In your opinion which do you feel would be the most traumatic way to lose a spouse (death or divorce)? Give reasons why you feel this way. A greater number said that divorce would be the most traumatic loss. Ten percent of the population had no opinion on this question. Another six percent said it depends on the circumstances; and four percent said the situations were equally traumatic (see Table XVI).

What advice would you give to someone in a similar situation? The response which occurred most often was counseling. Other frequently occurring answers are summarized in Table XVII. Many interesting suggestions were given by only one person and, therefore, did not appear in the table. They were as follows:

Don't give up.

Get job training.

TABLE XIII

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING TIME OF RECOVERY ACCORDING TO TYPE OF CRISIS

Question and Responses	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>How long would you estimate it took you to feel like yourself again after the crisis?</u>						
Have not	2	16.7	11	25.0	13	26.0
Less than 12 months	1	8.3	8	18.2	9	18.0
12-23 months	2	16.7	6	13.6	8	16.0
2 years	1	8.3	7	15.9	8	16.0
3-5 years	3	25.0	3	6.8	6	12.0
Always	-	-	2	4.5	2	4.0
Never	-	-	2	4.5	2	4.0
6 years +	-	-	1	2.3	1	2.0
Don't know self	-	-	1	2.3	1	2.0

TABLE XIV

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SAMPLE CONCERNING THEIR DEGREE OF ADJUSTMENT

Question and Responses	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Rate the degree of adjustment you have made to the crisis.</u>						
Very well adjusted	2	16.7	12	27.3	14	27.5
Well adjusted	3	25.0	9	20.5	12	23.5
Moderately adjusted	3	25.0	11	25.0	14	27.5
Slightly adjusted	1	8.3	5	11.4	6	11.8
Not adjusted	-	-	5	11.4	5	9.8

TABLE XV

RESOURCES JUDGED TO BE MOST VALUABLE BY WIDOWED AND DIVORCED PERSONS

Question and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Check three resources which were most valuable in helping you to cope with the crisis.</u>						
Friends	6	50.0	28	63.6	34	60.7
Relatives	7	58.3	20	45.5	27	48.2
Faith	4	33.3	23	52.3	27	48.2
Intelligence	4	33.3	16	36.4	20	35.7
Emotional stability	4	33.3	15	34.1	19	33.9
Counseling	1	8.3	15	34.1	16	28.6
Community agencies	2	16.7	7	15.9	9	16.1
Minister/Priest/Rabbi	3	25.0	5	11.4	8	14.3
Money	3	25.0	3	6.8	6	10.7
Insurance	2	16.7	4	9.1	6	10.7
Other						
Child custody	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
Books	-	-	1	2.3	1	1.8

*Respondents could check more than one reply. All responses were presented.

TABLE XVI

PERCEPTIONS OF WIDOWED AND DIVORCED PERSONS CONCERNING MOST TRAUMATIC TYPE OF LOSS

Question and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>In your opinion, which do you feel would be the most traumatic way to lose a spouse (death or divorce)? Give reasons why you feel this way.</u>						
Death						
Unexpected	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.7
No control	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.7
You'd be in love	-	-	3	6.8	3	5.4
Final	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.6
Hang on	-	-	1	2.3	1	1.8
Divorce						
Spouse living	1	8.3	6	13.6	7	13.5
Rejected and used	-	-	6	13.6	6	11.5
Guilt, problems, stigma	2	16.7	2	4.5	4	7.7
Death is final	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	7.7
Tend to hang on	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	5.8
No love	-	-	1	2.3	1	1.8
No opinion	2	16.7	3	6.8	5	9.6
Depends	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	5.8
Equal	-	-	2	4.5	2	3.8

*All responses given were presented in the table.

TABLE XVII

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING ADVICE FOR SOMEONE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION
GIVEN BY THE RESPONDENTS

Question and Responses*	Widowed		Divorced		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>What advice would you give to someone in a similar situation?</u>						
Counseling	-	-	6	13.6	6	12.2
Time helps	2	16.7	3	6.8	5	10.2
Get involved	1	8.3	3	6.8	4	8.2
Think of yourself	-	-	3	6.8	3	6.1
Counseling and find others who've had a similar experience	1	8.3	2	4.5	3	6.1
Don't wait	-	-	3	6.8	3	6.1
Faith/God/Pray	2	16.7	1	2.3	3	6.1
Think of yourself--counseling	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	4.1
God/Pray/Confidence	1	8.3	1	2.3	2	4.1
Live one day at a time	-	-	2	4.5	2	4.1

*Only those responses which were given by two or more persons were listed in the table.

Live life to the fullest.

Don't speak against former spouse.

Look forward.

Stay married.

Learn why marriage went bad.

Give him the kids.

Examine your priorities. Know yourself.

Don't jump into any new relationships.

Experience the situation in all its ups and terrifying downs. Never doubt the feeling happy or sad. The feeling will pass and so will the situation evoking that feeling.

Kubler-Ross Stages

See Table XVIII for a clear depiction of those who felt they experienced the Kubler-Ross stages of adjusting to loss of a loved one. Almost everyone (75 percent) in the study recalled experiencing depression. Bargaining was the stage the fewest number identified with. Some interesting comments written by the respondents were:

I experienced all stages.

There was no denial or bargaining.

Probably didn't go in this order; I would reach acceptance only to lose it and slip into anger or depression again.

These stages happened prior to the decision to divorce.

Why didn't they include a sixth stage--shopping?

The stages were very intense and repeated themselves in various orders.

I had to learn it was O.K. not to be strong sometimes.

TABLE XVIII

RECOLLECTION OF EXPERIENCING KUBLER-ROSS STAGES OF GRIEF
ACCORDING TO TYPE OF CRISIS

Kubler-Ross Stages	Recollection of Experience of Kubler-Ross Stages							
	Did Not Experience/Do Not Recall				Somewhat or Very Much Recall			
	Widowed		Divorced		Widowed		Divorced	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Denial	1	10	11	29	9	90	26	71
Anger	2	20	10	27	8	80	27	73
Bargaining	7	70	18	48	3	30	19	52
Depression	1	10	3	8	9	90	34	92
Acceptance	2	20	4	11	8	80	33	89

Widowed n = 10.

Divorced n = 37.

Total n = 47.

Examination and Discussion of Hypotheses

Utilizing analysis of variance, the following hypothesis was examined: H_1 --There will be no significant difference in degree of adjustment to the loss of a spouse and (a) sex, (b) age, (c) income level, (d) length of time married, (e) educational level, (f) number of children, and (g) type of crisis experienced (divorce or death). The analysis of variance revealed no significant difference at the .05 level between any of the above groups.

The other two hypotheses were analyzed by percentage and frequency data only. H_2 --There will be no significant differences in the financial, physical, emotional, and social problems faced by widowed and divorced persons. This information was discussed previously and can be seen in Tables II through VII. The most significant findings were:

1. Financial--Additional financial worries were reported by 65 percent of the total sample. The fear expressed most often was an inability to be self supporting. One-half of the widowed group did not have additional financial worries. Financial worries seemed to be greater for the divorced respondents.

2. Physical--The four most common physical difficulties reported by the divorced group were also the four most common areas marked by the widowed group. The most frequently occurring problems for divorced persons were: (1) nervousness, (2) insomnia, (3) fatigue, and (4) weight loss. The ranking for the widowed group was: (1) fatigue, (2) nervousness, (3) weight loss, (4) insomnia and increased use of alcohol (tied). A slightly larger percentage of divorced persons reported experiencing physical problems.

3. Emotional--Many of the 10 most common emotional difficulties experienced by widowed persons were also felt by the divorced persons. The rank order for the widowed group was: (1) depression; (2) anger, crying, easily irritated, and sadness (tied); (3) poor concentration and shock (tied); (4) uncertainty; (5) fear of nervous breakdown and guilt (tied). The rank order for the divorced group was: (1) depression, (2) uncertainty, (3) sadness, (4) anger, (5) poor concentration, (6) crying, (7) easily irritated and guilt (tied), (8) shock, (9) fear of nervous breakdown and suicidal thoughts (tied). A slightly larger percentage of divorced persons reported experiencing emotional difficulties.

4. Social--A greater percentage of widowed persons noted changes in familial relationships and friendships. More divorced than widowed persons noted differences in relationships with in-laws, more parental worries, and dissatisfaction with personal decisions concerning sexual readjustment.

H₃--There will be no significant differences in widowed and divorced persons with respect to preferred sources of assistance. This information was presented in Tables VIII and XV. Widowed persons reported receiving help from: friends (75 percent); immediate family (67 percent); clergy, neighbors, and relatives (tied at 42 percent); mental health professionals (25 percent), and church members (17 percent). Divorced persons reported receiving help from: friends (89 percent), immediate family (73 percent), mental health professionals (39 percent), relatives and clergy (tied at 27 percent), neighbors and church members (tied at 25 percent). Widowed persons reported that family members were

the most helpful persons to them during the crisis period. Divorced persons reported friends as being the most helpful to them.

Discussion and Conclusions

One of the reasons the analysis of variance revealed no significant findings may be due to the small sample size. The percentage and frequency analysis of Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 suggest that widowed and divorced persons experienced many of the same problems. There were many similarities in the physical and emotional difficulties experienced by widowed and divorced persons. Fewer widowed persons reported experiencing financial difficulties. This may be because this group was older and more financially established. Most of the widowed persons may have received life insurance benefits after the death of the spouse, whereas a divorcee may not have this financial help. Friendships are usually established by persons having common interests. The single-again person had to adjust and form new friendships when there was less in common with former married friends. Divorced persons may have noted friends as being most helpful to them because their family was not nearby. Older children may have been more helpful to widowed persons. There is a possibility that divorced persons had young children who could not give them the support that older children could give.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to develop insight into the problems faced by individuals who have lost their spouse through death or divorce and to determine what specific efforts of others were most beneficial in assisting the divorced or widowed persons. The objectives which guided this study were:

1. To determine the difference in problems faced by individuals who had lost their spouse by death with those who had lost their spouse through divorce.
2. To gain information concerning preferred sources of help during the crisis regardless of whether the loss was a result of death or divorce.
3. To determine the difference in degree of adjustment to the loss of spouse felt by divorced and widowed persons.
4. To make recommendations for further research regarding crisis situations.
5. To make recommendations to persons in the helping professions about how to help individuals who experience loss of a spouse.

Subjects

The sample was composed of 56 men and women from the metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This number represented a

31 percent rate of return of the questionnaires that were distributed to single-again persons in these areas. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were female. Divorced persons comprised 78 percent of the sample.

Results

Utilizing analysis of variance, the following hypothesis was examined: H_1 --There will be no significant difference in degree of adjustment to the loss of a spouse and (a) sex, (b) age, (c) income level, (d) length of time married, (e) educational level, (f) number of children, and (g) type of crisis experienced (divorce or death). The analysis revealed no significant difference at the .05 level.

All other data were analyzed by percentage and frequency distribution. The results were as follows:

1. The four most common physical difficulties reported by the divorced group were also the four most common physical difficulties reported by the widowed group. The order for the divorced group was: (1) nervousness, (2) insomnia, (3) fatigue, and (4) weight loss. The order for the widowed group was: (1) fatigue, (2) nervousness, (3) weight loss, and (4) insomnia tied with increased use of alcohol.

2. A slightly larger percentage of divorced persons reported experiencing physical problems (see Table II).

3. Many of the 10 most common emotional difficulties experienced by widowed persons were also felt by divorced persons. The rank order was slightly different. The leading emotional difficulties for widowed persons were: (1) depression; (2) anger, crying, easily irritated, and sadness tied; (3) poor concentration and shock tied; (4) uncertainty; (5) fear of nervous breakdown; and (6) guilt. The leading emotional

difficulties for divorced persons were: (1) depression, (2) uncertainty, (3) sadness, (4) anger, (5) poor concentration, (6) crying, (7) easily irritated, (8) guilt, (9) shock, and (10) fear of nervous breakdown and suicidal thoughts (tied).

4. A slightly larger percentage of divorced persons reported experiencing emotional difficulties.

5. Social changes--A greater frequency of widowed persons reported changes in familial relationships (75 percent compared with 52 percent) and friendships (75 percent compared with 57 percent). More divorced than widowed persons noted differences in relationships with in-laws (61 percent compared with 58 percent), more parental worries (70 percent compared with 58 percent), and more dissatisfaction with personal decisions concerning sexual readjustment (30 percent compared with 8 percent).

6. Financial problems--Sixty-eight percent of all divorced persons said that they had additional financial worries as a result of the crisis. Forty-two percent of the widowed persons had additional financial worries.

7. When asked the question "Who was the most helpful to you during your crisis?", 42 percent of the widowed persons responded with family. Divorced persons responded with friends (27 percent) to the same question.

8. Divorced persons most often checked (1) friends, (2) faith, and (3) relatives as their three most valuable resources in coping with the crisis. Widowed persons checked (1) relatives, (2) friends, and (3) faith, intelligence, and emotional stability (tied at 33 percent).

Limitations

The following aspects of the study limited the generalization of the results:

1. The procedure in the selection of subjects was not random sampling.
2. The geographic location was limited to the metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
3. There was a disproportionate number of divorced persons.
4. There was a disproportionate number of females.
5. The respondents were members of organized groups of single-again persons.
6. There were no controls for length of time since crisis occurred.
7. Remarried persons were not included in the sample.

Recommendations

The findings and limitations of this study indicated that further research was needed. The researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Include a larger sample size.
2. Control for length of time since crisis occurred.
3. Control for sex of respondent.
4. Control for age of respondent.
5. Control for type of crisis (death or divorce).
6. Control for socioeconomic status of respondent.
7. Control for ethnic background of respondent.
8. Include other types of crisis (death of child or parent).

One of the purposes of the study was to determine information about a person's adjustment to the loss of spouse in order to help individuals

who work in the helping professions do a better job of counseling clients. The following summary includes pertinent information for this purpose.

The respondents in this study were asked to give advice which would help other persons who experience the loss of a spouse. The advice they gave most frequently was to seek some type of counseling in order to get help in coping with the loss. The other advice given was to help the person going through a loss of spouse to realize that only time will help ease the pain. The experience of adjusting to the loss takes time and this cannot be rushed.

In summary, there were many similarities in the physical and emotional difficulties experienced by both widowed and divorced persons. There were some similarities in the social adjustments that had to be made. Many persons had additional financial worries. Both groups noted legal concerns, although divorced persons had different legal concerns than did widowed persons. Religious issues was another area where there was a similarity of feeling. Friends and family were the major sources of assistance. Loneliness was the biggest problem encountered by both divorced and widowed persons. Of those stating that they had not adjusted to the crisis (9.8 percent), all were from the divorced group. Both divorced and widowed persons recalled experiencing the Kubler-Ross stages of grief. The information yielded from this study should be valuable for counselors, researchers, doctors, ministers, lawyers, and the friends and family of widowed or divorced persons. The information concerning the Kubler-Ross stages of grief would be of special interest to counselors.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Directions: Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. Be sure to check the answers which best describe your background. There are no right or wrong answers. If you find any question objectionable, you may leave it blank. Thank you for your help.

1. What is your sex?

_____ male
_____ female

2. What is your age?

_____ less than 22
_____ 22-29
_____ 30-39
_____ 40-49
_____ 50-59
_____ 60 and above

3. What is your educational attainment?

_____ some high school
_____ high school graduate
_____ some college/technical training
_____ college graduate
_____ advanced degree

4. How long had you been married?

_____ less than 2 years
_____ 2-4 years
_____ 5-9 years
_____ 10-14 years
_____ 15-20 years
_____ more than 20 years

5. How many children do you have? _____

6. Where are your children living?

_____ have no children
_____ live with me
_____ live with another relative
_____ on their own
_____ other (describe) _____

7. Which best describes where you live?

_____ over 100,000 population
_____ 50,000-99,999 population
_____ 20,000-49,999 population
_____ 5,000-19,000 population
_____ 1,000-4,999 population
_____ under 1,000 population

8. Combined family income at time of death/divorce.
- _____ less than \$5,000
 _____ \$5,000-\$9,999
 _____ \$10,000-\$14,999
 _____ \$15,000-\$19,999
 _____ \$20,000-\$29,999
 _____ \$30,000-\$40,000
 _____ over \$40,000
9. What part of the above family income did you contribute?
- _____ none
 _____ less than 1/4
 _____ 1/4 to 1/2
 _____ between 1/2 and 3/4
 _____ 3/4 or more
10. Are you currently employed?
- _____ yes
 _____ no
11. How did your relationship end?
- _____ death
 _____ divorce
12. How long ago did the relationship end?
- _____ less than 6 months
 _____ 6 to 11 months
 _____ 12 to 17 months
 _____ 18 to 24 months
 _____ more than 24 months

Directions: To what extent did you experience the following difficulties after the death/divorce? Mark each blank with either 1 = NO PROBLEM, 2 = SOME PROBLEM, 3 = MAJOR PROBLEM.

A. Physical

- _____ 13. asthma
 _____ 14. changes in eliminating
 _____ 15. chest pains
 _____ 16. dizziness
 _____ 17. fatigue
 _____ 18. headache
 _____ 19. heart palpitations
 _____ 20. increase in use of alcohol
 _____ 21. insomnia
 _____ 22. marked increase in smoking
 _____ 23. marked increase in drug use
 _____ 24. menstrual changes
 _____ 25. nervousness
 _____ 26. skin rashes
 _____ 27. ulcers
 _____ 28. weight gain
 _____ 29. weight loss
 _____ 30. other _____

Directions: To what extent did you experience the following difficulties after the death/divorce? Mark each blank with either: 1 = NO PROBLEM, 2 = SOME PROBLEM, 3 = MAJOR PROBLEM.

B. Emotional

- 31. anger
- 32. apathy
- 33. crying
- 34. depression
- 35. easily irritated
- 36. fear of contracting disease
- 37. fear of dying
- 38. fear of nervous breakdown
- 39. guilt
- 40. numbness
- 41. poor concentration
- 42. sadness
- 43. shock
- 44. suicidal thoughts
- 45. uncertainty
- 46. other _____

Directions: Please check the response that is correct for you or write in your answer on the lines provided.

47. Were there any changes in your relationships with your family?

- yes
- no

48. If yes, what were the changes? _____

49. Were there any changes in your relationships with friends?

- yes
- no

50. If yes, what were the changes? _____

51. Did your relationship with your in-laws change?

- yes
- no

52. If so, how did the relationship change? _____

53. If you have children, what is your greatest parental worry? _____

54. Did you have additional financial worries as a result of the crisis?

_____ yes
 _____ no

55. Explain _____

56. Do you have certain religious beliefs or philosophies that helped you?

_____ yes
 _____ no

57. If so, what were these? _____

58. Were your religious or philosophical beliefs changed as a result of the crisis?

_____ yes
 _____ no

59. Are you comfortable with personal decisions you have made concerning your sexual readjustment?

_____ yes
 _____ no

60. What legal concerns did you have as a result of the crisis? _____

Which of these persons gave you assistance? (Check all that apply.)

- _____ 61. church members
 _____ 62. friends
 _____ 63. immediate family
 _____ 64. mental health professionals
 _____ 65. minister/priest/rabbi
 _____ 66. neighbors
 _____ 67. relatives
 _____ 68. other _____

69. Who was most helpful? _____

70. In what ways did people help you? _____

71. What was the biggest problem that you encountered? _____

72. People often wonder what to say or do during a crisis. What was said or done which was most helpful or meaningful? _____

73. What are things people should not say or do when someone experiences a crisis similar to your own? _____

74. How long would you estimate it took you to feel like yourself again after the crisis? _____
75. Rate the degree of adjustment you have made to the crisis. Circle the number that expresses your feelings.

Have Not Adjusted	Slightly Adjusted	Moderately Adjusted	Well Adjusted	Very Well Adjusted
1	2	3	4	5

Please check THREE resources which were most valuable in helping you to cope with the crisis.

- _____ 76. community agencies
 _____ 77. counselor
 _____ 78. emotional stability
 _____ 79. friends
 _____ 80. insurance
 _____ 81. intelligence
 _____ 82. minister/priest/rabbi
 _____ 83. money
 _____ 84. relatives
 _____ 85. religious faith
 _____ 86. other _____

87. In your opinion which do you feel would be the most traumatic way to lose a spouse (death or divorce)? Give reasons why you feel this way. _____

88. What advice would you give to someone in a similar situation? _____

89. Do you have additional comments to make concerning this study? _____

Some authorities have identified the stages of adjustment to the loss of a loved one as the following. Please respond on the degree to which you had these feelings or thoughts after the loss. 1 = DID NOT EXPERIENCE, 2 = DO NOT RECALL, 3 = SOMEWHAT, 4 = VERY MUCH.

- _____ 90. First Stage--Denial (to feel numb, in shock, to not believe; "It's not true," "It can't be happening to me.")
- _____ 91. Second Stage--Anger (rage; to feel angry at world, God, or others in general)
- _____ 92. Third Stage--Bargaining (wishes or attempts to make a deal with someone to make everything right again)
- _____ 93. Fourth Stage--Depression (crying, sadness, fatigue)
- _____ 94. Fifth Stage--Acceptance (to accept what has happened, put in perspective, see beyond, recognize new opportunities)

95. Explain _____
