

Bereavement Support For Spouses

Saying Goodbye To Your Lifemate

Whether the relationship was measured in months or in decades, the death of your lifemate is a loss for which you are never completely prepared. Well-meaning friends and family members sometimes encourage you to "move on" and even remind you that your mate "wouldn't want you to be sad." But that's just not how grief works.

The death of your lifemate is not something you just "get over." Your lives became intertwined through your time together. The holidays shared, vacations taken, and occasions celebrated knitted your lives together. In such a relationship, grief is not a bad "bruise;" it feels more like a complete amputation.

Some people try to compare losses. "Oh, I know just how you feel," he or she might say. But because every relationship is unique, every experience with grief is also unique. You and your life mate shared experiences of which only the two of you know, so in many ways, no one understands all the dimensions of your loss.

Sadly, death sometimes comes as a relationship is just budding. You had so many hopes and dreams and simply did not have the time to complete many of them. But even after forty, fifty, or sixty years of marriage, newly-widowed people wish for more time together.

The pledge of commitment, "until death do us part" is uttered somewhat glibly; now, the "parting" is filled with undeniable sorrow.

Finding Support

Bereavement is not best faced in isolation; we all need at least one or two supportive people around us. [Young Widow - Chapter Two](#) and [Parents without Partners](#) provide online resources and links to local chapters. Most communities also have a group named Widowed Persons Service or similar. You can search the internet for "widowed persons service (your city or county name)" to discover this resource in your community. You might also try connecting with a widow-to-widow online forum such as [Widowed Village](#) or [WidowNet](#). Or, you can [download our free brochure on How to Find a Grief Support Group](#).

Written Resources

Learning to live again without your lifemate is an enormous challenge, so reading the perspectives of others who have made the journey can be helpful. Many widowed people have found these books to be particularly insightful:

- Widowed by Dr. Joyce Brothers
- A Handbook for Widowers by Ed Ames
- Widow to Widow: Thoughtful, Practical Ideas for Rebuilding Your Life by Genevieve D. Ginsburg
- I'm Grieving as Fast as I Can: How Young Widows and Widowers Cope and Heal by Linda Feinberg
- Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing by Tom Golden
- The Tender Scar: Life after the Death of a Spouse by Richard Mabry