

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2009

Department:Nursing

Degree:PhD

Title:Grief and Mourning Among African American Elders After Spousal Bereavement

The individual experiencing spousal bereavement goes through grief and mourning while facing physical, psychological, and social changes. Research indicates that 10% to 20% of individuals over 65 have ongoing physical or mental health problems after the loss. The demographic shift occurring in the United States is increasing the number of widowed persons over 65, as well as the proportion of widowed persons over 65 that are from minority groups. Current research has minimal culturally diverse participants. Race and ethnicity influence many health-related issues, so this study explores the grief and mourning experiences of one of the largest minority groups, African Americans over 65. This study used grounded theory methods to interview 9 African American widows about their experiences with grief and mourning and to determine what helped them after their husbands died. The results of the study indicated that there were 6 phases of grief and mourning that the widows went through after their husbands died and they were able to identify helpful interventions during the transition into widowhood. Nurses and other health care providers can use the results of this study to provide culturally-sensitive, individualized care to persons who have experienced spousal loss.