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2021

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Apr 12th, 10:00 AM - 10:00 AM

## Effects of Sexual Orientation and Gender on Perceptions of the Bereaved

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### Recommended Citation

Dickinson, John and Walker, Ruth, "Effects of Sexual Orientation and Gender on Perceptions of the Bereaved". *ReSEARCH Dialogues Conference proceedings*. <https://scholar.utc.edu/research-dialogues/2021/posters/7>.

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## QUESTION

Does the amount of time participants believe a person should grieve vary by gender and sexual orientation?

## METHODS

### PARTICIPANTS

- N =150
- Ages 18-72
  - M=32.57, SD=15.144
- 84.0% White, 1.3% Black, .7% Asian or Pacific Islander, 2.7% Multiracial
- 74.7% Female
- 79.3% Straight, 5.3% Gay or Lesbian, 8.0% Bisexual

### PROCEDURE

Participants were given one of four scenarios, in which a gay man, a lesbian woman, a straight man, or a straight woman, lost their life partner/spouse and were asked to rate how long they felt the person in the scenario needed to grieve

### EXAMPLE SCENARIO

Elsa is 76 years old and lost her husband of 48 years, Michael. Michael battled an aggressive cancer and passed 11 months after his diagnosis. Elsa is struggling to move on from this loss and regrets the things she did not get to do with Michael. She struggles to find a reason to get out of bed in the morning, no longer finds joy in the activities she once loved, and does not always remember to eat.

## DISCUSSION

We found a significant interaction between the gender and sexual orientation of the target in the scenario on how long participants believed they should grieve following the loss of their partner.

### What do our results mean?

Participants believed straight women need the most time to grieve and lesbian women need the least amount of time to grieve the loss of their partner.

## RESULTS

2-Factor ANOVA (Grieve Time)

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	$\eta^2$	$\omega^2$
<b>IV1: Gender</b>	0.363	1	0.363	0.055	0.815	3.632e-4	0.000
<b>IV 2: Sexual Orientation</b>	70.562	1	70.562	10.637	0.001*	0.071	0.064
<b>IV3: Interaction</b>	46.310	1	46.310	6.981	0.009*	0.046	0.039
<b>Residuals</b>	882.279	133	6.634				

Note \* p significant at the .01 level. Data shown was collected as pilot data. More questions are being asked in the current study.



## Clinical Implications

- Mental health professionals need specialized training for bereaved LGBT+ person(s) who are suffering the loss of a partner. This may be particularly relevant for lesbian women, who have reported higher levels of disenfranchised grief in the literature.
- Future clinical care for bereaved person(s) who identify as lesbian or gay can be improved in order to provide better care.

## Future Research

- Future researchers should consider investigating the impact of other factors, such as age, religion, or affiliation with the LGBT+ community on perceptions of members of the LGBT community.
- Additionally, future researchers can investigate how perceptions of the LGBT community impact social support following a loss.
- Finally, future research should include the measurement of perceptions of the bisexual and transgender community.

# EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER ON PERCEPTIONS OF THE BEREAVED

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