Development of the Widowhood Resilience Scale (WRS): Assessing resilience behaviors at the crossroads of change

Dr. Samuel J. Dreeben, Ph.D., Schreiner University, USA
Dr. Carrie L. West, Ph.D., Schreiner University, USA

Abstract

Widowhood researchers have been increasingly interested in the construct of resilience, and identifying factors which contribute to adaptive responses to conjugal loss. Available measures of general resilience were validated on non-widowed samples and broadly lack face validity for use with widowed people. This presentation reports the development and validation of a resilience scale specific to widowhood, the Widowhood Resilience Scale (WRS). Initially qualitative responses from 744 widowed people were analyzed and cross-referenced with existing literature on resilience to develop 49 items. The 49 items were tested on a sample of 1188 widowed people, resulting in a 6 factor, 25-item scale.

Recent Publications

1. West, C. L. (in press). Nine things resilient people do after losing a spouse or partner. In N. Bauer-Maglin (Ed), *Widows' Words: Women Write on the Experience of Grief, The First Year, The Long Haul, and Everything in Between.* Newark, NJ: Rutgers University Press,.
2. Shead, V., Dreeben, S., Frantz, S., & Rodriguez, R. (in press). Anxiety and transitions of care. In G. J. A. Byrne & N. A. Pachana (Eds), *Anxiety in older people: Clinical and research perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
3. Grable, J. E., West, C. L., Leitz, L. Y., Rehl, K. M., Moor, C. C., Hernandez, M. N. & Bradley, S. (2017). Enhancing financial confidence among widows: The role of financial professionals. *Journal of Financial Planning*, 30 (*12*), 38–44.
4. Rehl, K. M., West, C. L., Leitz, L. Y., Grable, J. E., Moor, C. C., Hernandez, M. N., & Bradley, S. (2017). Helping repartnered widows navigate romance and finance: The role of financial advice. *Journal of Financial Service Professionals*, 71(*3*), 63-72.
5. Busing, K., & West, C. L. (2016). Determining the relationship between physical fitness, gender, and life satisfaction. *SAGE Open*, *6*(4), 2158244016669974.

Image

Widowhood Resilience Scale	Agency	Social Support	Living in the Present	Helping Others	Integration	Outlook
I can face my problems head-on instead of ignoring them	0.717					
I trust my gut	0.557					
I can make a decision and follow through	0.556					
I don't let others' expectations determine how I grieve	0.459					
I feel confident I can learn how to do things my partner used to do	0.440					
I have a strong sense of who I am, independent of my late partner	0.427					
I have a fulfilling social life		0.659				
I belong to a strong supportive community		0.646				
I can find support for the things I need		0.570				
I am comfortable asking for help when I need it		0.451				
I can have fun in the moment			0.855			
I can find humor in life			0.771			
I find there are times when I can live in the moment			0.731			
I laugh at least once every day			0.509			
I can feel joy for others when something good happens to them			0.422			
I am caring and compassionate				0.657		
I use my experiences to help others				0.587		
I can sit with someone else in pain				0.513		
I have integrated the love of my late partner with my current life and relationships					0.732	
I have found ways to honor my deceased partner or spouse					0.617	
I have blended my past life with my present life					0.542	
I have created a new life that honors the past					0.542	
I can picture a positive and happy future						0.703
I have goals I am working toward						0.612
I like the person I am now						0.453

Figure 1: Factor Loadings for Widowhood Resilience Scale.

Photograph



Biography

Dr. Sam Dreeben is the Associate Director for Research at the Soaring Spirits Resilience Center at Schreiner University. Dr. Dreeben received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Louisville and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in palliative care psychology through UTHCSA & the South Texas Veterans Healthcare System. Dr. Dreeben is a licensed psychologist in Texas. His research interests include assessment design, resilience and conjugal loss, anxiety and transitions of care, mindful body awareness, and the relationship between positive dispositional factors and physiological and psychological correlates of stress.

Dr. Carrie West is the Director of the Soaring Spirits Resilience Center at Schreiner University. Dr. West earned her PhD in Communication from the University of Denver with a focus on interpersonal and family communication, and a cognate in research methods. Her research focuses on the areas of grief, bereavement, resilience, privacy, and wellness and well-being.

Email: SDreeben@schreiner.edu;
CLWest@schreiner.edu