

Sibling Survivors

Sibling survivors are often called the forgotten mourners. When a sibling dies, those siblings left behind, no matter their ages, are considered secondary mourners to the parents and/or the spouse and children of the sibling who died.

For those siblings still living at home, they will "lose" their parents for some time as the parents grieve the death of the | deceased child. Parents can become so engrossed in their grief that they forget their living children still need reassurance that they are loved and wanted.

The surviving siblings' roles in the family are altered. They might feel the need to parent their parents or protect them from anything else happening. The opposite could also happen; the parents could try to shield the living children, afraid of losing them, too.

People forget the importance of siblings in our lives.

Listed are some characteristics of the sibling bond:

- It's the longest relationship we'll have in our lives. We are typically only a few years apart in age.
- We usually know them longer than our parents, spouses and children.
- We witness more life events and life changes with our siblings than anyone else.
- We share a sense of family, belonging and culture.

They teach us how to function in society and communicate with others.

The time spent together in our early years is greater than with our parents.

Contact [SafeHavenForWidowed](http://SafeHavenForWidowed.org)

Registered ® 2010 Safehavenforwidowed.org

© copyright 2013- 03-18 16:36:34 - All Rights Reserved

Sibling Survivors

Childhood: Some people believe children don't grieve. That's not true. Children have shorter attention spans so their grief will appear in brief periods. The grief might also manifest itself as physical pain (stomachaches, headaches, etc.) because children have underdeveloped coping skills and might not know how to express their feelings.

Adolescence: At this time, the siblings are trying to find their role in society. Each day they look in the mirror, they aren't sure who they see because they are changing so rapidly. They believe they are immortal because they don't face much death at this age. Also, adolescents are trying to separate themselves from their families but the death will throw a loop in that. They will struggle with pulling away and still wanting to be hugged by their parents. At school, they might deny their grief feelings because it's easier to fit in that way.

Young Adulthood: During our early 20s to mid-40s, we continue to set our identities and carve out our lives and careers. We have lots of hope and if we lose our sibling at this time, we learn the hard way that life does not hold unlimited promises. We also experience anger that our sibling is not there for important life events like graduations, marriages and the births of our children.

Middle Adulthood: In our mid-40s to 50s, our sacrifices become rewards as we slow down to enjoy what we have worked hard for. If our sibling dies, we might start questioning our definition of happiness and wondering if we completed what we really wanted out of life. At this time, our parents might die. If we also lose our sibling to suicide and there were unresolved issues (like disagreeing on the care of a now deceased parent, etc.), we will have to find a way to work through them alone.

Contact [SafeHavenForWidowed](http://SafeHavenForWidowed.org)

Registered ® 2010 Safehavenforwidowed.org

© copyright 2013- 03-18 16:36:34 - All Rights Reserved

Sibling Survivors

Late Adulthood: After we reach our 60s, our sibling might be the only family member alive with whom we can share memories of early life.

If we lose our sibling, it will either enhance the feeling that our time to die is coming or we might not grieve because we believe we are going to die soon, too.

Typically, siblings will carry this loss through a large portion of life. We will want a way to memorialize our sibling.

No one ever gets over a death, it becomes a part of us and we take it with us throughout life.

Contact SafeHavenForWidowed

Registered ® 2010 Safehavenforwidowed.org

© copyright 2013- 03-18 16:36:34 - All Rights Reserved