



B7: No Tears for the Widow

Type of Exercise: discussion question

Level: basic

Length of time: 30 minutes

Resources needed: handout of lyrics or CD player/computer to play the song. The song is available on iTunes. Artist: Judy Small

Instructions: This exercise could be used when talking about death and dying concerns or home care visits. Play the song (and provide a copy of the words for people to follow along). Discuss the reactions people have to hearing this song:

- As a nurse, how might you respond in this situation, if you don't see the couple as a couple?
- How might you respond differently if you do see them as a couple?
- What other experiences within health care might be similar?
- How might we interrupt the assumptions about LGBTQ couples within nursing practice?

Lyrics: Small, J. (1990). *No tears for the widow*, Snapshot . Fairfield, Victoria, Australia: Crafty Maid Music. Lyrics reprinted with permission, Sept 2009. *No Tears for the Widow*—Judy Small

*I never saw my mother cry
Until the night my father died
Married nearly thirty years
And his dying had been hard
I remember how the family came
To share the grief, the tears, the pain
And how her friends all gathered round
And all the black-rimmed cards*

*The funeral was a large affair
The civic fathers all were there
And mother held up stoically
She never shed a tear
But everyone there understood
That she had entered widowhood
And life would never be the same
Her status now was clear*



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Mickey Eliason and Carla Randall*



*And there were tears for the widow
Tears for the widow
For the woman who had lost her love
And must carry on alone
And mother now writes "widow"
In the space on all the forms
It's part of her identity
Like her grey hair or her name*

*My friend Amelia lost her love
To cancer's slow and painful glove
The dying was no easier
Than my father's was back then
No black-rimmed cards came to her door
Her grief and anguish all ignored
Except, of course, for closest friends
Who tried to understand*

*Her lover was described by all
As a single woman living well
A tragic loss for family
Taken well before her time
When Amy left the funeral home
She travelled to their house alone
And sat among familiar things
And wept into the night*

*And there were no tears for the widow
No tears for the widow
For the woman who had lost her love
And must carry on alone
And Amy still writes "single"
In the space on all the forms
But she rages at the lie it tells
And the loss that it ignores*

*And who can tell how many other women
Live their lives in shadows
Unrecognized, unsympathized
Unseen and disallowed
Who've lost not only lovers*



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*But often hearth and home
For "marriage" is a special word
And only meant for some*

*And there are no tears for the widows
No tears for the widows
For the women who've lost lovers
And must carry on alone
And life goes on, but for them
There is no space on any forms
Yes, "marriage" is a special word
And only meant for some*



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