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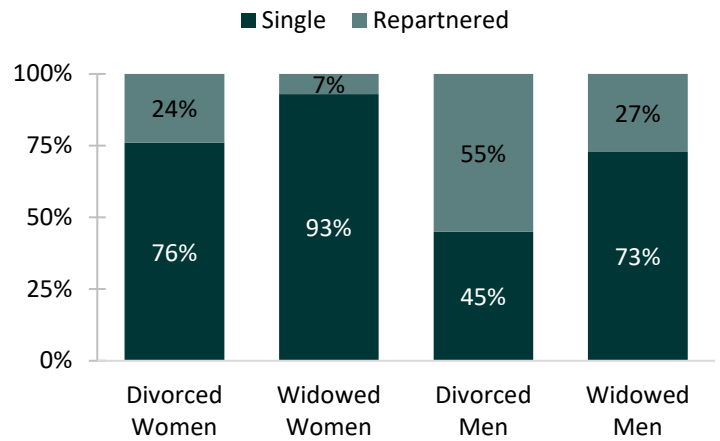
# The Role of Union Dissolution and Repartnering on Health Later in Life

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Research indicates that widowhood, which has declined in recent years, is often negatively associated with well-being in later life. Yet, little is known about the negative consequences in later life from gray divorce, which has doubled since 1990 (Brown & Lin, 2012). Here, we examine the link between gray divorce (divorce after age fifty) and well-being to address whether repartnering helps to offset some of the negative consequences of marital dissolution (Carr & Springer, 2010). Additionally, because men tend to reap more benefits from marriage than women, it is important to consider gender differentials (Simon, 2002). Using data from the 2010 Health and Retirement Study (HRS), we examine depressive symptoms and alcohol use by dissolution type, repartnering, and gender.

- Gray divorced women and men are more often repartnered than are either widows or widowers.
- Among divorced women, 76% are single and 24% have repartnered.
- For widows, 93% are single and just 7% have repartnered.
- Among divorced men, 45% are single and 55% have repartnered.
- For widowers, 73% are single and 27% have repartnered.

Figure 1. Repartnering by Dissolution Type and Gender

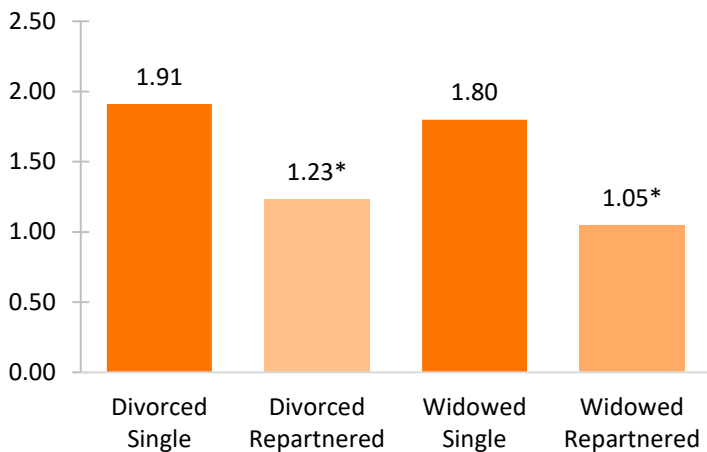


Source: NCFMR analyses of Health and Retirement Study 2010

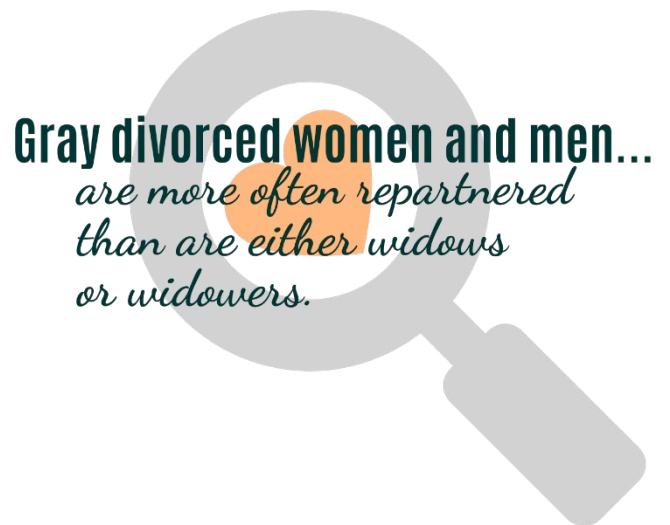
## Depressive Symptoms of Gray Divorce and Widowhood

- Depressive symptoms do not vary by dissolution type.
- Individuals who repartner have lower levels of depressive symptoms than those who remain single.

Figure 2. Depressive Symptoms by Dissolution and Repartnering



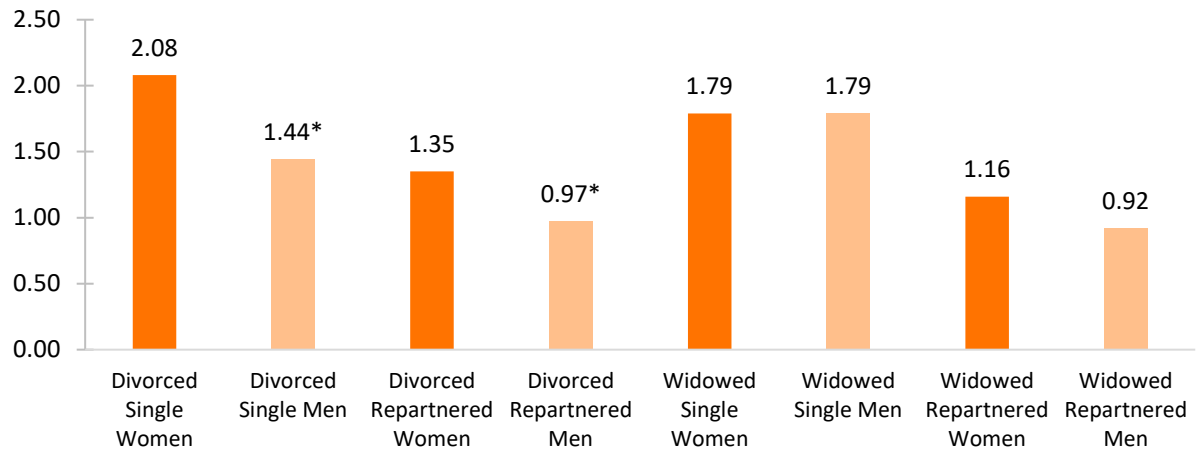
Source: NCFMR analyses of Health and Retirement Study 2010  
 Asterisks signify differences within dissolution groups at  $p < 0.05$



## Depressive Symptoms of Gray Divorce and Widowhood by Gender

- Divorced women report more depressive symptoms than men, regardless of repartnering.
- However, there are no differences in depressive symptoms among widowed women and men.

Figure 3. Depressive Symptoms for Dissolution and Repartnering by Gender

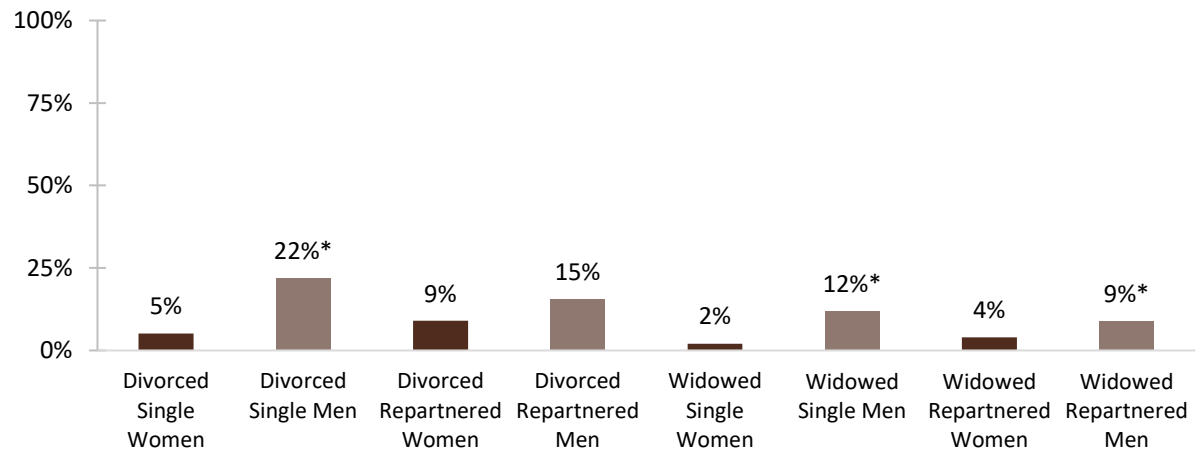


Source: NCFMR analyses of Health and Retirement Study 2010  
Asterisks signify differences within dissolution groups at  $p < 0.05$

## Alcohol Use by Gray Divorce and Widowhood by Gender

- Divorced individuals tend to be heavier drinkers than widowed individuals.
- Divorced men who remain single report the most alcohol use.
- Widowers consume higher levels of alcohol than widows regardless of repartnering.

Figure 4. Alcohol Use for Dissolution and Repartnering by Gender



Source: NCFMR analyses of Health and Retirement Study 2010  
Asterisks signify differences within dissolution groups at  $p < 0.05$

### References:

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