

Rebecca Utz is an associate professor of sociology. She teaches in the areas of population, research methods, and epidemiology. Her substantive research interests fall within the areas of health and aging, and specifically are related to 1) childhood obesity, and 2) end-of-life issues such as widowhood and caregiving. She enjoys mentoring graduate students and teaching them how to become independent scholars, as evidenced by two very recent publications that she collaborated on with her students (Find under Publications).

Funding

While she has recently been developing new grant proposals related to the potential role that schools may play in managing the childhood obesity epidemic in America (with Julie Metos in Division of Nutrition), most of her work in the past year has explored the ways that newly bereaved older spouses cope with the loss of their spouse and develop a “new” life for themselves.

Awards

Rebecca Utz has recently been named a “fellow” in the Gerontological Society of America and serves on the editorial board of *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, one of the premier health journals in the social sciences.

Publications

- H. Uphold-Carrier & R. L. Utz. (2012) “Parental Divorce among Young and Adult Children: A Long Term Quantitative Analysis of Mental Health and Family Solidarity” *Journal of Marriage and Divorce*, 53 (4): 247-266.
- M. Hollingshaus & R. L. Utz. (2013) “Race & Ethnic Disparities in Depression After Major Health Diagnosis” *Society and Mental Health*. 3 (1). 22-29.
- Utz, R. L., M. Caserta, D. Lund. (2012) “Grief, Depressive-Symptoms, and Physical Health Among Recently Bereaved Spouses” *The Gerontologist*, 52 (4). 460-471.
- Utz, R. L., Caserta, M. Lund, M. (forthcoming). An Evaluation of the Living After Loss Intervention - Part 1: Do Bereavement-Related Outcomes Vary by the Content of Support Groups? Accepted for publication in *Grief Matters: The Australian Journal of Grief & Bereavement*
- Utz, R. L. K Swenson, D. Lund, M. Caserta, B. DeVries. (forthcoming). Feeling Lonely vs. Being Alone: Loneliness and Social Support Among Recently Bereaved Older Adults. Accepted for publication in *Journal of Gerontology: Social Science*.

These recent publications draw upon an NIA funded research grant called “Living After Loss” that she has worked on with collaborators Mike Caserta (College of Nursing, Gerontology) & Dale Lund (Sociology at Cal State University San Bernardino) since 2005. The “Living After Loss” project developed a new model of a bereavement support group and implemented it to a sample of newly bereaved spouse. The “Living After Loss” study has been followed by a related project that is part of a larger project called “Partners in Hospice Care” funded by NCI. The new project delivers bereavement support in an individual one-on-one format, rather than a support group setting. Both

research projects will be compared to provide some of the most comprehensive research on how to best support newly bereaved spouses during this difficult life transition.