

Women and Wealth Suddenly Single

Choice, control and independence in times of transition

Separation, divorce and losing a spouse are all difficult life events – for both emotional and financial reasons. Typically, the transition from being married to being single has a negative financial impact on women, and even though it has become more commonplace, you might still end up feeling very alone. Dealing with the financial and emotional aspects of being unexpectedly single can be challenging. We're here to help.

Adjusting to your new reality

The statistics related to women finding themselves suddenly single are striking. For instance, the average age of widowhood in Canada is just 56. And in the first year after a divorce, a woman's standard of living drops an average of 45% – or even more among high-earning families.

The financial concerns associated with these life transitions can also be emotionally stressful. For instance, you may:

- Have to pay spousal or child support
- Discover that there is less money available for you and your children than your partner may have led you to believe, forcing you to make difficult decisions about selling assets (like your house)

- Have little experience managing money. Perhaps your partner was responsible for the family's finances while you managed the day-to-day running of the household and other caregiving matters
- Be unfamiliar with your wealth advisory team and unsure if they're acting in your best interests

We are here to help and are committed to putting you and your needs first. We want to work with you to help you gain a better understanding of your financial situation and objectives. Together, we will develop a strategy that ensures your short- and long-term requirements are met.

We will act as your coaches and teammates, answering your questions and helping you find a way forward during a difficult time. Through it all, we want you to know that you are not alone. We have your back.



Action items:

- Try to determine – and name – what you are feeling. Don't limit yourself to just one emotion. And remember, there are no wrong answers
- Honour your emotions and give yourself time to work your way through them. It isn't healthy to sweep feelings under the rug
- Keep things in perspective. During this difficult transition period, much may be new and challenging, but that won't always be the case

Recently divorced, separated or widowed? Let us help.

These life transitions are difficult – we get it. As your active partner, we can recommend solutions that will address the myriad interconnected considerations that often result – emotional, practical, financial and familial. And we'll offer that advice thoughtfully, and with sensitivity.

First, we'll have the conversations that are essential to your future – on your terms and your timeline. It's critical for you to feel comfortable, not overwhelmed, so we'll only talk when it works for you. The goal is to establish a relationship with you, not just your money.

Next, we'll determine what needs to be done right away. **Women who are suddenly single** – even those who have abundant assets – often worry that they won't be able to pay their bills. We'll help you take care of your immediate needs and then work with you to establish your financial priorities for the next month or so.

We'll guide you through this difficult time, answering your questions, providing information and acting as a reliable resource.

When you're ready, we'll start to plan for the future. Regardless of what plans you had in your old life, we'll take the time to examine what your needs and long-term goals are in your new life, for both you and your family.

Comprehensive guidance

At BMO Private Wealth, we've broken down the business line silos that you see at other institutions. Instead, our broad network of highly experienced specialists – from investment managers and private bankers, to estate, trust, tax and retirement planners, to philanthropic and business succession planning experts – will work collaboratively and in concert with your primary wealth advisor, placing your needs front and centre.



During this difficult time, try to:

- Avoid making rash, sudden or emotional decisions
- Think about who and what matters to you – in both the near and long term

Remember, your advisor should listen to you, be empathetic and sensitive to your needs and feelings, treat you with respect, inform you with clarity and move forward at your speed and comfort level.

Practical assistance

During life's transitions, there are many administrative details to take care of. We can help:

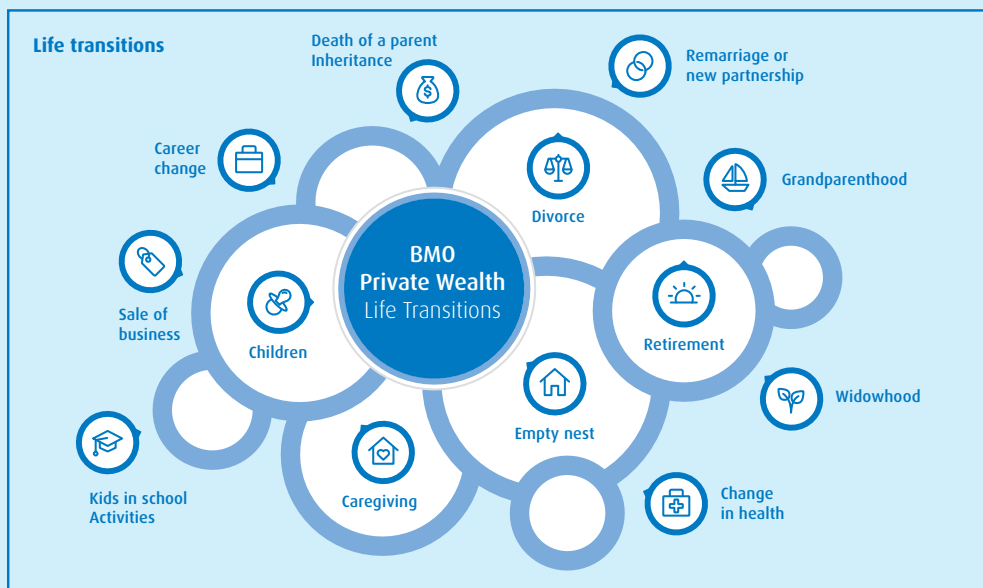
- Change the registrations on any jointly-owned financial accounts. Note that this will likely require completing and filing the relevant documentation and could take several weeks.
- Minimize your tax burdens and losses by working with BMO Tax Planners and carefully considering how to divide your assets and/or shift their ownership.
- Divide or roll over your pension and retirement accounts.
- Adjust your budget to accommodate your reduced household income, if necessary.
- Review and revise your life, health, disability and long-term care insurance coverage, as needed.

- Review and adjust the beneficiaries in your will, insurance policies and trusts, and update your powers of attorney, as necessary.
- Take inventory of your credit score:
 - Review accounts in your name and/or held jointly with your former spouse.
 - If you're divorcing, close your joint credit accounts and shift to single accounts to prevent your former partner's credit score from affecting yours.
 - If you've been widowed, contact both Canadian credit bureaus (Equifax Canada and TransUnion Canada) to let them know your spouse has died and to keep others from falsely establishing credit in his or her name.

Protecting yourself from those closest to you

It's an unfortunate reality that you may need to beware of the negative influence of family and friends. Though likely well-intentioned, loved ones may try to get involved in your financial affairs by offering unsolicited advice – but they may not be qualified to weigh in and may not have your best interests at heart.

With our help, you'll have the knowledge and support to manage your intergenerational and extended family relationships so you can protect your choices, control and independence and make sure your wishes are carried out. We will discuss how you feel about your children – or anyone else – being involved in the decision-making process and will be sure to obtain your permission before sharing any confidential information.



When multiple life transitions happen at the same time, it can be challenging to manage the conflicting priorities that result. Your BMO Private Wealth team can help you navigate all the considerations.

Contact us to start a conversation.

The Biddle Johnston Wealth Management Team

Stephen Biddle

Senior Portfolio Manager and
Senior Wealth Advisor

Email: stephen.biddle@nbpcd.com

Ashley Nichols

Client Service Associate

Tel: 780-945-5238

BMO Nesbitt Burns

800 Manulife Place

10180 - 101 Street

Edmonton, AB T5J 3S4

www.biddlejohnstonwmteam.ca



The Biddle Johnston

WEALTH MANAGEMENT TEAM

BMO Nesbitt Burns

BMO Private Wealth provides this publication for informational purposes only and it is not and should not be construed as professional advice to any individual. The information contained in this publication is based on material believed to be reliable at the time of publication, but BMO Private Wealth cannot guarantee the information is accurate or complete. Individuals should contact their BMO representative for professional advice regarding their personal circumstances and/or financial position. The comments included in this publication are not intended to be a definitive analysis of tax applicability or trust and estates law. The comments are general in nature and professional advice regarding an individual's particular tax position should be obtained in respect of any person's specific circumstances.

BMO Private Wealth is a brand name for a business group consisting of Bank of Montreal and certain of its affiliates in providing private wealth management products and services. Not all products and services are offered by all legal entities within BMO Private Wealth. Banking services are offered through Bank of Montreal. Investment management, wealth planning, tax planning and philanthropy planning services are offered through BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc. and BMO Private Investment Counsel Inc. Insurance services and products are offered through BMO Estate Insurance Advisory Services Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc. If you are already a client of BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc., please contact your Investment Advisor for more information. Estate, trust, and custodial services are offered through BMO Trust Company. BMO Private Wealth legal entities do not offer tax advice.

© Registered trademark of Bank of Montreal, used under license.

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, or referred to in any other publication, without the express written permission of BMO Private Wealth.

PCD18370