

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Lifekeeper Memory Quilt

Dr Kathleen Peters from the School of Nursing and Midwifery and Envoy Alan Staines OAM, Director, The Salvation Army Suicide Prevention – Bereavement Support Services will undertake a formal evaluation of the Lifekeeper Memory Quilt project to determine its effectiveness as a support strategy for friends and families involved, and in raising awareness of the impact of suicide in Australia. This project is funded by the Salvation Army.

'The incidence of suicide in Australia increased from 2,054 deaths in 2007, to 2,191 in 2008,' explains Dr Peters. 'This equates to around one Australian life being lost to suicide every 5 hours and, in 2006 more people died to suicide than on the nation's roads. For every person that dies by suicide, there are six people that will experience intense grief. Previous research has shown that suicide survivors receive substantially less support than those bereaved by other causes. Recently, the Salvation Army initiated the Lifekeeper Memory Quilt project which is designed as a memorial to people who have died by suicide. The idea is that it serves as a creative outlet for survivors' grief as well as a material, visual reminder of the people who have died. By putting a "face" on suicide, these quilts help to raise awareness about suicide and personalise the message.'

The research team will collect qualitative data in addition to quantitative data, to shed light on the results of the survey information gathered. The survey or quantitative component of the study will use a questionnaire to seek responses from participants regarding the effectiveness of the project as a support strategy and as a strategy for raising public awareness of suicide. In-depth interviews will be undertaken with participants of the Lifekeeper Memory Quilt project telling the story of their experiences.



Knowledge gained through this research will inform future development and promotion of the Lifekeeper Memory Quilt project and provide a framework for progressing this initiative. Further, this research has the potential to provide guidance for future interventions to be implemented by the Salvation Army and larger collaborative projects to assist people bereaved by suicide.

Project Title: Evaluation of the Lifekeeper memory Quilt Project: A mixed methods study
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