

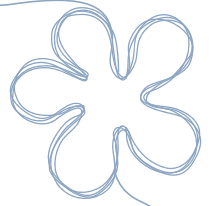


**SPEAK
THEIR NAME**

Greater Manchester
Suicide Memorial
Quilt

Stories should have a beginning, but ours starts with an ending. Stories should have an end but the end of this is just the beginning, so it's complicated. Bereavement by suicide is complicated.





The End...

Six years ago, my beautiful daughter took her own life at the age of 16. I can go back to that very moment and it still knocks the breath out of me. I don't know how I survived, I expected to just die from the pain of it all.

Bereavement by suicide is a very different grief, it's not something people like to talk about. It's shrouded in stigma, it's lonely and it's bloody hard. Support is a lottery and you have to fight for it. I survived through knitting and sewing, it kept the anxiety at bay and gave me focus.

Chapter One

I discovered other mums bereaved by suicide who were also knitting and quilting their way through grief. I spoke to Adele Owen at Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership about harnessing this art therapy and making it accessible to others bereaved. Peer support but with a focus, a project that could teach and empower others through those moments of hamster wheel anxiety. The concept of a memorial quilt was born.

Each year, more than 200 people die by suicide in Greater Manchester. That's a lot of people left behind. But those of us bereaved by suicide are not statistics, and those we have lost were people, lives stopped abruptly. The quilt would enable us to tell our stories and keep their memories alive. A way to explain the enormity of our loss and the devastation that the impact of suicide has.

The Sub Plot

All stories have a twist, ours came in the form of a pandemic. There was no question that the project should continue. We had people bereaved by suicide already suffering, with little support and isolated, all exacerbated during lockdown.

The solution was an online group, where I shared the embroidery videos that my husband helped me film. We began talking about our experiences and a community was formed. Together, throughout lockdown, we stitched.



The Final Twist

Two weeks before the end, I slipped a disc in my neck so I couldn't stitch the squares together. A group member, Heidi, is an accomplished quilter and she carried us over the finish line. Pandemics and injuries couldn't stop us, we did this together as a team.

I am incredibly proud of our group. We are warriors. We have dealt with the worst life can throw at us. Through grief we have built a community and produced the most beautiful collaborative piece of art made from love.

The Beginning

Our quilt is the beginning. Each square tells a story of the life each of us carries with us every day. A life gone too soon and a person living with unimaginable loss. This is our love letter to them. Our grief goes beyond these squares, so we ask that you read our stories. Understand suicide happens to anyone and it leaves families broken in its wake.

We made our quilt hoping you won't walk away but Speak Their Name because we still love them and we want to talk about them. Our hope is to stop suicide but also support those of us left behind.

Our quilt is a legacy and catalyst for change, a way to carry on the names of those we love.

This is the beginning.

Rebecca Jackson, Elspeth's mum

September 2020





Alistair

ALISTAIR
by Eileen

In memory of our dear son Alistair, who passed away in September 2016. He grew up in Stockport and after training to be a doctor, Ali moved to Australia where he was a consultant in anaesthesia. He pioneered improvements for better recovery and there's now a scholarship in his name.

Ali was a keen sportsman and a loyal supporter of Burnley Football Club, where he had been nurtured by his father.

He was a talented musician and loved the piano and guitar. He had been working on his band's first CD. We miss him deeply and his wonderful sense of humour, altruism and intellect.

In your name Ali. We love you always.





SAMUEL

by Dom

My square is in memory of my brother Samuel. I took part because I'd just started my grieving process, having only lost Sam in December 2019. I loved how it made me think of Sam, which is something I've struggled with.

The design celebrates Sam's passion and artwork. His art always made me smile and is a real extension of his personality, which shines through in the pieces he created. I am extremely proud to be his brother.

I've enjoyed seeing other people's work and although we're all in a club we don't want to be in, having the support of others going through the same loss is a big help.

Samuel

My squares are in memory of Ben who died by suicide on 19 August 2013 aged 14. Ben's death was very much a shock, coming out of the blue.



Ben is the twin brother of Sam and grew from a tiny 27 weeks pre-term baby into a 6ft tall, handsome young man. He was the life and soul of the party.

Ben had an immense love of music and was a percussionist. The stitched drum kit on my first square is the same colour as the kit he played. 'Rock in Peace' is also engraved on his gravestone as many of us used this phrase after he had died.





This square features the support mechanisms that helped us following our bereavement.

Faith is very important to us and our Church community supported us from day one. We see rainbows as a sign from our loved ones in heaven, while the butterfly symbolises that Ben's spirit lives on.

My family have comforted and protected us, so are at the centre of the 'SonFlower'. We renamed them after Ben died as we saw them everywhere and they reflect his sunny disposition.

Ben is so loved and missed, his photo shows that he will live in our hearts forever.

I added Papyrus UK's HOPELINEUK number in the hope that people will seek support in their time of need.

Ben



STEVIE
by Sarah

My square is dedicated to my friend, Stevie. The last time I saw him was before I moved to Shanghai and I promised that I would return to Manchester. Sadly, when I did, it was too late. I flew home for his funeral, which he would've seen as decadent and loved. I'm so sad that I can't share my daughter with Stevie, he would have loved her so much.

My design represents my grief and sadness. I'd wanted to do something to commemorate Stevie and this felt right. I miss him terribly.

The group is supportive and compassionate and I've loved sharing my story. Seeing everyone's squares has been so emotional and heartfelt.

Stevie

Lew

LEW

by Jen

In memory of my son Lew, who was beautiful, funny, and kind. Lew was unbelievably creative, which he expressed through mesmerising saxophone improvisations and song lyrics.

He succumbed to the traumatic and misunderstood disease of psychosis. While there is breath in our bodies, we will include him in everything we say and do. He is completely loved and painfully missed.

Suicide is incredibly complex and those left behind suffer further through other people's silence, misunderstanding, fear, and judgement.

Mental illness needs to be researched and understood like any other illness. I hope that this quilt, and all the lives represented in it, can help people better understand.



ELSPETH by Rebecca

My beautiful girl with her wild curly hair,
head in a book, stripy woolly tights and
purple Doc Martens with yellow laces.
Clattering down the stairs like a herd of
elephants, laughing, up to mischief, hiding in my
wardrobe to leap out at me just as I'd settled into bed, excited
for Halloween, excited for Christmas. Playing Green Day on
your purple ukulele, raiding the cake tin, knitting that enormous
blanket, watching Christmas movies in July. Nobody fills those
shoes or the hole you have left in my heart.





You are taking my photo and it is my face at 14 looking back at me. You were my mini me. When you left, part of me died with you. We see reflections of ourselves in our children, when they die, we see nothing, the light goes out on that part of our life.

Elsbeth

Aislinn

AISLINN
by Natalia

My sister Aislinn was my closest friend and the sunshine in the lives of those that love her. She was beautiful, goofy, strong, and full of love and kindness.

My square represents Aislinn's eternal love for her son and his love for her. A love so strong that it will always exist. We've told him that his amazing mummy is now a star whose light shines down and watches over him.

This project has made me feel less alone, especially during this pandemic. Mainly, it has shown me how strong we are to keep going. I've enjoyed the focus embroidery has given me and turning my pain into something positive for Aislinn.





ELLEN
by Caroline

I heard a story about grief being like a boat lost at sea. A journey you never wanted to embark on, but you have no choice but to ride the waves and keep the boat from sinking. The solace you find is from the love of others, showing you that you aren't drifting in the deep blue sea alone.

After losing my best friend, Ellen, it was hard to see the good in the world. Spending time with Ellen's loved ones showed me that although grief is a permanent state, you don't have to endure it alone.

Speak Their Name is so important and special, inspiring hope and togetherness in times of grief.

Ellen

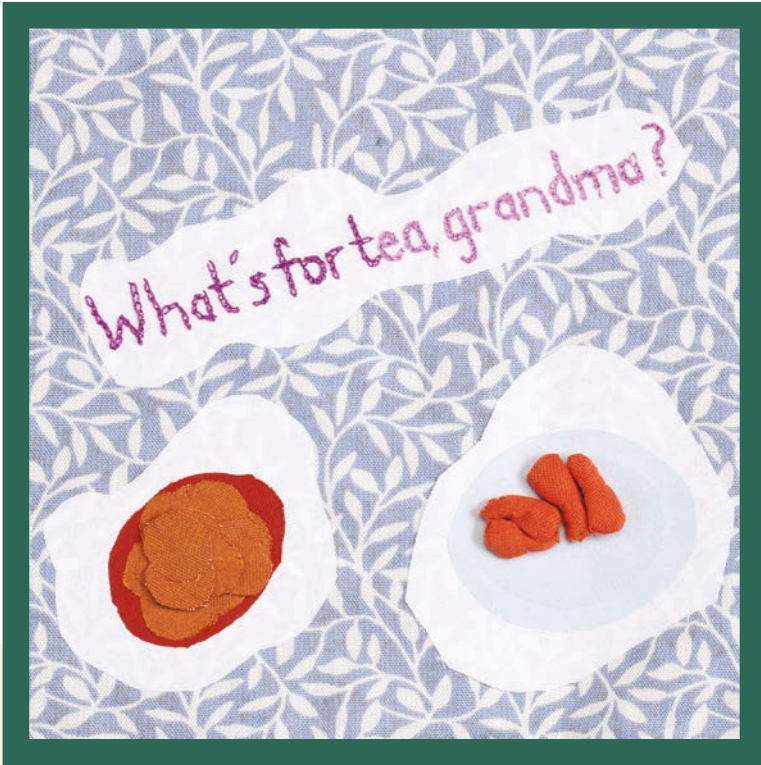
ELSPETH

by Elinor

It's been six years since we lost our beautiful, clever and talented granddaughter, Elspeth. When someone dies by suicide, it's very difficult to talk about them as often as we would like.

Making the squares has been the first chance I've had to do anything positive to express my feelings and think about my many memories. My first square shouts out her name.





My second square reminds me of the happy days, when we picked up our two grandchildren from school to come to our house for their tea. I can hear Elspeth's voice asking "What's for tea Grandma?" as she got into the back seat of the car.

I hope that everyone who has taken part has felt the same benefit as I have from the project.

Elspeth



TYLER
by Deborah

My square is in memory of my 19-year-old son Tyler who tragically lost his fight for life in 2014.

When Tyler passed away, a graffiti artist painted his name which has become his trademark. My square features Tyler's silhouette, which contains a map of Manchester, and the colours show his musical talent and love for reggae. The design is taken from his order of service and so holds a lot of significance.

I took part to express my love for my son and to spread awareness of suicide. I enjoyed creating my square, it kept me focused and busy throughout lockdown. It was nice to learn about everyone else's journey through their art.

Tyler

Jon

JON
by Vanessa

Our square is in memory of my brother Jon William who we lost in 2011, aged 30.

We chose to include a picture of Jon and some of his favourite things in his memory. We decided to take part as we always want Jon to be remembered.

Creating this square has helped to heal the pain of losing him by being involved with other families who are experiencing the same feelings. As a family we want to raise awareness to anybody that may be struggling to always talk and seek help. It's a fantastic project and we would like to thank everybody involved.



COLIN
by Tree

I made two squares for my funny, big-hearted best friend Colin. They sit either side at the top of the quilt which feels like the protective hug he was always ready to give. In one I wanted to capture him through his twinkly, kind smile.

In the other Col is leaving so only his outline of his head remains and the names of those who loved him are afloat beside him. The cosmos was inspired by my old hippie top which came on all our adventures and felt right to go with him here.





Making these was emotional as well as therapeutic. I got a lot from the group because we encouraged each other and understood the unique grief experienced when you lose someone you love to suicide.

The quilt has been created through the eyes of loved ones and in such a visual way that it allows conversations to begin simply by it being seen. I hope that seeing the quilt and reading these stories removes barriers for people who might be fearful of talking about suicide. The quilt humanises a taboo subject which still holds stigma and misunderstanding and I hope it encourages non-judgemental thinking as a result.

Colin

Paul

PAUL
by Toni

My square is in memory of my much-loved husband of 41 years, Paul.

Paul was a humble man cherished by all his family. He was caring, generous and always willing to help. He suffered with enduring mental illness and consequently, never fulfilled his potential.

Music was a big part of his life, he was an amateur drummer which is represented with the treble clef and drum. The light bulb is for his time as an electrician and the football boots show his love for the sport. Finally, the heart symbolises my heart and soul, which he has taken with him.

Speak Their Name is a beautiful way for our loved ones to be remembered.





**MY
BROTHER**
by
Anonymous

My square is in memory of my brother.

I got involved in the project because I felt Speak Their Name is very fitting. My brother should not be forgotten.

This year marks 10 years of my brother being in heaven. Due to Covid-19, it was difficult to mark this as we would have liked, so making this square really helped me get through that time.

My brother

Anne

The square is in memory of my Mum, Anne.

Rainbows remind us of Mum and also the beauty in every storm, so my friend made this rainbow heart. The heart reflects my love for my Mum and the words stitched around the heart represent who she was to our family.

ANNE
by Katie

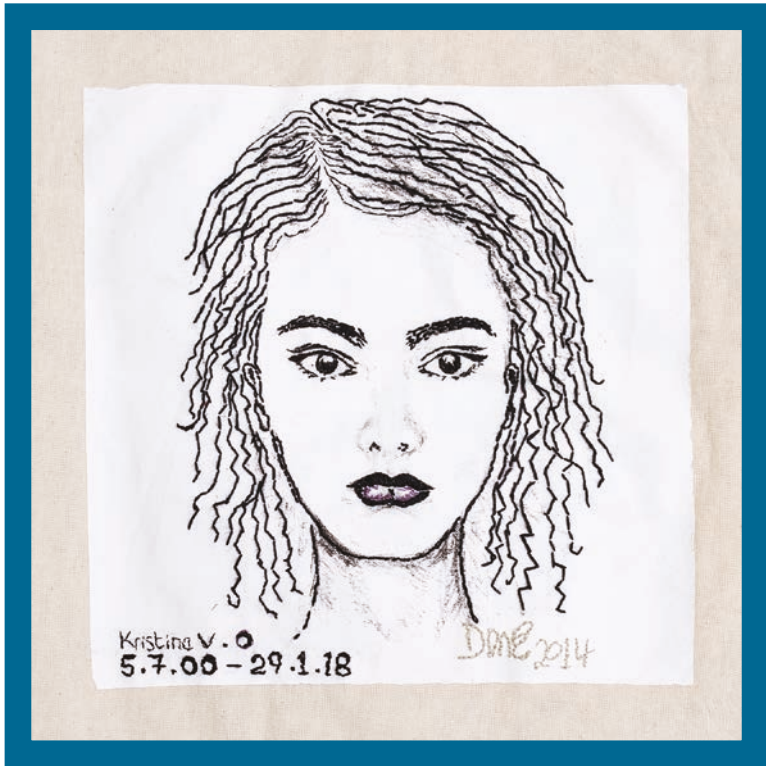




ANNE
by her
grandchildren

This square was made by my children and is in memory of their Grandma, Anne. It was done mostly by them with just a little bit of help from me.

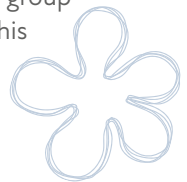
The design shows things they remember about their Grandma, the activities they enjoyed doing with her and the things that remind them of her. Things like how she would read lots of stories to them, how she enjoyed Norwich City play football, and the baking she did with them.



KRISTINA
by Donna

In memory of my daughter Kristina, who was 17 years old when she passed away in 2018.

The design is a copy of a drawing of Kristina that I did when she was 14 years old. I have enjoyed being part of the group. As well as learning new skills, being part of the group has helped me to feel less isolated in this very complicated grief.



Kristina

Paul

PAUL

by June

Paul was a very dear and valued friend. He was kind, quiet and had a lovely nature. He loved the simple pleasures in life like camping, holidays on the Norfolk Broads, and chatting to friends over a nice cup of tea.

Sport was one of his favourite pastimes as was mastering the art of skating. He was a talented drummer and music was a big part of his life. Three Steps to Heaven was one of his favourite songs.

I've found this project very therapeutic. Every stitch brought back all those lovely memories, making the happy times come to life.





MARIE
by Leone

My squares are in memory of Marie, my best friend of 40 years. We met when we were 15 and hit it off instantly and were a huge part of each other's families. She was the kindest, most loyal, giving friend as well as an amazing mum and loving partner.

Her death was so unexpected and has affected me in a way I never thought possible. The immense pain, grief and anxiety is, at times, unbearable.

Marie

I'd never sewn before but the benefits have been amazing. If I'm feeling low or anxious, I sew and the distraction is instantly calming. I've gotten so much out of this project. We're all part of this unique group that no one would ever choose to be part of. But here we are and we support each other in a way that no one else could understand.

If the quilt raises awareness and shows just one person that suicide is preventable, then it's been so worth it.

The quilt is beautiful, how can it not be when every stitch is sewn with so much love?



Jack

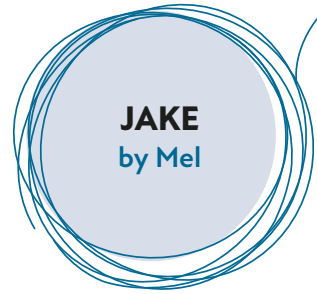
JACK
by Pauline

My wonderful son Jack, known to his friends as Biggie, chose to leave this world just three weeks before his 21st birthday. He was a kind, considerate, generous, and humorous young man, loved by all.

Jack had always wanted a tattoo, so I had one done for him inspired by his favourite song, Star Shopping by Lil Peep. Stars are a big part of my life now, so my design is a replica of the tattoo I had done for Jack.

Escaping into the crafting world has been good for the soul but hearing other people's stories has been the most rewarding part. We're all on this terrible journey together and mutual support helps us all along the way.

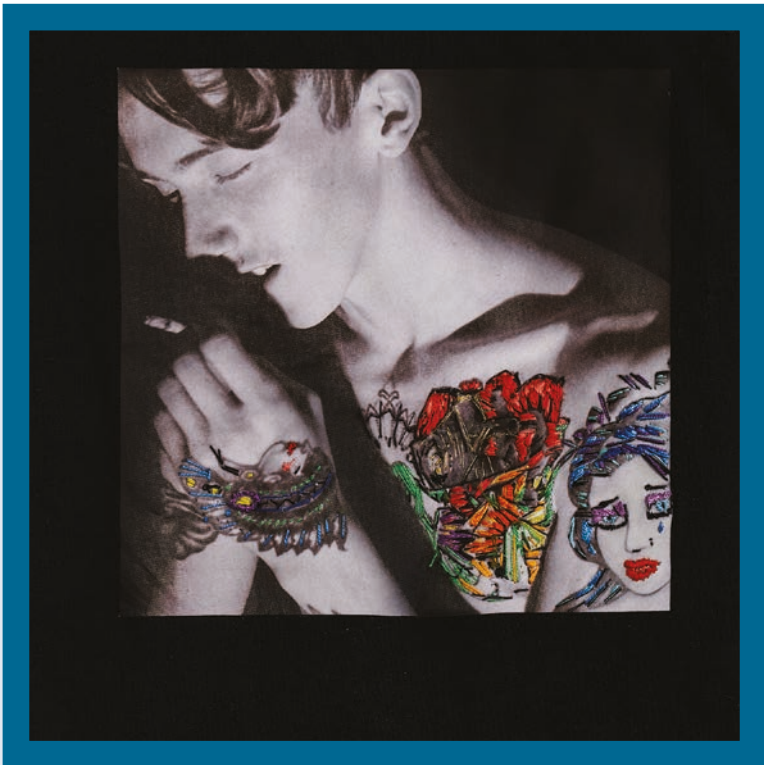




JAKE
by Mel

I lost my beautiful, warm, intelligent, quirky and creative son Jake to suicide on 23 August 2015. Like any 23 year old, Jake had masses of potential and his whole life ahead of him. He was studying Contemporary Photography and was passionate about a career in this field.

Jake had amazing friends and was confident and articulate. He was adored by everyone who knew and met him.





I considered many images and ideas for this project but the two squares I finally chose to design really do represent Jake's character and talents. I've added some colour to Jake's tattoos for one of my squares. For the other, I printed a silhouette portrait that Jake took of himself and added his signature in gold thread.

I love that through this project, I have been able to connect with Jake's creative side and add something to it myself. Speaking their name is so important as those of us bereaved by suicide never want to forget our loved ones.

Jake

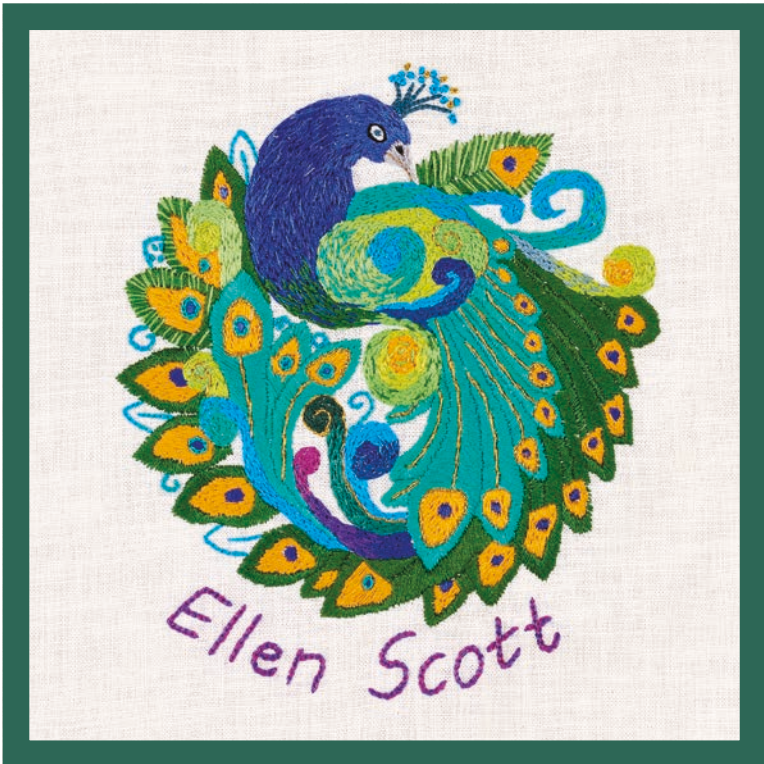
Ellen

ELLEN by Anna

My square is in memory of my inspirational daughter, Ellen. She was passionate about helping others with their mental health, despite battling depression and self-harm.

The sun represents Ellen's child, who was three when she died. The gaps in the feathers represent her unfinished peacock tattoo and the life she should have lived. Purple signifies the purple Dr Martens she wore, despite them falling to pieces and the gold represents the joy she spread.

Ellen was my girl and I will always feel the pain of her not being here and always be proud of her. My best effort has been put into this square and I think I've made her proud.





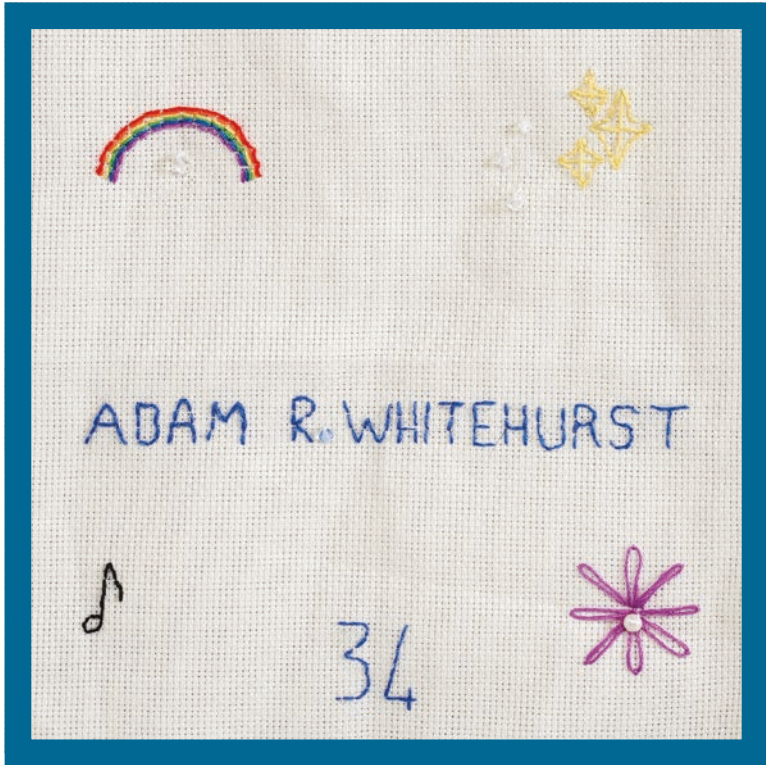
KRISTINA
by Rebekah

This square is in memory of my sister Kristina.

I used some of Kristina's own fabrics and incorporated them as part of the design.

I decided to take part in Speak Their Name in memory of my sister.

Kristina



ADAM
by Elizabeth

In memory of my son Adam, who died five years ago.

He was fun, caring, vibrant and he enriched the lives of others.

I wanted his name to be on the quilt as Adam had worked in Manchester since 2006. He is so missed by his family and friends.

He is forever loved.

Adam

Shirley

SHIRLEY
by Wyn

I made three squares in memory of my daughter Shirley. She took her own life on 29 September 2014, aged 40.

Shirley loved flowers so I created Shirley's Garden.





She also loved to read so I made her a book and called it 'Your Kiss on the Wind'. The title is inspired by a beautiful poem with the same title that my friend wrote for me two months after Shirley died.

My final square has a card with 'my beautiful daughter' written on it, a butterfly and a pink heart with pain lines sewn through it.



Shirley

Beth

BETH
by Karen

My square is in memory of my youngest daughter Beth, who died to suicide in April 2019, aged 26. Beth was a vibrant, happy and beautiful young woman. Her kindness was unfaltering in everything she did in her personal life and as a passionate Occupational Therapist working with older people.





Our whole family struggled following the murder of my niece Samantha in 2012. Sadly in 2015, my husband Ian took his own life. Beth and Ian were especially close, they had a very strong father and daughter relationship. Beth was amazing and supported us all, but she never got over his death.



As time passes, everyone thinks you are managing, but suicide and the complexity of grief is so multi-layered. Beth was struggling but I thought the strength of our relationship was a protective factor. Sadly, it wasn't, and I lost my precious girl.

I miss her so much. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share her story and honour her memory in this wonderful project. I hope she is safe and at peace and that people see Beth's girliness, profession and hope in these squares.

Beth

The positive impact of creating something so special for our loved ones is truly amazing. Meeting others who really get it and know how hard it is has given us a support network. There is very little help for families bereaved to suicide and service provision is a postcode lottery. If it wasn't for this group, many of us would be isolated and trying to get through it alone.





DANNY
by Liz

My square is in memory of my son Danny who died on 27 December 2014, aged 23.

Danny was a wonderful young man who made me proud every day. He had a loving family, girlfriend, and friends, and he'd just started a promising career in the police. He's left a Danny-shaped hole in many people's lives.

I took part to speak Danny's name with pride and highlight the need for suicide prevention strategies.

I've enjoyed learning a hobby that's helped me manage my grief. Being in touch with others who understand the challenges that bereavement through suicide brings has been a great support.

Danny

Jacqueline

JACQUELINE
by Andrea

My square has been created in loving memory of my beautiful sister, Jacqueline. She lost her battle with depression on 2 August 2018, aged 32. She's left a hole that will never heal and I want her legacy to live on.

The rainbow is from her son's mobile and the heart was cut from one of our matching scarfs. The candy skull, which Jacqueline had a tattoo of, is a reminder to celebrate that our loved ones had lived, rather than mourn their loss. It felt right to add her signature, the date she was born and when she left us. Just a collection of numbers, but so significant they can leave me broken.



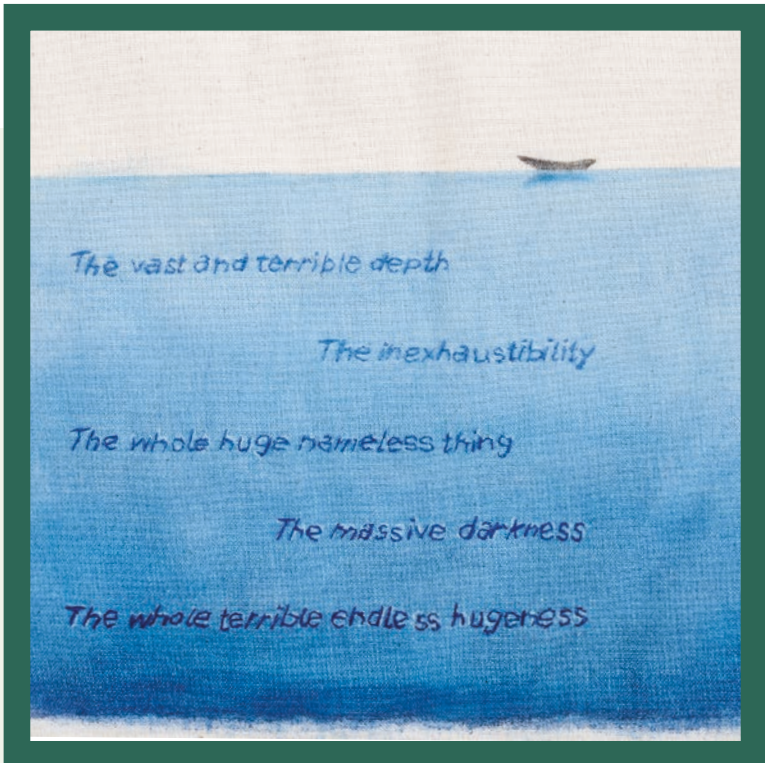


IAN

by Sara

I've made four squares in memory of my brother Ian. I wanted to involve my sister-in-law, my parents and Ian's two daughters, so it seemed right to make a square on behalf of them too.

I'm an artist and my brother's suicide has had an enormous impact on my work. I used symbolism, family photographs and relevant elements from my childhood, like the flame tree flower and rhinoceros beetle from the Solomon Islands, where my brother and I were raised. The sea and canoe represent loss and distance.





When I heard about the quilt, I was excited to take part in a project about something as hugely important and often overlooked as bereavement by suicide. It really is a hard and complicated grief. Few people, however caring they are, want to talk about it, so sharing our grief and receiving comfort can be difficult and I often feel very alone. The stigma surrounding suicide is still a problem and it's bereaved families and friends that suffer the judgements and criticisms. That really must end.

Ian

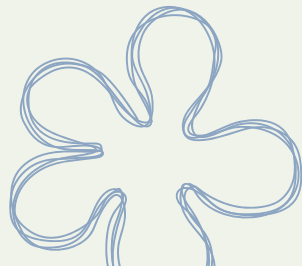


Hopefully, now all our stories are sewn into the quilt, it will raise awareness, openness and a willingness to listen.

I thoroughly enjoyed making the squares and I learnt a lot. I realised that I'd found a group where I could talk about my brother and how much of an impact his death has had on me without feeling like a killjoy or drama queen. It felt safe, supportive and truly comforting. It's also been a piece of joy in an otherwise joyless time.



Ian



We created four squares as a family in memory of Craig. It made us work together as a family which we did enjoy and most importantly made us reflect on our loss, but celebrate fond memories that we will always have.



Memories of movie night

By Levon



Craig



No one is cooler than Dad

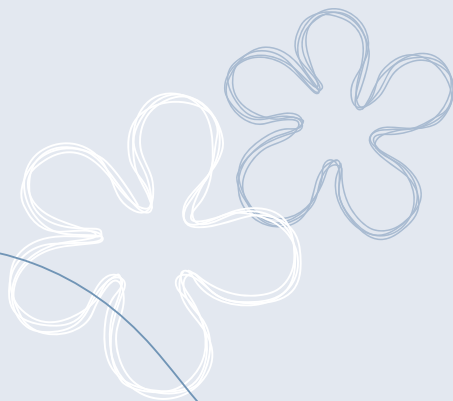
By Orla

"We take everything too much
for granted, including each other..."



Leader of the family

By Georgia



Craig

Memories in words

By Rose



Isaac

ISAAC
by
Karen

The design includes precious memories of our son Isaac from ourselves, our children and grandchildren, as well as special messages we received.





Reach out: Start to End Suicide

by
Dennis

My work as part of the Reach Out: Start to End Suicide campaign has given me the privilege of holding an annual Vigil of Remembrance in Salford on World Suicide Prevention Day.

As part of our vigil, we have a roll of remembrance of all the names of those that we have lost to suicide. When compiling this roll, I have the honour of speaking to the loved ones of those that we lost to suicide.

This square is in praise of those lives that we have lost but also in admiration of those that have been left behind.

by
Adele

Hope

When I was a police officer, I responded when people had taken their lives and I had to break the tragic news to their loved ones. I remember each and every one of them.

My square includes forget-me-not flowers so that those who died will always be remembered, and the word 'Hope' for their loved ones who live on with their loss.





by
Adele

Speak Their Name

A simple message to highlight the importance of continuing to speak the name of those lost to suicide with their loved ones.

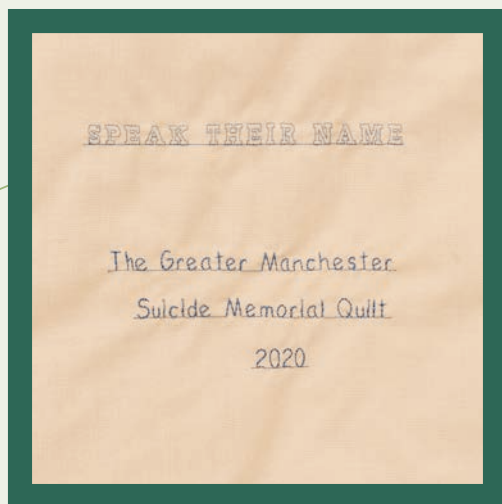


by
Adele

Shining a Light on Suicide

The Greater Manchester Shining a Light on Suicide campaign was launched in May 2019 to raise awareness of the impact suicide was having across our city-region. The campaign aims to encourage people to talk about suicide to save lives and support those bereaved by suicide.

It was an honour for the square to be added to the Speak Their Name Quilt.



Speak Their Name is in memory of all those lost to suicide in Greater Manchester.

Thank you to everyone who has joined our online community and to everyone that contributed to the Greater Manchester Suicide Memorial Quilt.

Greater Manchester Bereavement Service

Greater Manchester Bereavement Service can help to find support for anyone in Greater Manchester that has been bereaved or affected by a death. No one needs to feel alone as they deal with their grief.

Find out more: www.greater-manchester-bereavement-service.org.uk

Call 0161 9983 0902

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (except bank holidays)

Speak Their Name Facebook group

If you've been bereaved by suicide and want to join the online community, search Speak Their Name on Facebook or visit:

www.facebook.com/groups/SpeakTheirNameGM

Shining a Light on Suicide

A Greater Manchester campaign to bring the topic of suicide out of the dark by encouraging everyone to talk openly about it. As well as aiming to prevent suicide, the campaign provides information to help those bereaved by suicide. Find out more:

www.shiningalightonsuicide.org.uk

**Greater
Manchester**

**Health and
Social Care
Partnership**

