

GriefLink

GriefLink.org.au

Annual Report GriefLink Incorporated July 2020 - June 2021

This is now the third Annual Report I have presented on behalf of GriefLink, and it is my privilege to present this report today. I want to begin this report by acknowledging and paying tribute to two committee members who retired from our Management Committee this year.

Both Dr Teresa Burgess and Dr Gillian Laven, who announced their resignations in January 2021, were part of the original GriefLink Project in 1998-99. Their dedication to GriefLink, their persistence against all challenges, and their contributions over more than 20 years have been immeasurable.

For Dr Laven, leaving GriefLink has meant further embracing her retirement, and we offer her our very good wishes for the future. We will miss her acute eye and skills on the website.

For Dr Burgess, her resignation was forced by deteriorating health, and we were shocked and deeply saddened by the news of her death in June. We have lost a great friend and colleague.

COVID-19 has continued to complicate many aspects of our work in the last 12 months, but the projects we undertook last year are mostly complete or very near completion. The implications for grief in relation to the coronavirus pandemic are still highlighted on the home page, with the *Facing Coronavirus* page behind it. Although the actual death toll in Australia has never reached the levels experienced overseas, the separation of families from their loved ones, and all the other aspects of the pandemic have taken a heavy toll on many people. South Australia's mental health resources are still highlighted on these pages.

The funding for GriefLink to participate in South Australia's COVID-19 Virtual Support Network has enabled us to work on Search Engine Optimisation. Much groundwork has been completed, but it is apparent that this will need to continue into the future as well.

Of the palliative care projects directed to issues in aged care that were funded in 2020 by SA Health and Wellbeing, the collaboration between Flinders University Research Centre in Palliative Care, Death, and Dying was very successful. From the work done by Dr Jennifer Tieman's team, an extremely useful booklet for families dealing with grief and loss in Residential Aged Care was produced. Their research then provided the basis for a new GriefLink page, *Grief associated with Residential Aged Care*. It also provided an opportunity for the committee to complete the page on *Grief associated with Dementia* which had been planned for some time.

As I mentioned in my last report, GriefLink was successful in being awarded a Suicide Prevention Community Grant for 2020-2021. There were a number of elements involved in the project: the creation of two podcasts, the addition of a page focussing on *Suicide, grief and child abuse*, and adding audio to the pages of the suicide hub. With the help of our Suicide Prevention Reference Group, the two podcast topics decided on were, first, aspects of grief following bushfire, and for the

second, grief in multicultural contexts including Aboriginal perspectives. The first podcast was completed with support from Anglicare SA and the help of Professor Nicholas Procter, and Lee Boulger and Jacob Mangelsdorf from Anglicare SA's Suicide Prevention Service. Unfortunately, the second podcast has been delayed, but we anticipate it will be finalised soon. It's been a rather steep learning curve as we have embarked on this new future. We are very grateful for all the work that has been carried out on these projects by Dr Katherine Hodgetts.

GriefLink has continued to be represented on the Palliative Care Clinical Network Bereavement Advisory group by Mary Brooksbank and David Roach, and the Bereavement Project committee by Mary Brooksbank.

Various pieces of work have been carried out in the initial Bereavement Project which was directed by Kate Swetenham, SA Health and Wellbeing, and included Palliative Care SA CEO, Mark Waters, Professor Jennifer Tieman, Director of the Flinders University Research Centre in Palliative Care, Death, and Dying (REPADD) and GriefLink. For its part, after some delays, GriefLink is nearing completion of work to improve web page accessibility by creating audio pages across the whole web site. Most significantly, though, the results of a survey directed at General Practitioners will be presented soon to the Advisory Committee by Professor Jennifer Tieman, Director of the Flinders University Research Centre in Palliative Care, Death, and Dying (REPADD). It is hoped that this information will help guide the development of a population-health-based Bereavement Plan for South Australia.

Looking ahead, the work of keeping GriefLink as relevant and up to date as possible will continue through 2022, as well as seeking opportunities to contribute to South Australia's Bereavement Plan. The committee is also planning to work on an Australian adaptation of an American resource to assist Funeral Directors in their work with families who have been bereaved by suicide.

In closing I would like to thank all the members of the GriefLink Management Committee for another productive year under difficult circumstances. Ultimately responsibility for web content rests with the GriefLink committee, but I also wish to sincerely thank the members of the GriefLink Suicide Prevention Reference Group, and those people who have provided professional and editorial assistance with our new pages in the last year. All these people are listed at the end of the report.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank Alfred James Funeral Homes for their ongoing support and sponsorship. We are also very grateful for the ongoing 'in kind' support from the University of Adelaide, AnglicareSA and the University of South Australia.

James Anthony Consulting have continued to steer us through the intricacies of the world-wide-web, and we thank them for their expertise and support.

*Mary Brooksbank
Chair, GriefLink Management Committee
15th October 2021*

GriefLink Management Committee 2020-2021

Dr Mary Brooksbank AM, MB BS, FRACS, FChPM

Honorary Fellow, University of Adelaide

Retired Director of Palliative Care, Royal Adelaide Hospital and Medical Director, Mary Potter Hospice, Calvary North Adelaide Healthcare (1995-2009)

Retired Chair, Palliative Care SA (2010-2016)

Chair 2018 ongoing

David Roach OAM, BA (Soc Wk), MSW

Retired Palliative Care social worker, with a particular focus on grief and bereavement.

Retired Lecturer, Social Work (Grief and Bereavement), Flinders University,

Founding member of GriefLink

Deputy Chair 2018 ongoing

Dr Katherine Hodgetts PhD (Psychology), BA (Hons)

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Public Health, University of Adelaide

Acting Secretary 2021 and Project Officer 2020-2021

Dr Jaklin Elliott, PhD

Senior Lecturer and Post-Graduate Coordinator, School of Public Health, University of Adelaide

Program Coordinator (Research/1st year liaison), Graduate Program in Counselling and

Psychotherapy, University of Adelaide

Michael Traynor

Manager, Loss & Grief Services, AnglicareSA

Kate Obst BPsych (Hons)

Combined PhD/Master of Psychology (Health) Candidate, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Adelaide

Caitlin Hennessy BHlthSc

Lived experience, LGBTIQ+ mental health ambassador

GriefLink Suicide Prevention Reference Group 2020-2021

Prof Nicholas Procter	University of South Australia
Ms Jill Chapman	MOSH (Minimisation of Suicide Harm)
Ms Chez Curnow	Country SA PHN
Ms Megs Lamb	Multicultural Communities Council SA
Mr Ian James	OCP (Office of the Chief Psychiatrist)

Editorial and Professional advice 2020-2021

Mary Galouzis	Talk out Loud
Dr Bridget Warnes	Consultant Psychiatrist, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Women's and Children's Health Network, SA Health
Professor Jennifer Tieman	Director, Research Centre for Palliative Care, Death and Dying, Flinders university