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A meta-ethnography of male suicide bereavement qualitative research

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*Alex Whitebrook*

*03-Feb-1991 ~ 01-May-2017*

# A META-ETHNOGRAPHY OF MALE SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

John Whitebrook



UNIVERSITY OF  
WEST LONDON

UWL Doctoral Students  
Conference 14-Jul-2023



Survivors of  
Bereavement  
by Suicide



### Research Programme Graphic

Male suicide bereavement, trauma, men & help-seeking, postvention & peer support etc.

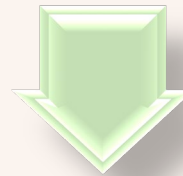
Lived experiences of men bereaved by suicide: impact, coping, support sought / taken up etc.

Exploring barriers and facilitators to postvention uptake & effectiveness; including providers & non-participatory men

Exploring the factors that may determine postvention uptake & effectiveness in men, including non-participatory men (demographics, loss, stigma, attitudes, wellness etc.)

Literature

M.Sc.



Library, Google Scholar

Protocol

Interviews

Survey

Thesis

#### Broad Literature Review:

Cross-sectional overview of postvention in male context

#### Meta-ethnography:

Review of male postvention qualitative research

#### Qualitative Study:

Identification of key drivers regarding male postvention

#### Quantitative Study:

Contribution of main drivers for male postvention uptake & effectiveness

#### Unique Contribution:

- Essential insights into the factors impacting UK & Ireland adult males bereaved by suicide, and how postvention approaches require modification to meet their needs

#### Possible Impacts:

- Greater awareness and understanding, facilitating a more unified approach to suicide postvention
- Description, and enablement, of a key role for male survivors in determining the approach to postvention

# META-ETHNOGRAPHY

Meta-Ethnography: Synthesizing Qualitative studies  
(Noblit & Hare, 1988):

- The synthesis of interpretive research
- Involves the translation of studies into one another
- The translation of studies takes the form of an analogy between and/or among the studies
- ‘making a whole into something more than the parts alone imply’

Improving reporting of meta-ethnography: The eMERGe reporting guidance (France et al., 2019):

- To provide guidance to improve the completeness and clarity of meta-ethnography reporting
- Recommendations and good practice for all seven phases of meta-ethnography conduct and reporting were newly identified leading to 19 reporting criteria and accompanying detailed guidance

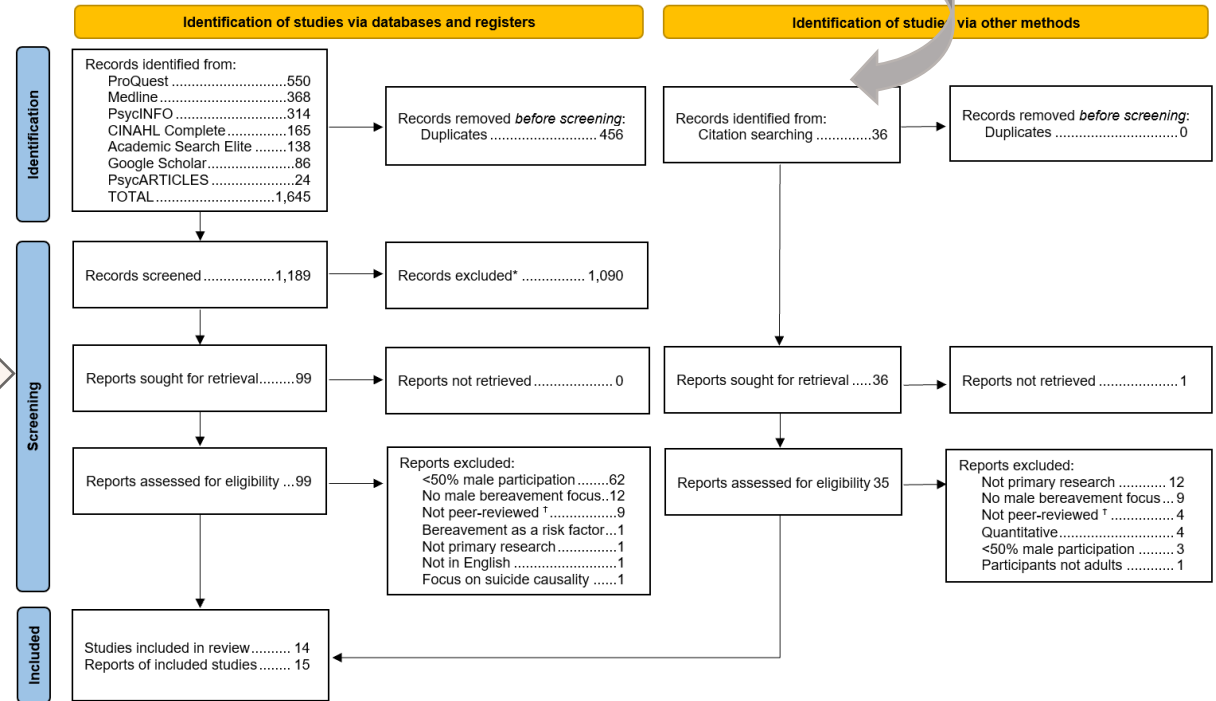
# META-ETHNOGRAPHY: STRUCTURED APPROACH

- Timeframe
- Team
- Review question:
  - **What are the lived experiences of men bereaved by suicide?**
- Data sources
- Population
- Searches
- Types of study
- Data extraction
- Risk of bias (quality) assessment
- Strategy for data synthesis
- Language
- Dissemination plans
- Inclusion / exclusion criteria
- **>50% Male participation**

Database	Search Strategy	Results
Academic Search Elite	(suicid* OR self-killing) AND (grie* OR bereave* OR mourn* OR loss) AND (survivor* OR relative* OR relation* OR dependant* OR family OR parent OR spouse* OR widower OR child* OR sibling* OR orphan* OR friend*) AND (male* or men or man) AND Apply related words ✓   Apply equivalent subjects ✓   Language = English	138
CINAHL Complete	(suicid* OR self-killing) AND (grie* OR bereave* OR mourn* OR loss) AND (survivor* OR relative* OR relation* OR dependant* OR family OR parent OR spouse* OR widower OR child* OR sibling* OR orphan* OR friend*) AND (male* or men or man) AND Apply related words ✓   Apply equivalent subjects ✓ Language = English   Limits: Human   Sex = Male   Age Groups = All Adult	165
Medline (OVID)	(suicid* OR self-killing) AND (grie* OR bereave* OR mourn* OR loss) AND (survivor* OR relative* OR relation* OR dependant* OR family OR parent OR spouse* OR widower OR child* OR sibling* OR orphan* OR friend*) AND (male* or men or man) AND Limits: Humans   English Language   Male   Age Groups = All Adult (19 plus years)   Map term to sub-heading ✓	368
PsycARTICLES	(suicid* OR self-killing) AND (grie* OR bereave* OR mourn* OR loss) AND (survivor* OR relative* OR relation* OR dependant* OR family OR parent OR spouse* OR widower OR child* OR sibling* OR orphan* OR friend*) AND (male* or men or man) AND Apply related words ✓   Apply equivalent subjects ✓ Age Groups = Adulthood (18 years & older)   Population Group = Male   Language = English (post query)	24
PsycINFO	(suicid* OR self-killing) AND (grie* OR bereave* OR mourn* OR loss) AND (survivor* OR relative* OR relation* OR dependant* OR family OR parent OR spouse* OR widower OR child* OR sibling* OR orphan* OR friend*) AND (male* or men or man) AND Apply related words ✓   Apply equivalent subjects ✓ Age Groups = Adulthood (18 years & older)   Language = English   Population Group = Male	31
ProQuest	(suicid* OR self-killing) AND (grie* OR bereave* OR mourn* OR loss) [in ABSTRACT] AND (survivor* OR relative* OR relation* OR dependant* OR family OR parent OR spouse* OR widower OR child* OR sibling* OR orphan* OR friend*) AND (male* or men or Language = English	550
Google Scholar	With all the words – (suicide bereavement) With the exact phrase – With at least one of the words – (qualitative research methods interview ethnographic phenomenological experience experiences) Without the words – Where my words occur – @in the title of the article Language = English   Include citations ✓	86
TOTAL =		1645

Protocol<sup>1</sup>

PRISMA Flowchart<sup>2</sup>



Iteration

Review

Quality Assessment<sup>3</sup>

Defined  
Data Searches

1. Prospero (International prospective register of systematic reviews) format:  
<https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/>
2. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses - PRISMA 2020 explanation and elaboration: updated guidance and exemplars for reporting systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021)
3. CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) qualitative studies checklist

# SYNTHESIS

IMPACT: questioning of own existence and purpose (including suicidal ideation); searching for answers...

BLAME: judgement, disrespect, low empathy, religious dogma. Self-blame leading to withdrawal...

HEALTHCARE & SUPPORT: deceased's mental health / self-harm or suicide attempts; let down by healthcare system...

DISTRESS: shock, anger, fear, guilt, agony, grief, anxiety, denial, depression, injustice...

RESPONSIBILITY: failure to keep the deceased safe; protective towards other survivors...

CULTURE: taboo regarding suicide and mourning; systemic broad and long-term denial...

MEMORIALISATION: continuing bonds, pride and personal growth, spirituality; shattered dreams, relief.

INNER CONFLICTS: e.g., emotional pain but fear of losing the connection if it fades; guilty of keeping secrets...

## ➡ EIGHT CONCEPTS



# SYNTHESIS

IMPACT: questioning of  
own existence...

**Changed Forever:** the  
impacts of suicide are  
not transitional but  
life-changing and  
permanent...

DISTRESS: shock,  
anxiety...

**Trauma:** the effect of  
bereavement by suicide  
is far reaching and the  
adaptation process  
non-linear...

BLAME: judgement,  
disapproval...

**Stigmatisation:** mental  
health and suicide,  
frowned upon; survivors  
are frequently judged...

RESPONSIBILITY:

**Protector:** sense of  
failure to protect those  
lost; feel responsible for  
subsequently keeping  
others safe from  
suicide...

MEMORIALISATION:

**Lost futures:** the lives  
that could have been  
are mourned, even as  
survivors fondly recall  
those they lost...

HEALTHCARE &  
SUPPORT: deceased's  
needs...

**Lost in plain sight:**  
millions significantly  
affected but not  
recognised in terms of  
their losses, trauma  
and support needs...

CULTURE: taboo  
regarding suicide...

**Societal norms:** losses  
within framework of  
culture and society;  
constrained by  
acceptable customs...

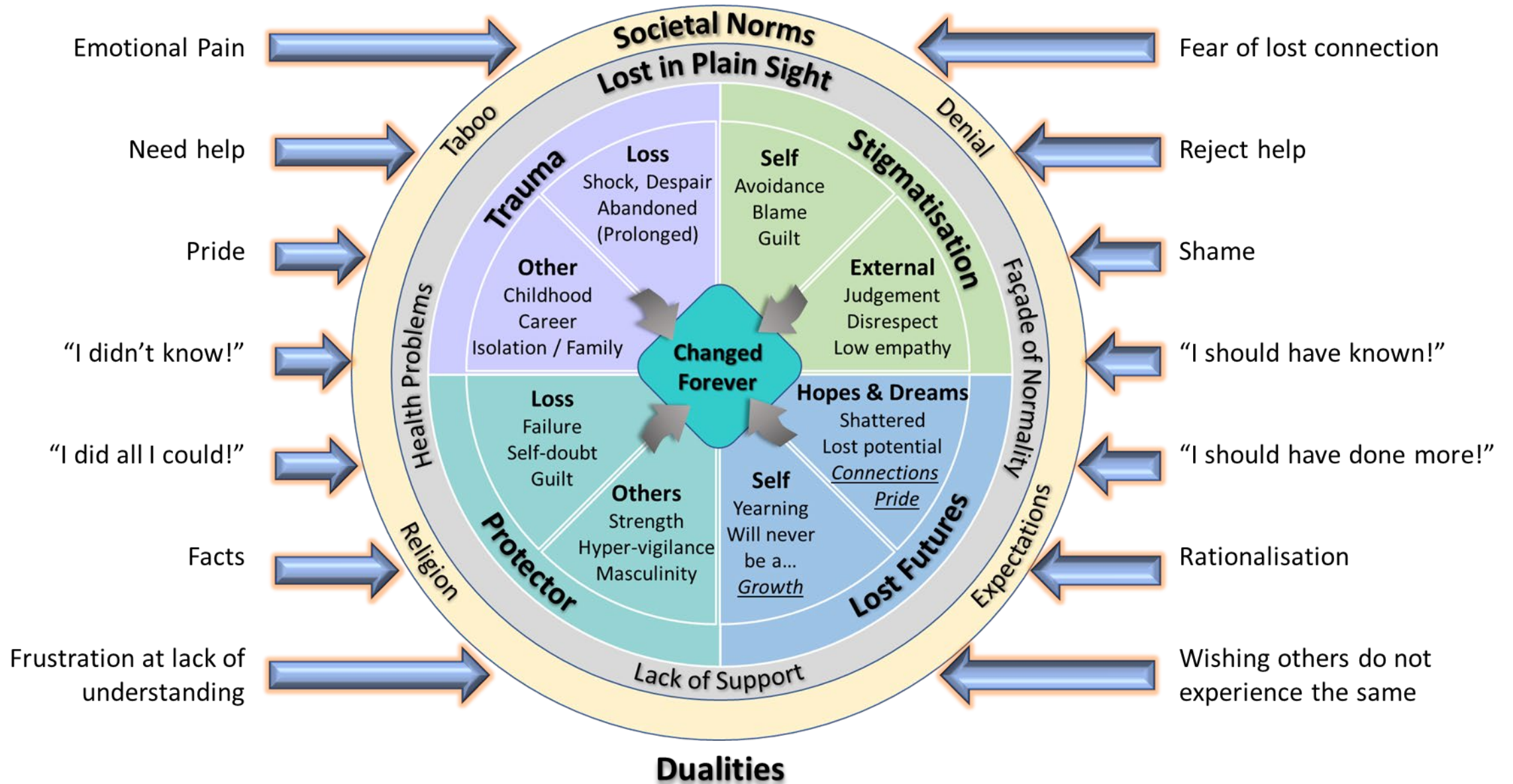
INNER CONFLICTS: e.g.,  
emotional distress...

**Dualities:** constantly  
face conflicting  
emotions, pressures,  
expectations, needs  
etc.; cognitive  
dissonance...

➔ EIGHT CONSTRUCTS

# SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT

# PROPOSED MODEL





# CONCLUSIONS (INTERIM)

- Suicide bereavement highly complex & many interwoven facets
- All included studies fit the proposed model:
  - Reciprocal translation, line of argument (Noblit & Hare, 1988)
- Suicide bereavement changes people permanently:
  - Recovery and growth is not linear; may be locked in grief
- Suicide bereavement ***IS*** different – qual. vs. quant.
- Dualities somewhat akin to the Dual Process Model (Stroebe & Schut, 1999) but with ***contention*** as well as ***oscillation***
- Postvention (bereavement support) research remains rare and usually regarding specific relationships to those lost
- Very little in studies specific to male bereavement:
  - Stereotypical findings – avoidance, over-working, drinking
- Need to be able to reach men that do not seek support

# THANK YOU

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<https://netecr.org/2022/03/13/john-whitebrook/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-whitebrook-864b04/>

1. A phenomenological study of siblings bereaved by suicide: A shared experience (Adams et al., 2019)
2. Grief Reactions and Suicide Bereavement in the Context of Stigma among Parents: An IPA (Ali & Rehna, 2022)
3. Suicide and trauma: A case discussion (Briggs et al., 2012)
4. The “men in grief” phenomenon among suicide bereaved Chinese men in Hong Kong (Chan & Cheung, 2022)
5. Initial-Stage Suicide Bereavement Experiences: A Case Study (Chen & Laitila, 2022)
6. Experiences of Parental Suicide-Bereavement: A Longitudinal Qualitative Analysis over Two Years (Entilli et al., 2021)
  - Parents’ Experiences of Suicide-Bereavement: A Qualitative Study at 6 and 12 Months after Loss (Ross et al., 2018)
7. Stigma in the bereavement experiences of gay men who have lost a partner to suicide (Ferlatte et al., 2019)
8. Suicide bereavement and coping: a descriptive and interpretative analysis of the coping process (Gaffney & Harrigan, 2010)
9. Suicide of a close family member through the eyes of a child: A narrative case study report (Jackson et al., 2015)
10. Case Study of a Survivor of Suicide Who Lost All Family Members Through Parent–Child Collective Suicide (Lee et al., 2015)
11. We’re The First Port Of Call’ – Perspectives of Ambulance Staff on Responding to Deaths by Suicide - A Qualitative Study (Nelson et al., 2020)
12. “Doctor, please don’t say he died by suicide”: exploring the burden of suicide survivorship in a developing country (Ohayi, 2019)
13. Men on Losing a Male to Suicide: A Gender Analysis (Oliffe et al., 2018)
14. Discursive construction of fatherly suicide (Ziółkowska & Galasiński, 2017)

## APPENDIX: INCLUDED STUDIES