

'A Walk with Absent Friends'

A collaborative Public Art Installation on Loss, Death, and Care.

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Introduction and Aims

This collaborative installation by Say Something Dundee (SSD) and Tayside Healthcare Arts Trust (THAT), in partnership and The University of Dundee Botanic Gardens, aimed to creatively prompt conversations around dying, death, loss and care, as part of the 'to absent friends' national festival. The project remembered and celebrated those who have died, through photography, creative writing and singing and designed a walk that took in five locations across the Dundee Botanic Gardens.



Results

'A Walk with Absent Friends' created three destinations with different configurations of the THAT work. Visitors encountered images and text hung from buildings and plants in an informal way and accessed the music through mobile phones. Also included in the walk were the Good Grief Garden and an Information Point that carried explanations of the project, a map, and contact information for a range of associated services. A reception with over 50 people was held and the installation remained open to the public for a week. Event feedback was very positive and recorded engagement with the work showed it was well received.



Methods

Three groups of THAT participants, with health impairments, responded to the absent friends theme using different media; writing, photography and song. A selection of the writing and photographs were printed, and a song was recorded and made accessible through a QR code.

Conclusions

A creative interpretation of sensitive content can and does act as a positive catalyst for public discourse. A collaboration between three seemingly unconnected organisations produced new enquiries and relationships and will now lead to further partnership working.



The Rose
sung by Perth Vocal Chord

