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## RESEARCH BRIEF

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# Healing Messages: The potential therapeutic benefit of mediumship readings in the treatment of grief

### FACTS:

- ◆ Unresolved grief can cause significant mental and physical distress (e.g., Shahar et al., 2001; Stroebe et al., 2007).
- ◆ Traditional psychotherapy provides little to no effect for relieving grief (e.g., Currier, Neimeyer, & Berman, 2008).
- ◆ Spontaneous and induced experiences of after-death communications (ADCs) dramatically reduce grief (Botkin, 2000; Drewry, 2003; Hastings et al., 2002; Houck, 2005; LaGrand, 2005; Parker, 2005; Sanger, 2009).
- ◆ Pilot data suggest similar positive effects after readings with mediums (Beischel, Mosher, & Boccuzzi, 2014-2015).

**The potentially therapeutic benefits of mediumship readings warrant further study.**

## EXPLORATORY STUDY

There have been no systematic studies published investigating the effects that receiving a personal mediumship reading from a non-denominational, mental medium has on the experience of grief.

An exploratory study using an anonymous, on-line survey which asked participants (n = 83) to retrospectively rate their levels of grief before and after a reading with a medium indicated that participants recollect experiencing meaningful reductions in levels of grief (Beischel, Mosher, & Boccuzzi, 2014-2015).

A subset (35%, n = 29) of participants also worked with a mental health professional (MHP) as part of their approach.

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## REPRESENTATIVE PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

### Short- and long-term effects of a mediumship reading

*“[The medium]... had a profound effect on my life and my grieving process... It has helped me in a way I never would have imagined.”*

*“After the reading... I had a different definition of my relationship with my mom that was more special than I could ever expect.”*

*“[The medium] helped me manage the grief that has been with me for more than 20 years.”*

### Experiences with a mental health professional (MHP)

*“When my first MHP negated the reading I had with a medium, I switched to someone who understood and supported ‘my new reality’ and therefore received much more constructive help with my grief.”*

*“I only went to a grief counselor for four sessions. I did not continue because I didn’t feel that she was helping me either way.”*

*“I know that I personally needed to go through counseling as well. However, the level of healing was accelerated by getting readings.”*

*“The medium reached my heart, the social worker my mind.”*

## Advantages of Mediumship Readings over Traditional Grief Counseling Interventions, Non-traditional Methods, and Spontaneous Experiences

Readings may be less frightening, less intimidating, and easier to understand than more personal, spontaneous ADC experiences.

The scheduled and regulated environment of a reading makes it well-suited as a controlled and prescribable treatment option.

A reading may be preferred for individuals who long for contact but have not experienced it.

A medium serves as a non-judgmental participant in the experience who will not disparage or pathologize the experiences of the bereaved.

## CONCLUSIONS

The absence of effective treatments for grief and the trends from exploratory data warrant further study into the potential therapeutic benefits of mediumship readings in the field of grief psychology.

We recommend controlled research trials such as the Bereavement And Mediumship (BAM) Study ([www.afterlifescience.com](http://www.afterlifescience.com)) with readings from credentialed mediums whose abilities to report accurate and specific information about the deceased have been demonstrated under controlled laboratory conditions (e.g., Beischel, 2007).

The combination of traditional psychotherapy and mediumship readings may prove to be more beneficial than either intervention separately.