It is not uncommon for the bereaved to experience some form of contact with the deceased. Although the traditional psychoanalytic theoretical model of grief views contact with the deceased as problematic, the modern continuing bonds model views maintaining a relationship with the deceased as normal and healthy (Klass & Steffen, 2018). This involves the bereaved recognizing that their relationships with the deceased continue; a relationship that was in the physical is now in the spiritual.

ADCs

Events that involve contact with or messages from the deceased are termed after-death communication experiences (ADCs). There are four main categories of ADCs: spontaneous, facilitated, assisted, and requested (Beischel, 2019).

Spontaneous after-death communication experiences (sADCs) involve unexpected or uninvited contact and are the most common type. They occur in all types of people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, education level, income, type of death, time passed since the death, or socioeconomic or religious standing (Houck, 2005; Streit-Horn, 2011). sADCs are common and normal and a natural part of the grieving process. sADCs include (but are not limited to) the following:

- sensing the presence of the deceased;
- visual (seeing), tactile (feeling), auditory (hearing), and olfactory (scents) phenomena;
- conversations;
- powerful dreams;
- hearing meaningfully timed songs on the radio or music associated with the deceased;
- communication through electric devices or telephones;
- natural phenomena including unusual animal or insect behavior;
- symbolic messages; and
- other unusual coincidences, incidents, or unexplainable phenomena.

Experiences of contact with the deceased that occur during a specific protocol and with the direction of a trained facilitator are termed facilitated after-death communication experiences (fADCs). These include psychomanteum- and EMDR/IADC®-induced experiences (e.g., Hastings, 2012; Botkin, 2000).

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1The content contained herein is based on Beischel, 2019. That source contains additional citations and resources.

2The plural abbreviation ADCs includes the term experiences. In English, the plural word communications refers to a technological system for transmitting information (e.g., telephone, TV, fiber optics) and should not be used to describe after-death experiences.
During a mediumship reading, a psychic medium shares messages received from the deceased with sitters (the living friends or relatives of the deceased). The sitters receiving the messages are having assisted after-death communication experiences (aADCs) (e.g., Loetschert, 2014).

**Requested after-death communication experiences** (rADCs) involve experiences that do not fall within the categories of sADCs, fADCs, or aADCs or that occur as the result of the experiencer inviting the deceased to communicate, engaging in specific practices designed to encourage contact, employing technological or other physical apparatuses, or simply intending that the experience occur. rADCs may involve instrumental transcommunication (ITC) or the use of psychoactive substances.

The simple knowledge that ADCs are a natural part of grieving could be the difference between whether an experience is comforting or upsetting. Words like ‘paranormal,’ ‘alleged,’ and ‘imaginal’ should be avoided when discussing experiences with the bereaved. Clinically speaking, the key issue is how these experiences can be used to aid in healing, not if they reflect actual communication.

None of the techniques, experiences, or methods described here will work for everyone. In addition, any ADCs that do occur will not be the same for everyone.

**References and Further Reading**


