

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).
- ◆ The consensus within the bereavement literature is that grief counseling is at best ineffective while at worst harmful to clients seeking help (e.g., Larson and Hoyt, 2007; Currier, Neimeyer, & Berman, 2008).
- ◆ Pharmaceutical interventions are often ineffective for acute grief responses due to delayed efficacy.
- ◆ Spontaneous and induced after-death communication experiences (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, 2014-15).

EXPLORATORY STUDY

There have been no systematic studies published investigating the effects that receiving a personal mediumship reading from a secular medium (one not associated with a particular religion) has on the experience of grief.

An exploratory study (Beischel, Mosher, & Boccuzzi, 2014-15) 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 their levels of grief.

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

REPRESENTATIVE PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

"[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."

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

"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."

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

"The medium reached my heart, the social worker my mind."

CONTINUING BONDS

Grief is resolved when the bereaved are able to recognize their continuing bonds with the deceased (e.g., Klass & Steffen, 2017).

This can occur after spontaneous ADCs (e.g., sense of presence; dreams; meaningful scents; seeing, hearing, or feeling the deceased) which are universal, normal, and often healing (e.g., Drewry, 2003; Houck, 2005; LaGrand, 2005; Parker, 2005).

Assisted ADCs during readings from mediums may also demonstrate continuing bonds between the living and deceased.

The primary clinical issue around these experiences is how they can alleviate grief not whether or not they reflect actual communication with the deceased (e.g., Drewry, 2003; LaGrand, 2005; Parker, 2005).

ADVANTAGES OF MEDIUMSHIP READINGS

- ◆ Readings may be less frightening and easier to understand than more personal, spontaneous ADCs.
- ◆ The regulated environment of a reading makes it well-suited as a 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 who will not disparage 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.

The results of this research must be reviewed before they can be ethically recommended as a treatment option.

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

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