

Understanding how effective 'induced after-death communication' therapy is in helping people deal with grief and what factors influence the results

Submission date 23/03/2025	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 24/03/2025	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 24/03/2025	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Grief is a normal human experience, but some people experience intense sadness that lasts for months or years, making everyday life difficult. Induced After-Death Communication (IADC) therapy is a brief, two-session treatment that may help people process their grief and feel reconnected with loved ones who have passed away. This study aimed to test whether IADC therapy helps reduce grief symptoms, and to explore which factors might predict better outcomes.

Who can participate?

Adults aged 18 and older who were grieving the loss of a loved one and had experienced that loss at least six months prior were eligible. All participants needed to speak English and be able to tolerate strong emotions during therapy.

What does the study involve?

Participants first completed a screening interview to ensure suitability. They then completed online surveys at four points: one month before therapy, just before therapy, just after therapy, and one month after therapy. Therapy involved two 90-minute sessions focused on reducing the sadness of grief using a specialised technique involving eye movements or tapping (bilateral stimulation). Some participants also reported sensing the presence of their deceased loved one during therapy.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Many participants reported feeling "lighter" and better able to move forward after the therapy. Benefits may include reduced sadness and stronger feelings of connection with the deceased. Risks include temporary emotional discomfort when recalling sad memories, and feeling tired after therapy sessions.

Where is the study run from?

The study was conducted by two psychologists in private practice—one in Adelaide, South Australia, and one in Queensland. Some sessions were delivered in person, others via Zoom.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

The study began in July 2023 and data collection finished in early 2024. The write-up is currently underway.

Who is funding the study?

This study received no external funding and was conducted voluntarily by the lead researcher.

Who is the main contact?

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Contact information

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal Investigator

Contact name

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Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

Secondary identifying numbers

H-2023-207

Study information

Scientific Title

Efficacy and predictors of outcome of Induced After-Death Communication (IADC) therapy in treating grief

Acronym

IADC Study

Study objectives

The primary hypothesis is that IADC Therapy will have therapeutic effects on grief symptoms and sadness.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 29/08/2023, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Adelaide (LEVEL 3, RUNDLE MALL PLAZA 50 RUNDLE MALL, Adelaide, 5000, Australia; +61883135137; hrec@adelaide.edu.au), ref: H-2023-207

Study design

Interventional wait-list controlled trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Secondary study design

Wait list controlled trial

Study setting(s)

Internet/virtual, Other therapist office

Study type(s)

Treatment

Participant information sheet

See outputs table

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Treatment of grief in bereaved adults

Interventions

Bereaved English-speaking adults in Australia were provided with Induced After-Death Communication (IADC) Therapy following a one-month waitlist (control) period.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome measure

1. Grief Symptoms as measured using the International Prolonged Grief Disorder Scale at Time 1 (start of waitlist period), Time 2 (end of one-month baseline waitlist period), and Time 4 (one-month follow-up post-treatment).
2. Average Daily Sadness - subjective self-report on a 0-10 scale at Time 1 (start of waitlist period), Time 2 (end of one-month baseline waitlist period), and Time 4 (one-month follow-up post-treatment).

Secondary outcome measures

1. Depression as measured by the Depression, Anxiety & Stress Scale (DASS-21)
2. Occurrence of after-death communication (ADC) as measured by self-report at Time 3 (immediately posttreatment) and Time 4 (one month follow-up)
3. Ongoing bonds as measured by the Continuing Presence subscale of the Ongoing Attachment Inventory at Time 1 (start of waitlist period), Time 2 (end of one-month baseline waitlist period), and Time 4 (one-month follow-up post-treatment).
4. Grief as measured by the Hogan Grief Reaction Checklist at Time 1 (start of waitlist period), Time 2 (end of one-month baseline waitlist period), and Time 4 (one-month follow-up post-treatment).

Overall study start date

01/07/2023

Completion date

16/07/2024

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. English-speaking
2. Adults (>18 years)
3. Within Australia

Participant type(s)

Patient

Age group

Adult

Lower age limit

18 Years

Sex

Both

Target number of participants

45

Total final enrolment

45

Key exclusion criteria

1. Suicidality
2. If less than six months had passed since the loss
3. If clients were unwilling or unable to tolerate high levels of emotion or distress in confronting their grief and sadness.

Date of first enrolment

10/09/2023

Date of final enrolment

15/05/2024

Locations

Countries of recruitment

Australia

Study participating centre**Moveon Counselling**

168 Main Rd

Blackwood

Australia

5051

Study participating centre**John Daniels Psychology**

Suite 55, Level 2, Niecon Plaza, 19 Victoria Ave

Broadbeach

Australia

4218

Study participating centre**Healing Grief International Pty Ltd**

10 Scroop Rd

Hawthorndene

Australia

5051

Sponsor information

Organisation

The University of Adelaide

Sponsor details

Level 4, Rundle Mall Plaza
50 Rundle Mall
Adelaide
Australia
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+61 8 8313 5208
research.services@adelaide.edu.au

Sponsor type

University/education

Website

<https://www.adelaide.edu.au>

ROR

<https://ror.org/00892tw58>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Other

Funder Name

Investigator initiated and funded

Results and Publications

Publication and dissemination plan

Planned publication in a high-impact peer-reviewed journal.

Intention to publish date

01/05/2025

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The individual-level data collected in this study includes sensitive health information from bereaved participants in a therapeutic context. Due to confidentiality, privacy obligations, and ethical constraints, this data will not be made publicly available. Consent was obtained on the basis that data would be stored securely and accessed only by the research team.

IPD sharing plan summary

Not expected to be made available

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
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