Continued Encounters

The Experience of After-Death Communication

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Purpose: *To analyze and categorize the various forms of after-death communication (ADC) and describe the effects on the bereaved.* ***Method:*** *In this qualitative descriptive study of 9 men and 9 women, data were collected during in-depth interviews using the Grief and Mourning Status Interview and Inventory and semistructured interview questions. Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed and coded for content.* ***Findings:*** *Four categories of ADCs were identified: (a) visions and dreams, (b) lost-things-found, (c) symbolic messages, and (d) sightings. Both men and women experience ADCs; however, women are more likely to discuss the events with others.* ***Conclusion:*** *Although not everyone encounters or recognizes the phenomenon of ADC, it is a common aspect of the bereavement experience.* ***Implications:*** *Nurses and other health care providers have an important role in supporting and educating the public, especially the bereaved, regarding the phenomenon of ADC.*

Keywords: *continued encounters; after-death communication*

The loss of a spouse, child, or close family member can be one of the most profoundly disturbing events encountered by human beings. Individuals experience bereavement in many different ways. Initial shock, denial, and confusion, followed by feelings of anger, depression, and despair are common expressions of grief. One manifestation that may be less well known, yet occurs commonly, is the phenomenon of continued encounters, also known as after-death communication (ADC). Defined as an unexplainable phenomenon or occurrence that is understood by the bereaved to be a communication from the deceased, ADCs are signs or events that symbolize the relationship or otherwise hold special meaning for the survivor (Daggett, 2002). It

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