

# Windbridge Research Center

The Windbridge Research Center is a non-profit research organization based in Tucson, Arizona, dedicated to the rigorous scientific study of mental mediums (people who claim regular communication with the deceased).

## History

The Windbridge Research Center is a non-profit US public charity co-founded in 2017 by husband-and-wife research team [Mark Boccuzzi](#) and [Julie Beischel](#). In the same year, the Center took over the peer-reviewed research relating to life after death that had been conducted at the [Windbridge Institute, LLC](#) (also founded by them) since 2008. Boccuzzi volunteers as executive director and Beischel serves as director of research.

The Center's main focus is rigorous scientific study of mental mediums, people who report experiencing regular communication with the deceased.<sup>[1]</sup> It also provides free educational materials focused on dying, death, and what comes next,<sup>[2]</sup> with the aim of easing suffering.

The Center serves four different, but potentially overlapping, populations: the general public; clinicians, including medical and mental health professionals; scientists, such as researchers and philosophers; and practitioners, such as mediums. It receives input from scientific, clinical, and community advisory boards.<sup>[3]</sup>

Specifically, its research interests are:

- empirical evaluations of the effectiveness of methods aimed at reducing anxiety related to the fear of death
- understanding the nature and prevalence of end-of-life experiences
- empirical evaluations of treatments for grief
- understanding the practices and abilities of practitioners

## Mediumship Research

Currently, Windbridge Research Center studies focus on mediums and those to whom they give readings (sitters). It works with a team of Windbridge Certified Research Mediums (WCRMs), each of whom was screened over several months using an intensive eight-step, peer-reviewed screening and training procedure.<sup>[4]</sup>

Each WCRM agrees to donate a minimum of four hours per month to assist in various aspects of the research and to embrace a strong commitment to the values of scientific mediumship research.<sup>[5]</sup> (Funding for the WCRM program has ended, and the Center is no longer screening or admitting new mediums.)

The mediumship research has three main arms:

- Information Research Program – examines the type and accuracy of information reported by mediums

- Operation Research Program – includes research on mediums’ phenomenology (experiences), psychology, and physiology
- Application Research Program – explores socially relevant uses for mediumship readings and information, specifically the potential therapeutic effects on grief of assisted after-death communication during readings with mediums

## Research Findings

Some key findings are as follows:

- Certain mediums can make accurate statements about dead people that they couldn’t reasonably know.
- Experiences of communication with the deceased have differences and similarities when compared to experiences of obtaining psychic information about the living.
- The explanation best supported by the data is that at least some mediums are communicating with the dead.
- This is possible within the non-materialist model of consciousness as non-local.
- Mediums may have unique psychological or personality characteristics when compared to non-mediums.
- Claims that all mediums are fabricating information or recalling facts previously acquired about the deceased are not supported by EEG data.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Anomalous Information Reception

In a study reported in 2015, twenty Windbridge-certified mediums (WCRMs) participated in over a total of 86 readings with quintuple blinding (five levels). The highly-controlled study eliminated conventional explanations, including cold reading, rater bias, experimenter cueing and fraud. All analyses of the data retrieved statistically significant results with p-values ranging from 0.05 to 0.0001, a highly significant result. This work successfully replicated and extended previous findings and further demonstrated anomalous information reception.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Brain Imaging of Mediums

Beischel, together with colleagues at the [Institute of Noetic Sciences \(IONS\)](#), used EEG to monitor the brain activity of mediums trained at the Windbridge Institute. Each of six mediums engaged in four mental tasks: thinking about a living person known to them; fabricating a person and thinking about them; listening to information spoken by an experimenter; and mentally interacting with a deceased person they knew. Findings suggested that mental states associated with communication with the deceased were distinctly different from normal waking states.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Comparing Discarnate and Psychic Readings

In a study reported in 2009, six WCRMs were asked to describe, in as much detail as possible, their subjective experiences while engaged in both discarnate

communication and psychic readings. The discarnate experiences centred around partial merging with the discarnate; auditory, visual, tactile, and olfactory information germane to the deceased individual; signs that contact was made; apparent independence of the medium from the discarnate; and the experience of multiple sensory modalities occurring simultaneously. Psychic readings produced reports of experiences of visual, auditory and tactile information pertinent to the client, as well as empathy and precognition. A comparison of the discarnate and psychic readings revealed clear-cut differences.<sup>[9]</sup> A more recent, much larger qualitative-quantitative study builds on this research.<sup>[10]</sup>

## **Therapeutic Potential**

In a paper<sup>[11]</sup> and anthology chapter,<sup>[12]</sup> Beischel and colleagues discuss the limitations of conventional grief counselling that emphasizes the separation of the living and deceased, with concomitant acceptance of the loved one's death – which they say are largely devoid of proven benefits. They propose an alternative approach that treats the bonds between the living and deceased as real and a resource that can be channelled to the living (in both a literal and metaphorical sense). The authors note that both spontaneous and induced experiences of after-death communication have been shown to be beneficial in the resolution of grief by demonstrating these continued bonds. These resources are aimed at improving understanding among grief counsellors and their clients regarding after-death communication and the idea of continuing bonds with the deceased.

A large demand for alternative approaches to standardized grief counselling is the driving force behind a clinical study into the therapeutic potential of mediumship. A 2019 paper discusses the research regarding the effects on grief of all four types of After-death Communication (ADC): spontaneous, facilitated, assisted, and requested.<sup>[13]</sup> In a 2023 paper, Beischel describes experiences of ADCs and their effect on the grieving process. She focuses on the psychological benefits of spontaneous and clinically facilitated ADCs, often finding an improvement in coping with grief.<sup>[14]</sup>

## **Bodily Measurements**

In a paper published in 2019 in *Explore*, Beischel, Shawn Tassone and Bocuzzi describe an investigation of bodily correlates of psychic ability during mediumistic readings. Five WCRMs had general physiological measurements made and blood taken before and after a reading. A survey was also conducted soliciting responses from 125 mediums and 222 non-mediums on a range of health issues. No significant physiological changes before and after readings were observed. However, significant health differences were seen: mediums reported having at least one autoimmune disease (35.2% vs. 18.9%;  $p = 0.00076$ .) and overall reported experiencing more health issues than non-mediums ( $p < 0.000001$ ).<sup>[15]</sup>

## **Learning Styles and Mediumship**

A study published in 2021 explored the relationship between the accuracy of readings given by mediums and their learning styles. Twelve WCRMs were asked specific questions about deceased individuals under blinded conditions in four

categories: physical description, personality, hobbies, and cause of death, revealing that all were equally accessible. No correlation was found between learning styles and accuracy. This appears to confirm that mediums are passive receivers of information from 'outside' rather than constructing readings internally.<sup>[16]</sup>

### **Somatic v Discarnate Psi**

A 2021 study worked with ten WCRMs to explore the difference between discarnate psi (information from the deceased) and somatic psi (information from the living, a form of regular psi). The mediums were successful in identifying if the source of information was living or dead (74% success rate,  $p = 0.032$ ). Measurements indicated increases in altered time sense, imagery, imagery amount, and direction of attention during readings as compared to baseline. Interestingly, scores for feelings of love were significantly higher for deceased targets than for living targets ( $p = 0.02$ ). Overall, it was concluded that evidence collected during this study under controlled conditions can distinguish between mediums' regular psychic functioning and survival psi experiences.<sup>[17]</sup>

### **Background of Mediums**

An online survey of practising mediums explored the day-to-day activities of practising mediums. Over 60% of 128 respondents reported other psychic abilities besides mediumship. Over half (55.9%) first experienced mediumistic abilities before their tenth birthday. A sizeable proportion (21.5%) worked with law enforcement or other investigators (32.8%). Reassuringly, nearly 30% did not charge for readings, and the vast majority who did charged less than 0. These findings contradict the sceptical view of mediums as financial opportunists.<sup>[18]</sup>

### **Compassion and Death Anxiety in Mediums**

An online survey found that mediums demonstrated significantly higher levels of compassion and significantly lower levels of death anxiety than non-mediums (demographically matched on gender and age). This confirms that engaging in mediumistic practices helps to cultivate compassion and that experiences related to the afterlife reduce death anxiety.<sup>[19]</sup>

### **Survey Development**

In a paper published in 2020, Beischel and Boccuzzi emphasize the importance of surveys that measure belief in the paranormal and the preponderance and type of anomalous experiences. They created the Windbridge Psi and Related Phenomena Awareness Questionnaire (WPRPAQ), consisting of 10 items each describing a paranormal experience. Respondents are asked if they are aware of the phenomena and if so, what their particular experience of the phenomena was like. The online survey obtained 316 responses from self-identified mediums and 1,030 responses from self-identified non-mediums. Overall knowledge of the paranormal was high with over 80% of both mediums and non-mediums reporting being aware of all 10 phenomena. As expected, significantly more mediums reported experiencing each of the 10 phenomena than non-mediums ( $p < .0001$ ). The authors encourage adoption of the questionnaire by other researchers.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Essay Contest

In 2021 Beischel won a runners-up prize of ,000 in an [essay contest](#) run by [the Bigelow Institute of Consciousness Studies \(BICS\)](#) on the best evidence for an afterlife. In her [essay](#) Beischel offers an autobiographical perspective as the background to her later development of high-quality experiments in mediumship.

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## Education and Outreach

A mission of the Windbridge Research Center is to make research- and education-based materials freely available. These include [fact sheets](#), short [videos](#) based on research findings, and [Threshold: Journal of Interdisciplinary Consciousness Studies](#), a free, peer-reviewed, online-only, open access journal.

The Center maintains a list of peer-reviewed articles written or co-authored by its investigators.<sup>[22]</sup>

As well as maintaining an active social media presence, the Center presents at meetings, workshops and academic conferences, and provides a free monthly email newsletter. Its researchers regularly participate in media interviews.

Education and outreach materials are listed [here](#).

An overview of mediumship research is provided [here](#).

Information about other research can be found [here](#).

See also the *Psi Encyclopedia* entry by Beischel on the history of [mental mediumship research](#).

Michael Duggan

## Literature

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## Endnotes

### Footnotes

1. ^ <https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/mental-mediumship-research>
2. ^ <https://www.windbridge.org/about-us/>
3. ^ <https://www.windbridge.org/about-us/#abs>
4. ^ Beischel (2007).

5. ^ <https://www.windbridge.org/mediums/>
6. ^ <https://www.windbridge.org/research/mediumship-research/>
7. ^ Beischel et al. (2015).
8. ^ Delorme et al (2013).
9. ^ Rock et al (2009).
10. ^ Beischel et al (2017).
11. ^ Beischel et al (2014–15).
12. ^ Beischell et al (2017).
13. ^ Beischel (2019).
14. ^ Beischel (2023).
15. ^ Beischel et al (2019).
16. ^ Beischel & Conboy (2021).
17. ^ Beischel, et al (2021).
18. ^ Beischel & Boccuzzi (2023a).
19. ^ Beischel & Boccuzzi (2023b).
20. ^ Beischel & Boccuzzi (2020).
21. ^ Beischel (2021).
22. ^ <https://www.windbridge.org/peer-reviewed-research-articles/>