



Assisted Dying Service

Responding when a person raises assisted dying

A conversation guide for registered health professionals

September 2021

This guide is designed to support you to respond respectfully and appropriately when a person raises assisted dying with you.

Before you use this guide

You should read *Responding when a person raises assisted dying: a handbook for registered health professionals*.

Using the conversation guide will ensure key aspects of the conversation are covered. The order is important. Throughout the conversation you should:

- Listen more than you talk
- Acknowledge what the person has told you
- Ask clarifying questions where necessary
- Respond to emotion
- Check whether the person wants to keep talking
- Avoid assessing eligibility unless this is within your clinical scope of practice.

This conversation guide is **NOT** for the formal process outlined in section 11 and onwards of the **End of Life Choice Act 2019**. More information about assisted dying can be found on the **Ministry of Health's website**.

A person asks you about assisted dying

Thank you for bringing this up with me. Are you asking for general information, or do you want to talk about assisted dying for yourself?

If they want to talk about assisted dying for themselves, consider whether:

- *this is the right time and place for the conversation*
- *you are able to continue the conversation*

Do you provide assisted dying services?

NO

YES

I don't provide assisted dying services, because...

- ▶ only doctors can provide that
OR for doctors
- ▶ I do not have the skills/experience to do that
- ▶ I have a conscientious objection

But I am able to direct you to people who do

Pause: to allow the person to consider what you have just disclosed

Questions:

- ▶ I would really like to understand what is going on for you. Would it be okay if I ask you some questions?
- ▶ This is an important conversation. Is there anyone else you would like here with you?

Questions:

- ▶ To make sure we are on the same page, can you tell me your understanding of what's happening with your health and what might be ahead for you? *If necessary, add any missing information about current and future health.*
- ▶ Could you tell me what you know about assisted dying?
- ▶ The End of Life Choice Act has very specific criteria and not everyone with a serious illness will be eligible for assisted dying. You will need to be formally assessed to determine if you meet all the criteria.

Questions:

- ▶ What are your priorities as you approach the end of your life?
- ▶ What worries you when you think about your health changing?
- ▶ What helps you through the tough times?
- ▶ How much does your whānau know about what is most important to you?

I have heard you say ... is really important to you. I have also heard you say you're considering assisted dying. Keeping that in mind, we can... [discuss supportive measures]

If you do want to proceed with assisted dying...
I can put you in touch with someone who can provide you with more information and start the formal process.

OR – if you provide assisted dying services
We can make an appointment to talk more about this and/or start the formal process.

OR – minimum requirement for doctors with a conscientious objection
You can contact the SCENZ (Support and Consultation for End of Life in New Zealand) Group to get the name and contact details of a doctor who provides assisted dying services.
(SCENZ Group can be contacted via 0800 223 852)

Questions:

- ▶ How does this plan seem to you?
- ▶ I will do all that I can to help you get the best care possible.
- ▶ Is there anything you would like to go over again/ask/talk about?