# 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*](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/end-life-choice-act-implementation/end-life-choice-act-implementation-resources).

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](https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2019/0067/latest/DLM7285905.html). More information about assisted dying can be found on the [Ministry of Health’s website](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/end-life-choice-act-implementation/end-life-choice-act-implementation-resources).

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*

*A person asks you about assisted dying*

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?

*Do you provide assisted dying services?*

**YES**

**NO**

Set up

* 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: |

Enquire and share

* 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?

|  |
| --- |
| Questions: |

Explore

Close

**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)

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]

* 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?

|  |
| --- |
| Questions: |

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*