



Supporting someone accessing voluntary assisted dying

This fact sheet provides information for families, friends and support persons about how they can support a person who is accessing voluntary assisted dying.

You may be asked to support a loved one as they consider or access voluntary assisted dying. This help may be in ways that you are already familiar with, for example providing them with emotional support as they undergo medical treatment or going with them to attend appointments.

You may also be asked to play a formal role that carries responsibilities under the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021](#) (the Act). It is important that you understand what these roles are, whether you meet the eligibility requirements, and whether you are emotionally and physically able to support someone in their choice.

Where do I start?

The [Knowing your choices: Information for people considering voluntary assisted dying](#) booklet is available to help you learn more about accessing voluntary assisted dying in South Australia.

You may also like to speak to the [South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service \(SAVAD-CNS\)](#) who can provide you with information and resources to help you support someone considering accessing voluntary assisted dying throughout the process.

Conversations about voluntary assisted dying

Choosing voluntary assisted dying may be a difficult and emotional decision. It is likely that the person you are supporting may want to discuss this with you.

It is possible to support someone's decision even if you do not agree with it. This may mean that you do not want to discuss voluntary assisted dying with them.

You can contact the SA Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service or a Voluntary Assisted Dying Local Health Network Liaison Officer for support navigating conversations about voluntary assisted dying.

Waiting to access voluntary assisted dying

The process to access voluntary assisted dying can take several weeks or even months. This is to make sure that it is a safe and considered process.

During this time it is important that you are well supported. Seeking support from palliative care or other community support services might be helpful.

Knowing the date and time of the death ahead of time may be confronting. If this is the case talking with other family members or friends or the care navigator service may help. If your loved one has discussed their plans of death, make sure you gain their consent prior to disclosing that to other family members, friends or carers.



Help with voluntary assisted dying planning

Your loved one might seek your support with some parts of the process to access voluntary assisted dying. This could include:

- getting to and from medical appointments
- finding correct documents
- talking about how their appointment went
- witnessing the signing of a form
- being their Contact Person who is responsible for returning the medications
- talking about their plans for what will happen when they die
- being present at their death.

A person's choice to access voluntary assisted dying

The Act requires a person requesting access to voluntary assisted dying does so freely and without coercion. Another person, for example a family member, friend or carer, can support someone throughout the process, however they cannot request access on that person's behalf.

A family member, friend or carer cannot prevent a person from accessing voluntary assisted dying.

Getting support

Helping someone with voluntary assisted dying can be a positive experience but may be confronting for some. You should consider the help you can give that is right for you.

Consider getting support from the SA Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service or Voluntary Assisted Dying Local Health Network Liaison Officer.

You can contact the SA Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service by calling [0403 087 390](tel:0403087390) between 9.00am to 5.00pm on Monday to Friday.

Grief and bereavement support

Grief is a normal response to loss and can affect individuals in different ways.

Experiences related to grief will become more manageable over time, especially if you have supportive friends and family to talk with. You may choose to access bereavement support from:

- your General Practitioner
- a specialist palliative care service
- [the My Grief App](#)
- [Grief Australia](#)
- [Griefline](#).

Resources and services to support people experiencing grief and loss are available on SA Health's [Bereavement Portal](#).

Support

Some people may find issues relating to voluntary assisted dying concerning or distressing.

If you need to talk to someone, these services provide telephone support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

- visit the [Lifeline website](#) or call [13 11 14](#).
- visit our [Bereavement Portal](#) website.
- visit the [SA Health mental health services](#) webpage.
- call the Mental Health Triage Service on [13 14 65](#).
- call the [Kids Helpline](#) on [1800 551 800](#).

Contact us

For more information about voluntary assisted dying in South Australia visit the SA Health website.

Specialist services are available to support access to and provide information about voluntary assisted dying to people making decisions at end of life, their family, friends and carers, health practitioners and service providers.

South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service (SAVAD-CNS)

For support to access voluntary assisted dying contact:

Email: Health.VADCareNavigators@sa.gov.au

Phone: [0403 087 390](tel:0403087390)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Service (SAVAD-PS)

For queries related to the supply, administration or disposal of voluntary assisted dying medication contact:

Email: Health.VADPharmacy@sa.gov.au

Phone: [\(08\) 7326 1746](tel:0873261746)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board

For any feedback about voluntary assisted dying contact the Review Board Secretariat at:

Email: Health.VADReviewBoard@sa.gov.au

Phone: [\(08\) 8226 8859](tel:0882268859)

For more information

Health Services Programs Branch
Department for Health and Wellbeing
Health.VoluntaryAssistedDying@sa.gov.au
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/vad
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