

LIVING WITH VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

LEGISLATION

All those who are professionally engaged with people considering VAD are encouraged to download and read the relevant VAD legislation for the jurisdictions in which they work. The ACT Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2024 can be accessed here:

<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2024-24/>

IMPLEMENTATION of each state's legislation has been overseen by the relevant state health department. A summary of each state's legislation and links to the state implementation websites can be found here: <https://end-of-life.qut.edu.au/assisteddying> Note this is a pro-VAD organisation.

UNDERSTANDING PATIENTS' DESIRE FOR HASTENED DEATH STATEMENTS

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28965095/>

SPIRITUAL SUFFERING

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pon.3795>

SPIRITUAL CARE

Best MC, Vivat B, Gijsberts M-J. Spiritual Care in Palliative Care. Religions. 2023; 14(3):320. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14030320>

This paper contains a summary of the meaning, importance and practice of spiritual care at the end of life. <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/14/3/320>

DIGNITY THERAPY

Research shows that loss of dignity correlates with the person feeling they were a burden to others, and a reduced will to live, hopelessness, depression and spiritual distress. Dignity is enhanced when people can explore issues that invoke a sense of meaning and purpose, giving them a sense of affirmation and continued influence after death. Reflecting on one's own biography allows the individual to share details that capture their life story and to say things that they wish to say, allowing them to frame their legacy in their own terms. It represents one way in which individuals and their families can process, make sense of and celebrate the closure of a person's life. One method of biography has been developed by Canadian psychiatrist, Harvey Chochinov, in a form of psychotherapy called Dignity Therapy. The questions used, as listed below, can also be used to guide conversations with people at the end of life who may benefit from life review.

1. Tell me about your life history; particularly those parts that you either remember most of think are the most important
2. When did you feel most alive?
3. Are there specific things that you would want your family to know about you, and are there particular things you would want them to remember?
4. What are the most important roles you have played in life?

5. Why were they so important to you and what do you think you accomplished in those roles?
6. What are your most important accomplishments, and what do you feel most proud of?
7. Are there particular things that you feel still need to be said to your loved ones, or things that you would want to take the time to say once again?
8. What are your hopes and dreams for your loved ones?
9. What have you learned about life that you would want to pass on to others?
10. What advice or words of guidance would you wish to pass along to your [family members]?
11. Are there words or even instructions you would like to offer your family, to help them prepare for the future?
12. In creating this permanent record, are there other things that you would like included?

Harvey Max Chochinov et al. Dignity Therapy: A Novel Psychotherapeutic Intervention for Patients Near the End of Life. J Clin Oncol 23, 5520-5525(2005)