

Doctor Assisted Death

Questions for Discussion

1. Quality of life is an important consideration for many people. In his book (see resources) Atul Gawanda tells of a gentleman who says that he would be ready to die, “When I can no longer eat chocolate ice cream and watch football on TV.”

What gives your life value? Is there a point at which you feel that the quality of your life will no longer make living worthwhile for you?

2. Caring for members of our society who are vulnerable is one thing which makes us civilized humans. **In your view, which demonstrates more caring: ending suffering by assisting death or providing the means for easing pain and suffering through human contact and medications?**

How does this mesh with your view of the kind of society you wish Canada to be?

3. In what circumstances would you consider doctor assisted death for yourself? Your loved ones? Consider mental, physical and emotional suffering.

4. In what circumstances would you NOT consider doctor assisted death for yourself or your loved one?

5. If medical professionals e.g. doctors are able to end a person’s life, do you think it will have an impact on *the doctor’s* mental health if they later feel guilty about it or even unsure if they did the right thing? Do you think that later feelings of guilt would be a problem for **you** if you provided consent to end a loved one’s life?

6. Who do you need to inform about your wishes to ensure that your wishes are carried out without causing stress and dissention among your loved ones?

7. Are medical professionals or patients “playing God” or acting against the natural order of life by using **life sustaining or prolonging medications and surgeries** when the body would naturally have worn out and died? Does this depend on one’s age and medical condition? E.g. Would you consider continuing medications to prevent a stroke or heart attack for someone aged 50 verses a frail, ill person of 95? A pacemaker to keep the heart going?

Notes:

Making your Plan:

- ✘ Think about it
- ✘ Read about it
- ✘ Talk about it
- ✘ Delegate a POA and ensure that she/he understands your wishes and is willing to carry out your wishes. Put your wishes in writing. Communicate your wishes to all of your family members so there will be no disputes among your family
- ✘ Consider making a Living Will. Alternatively, you can make your wishes very clear on your POA papers

Resource: MP Mike Bossio mike.bossio@parl.gc.ca to express your opinion to parliament.

Quinte Hospice: 225 Dundas St E., Belleville. 613-966-6610

Heart of Hastings Hospice: 17 McKenzie St., Madoc, 613-473-5125

Being Mortal by Dr Atul Gawande

Legalline.ca (<file:///G:/Living%20Wills%20-%20Legal%20Line.html>) for information concerning Living Wills in Canada

Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General: for downloading papers to assign a Power of Attorney

<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/poakit.php>