



# Glossary of terms

The following terms relate to voluntary assisted dying in South Australia and can be used as a reference when reading materials, including the SA Health voluntary assisted dying website and information resources. For exact definitions you may need to refer to the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021](#) (SA) or other relevant legislation. This glossary is intended as a general information guide only.

## A

**Act:** refers to the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021*.

**Administration permit:** a permit issued under the Act permitting the prescription, supply, and administration of the voluntary assisted dying medication. The permit may allow self-administration or practitioner administration.

**Administration request:** a request made by a person to their Coordinating Medical Practitioner for administration of the voluntary assisted dying medication.

**Advance Care Directives:** a legal document that empowers individuals to make clear legal arrangements for their future health care, end of life, preferred living arrangements and other personal matters. It allows individuals to appoint one or more Substitute Decision-Makers to make these decisions on their behalf if they are unable to do so in the future because of impairment of decision-making capacity. Voluntary assisted dying cannot be requested through an Advance Care Directive.

**Allied health professional:** a qualified person who practises any of a wide range of health and related professions other than medicine and nursing (for example, a physiotherapist, speech pathologist, social worker, pharmacist etc).

## C

**Care Navigator:** a health practitioner working for the South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service (SAVAD-CNS) who provides information and support regarding voluntary assisted dying.

**Carer:** a person who provides informal care and support to family members or friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol, or other drug issue or who are frail and/or aged.


**Carriage service:** the use of a telephone, email, fax, videoconference, internet, and the like.

**Coercion:** persuading someone to do something by using dishonesty, force, or threats. The term abuse is intended to include coercion. Under the Act, a person's choice to access voluntary assisted dying must be free from coercion.

**Conscientious objection:** when a registered health practitioner or health service declines to participate in a treatment or procedure due to religious, moral, or ethical beliefs.

**Consulting assessment:** an independent assessment conducted by a Consulting Medical Practitioner to determine if a person meets the eligibility criteria for voluntary assisted dying.

**Consulting Medical Practitioner:** a registered medical practitioner who accepts a referral to conduct a consulting assessment of a person applying to access voluntary assisted dying.



**Contact Person:** an individual appointed by a person accessing voluntary assisted dying who takes responsibility for returning any unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying medication to the South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Service (SAVAD-PS).

**Coordinating assessment:** a first independent assessment conducted by a Coordinating Medical Practitioner to determine if a person meets the eligibility criteria for voluntary assisted dying.

**Coordinating Medical Practitioner:** a registered medical practitioner who accepts a person's first request, or a Consulting Medical Practitioner for the person who accepts a transfer of the role of Coordinating Medical Practitioner.

## D

**Decision-making capacity:** a patient's ability to make decisions about their life. For the purposes of the Act, a patient has decision-making capacity in relation to voluntary assisted dying if they can understand the information relevant to the decision, retain that information to the extent necessary to make the decision, use that information to make the decision and communicate the decision verbally or by gestures, or other means of communication available to the person. The person must have decision-making capacity through the entire voluntary assisted dying process.

## E

**Eligibility criteria:** the set of requirements that a person must meet to access voluntary assisted dying.

**End of life:** the time leading up to a person's death, when it is expected that they are likely to die soon from an illness, disease, or medical condition. A person at end of life will likely die within the next 12 months.

**End of life care:** physical, spiritual, and psychosocial assessment, care and treatment delivered by health professionals. It also includes the support of families and carers, and care of the person's body after their death.

**Enduring request:** a request that is maintained or lasts over a period of time. The Act requires the request for voluntary assisted dying to be made at three different points in time (first request, written declaration, and final request) to ensure the request is enduring.

## F

**Final request:** the final request for access to voluntary assisted dying that a person makes to the Coordinating Medical Practitioner after completing the Written Declaration. This is the last of three requests a person must make to access voluntary assisted dying.

**Final review:** a review conducted by the Coordinating Medical Practitioner that certifies that the voluntary assisted dying request and assessment process has been completed in accordance with the Act.

**First assessment:** an assessment completed by the Coordinating Medical Practitioner to determine if a person meets the eligibility criteria for access to voluntary assisted dying. If eligible, this would be followed by the consulting assessment.

**First request:** a clear and unambiguous request for access to voluntary assisted dying made personally to a registered medical practitioner.

## H

**Health practitioner:** a person who is registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010 (SA)* to practice a health profession, including medical practitioners, nurses, allied health practitioners, pharmacists, and paramedics.

**Health service:** a broad range of metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote settings delivering acute, palliative care, and residential care and primary/community health care.

## I

**Initial discussion:** the process of seeking and reviewing information about voluntary assisted dying.

**Interpreter:** a person who translates speech orally into another language including sign language.

## L

**Life-limiting:** a disease, illness or medical condition that is expected to cause death.

## M

**Medical practitioner:** a person who is registered with the Medical Board of Australia through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Also known as a doctor.

**Mental illness:** any illness or disorder of the mind as defined in the *Mental Health Act 2009 (SA)*.

## N

**Neurodegenerative condition:** a condition characterised by degeneration of the nervous system, especially the neurons in the brain. For example, motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease, and Huntington's disease.

## P

**Palliative Care:** an approach that improves the quality of life of people (adults and children) and their families who are facing problems associated with a life-limiting illness. It prevents and relieves suffering through early identification, correct assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, whether physical, psychosocial, or spiritual. A medical practitioner can administer medical treatment under 17(1) of the *Consent to Medical Treatment and Palliative Care Act 1995* to a patient with the intention of relieving pain or distress.

**Patient:** a person who requests information about or access to voluntary assisted dying.

**Practitioner administration:** the process whereby the Coordinating Medical Practitioner administers the voluntary assisted dying medication to a person.



## R

**Registered health practitioner:** a qualified person registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010* (SA) to practice a health profession (other than as a student).

## S

**Self-administration:** the process whereby a person administers the voluntary assisted dying medication themselves.

**South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT):** an independent legal entity that helps people in South Australia resolve issues within specific areas of law. SACAT can review certain decisions related to voluntary assisted dying assessment.

**South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service (SAVAD-CNS):** provides care coordination, education and support for people accessing voluntary assisted dying as they live with a life-limiting illness.

**South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Operations Team:** responsible for the management of the day-to-day mechanisms to support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Pathway.

**South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Service (SAVAD-PS):** provides clinical resources to facilitate supply, education, and safe disposal of voluntary assisted dying medications.

**South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (the Review Board):** the statutory Board ensures compliance with the Act and provides recommend safety and quality improvements about voluntary assisted dying.

**Spiritual care:** care that helps a person feel more connected with themselves, other people or to something beyond. It supports the beliefs, traditions, values, and practices that give meaning and purpose to a person's life.

## T

**Telehealth:** the use of communication technology to provide healthcare virtually through a phone call or videoconference.

## V

**Vocationally registered general practitioner:** general practitioners who were registered for Medicare purposes on the Vocational Register on 16 June 2021 and continue to hold general registration by the Medical Board of Australia.

**Voluntary:** when a person acts of their own free will. Under the Act, a person is not obliged at any stage of the process, even after completion of the request and assessment process, to take any further action in relation to voluntary assisted dying.

**Voluntary assisted dying:** the legal process that enables an eligible person to access, administer or be administered the voluntary assisted dying medication for the purpose of causing their death.

**Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021 (the Act):** the legislation that regulates voluntary assisted dying in South Australia.



**Voluntary Assisted Dying Clinical Portal (the Clinical Portal):** the secure online system used to manage requests for voluntary assisted dying in South Australia.

**Voluntary assisted dying medication:** a controlled medication or a drug of dependence specified in a voluntary assisted dying permit for the purpose of causing a person's death.

**Voluntary assisted dying training:** mandatory training for Coordinating Medical Practitioners and Consulting Medical Practitioners. This training must be completed before these practitioners conduct a coordinating assessment or consulting assessment to determine if a person meets the eligibility criteria for voluntary assisted dying.

## W

**Written declaration:** a formal written request for access to voluntary assisted dying made by a person after they are assessed as eligible by the Coordinating Medical Practitioner and the Consulting Medical Practitioner. This is the second of three requests a person must make to access voluntary assisted dying.

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## For more information

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[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/vad](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/vad)

