



Assistance with communication

Communicating your request

A person accessing voluntary assisted dying may have a communication barrier that affects their ability to be understood by others. For example, someone may have a communication disability, or prefers or needs to communicate in a language other than English.

Having a communication barrier does not mean the person does not have decision-making capacity.

The [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021](#) (the Act) allows you to communicate your request to access voluntary assisted dying through speech, gestures or other practical and appropriate techniques including:

- using information or formats tailored to your needs
- health practitioners assisting you to communicate your decision
- health practitioners giving you more time to discuss your request
- using technology that alleviates the effects of disability you may experience.

You can also communicate your decision non-verbally, including by:

- writing or drawing
- pointing to a picture or items such as a body part
- sounds with positive or negative intonation
- head nodding for 'Yes'
- head shaking for 'No'
- blinking, such as once for 'Yes', twice for 'No'
- shrugging shoulders for 'unsure' or 'don't know'
- gestures and facial expressions
- purposeful eye gaze
- other symbols of intent or acknowledgement.

Interpreters

If you prefer or need to communicate in a language other than English, you can use an accredited interpreter to help you communicate throughout the process.

Your health practitioner should engage a professional interpreter for you through their local procedures.

Interpreters can choose whether or not to assist you to request access to voluntary assisted dying. It is the responsibility of the health practitioner to ensure interpreters are briefed on the content matter *prior* to any appointments and given the opportunity to choose not to be involved.

Requirements for interpreters

The Act requires an interpreter who assists you throughout the Voluntary Assisted Dying Pathway to:

- be accredited by the [National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters \(NAATI\)](#) or any other body determined by the Chief Executive in accordance with the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Regulations 2022](#)
- not be a member of your family
- not know or believe they may benefit from your death

- not own or be responsible for the day-to-day management of a health facility where you live or are being treated, for example as a residential aged care facility
- not be directly involved in providing health services or professional care to you.

Contact us

The [South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service](#) can also help you find an interpreter to support you to communicate your choice.

The Care Navigator Service can be contacted by email and phone during standard business hours (9:00 am – 5:00 pm)

Email: Health.VADCareNavigators@sa.gov.au

Phone: 0403 087 390

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For more information

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

