

Assisted Suicide is a current controversial ethical issue. Assisted suicide involves a medical professional (physician) prescribing or providing a patient with medications that can be used to commit suicide, as well as education on the lethal dose for the medication. There are currently eight states that have passed legislation to perform these acts including California, Washington, Montana, Vermont, Hawaii, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. There is a detailed debate between right to live activists who believe this is a form of murder, and quality of life advocates who enforce it to keep autonomy and control over each person's own health.

Assisted suicide can involve nursing practice as the decision to perform it may involve a nurse. For example, the physician may order a lethal dose of a medication, that is to be given to the patient by the nurse. From a legal standpoint, this can be classified as homicide, yet from an ethical standpoint this is an act of mercy. Due to this, the ANA issued a statement prohibiting nurses from participating in assisted suicide, as it is a violation of code. Although, this may be contradicted with provision 1.4 stating that patients have the right to accept, refuse, or terminate treatment. (Campbell 2019)

Ethically, those who disagree with assisted suicide claim that it destroys value of life and encourages an increase in popularity of suicide and a culture of death. They also believe that by allowing critically ill patients to have the option of assisted suicide, that their value in society will be degraded. They also bring into light what exactly is "quality of life" as it can be interpreted differently on a person to person basis.

Those who support the agreement believe that it helps provide a more natural way of dying by avoiding artificial prolongation of life. Each and every person has a right to die, including refusing life extending medical treatments. There is belief that there is no moral difference between accepting patient requests to refuse life prolonging medical treatments and accepting patient requests for physician assisted dying. In many cases, if the patient is conscious, it is a safer alternative to accept assisted suicide rather than considering suicide on their own.

Campbell C. S. (2019). Mortal Responsibilities: Bioethics and Medical-Assisted Dying. *The Yale journal of biology and medicine*, 92(4), 733–739.