



Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) and the Role of SLPs

Question: I am a hospital based SLP and I have been asked to assist a Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) team for one of our clients. I'm feeling a little apprehensive given the difficult nature of this situation. Is there anything I need to be aware of? What resources are available?

Answer: While SLPs (and audiologists) are not at the forefront in relation to MAID, there are times when we may become involved in the MAID process for clients. SLPs on multidisciplinary MAID teams may have important roles in:

- Screening or assessing for communication impairments in clients who request MAID,
- Facilitating client's understanding of information relevant to the MAID process, as well as client's expression and autonomy throughout their time in care,
- Providing education to other healthcare professionals and to family members on ways to accommodate a client's communication impairments, and/or
- Administering communication assessments as part of competency for decision-making assessments as necessary.

In any circumstance, ACSLPA regulated members should be informed about their roles and obligations regarding MAID. Members may find the following resources helpful when working with clients who have requested MAID:

- The [Government of Canada's overview of the federal legislation on MAID](#).
- Speech-Language & Audiology Canada's [Communication Health and End-of-Life Care](#) toolkit.
- ACSLPA's [Informed Consent for Service](#) guideline, which provides more information on competence for making informed consent for service decisions.
- ACSLPA's position statement on [The Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist in Assessing Capacity for Decision-Making by Adults with Communication Disorders](#).
- Employer policies and procedures related to MAID.



Selected References

- DeZeeuw, K., & Lalonde Myers, E. (2020). The role of speech-language pathologists in medical assistance in dying: Canadian experience to inform clinical practice. *Canadian Journal of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology*, 44(2), 49–56. https://www.cjslpa.ca/files/2020_CJSLPA_Vol_44/No_2/CJSLPA_Vol_44_No_2_2020_MS_1196.pdf
- Chahda, L., Mathisen, B.A., & Carey, L.B. (2017). The role of speech-language pathologists in adult palliative care. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 19(1), 58–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549507.2016.1241301>