

Recommended questions to ask an End-of-life Doula



**Palliative Care
Australia**
Matters of life and death

The Australian Palliative Care Peak Bodies Network understand that end-of-life doula roles are emerging throughout Australia. As this a relatively new role in the Australian context, the network hosted a roundtable to increase its understanding of the role and to establish resources to support person-centred and quality palliative care.

These questions have been developed to support people experiencing a serious or life-limiting illness and their carers and communities who may be considering engaging an end-of-life doula.

The following are recommended questions to ask an end-of-life doula when considering engaging them or purchasing services:

What can and can't you do in your role?

Each end-of-life doula offers different supports and it is important to know what services are provided.

Questions we recommend

- What activities/tasks do you do in a typical day in your role as an end-of-life doula?
- Are there activities/tasks that you will not be involved in?
- How can you help with paperwork? For example, Advance Care Planning (ACP), wills, powers of attorney etc.
- How can you help after my loved one or I die? For example, cooling equipment, notifying family/friends, funeral arrangements, memorialisation etc.
- Can I choose what supports from you I do or don't want? And what if I change my mind?
- Are you regulated by a Code of Conduct?¹

Tell me more about your background?

Each end-of-life doula comes from a different background and there is currently no registration process for an end-of-life doula. It is important to understand the background of the individual.

Questions we recommend

- How do I know that you have the qualifications and experience to support me/my family?²
- What relationship do you have with local services such as my GP or community nurse including palliative care services?
- Do you support people who are considering voluntary assisted dying (VAD)?

¹ End-of-life doulas are regulated by the National Code of Conduct for unregistered health care workers in NSW, VIC, SA and QLD. Other jurisdictions are in the process of implementing this code. A new peak body, holistic End of Life and Death Care Inc., HELD has been established.

² A nationally accredited certificate IV in End of Life Doula Services is available. It is not a requirement of practice.

Other important areas to discuss

Questions we recommend

- How much do you charge? And how is this paid (i.e. up front or in instalments)
- How much time will you spend with me?
- Is there a period in my illness when you would recommend allocating more time for services? Are there additional costs for these e.g. after hours supports?
- What times/days are you available? What if I need you and you are away? For example, on holiday or a weekend away. Do you have a backup doula or do you work in a team? If so, can I meet other team members so that I have a chance to build trust with them too?
- How can I contact you? Do you provide phone or email support if I have any questions?
- What's the difference between your service and a social worker at the hospital?
- What do you offer that is different to a palliative care volunteer?
- Do you have insurance to cover your services?

For more information about palliative care, please visit your relevant website below:

Palliative Care NSW
www.palliativecarensw.org.au

Palliative Care WA
www.palliativecarewa.asn.au

Palliative Care Queensland
www.palliativecareqld.org.au

Palliative Care ACT
www.pallcareact.org.au

Palliative Care SA
www.palliativecaresa.org.au

Palliative Care NT
www.pallcarent.org.au

Palliative Care Tasmania Limited
www.pallcaretas.org.au

Palliative Care Victoria
www.pallcarevic.asn.au

Palliative care peak bodies from all Australian states and territories as well as Flinders University have developed this document:



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