
From: Alex Wittmann [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 16 June 2021 1:57 PM
To: Health and Environment Committee
Subject: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Hi, my name is Alex Wittmann, I'm a Counsellor who works for [REDACTED] (a post-suicide support service) where I have attended over 200 post-suicide support sessions.

I'm in support of this bill but would like the language to be reevaluated for those considered 'not eligible'. While I'm not (at present) advocating the bill be introduced for those suffering mentally, it's important for any public discourse to consider all perspectives and avoid reinforcing old paradigms.

The drafters of the QLRC report were very careful to say they are only offering a "framework", however, language and assumptions heavily influence decision makers. The example I want to highlight here is, they say they are limiting the framework to those "suffering and dying" **physically**... and then go on to say it's not for those "tired of life", in reference to those struggling **mentally**.

"Tired of life"!?

"Tired of life" is dismissive, minimising and marginalising language. As if one cannot be 'suffering and dying' psychologically, emotionally and spiritually to the same degree as one does physically. There is clear and very substantial research showing the connection of emotional life to physical health. To assume physical suffering is worse than mental suffering is simply buying into outdated social constructs, and just does not add up. The research is clear on this, the vast majority of suicides are by those debilitated with mental/emotional pain (or the mental anguish *connected to* physical suffering). Anecdotally, this is also very clear in my work.

Can I please ask we consider the whole spectrum of 'suffering and dying' here, and that the language and assumptions around those deemed "ineligible" be reconsidered and reflective of progressive research.

Kind regards, Alex

Alex Wittmann

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