

# I'm NOT better off dead says disabled actress

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Defiant: 'We're living the life that many pushing for assisted suicide are afraid of' ... Liz Carr (above, right) with her mother, Patricia.

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## Should assisted suicide be a human right? As campaigners argue that people should be allowed to choose when to die, a blistering new documentary warns of dreadful consequences.

### What's happening?

Assisted dying and suicide are becoming steadily more popular. Forms of it have become legal in many countries.

But it remains illegal in many more. In the law of England and Wales, **euthanasia** is considered **manslaughter** or murder. Those charged can face life in prison.

Many believe that this should change. In January TV presenter Esther Rantzen launched a petition asking the UK Parliament to debate assisted dying and bring it into law. By the start of February more than 100,000 people had signed the petition.

### Find out more

Campaigners believe assisted dying allows people to die in dignity rather than living with a painful disease.

But not everyone agrees. In her powerful new BBC documentary *Better Off Dead?*, actor Liz Carr has delivered a blistering attack on assisted suicide.

Carr has used a wheelchair since she was 14. She thinks assisted dying will make people feel under pressure to end their lives. Her film challenges the idea that disabled lives are worth less than others.

Carr says: "I fear we've so devalued certain groups of people — ill people, disabled people, older people — that I don't think it's in their best interests to enshrine in law the right of doctors to kill certain people."

### Should assisted suicide be a human right?

#### Some say

Yes! Just as our lives are our own, so are our deaths. It is only fair that we should have the right to choose how we exit the world.

#### Others think

No: Allowing assisted dying would be easy to exploit. And there is no fair way to ensure that vulnerable people are protected.

## Six steps to discovery

### 1. Connect

**How do you feel about this story?** - Are you scared or worried about death? If you could choose, how would you want to die?

### 2. Wonder

**What questions do you have?** - For example: Why do you think assisted suicide is still illegal in England and Wales?

## Some people say

*"Every man must do two things alone; he must do his own believing and his own dying."*

**Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), German theological and Protestant reformer**

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*What do you think?*

### 3. Investigate

**What are the facts?** - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure.

### 4. Construct

**What is your point of view?** - Could you ever approve of assisted dying?

### 5. Express

**What do others believe?** - In groups, design a campaign poster, either in favour of or against assisted dying.

### 6. Reflect

**What might happen next?** - How would you feel if someone you loved was terminally ill and wanted to opt for assisted dying?

## Glossary

**Euthanasia** - The deliberate and painless ending of a life.

**Manslaughter** - The crime of killing another human either without meaning to, or in circumstances that are not as serious as murder.