

# Understanding Grief and Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) in Motor Neurone Disease (MND)

Presented by Dr Margaret Sealey and Prof Samar Aoun AM

Family carers who lose loved ones to MND, are at heightened risk of prolonged grief and other bereavement complications. Healthcare professionals are uniquely positioned to make a difference to carers' grief experiences, including the impact of VAD on bereavement outcomes.

This online 2-hour educational session will help participants to:

- Describe the characteristics and processes of grief and bereavement
- Articulate the impact of VAD on carers' grief and bereavement experiences
- Identify ways to support bereaved carers
- Improve professional practices regarding bereavement care

*This educational session is applicable to healthcare professionals working with other serious illnesses eligible for VAD.*

Free online sessions via Teams.  
Registration - <https://bit.ly/3YNvRrE>

**Choose 1 session from the following during registration**

## March 2026 (AEDT)

- 3rd, Tue, 1-3pm
- 11th, Wed, 5-7pm
- 19th, Thu, 3-5pm
- 24th, Tue, 1-3pm
- 27th, Fri, 12-2pm

## April 2026

- 1st, Wed, 1-3pm (AEDT)
- 23rd, Thu, 4-6pm (AEST)
- 29th, Wed, 11am-1pm (AEST)

## Brief Bios of Presenters



**Dr Margaret Sealey (PhD, FT)** is a thanatologist who has worked as a counsellor, educator, and researcher with vulnerable populations in end-of-life health settings for over 25 years. Her counselling practice focused on both patients and carers facing end-of-life, grief and bereavement. She has worked with the Motor Neurone Disease Association of WA as a Care Advisor and Counsellor.

With a previous background as a registered Nurse, she attained a Bachelor of Psychology (Hons) and postgraduate studies in Counselling and Counselling Psychology. Her PhD research developed a bereavement risk assessment model for use in palliative care, which entailed the design of a self-report grief assessment tool for carers.



**Prof Samar Aoun AM** is Perron Institute Research Chair in Palliative Care at the University of Western Australia. She is an international leader in the promotion and advocacy of public health approaches to palliative and bereavement care and led this approach for those living with grief and bereavement and specifically for MND. Her research programs on supporting family carers pre and post bereavement have informed policy and practice at the national and international levels. She developed and led the MND Care Educational Program for health professionals in WA (2019-20).

She is a member of Public Health Palliative Care (PHPC) International, the PHPC reference group of the European Association of Palliative Care, and member of the International Expert Advisory Group for the development of best practice statements in bereavement care in Europe.

Samar is past Chair of the MND Association in WA and MND Australia. She is the founder and current Chair of Compassionate Communities Australia. Among her awards: The 2023 WA Australian of the year, the Lifetime Achievement Award from MND Australia and Life Member of MNDWA.