Are There Some Premature Deaths We Should Not Prevent? Suicide Prevention when Assistance in Dying is Available

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Abstract. Suicide prevention services are generally supposed to do their utmost to prevent suicides with all persons, regardless of the suicidal individual's characteristics and reasons given for wanting to die. Their assumptions are that doing otherwise constitutes discrimination and that they would venture into an ethical morass if they attempt to determine whether some lives are more worthy of saving than others. However, where MAiD (assisted suicide and euthanasia) has been legalized, should we continue to strive to prevent all suicides? Or are there some circumstances where we should abstain from preventing a death by suicide or even encourage people to seek to end their lives by MAiD? This presentation explores if there are justified distinctions between how to respond to people requesting or considering requesting MAiD, and how to respond to suicidal individuals. We examine whether suicide is sometimes rational and without ambivalence, as well as how respect for autonomy may be balanced against obligations to protect vulnerable populations.