

Reading

- Michael Cholbi, *Suicide: The Philosophical Dimensions*

What *is* Suicide?

- How should we define suicide? Some conceive of suicide as the **intentionally caused death of oneself by oneself** through actions that one **chooses** and **believes** will lead to one's death.
- What do you think?

Suicide and Morality

- In the history of philosophy and religion there have been varying attitudes towards whether suicide is ever **morally justified**.
- How we approach this will depend upon how we think about moral matters in general. Here are some approaches that philosophers distinguish:
 - Whether actions are right or wrong depends upon whether they have good or bad consequences or effects (**consequentialism**).
 - Whether actions are right or wrong depends upon whether they conform to moral norms, laws, or principles, regardless of their effects (**deontology**).
 - Whether actions are right or wrong depends upon whether they manifest virtues or vices of character (**virtue ethics**).

Suicide and Society

- Suicidal behaviour and ideation are often regarded as **pathological** or **medical**: seen as a sign of a severe mental health condition. This means that there can be social support for people who need it in health care settings. But are there downsides to this way of thinking too?

Beyond Morality & Pathology: Suicide and The Value of Life

- Many of us have a default negative disposition towards suicide: regarding it as *typically* bad, sad, tragic, etc. Can we understand this without invoking morality, or pathology? This might be helpful if we want to avoid **moralizing** and **pathologizing**.
- One suggestion: the negative disposition reflects the **positive** dispositions we have for others: we value life, and their lives, we have love, friendship, and connection. We feel that suicide is bad not because we condemn or pathologize suicidal behaviour, but because we value life.

This gives us something positive to end on!

- The value, meaning, and purpose of life – including *our own* lives – what other people mean to us, and what we mean to other people.