

Bioethics Glossary

Abortion: Intentionally causing the death of a fetus in utero, by either active or passive means.

Active Abortion: Intentionally-caused death of a fetus in utero, by direct assault on the body of the fetus itself, rather than the condition of pregnancy which supports it.

Active Euthanasia: Mercy-killing; direct act of physically killing a sick or dying person.

Animal Rights Advocacy: That moral position which holds that animals other than human can have rights.

Animal Welfare Advocacy: That moral position which holds that all animals deserve humane treatment.

Assisted Suicide: Helping to provide someone with the means to self-kill. Any moral agent can be complicit in this act.

Autonomy: Self-rule, capacity for mature, uncoerced and therefore mentally competent decision-making; not the same as a liberty or right to choose this or that specific action, since this mental capacity is the prior condition of possibility of any competent decision..

Beneficence: doing well by someone; well-meaning intent and behavior.

Categorical Imperative: That moral maxim or principle, attributed to Kant, which holds that persons should be treated as ends in themselves, and never as means only.

Circularity: The logical error of question-begging; to assume as true or given that which is also to be argued for; to have the conclusion simply re-state the premise.

Competence: Capability of a mature person to reason and to choose autonomously.

Complicit Moral Agency: agreement in action or intent between two or more moral agents.

Conflict of Interest: A mind-state of having competing goals or intentions.

Euthanasia: A moral agent's intentional causing of a patient's earlier than natural death, either actively or passively. Genetic

Mother: The woman who contributes her ovum for gestation.

Gestational Mother: The woman who is pregnant.

Harm Principle: Moral maxim which holds that one is not free to cause harm to others, attributed to J.S. Mill. **Involuntary:** That which is imposed upon a person despite that person's objection.

Justice: Fairness or treating all equally.

Justification: Supporting reason for an action or decision which renders it morally acceptable.

Moral Agency: Capability of discerning right and wrong.

Natural Law: a source of law that arises out of human nature itself, innate, inborn, and which determines species characteristics, like moral agency or capacity to understand and think.

Non-Voluntary: That which is chosen on behalf of an incompetent person.

Nurturing Mother: The woman who raises a child who may or may not be her own biological offspring.

Palliative Care: Comfort care for those in pain, pain management, hospice care, etc.

Passive Abortion: Chemical or drug-induced abortion, with no direct assault on the fetal body itself.

Passive Euthanasia: Letting die, or allowing to die of a sick or dying person by any moral agent (including the patient himself) who is specifically intending to help bring about an earlier than natural death for that person.

Passive Infanticide: Intentionally letting an infant die from neglect of its needs.

Paternalism: Suppressing an individual's autonomy for that person's own sake.

Personhood: That moral status which is worthy of highest respect, and possessive of rights.

Physical Sentience: The capacity to feel physical touch, or experience discomfort/pain.

Rationality: Capability to reason or organize thoughts.

Self-consciousness: Awareness of one's identity, knowledge that one's self endures over time.

Speciesism: A moral theory which only applies to humans.

Supererogatory: Heroic or lofty behavior which goes beyond duty or obligation.

Surrogate Motherhood: Pregnancy undertaken for the purpose of gestating a child for another.

Termination of Pregnancy: Intentional or spontaneous ending of a pregnancy after which the fetus may live or die.

Total Extra-Corporeal Gestation: the growing of a human being entirely outside of the female human body.

Utilitarianism: That moral theory which holds that actions are good or bad depending on their consequences.

Viability: The physical state of being able to remain alive unattached to another human being.

Virtue: A habit of doing good.

Voluntary: That which is chosen freely.