

WHAT IS MORAL INJURY?

Moral injury is a wound of the soul that can have devastating effects on the spirit, mind, and body. It is a natural human response to a traumatic event or events. Though not a diagnosable psychological disorder, when left unresolved moral injury can play a significant role in the manifested symptoms of mental health problems.

CAUSES

- Having to make difficult moral choices under extreme conditions
- Experiencing morally anguishing events or performing morally anguishing duties
- Witnessing immoral acts
- Behaving in ways that profoundly challenge one's moral conscience and identity and the values that support them

SYMPTOMS

- Loss of faith
- Propensity to commit suicide
- Intrusive memories
- Self-sabotaging
- Substance abuse
- Loss of meaning
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Isolation
- Despair
- Depression
- Shame
- Guilt

How can Moral Injury affect me?

Moral injury causes people to experience profound feelings of guilt, betrayal, remorse, despair, and shame. These feelings can vary in intensity over time. People experiencing moral injury can go through stretches of time when they feel 'normal,' and other periods of time when they feel utterly debilitated by feelings of anguish.

Many people who have moral injury can lead very stable and productive lives outwardly, but their inner pain and torment can deeply affect their relationships and emotional well-being over time.

Moral Injury is NOT PTSD. Receiving treatment for PTSD does not address the symptoms of moral injury.

EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

- Identify potential moral injury experiences
- Recognize trauma discourses and behaviors that indicate moral injury exposure
- Distinguish moral injury from other forms of trauma
- Learn how to design and implement strategies for recovery from moral injury
- Appraise experiences that cause moral injury and select best strategies for different populations and events

How Volunteers of America, Dakotas can help

Volunteers of America, Dakotas has long looked to serve those with issues stemming from war, imprisonment, substance abuse, homelessness, and other vulnerable situations. Moral injury is an intangible residue of such situations. Our moral injury training is designed to identify moral injury, as well as help those affected to rebuild their soul and repair their relationship with themselves.