

Introductory Questions

This exercise is for your reflection only and will not be shared with others.

1. Have you ever done something that you felt was morally right, but also felt that it challenged you emotionally, psychologically, or spiritually?
2. Have you ever done something that is at odds with your core code of ethics and values? How?
3. Have you ever witnessed an act that challenges your ethical beliefs or values?
4. Have you ever been affected by these experiences for a long time afterward?
5. How has your sense of self and your outlook on life been shaped by your own or others' moral choices?

Consequences of Moral Injury: From Combat to Cul-de-Sac

Directions: Read the scenario, and consider the questions that follow. Write down your responses to the questions in the space provided.

Jeff is an Air National Guard sensor operator; he controls the MQ-1B Predator's cameras and lasers and guides missiles to their targets when necessary. This is Jeff's second CONUS deployment. His unit is part of the Wing's Operations Group and provides support to ground force commanders in the Middle East. Jeff's most recent combat mission involves flights in Iraq, where his unit supports ISR.

Jeff hasn't yet fired a Hellfire, but he's witnessed a good deal of brutality from ISIS fighters. Jeff remembers during one flight over Mosul he watched an ISIS suicide bomber drive a car packed with explosives toward an Iraqi unit. An Iraqi soldier driving a bulldozer collided with the car. The bomb detonated and killed the ISIS driver, but the soldier miraculously survived.

Another scene particularly sticks with Jeff. In early spring 2017, Jeff was providing overwatch for an Army platoon on patrol in Mosul. Jeff witnessed a brief flash and knew immediately that the patrol had been struck by an IED. As a result, a Soldier was killed. There was nothing Jeff could do, and he knew this.

Jeff is stationed a short driving distance from his house. He can go from combat to coaching soccer in about 30 minutes. The day he witnessed this strike he felt *off* as he drove home. It didn't matter that Jeff didn't cause any harm or that he had only been tracking the truck for a few minutes or that it was outside his power to stop it. Somehow it was difficult for Jeff to think that a combat zone like Mosul could exist in the same world as the one in which Jeff and his family live. And, even more striking for Jeff was the fact that he had to operate in both worlds on any given day.

Questions

1. Thinking about the definition and potential causes of moral injury, how might this scenario cause a moral injury?
2. Do CONUS deployments, like Jeff's, present unique moral challenges and opportunities for Service members?
3. Do CONUS deployments, like Jeff's, present unique challenges and opportunities for families/friends?

What You Can Do

Directions: Consider the following questions. Write down your responses to the questions in the space provided.

Some support strategies are listed below:

- Being non-judgmental, patient, compassionate
- Giving small but consistent doses of loving and caring
- Making yourself available to talk about what is bothering the Service member or Veteran
- Getting in touch with branch or VA care providers who can advise you
- Fostering help-seeking by the Service member or Veteran

In general, what type of support do you prefer?

1. Having a support person present, not actively involved in problem-solving
2. Having a support person proactively involved in problem-solving
3. Having a support person ready to be actively involved in problem-solving only when asked

In general, what type of support do you prefer to provide to others?

1. Being present, not actively involved in problem-solving
2. Being proactively involved in problem-solving
3. Being ready to be actively involved in problem-solving only when asked

Can you be flexible in the support you provide, depending on the type of support the other person wants? (Yes/No)

Are you able to talk with members of your social support network about what you need? (Yes/No)

Are you able to recognize when your attempts at support are not working for the person you are trying to support? (Yes/No)

Resources

- [National Center for PTSD website](http://www.ptsd.va.gov) at www.ptsd.va.gov
 - [Moral Injury in the Context of War](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp):
https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp
- [Where to Get Help for PTSD](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/index.asp): <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/index.asp>
[Veterans Crisis Line website](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) at www.veteranscrisisline.net or call: 1-800-273-8255