

## Understanding Moral Injury (Slide 1)

- Moral injury is not spoken of often and someone suffering from it may not know it

## Objectives (Slide 2)

- Define moral injury
- Understand the causes and consequences of moral injury
- Identify strategies to heal and recover from moral injury
- You may perform or witness actions that “lead to serious inner conflict because the experience is at odds with [your] core ethical and moral beliefs”
  - The guilt, shame, and inner conflict you experience is moral injury

## Introductory Questions (Slide 3)

- **Exercise 1:** Introductory Questions
- **Handout 1:** Introductory Questions

## Moral Injury Definition (Slide 5)

- Moral injury is the lasting spiritual, social, and psychological aftermath of doing things; failing to do things; or being the victim of others’ actions - all of which challenge an ethical code of conduct - when the stakes are high

## Potentially Morally Injurious Experiences (Slide 6)

- Experiences that can cause moral injury
  - Causing injury or pain to others, even when ethically justified in doing so
  - Betrayal by leaders who make bad decisions with disastrous consequences
- There can be a delayed impact

## True or False (Slide 7)

- You cannot look at a list of experiences and determine which cause moral injury
- Moral injury occurs at an individual level because ethics and morals must be considered

## Moral Injury Scenario (Slide 8)

- **Exercise 2:** Moral Injury Scenario
- **Handout 2:** Moral Injury Scenario
  - For Question 3, responses will not be discussed as a group; however, your answer could make a difference in how you can support someone struggling with moral injury

## Consequences of Moral Injury Quote (Slide 9)

- When trying to make sense of what happened, the consequences of moral injury often get reduced to “It was my fault,” “The world is dangerous,” or, in severe cases, “I’m a monster”

- Moral injury causes Service members to no longer “trust in previously deeply held beliefs” about themselves and others’ ability to live by shared moral values

### Consequences of Moral Injury (Slide 10)

- Consequences of moral injury
  - Being haunted, avoiding reminders
  - Disinterest, detachment from family and friends
  - Low motivation, alienation, purposelessness
  - Broken moral compass
  - Shame and guilt
  - Reduced trust in others and in social contracts
  - Poor self-care
  - Self-handicapping
  - Loss of faith

### What to Look For (Slide 11)

- Potentially problematic changes in behavior that loved ones may notice
  - Withdrawal and disconnection
  - Problems communicating about inner experience
  - Problems expressing caring feelings
  - Problems feeling good in situations that used to bring pleasure
  - Poor self-care
  - Self-handicapping
- Changes in behavior can be indicators of “avoiding and concealing” combat experiences and not processing them in a healthy way

### Healing Moral Injury: Moral Repair (Slide 12)

- The fact that Service members are conflicted by what happened during combat means that healing is possible
- Remember
  - Goodness is reclaimable
  - Forgiveness and repair are possible
  - Healing is a process

### Supportive Behaviors for Others (Slide 13)

- There is no one strategy that works best for everyone, and there can be unintended consequences from well-meaning but misdirected support behaviors
- **Exercise 3:** What You Can Do
- **Handout 3:** What You Can Do

### Supportive Behaviors for Self (Slide 14)

- Options in the healing process
  - Sharing experiences with natural support systems

- Doing things that correct harm
- Connecting to faith communities
- Getting in touch with branch or VA care providers who can help
- Evaluate your social support network if things are not improving
- Being judgmental, impatient, uncompassionate
- Being overwhelming in attention, love, and care
- Being unavailable
- Consider getting professional help, especially if your social support network is unable to provide the support needed

### Resources (Slide 15)

- PTSD resources may be able to provide support
- Handout 4:** Resources

### Objectives (Slide 16)

- Review
  - How do you define moral injury?
  - What are the causes and consequences of moral injury?
  - What are some strategies to heal and recover from moral injury?