

Slide 1: Understanding Moral Injury

Slide 2: Objectives

- Define moral injury.
- Understand the causes and consequences of moral injury.
- Identify strategies to heal and recover from moral injury.

Slide 3: Introductory Questions

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

Slide 4: Moral Injury Quote

"You are praying that the decision you make is the right one, and if it is the wrong one – which a couple of decisions were the wrong ones – you are paying the price and you are living with it."

-Former Service member Sendio Martz

Slide 5: Moral Injury Definition

- 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 violate an ethical code of conduct, *when the stakes are high*

Slide 6: Potentially Morally Injurious Experiences (PMIEs)

- Causing injury or pain to others, even when ethically justified in doing so
- Betrayal by leaders who make bad decisions with disastrous consequences

Slide 7: True or False

- Can moral injury be determined by reviewing a list of a Service member's combat experiences?

False

Slide 8: Moral Injury Scenario

- What would you recommend to a friend to heal and recover from something that strongly violated his or her moral core?
- What do you think a person needs from friends and family after doing or seeing something that violated his or her moral core?

Slide 9: Consequences of Moral Injury Quote

“People try to make sense of what happened, but it often gets reduced to, ‘It was my fault,’ ‘the world is dangerous,’ or, in severe cases, ‘I’m a monster’.”

-Peter Yeomans, Staff Psychologist, VA Medical Center in Philadelphia

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: careless and reckless behaviors, low motivation for improving situation
- Loss of faith

Slide 11: What to Look For

- Significant changes in behavior since redeployment (or discharge):
 - 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

Slide 12: Healing Moral Injury: Moral Repair

- Goodness is reclaimable
- Forgiveness and repair are possible
- Healing is a process – no quick-fix

Slide 13: Supportive Behaviors for Others

- 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

Slide 14: Supportive Behaviors for Self

- Sharing experiences with natural support systems
 - Family, friends, clergy
- Doing things that correct harm done
 - Giving to others, doing good, volunteering
- Connecting to faith communities (if applicable)
- Getting in touch with branch or Veterans Affairs (VA) care providers
 - Seek help and support when suffering

Slide 15: 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

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