

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?