# Spiritual Care of the Morally Injured

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## Moral Injury

When there has been a betrayal of what's right By someone who holds legitimate authority In a high-stakes situation OR

When there has been a betrayal of what's right Perpetrated by the morally injured person In a high-stakes situation

Religious Struggles
Loss of Faith
Disconnection from God/Higher Power
Belief in Unforgiveability (by self, others, Higher Power)
Disconnection from Spiritual Communities
Loss of Meaning and/or Purpose

Perpetrating or Witnessing Violence Against Others
Not Protecting Others
Being in a Moral Compromising Position
Dehumanizing Others
Having to Choose Who to Save

Event Transgres s Moral Code

Spiritual and Religious

Spiritual but not Religious

Moral Injury religious

Moral Injury psychological

Guilt & Shame
Feelings of Betrayal
Loss of Trust
Difficulty Forgiving
Loss of Meaning and/or Purpose

#### **Clinical Outcomes**

PTSD Symptoms
Depression
Anxiety
Substance Abuse
Sleep Problems
Relationship
Problems
Headaches/Pain
Physical Disability
Unemployment

Koenig, H. et al. "The Moral Injury Symptom Scale-Military Version." Journal of Religion and Health 57 (2017): 249-265.

The world is benevolent and good

The life has meaning and is not just chaos

I am worthy of dignity and respect

vs.

The world is harsh and untrustworthy
Life has no meaning

I am worthless and deserve to be punished

#### **Moral Injury Symptoms**

Violation of core moral beliefs

Spiritual/Religious focus

Conscience Violated

Identity/Existentially focused

"I'm not worthy"

"I'm not good."

Grief, Sorrow, Regret

Shame, Guilt, Self-Blame

Self-Condemnation

Self Sabotage

Alienation/Isolation from

Others

"I'm unforgiveable."

### **Overlapping Symptoms**

Anger

Depression

Anxiety

Self-Medication with

Substances

Distrust of self and others

Social Issues/Withdrawal

Negative View of Self

Suicidality

Disgust

Nightmares/Disturbed

Sleep/Insomnia

#### **PTSD Symptoms**

Violation of Personhood

Flashbacks

Hyperarousal

Hypervigilance

Fear Responses

"Startle" Reflex

Avoidance of Re-Injury

Memory Loss

Paranoia

Lament & Grief

Confession, Repentance, & Renewal

Forgiveness

Community

Meaning and Purpose

Spiritual Practices & Participation