



Moral Injury and Moral Courage in the Workplace

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MAINE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

A State Branch of the American Counseling Association



Objectives



Define moral distress and moral injury as they relate to the workplace



Discuss the impact that moral injury can have on the worker



Define moral courage and discuss protective factors to reduce moral injury



Discuss ways to make meaning out of difficult situations

Moral Distress

Feelings of stress, guilt, shame, worry, and/or anger that occur when one is faced with an individual or agency's behavior, practice or policy which goes against one's own sense of what is right.



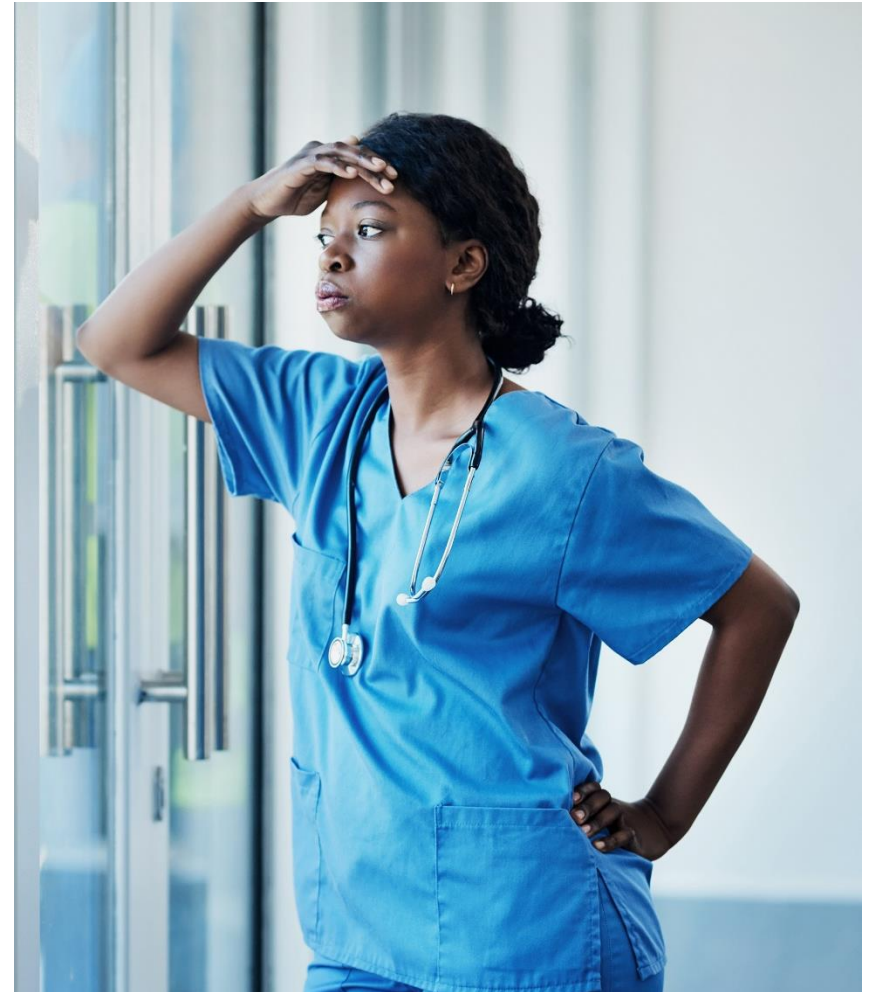
Moral Injury

- Resulting from ongoing, unanswered moral distress
- First discussed within the context of post-combat war veterans. The term described traumatic experience(s) which led the person to question their morality. Moral injury was related to, but not exclusive to, PTSD.

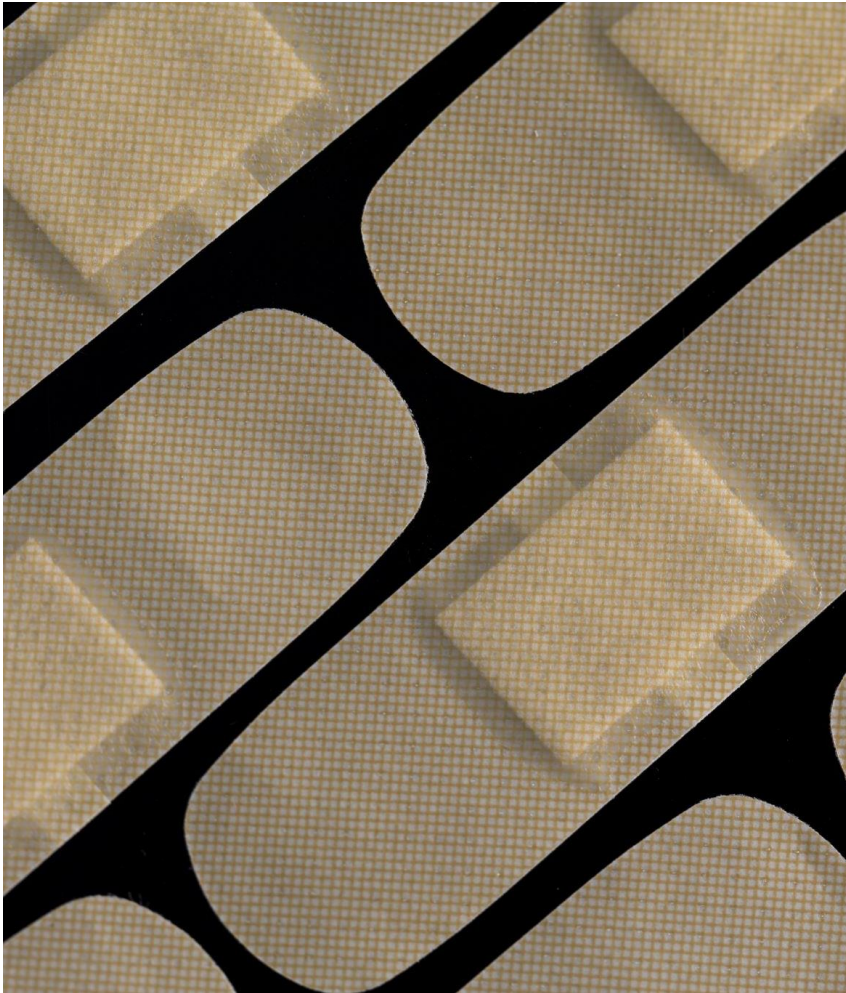


Moral Injury in the Workplace

- High level of ongoing stress, hopelessness, distrust, guilt, etc., which result from participating in or bearing witness to actions or policies in your workplace which go against your own morals/ ethics/ values.



Common Effects of Moral Injury



- High levels of workplace dissatisfaction
- Burnout
- Distrust in leadership
- Self-loathing, shame, self-doubt
- Anger, anxiety, depression
- Increase use of substances, over-eating or self-isolation

Moral Courage

“... [the] capacity to overcome fear and ... the willingness to speak out and do that which is right in the face of forces that would lead a person to act in some other way” (Lachman,2007).



MORAL COURAGE

When to act and how?

Seek Support

- Leadership
- Supervision
- Peer consultation
- Social supports and self-care



Clearly Define Values



Key Questions:

- What is most important to me?
- Am I living in alignment with my values?
- What changes do I want or need to make in order to honor my values more?

Set Boundaries & Stick to Them

- Say “no” when you mean no.
- When saying “yes” to a request, define why you are making this decision.
- Once a decision is made, stick to it.



Take Action When Possible



Engage in action committees



Discuss with trusted leadership



Get involved in policy change and advocacy



Share your opinions and thoughts with trusted others

Making Meaning After Moral Injury



- Keep a growth-oriented mindset
- Use self-talk to move forward
- Do your best within the current context

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Seek help

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