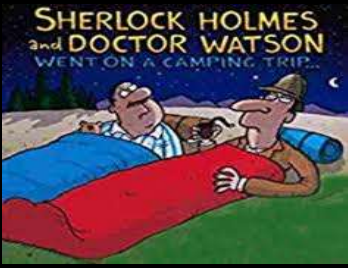


“Recognizing Moral Injury in Crisis Intervention and how to heal from it”

Greg Young, Chaplain, Germantown Police Dept.
 Chaplain, FBI
 Adjunct faculty, Fox Valley Technical College, Public Safety Training Center
 UWGB Behavioral Health Training Partnership trainer
 Debriefer for Multiple Agencies
 Resilience/Post-traumatic growth consultant
 ILEETA Member
 ICISF trainer
 Email: greg@resilientresponse.com
 Website: resilientresponse.com

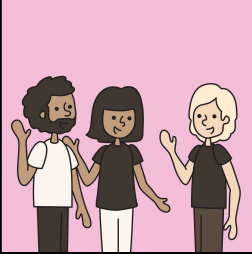
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SHERLOCK HOLMES AND DR. WATSON GO CAMPING



2

INTRODUCTIONS



- Please type you are, where you are located, and what you do!

3

A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS TO GET US STARTED:

- Who taught you to be a moral person?
- How do you feel when you have done something bad?

(Credit to Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock)

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YOU EXPERIENCE MORAL INJURY IN THE WORK YOU DO

- "Anyone who works with marginalized, at-risk populations has probably seen that empty stare that can be moral injury. People in poverty. People struggling with addiction. People whose daily lives and their choices erode their feeling of being a good and decent person, worthy of respect. People who carry unprocessed grief and guilt in ordinary life. Because of things we do, witness, are ordered to do, or fail to do in high stakes situations, we can lose our moral foundations and our sense of being a good person." (Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock)

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DEFINING MORAL INJURY

The classic definition of Moral injury given to us by Syracuse University's Moral Injury Project is:

"Moral injury is the damage done to one's conscience or moral compass when that person perpetrates, witnesses, or fails to prevent acts that transgress one's own moral beliefs, values, or ethical codes of conduct."

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MORAL INJURY....

- Those experiences one has that violates your conscience.
- Some describe it as a soul wound
- I sometimes refer to it as those experiences which tear a hole in our souls.

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Some have described moral injury as:



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MISASMA

- Greek root of moral injury. Ancient Greek concept of moral defilement or pollution after resulting from unjust killing

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Moral dilemmas

- While not a major moral injury caused by traumatic incidents, we experience moral dilemmas nearly every day....
- Example: You walk by a homeless person wanting to help, but deciding not to. Or seeing a disabled person having trouble crossing at a crosswalk and not helping because you are late for an appointment....

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ONE CAN EXPERIENCE MORAL INJURY FROM:

DOING SOMETHING THAT VIOLATES YOUR MORAL CODE OR EXPERIENCING SOMETHING DONE TO YOU THAT VIOLATES YOUR MORAL CODE

FROM EXPERIENCES IN WHICH YOU FELT POWERLESS TO HELP OR OTHER ACTS OF OMISSION

(NOTE: THE PANDEMIC HAS UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSED MORAL INJURY IN A NUMBER OF WAYS)

FROM WITNESSING OR EVEN HEARING ABOUT A CRITICAL INCIDENT

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MORAL INJURY

GUILT
AND
SHAME


Guilt: "I made a mistake"

Shame: "I am the mistake"

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MORAL INJURY... WHO AM I

- People suffering from Moral Injury may not recognize the person they were before the injury...



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MORAL INJURY



- Individuals with moral injury may see themselves as *immoral, irredeemable and unrepairable* and may believe the world is *immoral*

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HOW IS MORAL INJURY DIFFERENT THAN PTSD?

- Simply stated PTSD is an Anxiety or Fear based disorder
- Moral injury is not currently classified as a mental disorder. Comes from how one interprets an experience(s)
- PTSD and Moral Injury can co-occur, but Moral injury lingers....

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COMMON SYMPTOMS OF MORAL INJURY



- Loss of faith
- Depression
- Loss of meaning
- Shame
- Guilt
- Self-sabotaging

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COMMON SYMPTOMS OF MORAL INJURY




- Substance abuse
- Anxiety
- Anger/Outrage
- Isolating
- Despair
- Propensity to commit suicide
- Intrusive memories

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MORAL INJURY AND PTSD		
PTSD	BOTH	MORAL INJURY
"STARTLE" REFLEX	ANGER	SORROW GRIEF
MEMORY LOSS	DEPRESSION	REGRET
FEAR	ANXIETY	SHAME
FLASHBACKS	INSOMNIA	ALIENATION
	NIGHTMARES	
	SELF-MEDICATE	

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EXAMPLE OF MORAL TRAUMA...

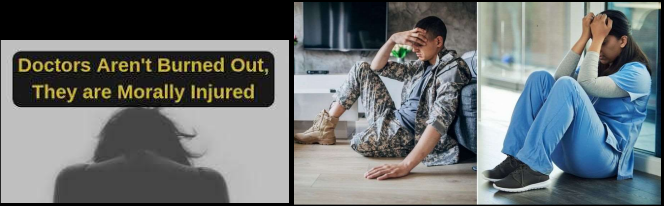


Nurse who meets with a chaplain in a New York Hospital who had been treating patients with COVID-19

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Doctors, Nurses, First Responders, Military, Health and Human Services workers and many others are at risk of Moral Injury

Doctors Aren't Burned Out, They are Morally Injured



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A MORAL INJURY EXAMPLE



A STORY OF MORAL INJURY TOLD TO ME BY A FEMALE POLICE OFFICER IN WISCONSIN SERVING IN A METROPOLITAN AREA...

24

RESPONDING TO THIS CAUSES MORAL INJURY



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Responding to, witnesses, or even hearing about heartbreaking situations can lead to moral injury, and break your moral "compass"



- Mass shootings...like Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, 911, Child abuse, any acts of cruelty can break your moral compass

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Please share some examples of moral injury from your experience

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RISK FACTORS ...



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Times I have experienced moral injury

Sikh Temple Mass shooting:



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Times I have experienced moral injury

Sandy Hook Elementary Shooting: December 14, 2012



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Sandy Hook....



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CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24, 2012

Police officer, Jennifer Sebens was shot and killed by her husband while she was on duty



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MORAL INJURY EXAMPLES CAUSED BY YOUR OWN ACTIONS VIOLATING YOUR MORAL CODE



- You cross boundaries you never thought you would cross and have sex with another person who is not your spouse. You never thought you would do something like this, and it causes you shame for having done something you never thought you would ever do....

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MORAL INJURY EXAMPLES CAUSED BY YOUR OWN ACTIONS VIOLATING YOUR MORAL CODE

- You work as an AODA counselor, and after several years of sobriety, to cope with the stress of the pandemic and some relationship problems at home, you go to the bar, get drunk, and are involved in a drunk driving accident in which an occupant of the car you collide with is killed.

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MORAL INJURY EXAMPLES CAUSED BY YOUR OWN ACTIONS VIOLATING YOUR MORAL CODE

- You cross boundaries with a client you never thought you would cross and have sex with that client. In an attempt to break off that relationship, the client tells others in your agency that also work with him/her, and it becomes known throughout the agency.

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Officer involved shooting: Can lead to Moral Injury



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THE CONSEQUENCE....

- Guilt
- Shame..... "I am a bad, horrible, or evil person"
- Can lead to Suicide

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EXAMPLE....

- *Prosecutor Tries to Kill Himself After Arrest in Pedophile Case*
- By Nick Bunkley
- Sept. 21, 2007
- DETROIT, Sept. 20 A federal prosecutor from Florida who is accused of traveling to Michigan with the intention of having sex with a 5-year-old girl tried to hang himself on Thursday in his jail cell, the police here said.
- The prosecutor, John David Roy Atchison, 53, had been removed from a suicide watch the previous day after assuring his lawyer and a judge that he would not harm himself. He was not injured in the suicide attempt, which another inmate reported about 4 a.m.
- Mr. Atchison was arrested Sunday at Detroit Metropolitan Airport as part of an internet investigation operated by the sheriff's department in Macomb County, Mich. He was carrying a Dora the Explorer doll and a pair of earrings at the time of his arrest.

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SHAME

- Shame does not make a distinction between self and action...in other words, shame is not just the feeling that you did something bad, but that YOU are bad..
- Shame is a "self-attack"
- Shame is the feeling that you are fundamentally flawed...that you are wasting space and air. The person who feels shame feels worthless and defective

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MORAL INJURY CAN BE:



CAUSED BY YOUR INABILITY, OR POWERLESSNESS TO HELP SOMEONE IN A DANGEROUS, DIFFICULT, OR CRISIS SITUATION, VIOLATING YOUR MORAL CODE. FOR EXAMPLE:

You are out on Patrol and you come across a young woman who is standing on the ledge of a tall building. You and an officer try to talk to this young woman to come off the ledge so that you can help her, and she looks at you and leaps to her death anyway....

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MORAL INJURY CAN BE: Something you are powerless to do anything about to help...



You are on patrol with an officer and you are told by dispatchers that there is a bus with people onboard in floodwaters about to be swept away by the strong current

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MORAL INJURY BY WITNESSING OR EVEN HEARING ABOUT AN INCIDENT REPORTED BY YOUR STAFF

- You hear about a colleague, one of your staff , arrested for doing something so inappropriate like delivering and possessing child pornography, or a colleague that attempted to kill his wife. These kinds of experiences violate your moral compass
- One of your staff tells you about a citizen who left their child in a car seat overnight because they were drunk. The child died. Your staff member had held the client's baby in their office numerous times.

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MORAL INJURY CAN BE:

A county crisis worker receives a call from a client she had worked with for some time, who was threatening to take his own life. The crisis worker talks to him, and attempts to de-escalate him. She also reached out to 911 through another co-worker who helped to offer suggestions to the crisis worker on the phone with her client. After a while the crisis worker heard a muffled pop, and the client said that he shot himself, and unfortunately died before help could arrive.

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MORAL INJURY CAN BE:

Discrimination and Hate crimes, (physical and sexual assault)
One of your staff is part of the LGBTQ community and has been discriminated against in their personal life, and work setting and is afraid to speak up and they feel powerless.

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MORAL INJURY BY WITNESSING OR EVEN HEARS ABOUT AN EGREGIOUS INCIDENT REPORTED BY YOUR STAFF

- You hear about a colleague, one of your staff , arrested for doing something so inappropriate like delivering and possessing child pornography, or a colleague that attempted to kill his wife. These kinds of experiences violate your moral compass
- One of the your staff tells you about a client of theirs who left their child in a car seat overnight because they were drunk. The child died. Your staff member had held the client's baby in their office numerous times.

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BETRAYAL

MORAL INJURY
BETRAYAL-BASED INJURIES




- When an officer or coworker confidence in moral authority and moral structure is shaken if not obliterated by something wrong done by leadership.

Dr. Cardwell C. Nuckols, Ph.D

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BETRAYAL-BASED INJURIES



- Difficulty forgiving can cause persistent anger
- And possible wish for revenge
- Irritability, blaming and revenge fantasies

ASK- "Are there things about your experience that you cannot forgive others for?"

Dr. Cardwell C. Nuckols, Ph.D

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER...

- If a Police officer or a chaplain experience or witness something very bad happen that breaks their moral compass, they may leave the job.

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER.....

- Experiencing morally injurious incidents can cause you, and your co-workers loss of the meaningful purpose of what they (or you) felt called to do...



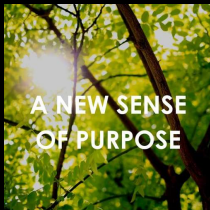
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STORY

- STORY OF WORLD WAR 2 SERGEANT RECRUITING 4 "VOLUNTEERS"
- THE LAST 10 HOLES TOOK LESS TIME TO DIG THAN THE FIRST 4.....WHY?
- PURPOSE

50

MORAL INJURY CAN LEAD TO A COLLAPSE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE



- Because of that, recovery from that requires a renewing/rebuilding of a renewed sense of purpose.

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HEALING.....

- You can't become "moral" on your own, so you need those in whom you trust to process this stuff.
- Peers are essential to the healing process
- Peers need to listen in ways that validate, ie. Listening withholding judgement.

52

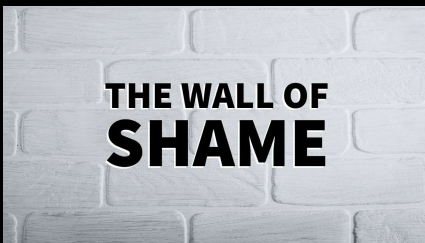
EXTENDING GRACE IN THE VULNERABLE MOMENTS



Confession of a Disaster chaplain....

53

The big challenge in working with someone with a moral injury...



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MORAL REPAIR...

- There is no simple approach but Adaptive Disclosure process which is based on cognitive-behavioral principles, (ie. Prolonged exposure & cognitive processing therapy)
- Peer support of those who understand is essential
- Chaplains can play a big role in helping the person(s) with working toward self-forgiveness

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WRAPPING UP



- "We need to listen deeply enough to things that we lack the words to describe...." (Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock)

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