



MORAL INJURY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PTSD

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WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- Trauma can be defined as any event that overwhelms our current coping system.
- Examples:
 - A car accident
 - A natural disaster such as a hurricane
 - Rape or sexual assault.



QUOTE:

- “ He who did well in war, earns the right to begin doing well in peace.”
 - Robert Browning.
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- “ Someone once wrote hell is the impossibility of reason.” Charlie Sheen-
Platoon-1986.
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INTRODUCTION

- Moral Injury has been referred to as the signature wound of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- My personal belief is that as long as societies have been going to war, moral injury is present.
- Camillo Mac Bica; Vietnam War veteran writes:
- “Whatever their source and content, and however the process occurs, humankind has accepted and internalized a set of values and norms.”(p.54)

WHAT ARE MORALS?

- A set of rules that others live by.
- A code or set of values to live by.
- These values norms provide a parameter to who we are.

OXFORD DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF MORALITY:

- Oxford Dictionaries defines morality as:
- principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior.
- a particular system of values and principles of conduct, especially one held by a specified person or society.
- the extent to which an action is right or wrong.

WHAT IS MORAL INJURY

- Moral injury is defined by Litz, et al., (2009) as occurring from “perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.”
- A wound to one’s soul
- The pain that results from damage to a person’s moral foundation
- A violation of what one considers to be right or wrong
- Involving acts of transgression that creates dissonance and conflict because it violates assumptions and beliefs about what is right and wrong and personal goodness (Boudreau, 2018, p.53)
- Considered by many as the “signature wound” of recent wars in Iraq & Afghanistan

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT SOLDIERS IN A WAR ZONE?

- The wife of a Vietnam veteran I knew in Maine stated, “ Everyone has been taught to have some type of a moral code, whether it is not to kill, or treat others with kindness”.
- One Vietnam Veteran stated: “ I was taught my whole life not to kill, the Army sends me a draft notice, they send me to Vietnam, telling me its okay to kill. After my tour is done, I’m told again that it’s not okay to kill, and I have to spend the rest of my life making sense of this.”

BORGES ET AL:

- Exposure to morally injurious events is a byproduct of war. (Farnsworth, Drescher, Evans & Walker, 2017; Litz et al.'2019).
- Borges et al., (2019), describing the effects of war on combat veterans, quote one veteran who states, “ I have acted in ways that violated my own moral code or values.”
- Some feelings associated with a morally injurious event (MIE) include: shame, guilt, disgust, anger and contempt.

HOW DOES THIS LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PTSD

- Borges, et al., (2019), cite one possible explanations can be linked to the fear neural pathways.
- They also state that the link between PTSD and moral injury is robust.
- What is the link between moral injury and PTSD?
- One link can be the discrepancy between expectations and reality.

The background is a blue gradient. In the corners, there are white line-art patterns resembling electronic circuit boards or neural networks, with lines and small circles connecting them.

SOME SYMPTOMS OF MORAL INJURY

SYMPTOMS OF MORAL INJURY

- Guilt
- Shame
- Difficulty forgiving self
- Changes in loss of spirituality and religious beliefs
- Loss of meaning or purpose

SYMPTOMS OF MORAL INJURY CONT''

Depression

- Anxiety
- Anger/rage
- Anhedonia- an inability to feel pleasure
- Suicidal ideations or attempts
- Aggression

Misconduct

MORAL INJURY VS. PTSD

- Overlapping symptoms:
- Anger
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Nightmares

MORAL INJURY SYMPTOMS ALSO INCLUDE

- Sorrow
- Regret
- Grief
- Alienation
- Shame

VIDEO: NOW AND AFTER

- [https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=now+after+\(ptsd+from+a+soldier%27s+pov\)+](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=now+after+(ptsd+from+a+soldier%27s+pov)+)
- As you watch this video, try and identify segments where you feel might illustrate a persons moral injury. There are no right or wrong answers.

SECOND VIDEO

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aU4vJqXfZ8o>
- Be looking for areas where you feel moral injury may have contributed to the potential development of PTSD.

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