

What is Moral Injury (MI)?

MI is the inner conflict a person feels because they have violated their moral or religious values by participating, seeing, or failing to stop something bad that happened in their life. It is common after combat experiences.

Is MI the Same as PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?

No – MI is different from PTSD. Moral injury is considered a spiritual issue, while PTSD is considered a fear-based disorder. A person can have both MI and PTSD at the same time. Also, they have many symptoms in common.

What are the Symptoms of MI?

- Persistent negative emotions, such as shame, grief, sorrow, anger, depression, or regret
- Loss of meaning in life
- Apathy or lack of interest
- Problems trusting others
- Avoidance of others

Quick Guide for Patients and Family

Military personnel are affected by their war experiences. Adjustment problems are common and are normal reactions to negative or bad experiences. This brochure deals with moral injury issues that are common following deployment. Remember - identifying your problem areas and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. It means you are actively coping with your challenges.



Find More Information

[Almost Sunrise Veterans Resources](http://sunrisedocumentary.com/impact-campaign/moral-injury)

<http://sunrisedocumentary.com/impact-campaign/moral-injury>

[DAV](https://www.dav.org/veterans/resources/moral-injury/)

<https://www.dav.org/veterans/resources/moral-injury/>

[Faith Communities, Veterans and Mental Health](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=_s1pf-vdj8o&feature=youtu.be)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=_s1pf-vdj8o&feature=youtu.be

[Moral Injury Support Network For Women](https://chaplainconsultants.com)

<https://chaplainconsultants.com>

[US Department of Veterans Affairs](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp)

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp

Moral Injury (MI)



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Understanding Moral Injury

What Causes MI?

Veterans may be put in situations where they witness or participate in actions that go against their ethical beliefs and/or social rules. This may cause a loss of faith or damage to the soul.

What Is It Like to Live with MI?

- It causes a lot of stress. You feel nervous around people and uncomfortable speaking.
- You feel a lot of guilt and shame.
- You trust no one, not even family or friends.
- You feel afraid to go places and be around people.
- You feel like - “I do not know who I am anymore” or “I’ve lost a part of myself.”
- You may also drink alcohol and/or use other drugs because they make you feel numb.



Dealing with Moral Injury

How Bad Is It? Can It Get Worse?

It can be severe because anything could bring back the memories. You might feel as if the bad situation is happening again (flashbacks). You feel burdened with guilt and shame for what happened.

If You Know Someone with MI:

- Do not judge. It is better to support!
- Pay attention and recognize their emotions by saying, “I hear you.”
- Show that you care, be patient and respectful.
- Do not try to fix their pain or problems.
- Encourage them to seek professional help (psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist, etc.).



Getting Help



How Can It Get Better?

- MI can be treated. But it may be hard for you to share your experiences because of your feelings of guilt and shame. Find medical help and counseling!
- Emotional support animals can help! Dogs can be trained to help you feel more at ease in stressful situations, like when flashbacks occur.
- Keep busy - volunteer, help others, exercise, and eat healthy foods.
- Become aware of your surroundings. Focus on the “now” instead of thinking about past events.
- Look for a peer support group! Accept the help of others who have had similar bad experiences and are willing to talk about it.

