



## **Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series**

### **2024 OCT CCSS: Fostering Quality and Excellence in Military Specific Care**

#### **S04: Moral Injury: Addressing the Invisible Wounds through Assessment and Treatment**

##### **Resource List**

As leaders in the field of psychological health and wellbeing, the [American Psychological Association \(APA, 2021\)](#) published a book for clinicians who treat moral injury with the intent to facilitate recovery from moral injury and identify promising clinical models for which additional education and training might be pursued in the future.

Improving workplace policies and practices is the best way to address burnout. While individual-level solutions like self-care and resilience training may help, making organizational changes is necessary. For this reason, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC, 2023\)](#) took action to address this issue. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (a center within the CDC) created an online training so healthcare leaders can learn strategies to prioritize employee health and well-being and prevent burnout. The training is modular and offers up to 3.5 hours of continuing education credit at no cost. This training is for managers and supervisors in state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments, senior leaders, managers, and supervisors in public health-serving organizations.

Frontline healthcare workers may be at higher risk for moral injury during the COVID-19 pandemic because limited resource availability restricts their ability to provide the normal standard of care. Healthcare workers who are isolated and/or quarantined and unable to return to work immediately, may experience guilt, shame, anger, or feelings of betrayal. The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS, 2020\)](#) published this document with the intent to support healthcare workers in identifying and preventing moral injury and providing support for those affected at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance in this document should serve as a foundation that may be adapted to meet individual needs and situational considerations that have evolved over the last 4 years.

A moral injury is the distressing psychological, behavioral, social, and sometimes spiritual aftermath of exposure to specific events. A moral injury can occur in response to acting or witnessing behaviors that go against an individual's values and moral beliefs. The [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder \(2024\)](#) created this information page that defines moral injury, offers additional resources for examining moral injury, tools to assess for moral injuries and evidence-based treatments and inventories to utilize in clinical practice.



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### References

- American Psychological Association. (2021). Addressing Moral Injury in Clinical Practice. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/addressing-moral-injury-clinical-practice-sample-chapter.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Online Training: Understanding and preventing burnout among public health workers. *The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health*. [Online Training - Understanding and Preventing Burnout among Public Health Workers | NIOSH | CDC](#)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020). Preventing and addressing moral injury affecting healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Behavioral health guidance and resources. [Preventing and Addressing Moral Injury Affecting Healthcare Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic \(hhs.gov\)](#)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2024). Moral injury. *PTSD: National Center for PTSD*. [Moral Injury - PTSD: National Center for PTSD \(va.gov\)](#)