



MORAL INJURY

Megan Levy

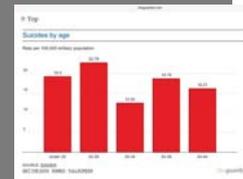
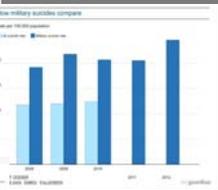
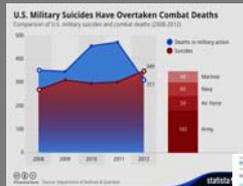
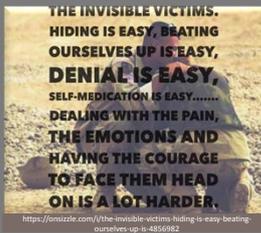
The University of Notre Dame Australia - ASeTTS



I am tired and sick of war.
Its glory is all moonshine.
It is only those who have neither fired a shot
nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded,
who cry aloud for more blood, more vengeance, more desolation.
War is hell.

—William Tecumseh Sherman, 1820-1891
General, Union Army, American Civil War

There is a possibility, though not yet explored, that Moral Injury could also be present in T&T survivors who have faced e.g., moral choices, and suffered, witnessed or perpetrated violence, rape, sex-slavery, human traffic, etc. In which case it is presumed, it could negatively impact resettlement, health and wellbeing.



Should you have any questions or comments please email: Megan.Levy@asetts.org.au
I will be very happy to respond and thank you for your time & interest.

The young Americans who sign up to serve their country in Iraq and Afghanistan often return broken in mind and spirit; and they are taking their own lives in record numbers

When combined, the figures paint a stark portrait of loss. By late 2012 more than 6,500 members of the armed forces had taken their own lives, this is nearly triple the number of troops who have died in Afghanistan and half+ of all U.S. fatalities in Iraq

In May 2016, the Pentagon reported 265 suicides of active-duty service members during 2015.

Research is finding, at the bottom of the problem

... Moral Injury.

References
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Brett T. Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Labowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva, Shira Maguen, (2009) Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy, *Clinical Psychology Review*, V29 (2009) 695-706,
Nakashima Brock, R., & Lettini, G. (2012). *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*. Beacon Press, Boston MA, 2012
<https://onsizzle.com/the-invisible-victims-hiding-is-easy-beating-ourselves-up-is-4856982>



The Facts
22+ Veterans and 1 Active Duty Soldier
LOST EVERY DAY to suicide.
That's with only 22 states reporting veteran suicides

MORAL INJURY: The Crucial Missing Piece in Understanding Soldier Suicide

1. The most serious blind spot in the reporting on military suicides is an absence of discussions about the moral impact of military training and its implementation in combat.
2. Soldiers are trained to kill, which is regarded as criminal behaviour in civilian life, and they are trained to be lethal without even thinking about it.
3. Moral injury is likely one of the most important factors in military suicide.
4. Moral injury is not PTSD. PTSD is an immediate injury of trauma, symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, dissociative episodes and hyper-vigilance..
5. Moral injury has a slow burn quality that often takes time to sink in. To be morally injured requires a healthy brain that can experience empathy, create a coherent memory narrative, understand moral reasoning and evaluate behaviour.
6. Moral injury is a negative self-judgment based on having transgressed core moral beliefs and values or on feeling betrayed by authorities.
7. Moral injury is reflected in the destruction of a moral identity and loss of meaning.
8. Its symptoms include shame, survivor guilt, depression, despair, addiction, distrust, anger, a need to make amends and the loss of a desire to live.

Rita Nakashima Brock, Ph. D.
Director, The Soul Repair Center
Nakashima Brock, R., & Lettini, G. (2012)



What impressed me more was the loss in these men of a sense of identity. They knew who they were; they had a personal identity. But it was as if their lives no longer hung together – and never would again. There was a central disturbance of ego identity ... the ability of experiencing oneself as a moral being who has continuity and sameness, and to act accordingly.

Erik Erikson, *Childhood & Society*, NY, Norton, 1963, p42

