



The Role of Faith and Faith Communities in Veteran Healing

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Arizona Coalition for Military Families Faith Based Initiative

Today's Agenda

- Challenges veterans face
- PTSD and moral injury
- Spirituality and veteran wellness and healing
- Role of faith communities
- Faith community example: Navajo Lutheran Mission, Rock Point, AZ

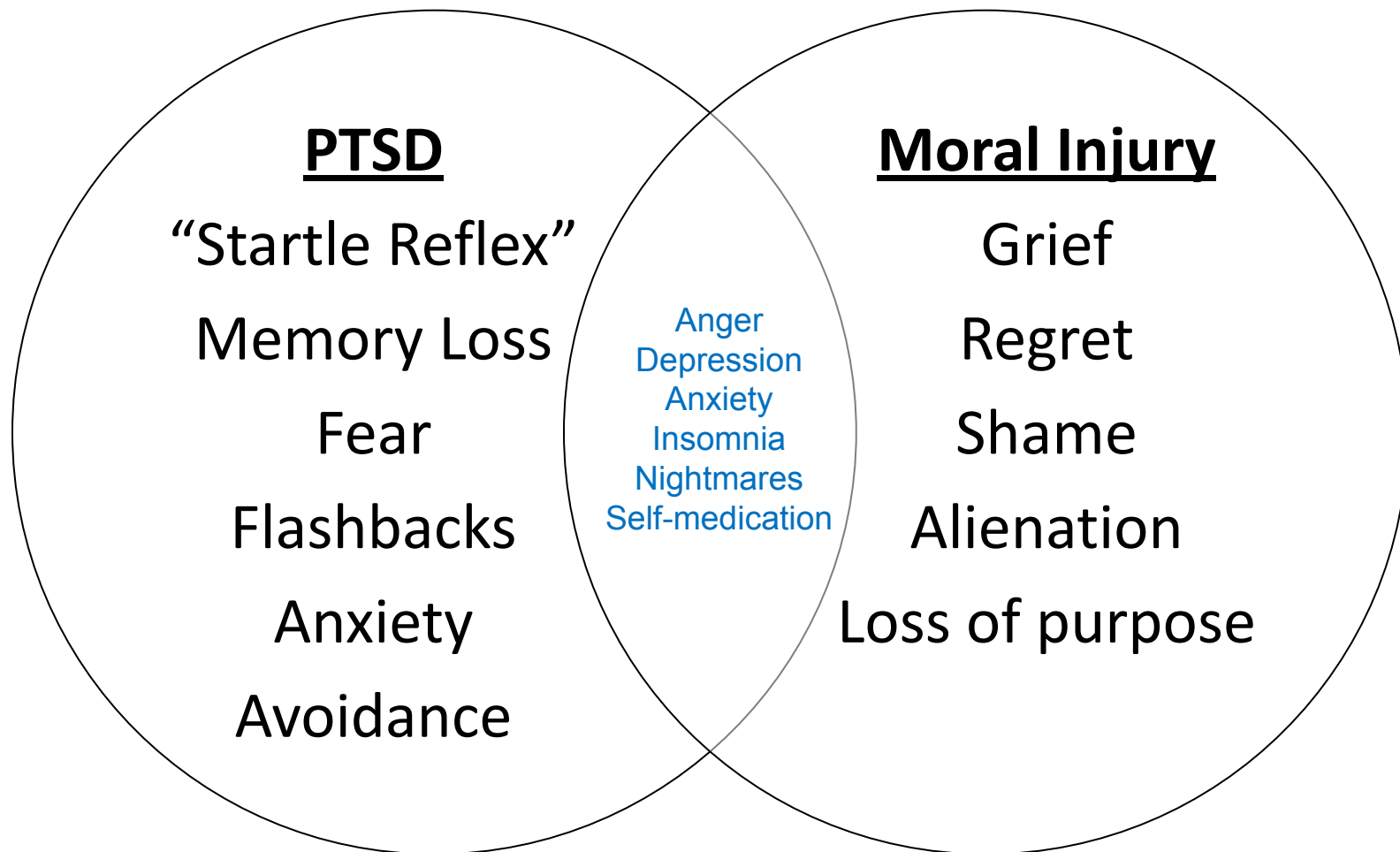
Challenges Veterans Face

- Isolation
 - Fear of Large Crowds
 - Over stimulating environments (noise)
- Internal struggle
 - Dealing with stages of grief from loss of friends
 - Necessary actions for survival during combat
- Feeling Disconnected
 - Having a hard time relating to others (civilians)
 - Having a hard time relating to family
- Employment and education
- Family Challenges
- Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Trauma

PTSD and Moral Injury

- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, rape or other violent personal assault.
- Moral injury is a relatively recent term used to describe a crisis that soldiers have faced for centuries, the internal suffering that results from doing something against your moral code. In essence it is a wound to the conscience.

PTSD and Moral Injury



Spirituality can improve post-trauma outcomes through:

- Reduction of behavioral risks through healthy religious lifestyles.
- Expanded social support through involvement in spiritual communities.
- Lessening of feelings of isolation, loneliness & depression related to grief and loss.
- Enhance coping skills & understanding trauma that result in meaning-making.
- Improve physiological mechanisms (i.e. "relaxation response") through prayer or meditation.
- Places veterans amongst caring individuals who can provide encouragement, emotional support, & financial assistance.

Unique Role of FBCS

- Faith-based communities can play a major role in healing and reintegration of veterans.
 - FBCs are in nearly every community of our state.
 - Military personnel, veterans and their families may be cautious about who they allow to engage with them; Veteran-competent FBCs can earn their trust.
 - FBCs often have ministries already in place to that can be called on to help military personnel, veterans and their families.
 - Veterans may have spiritual, as well as psychological and physical wounds.
 - Faith communities can provide a supportive “home.”

Veterans – Some Ideas

- Check in with when veteran returns
- Welcome to faith community
- Provide job assistance
- Provide support groups
- Provide counseling and spiritual direction
- Conduct veterans recognition events
- Partner with veteran organizations and provide volunteers and funding
- Refer to appropriate services and programs – AZ Coalition for Military Families – Be Connected Call In Line



Faith-Based Initiative

- Raise awareness among FBCs about the contributions and needs of service members, veterans & their families.
- Engage FBCs in providing effective care & support by equipping key staff/volunteers with information, training and resources.
- Connect FBCs into the network of organizations that serve the military & veteran community.
- Train faith-based organizations on the BE CONNECTED campaign to connect service members, veterans and family members to resources and support.

**The goal of the faith-based initiative is a
CALL TO ACTION.**

- Combined Be Connected and Trauma Informed Care Training
 - Wednesday, May 5 from 1pm to 3:30pm
 - Tuesday, May 18 from 9am to 11:30am
 - Online and free
- Faith Based Summit
 - Wednesday, June 9 from 10am to Noon
 - Online and free



Contact information:

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