



The Role of Faith Communities in Helping Veterans Heal from Moral Injury

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BeConnected Faith Network



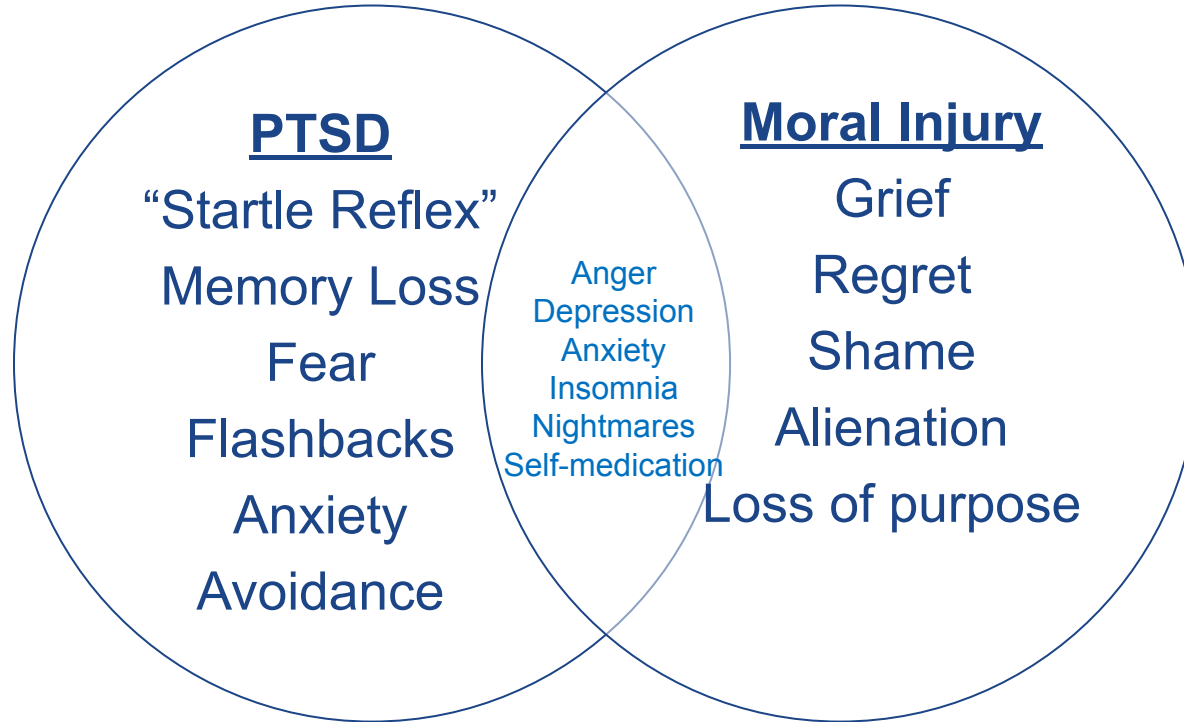
Our Goals for Today

- To define moral injury and show how it relates to PTSD
- To make the attendees aware of the BeConnected Faith Network and how membership in this organization can provide them with valuable resources to support them as they serve veterans.
- To provide practical actions that chaplains and faith community leaders can take to help veterans heal from moral injury.

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 warriors 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 and PTSD

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.



A Pathway to Healing

- Many service members and veterans are people of faith and view clergy and the chaplaincy as **confidential, trusted** sources of support.
- Veterans are 5X more likely to approach their **faith leader** than a mental health professional with an issue of concern.
- Fostering a sense of belonging for military connected people through faith within congregations can be a key part of a community's overall effort to **reduce veteran suicide**.
- Spiritual connection gained through discussion, activities and events can provide **hope, reduce isolation** and be a springboard to promote other **healthy behaviors**.



Veteran Healing/Reintegration

- Faith communities can play a major role in healing and reintegration of veterans
 - Military personnel, veterans and their families tend to be very cautious about who they allow to engage with them
 - Faith communities with an open and caring culture tend to be trusted more than other organizations
 - Faith communities often have ministries already in place to that can be called on to help military personnel, veterans and their families
- Faith communities are in the best position to deal with spiritual wounds

BeConnected Faith Network

Engage faith-based communities (FBCs) to provide effective care and support to Arizona's 500,000+ service members, veterans & their families and to connect them to the right



BeConnected Faith Network

- 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.





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Faith Network: www.connectveterans.org/faith

Introducing Our Veteran Panel



Anthony Newkirk



Graciela Marroquin



Joe Brett



Lina Webb



Travis Burns

Introducing Our Chaplain/Faith Leader Panel



Chaplain Darwin Campbell



Rev. Lisa Goforth



Chaplain Joel Larson



Rev. Katie Sexton Wood



Pastor Bill Stewart