

Moral Injury Fact Sheet

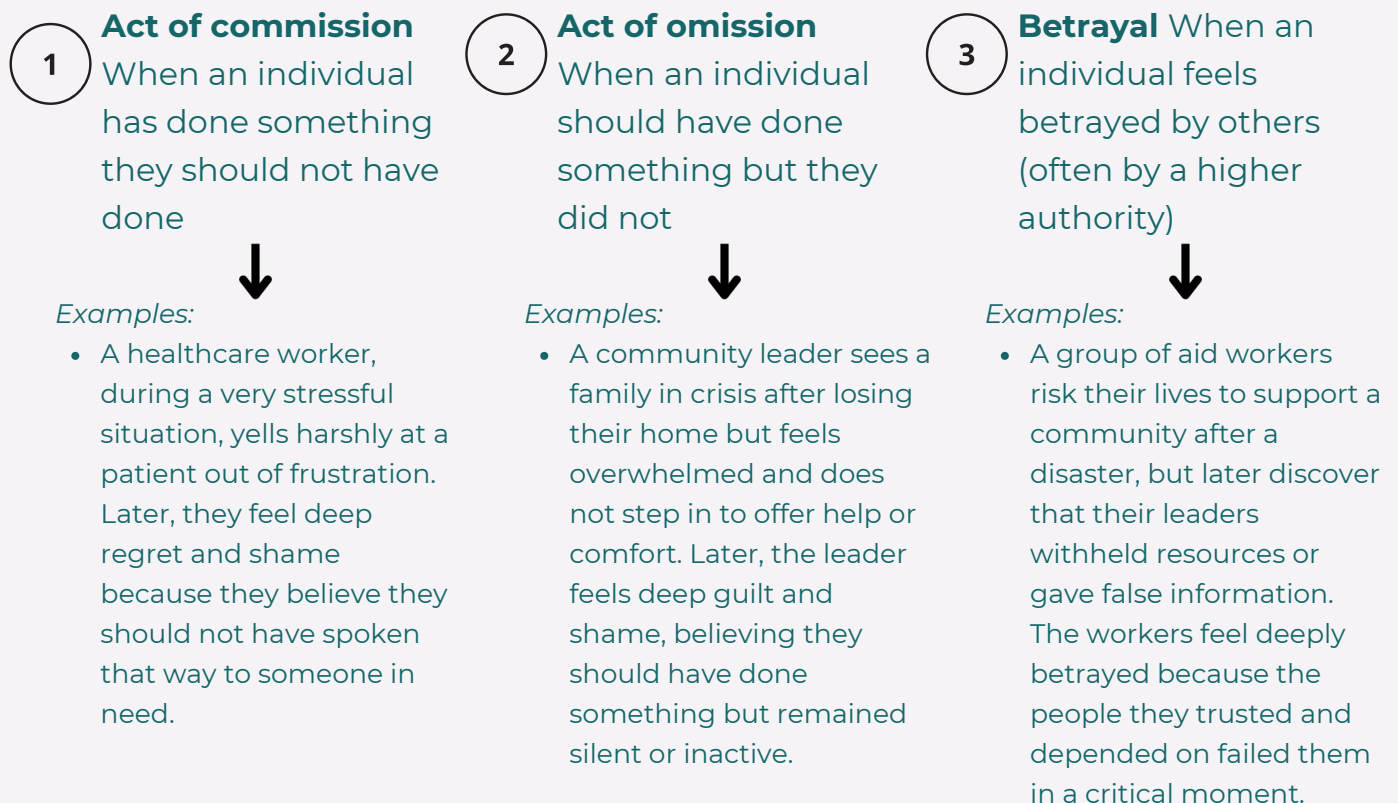
WHAT IS MORAL INJURY?



Moral injury is described as **intense psychological distress which results from actions, or lack of actions, which violate an individual's moral or ethical code.**

Simply put, moral injury occurs when you do something – or are unable to do something – that goes against your core values.

How does moral injury occur?



The effect of moral injury

Although moral injury is not classified as a mental health condition, people may experience profound feelings of **shame, guilt, blame and anger**. These symptoms can impact their day-to-day functioning and family life.

A study indicates that members of the Ethiopian community, including leaders and helpers, who experience moral injury—such as distress from actions or events conflicting with their values—are at a higher risk of developing severe mental health challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and suicidal thoughts.



Is moral injury the same as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

- Unlike PTSD, which can occur following threat-based trauma, potentially morally injurious events do not necessarily involve a threat to life.
- As such, distress from morally injurious events can lead to different symptom profiles than distress from traumatic events that elicit a fear-based reaction.
- Unlike post-traumatic stress disorder, moral injury is not considered a mental illness.
- Though moral injury is not the same as PTSD, both may exist alongside each other, and ex-Service personnel with moral injury or traumatic events were more likely to meet the criteria for PTSD, depression, and anxiety than those who reported no challenging events during service.

Does moral injury only effect helping professionals?

No

Research on moral injury, initially focused on various groups, shows that it is also prevalent within the Ethiopian community, including leaders, helpers, and others. Many individuals face ethical dilemmas in their roles or daily lives, and moral injury is not limited by occupation or position. Anyone in the community can experience moral injury.

adopted from: moral-injury.co.uk

