

# H.E.A.L. M.E.

## Moral Injury

Moral distress doesn't have to become moral injury!  
Let's build a plan to address it!

*Wellness Through Awareness*



**Moral distress:** When a situation arises that conflicts with your moral or religious beliefs, resulting in an internal conflict. You may have been a victim, betrayed by authority, been unable to act differently, actively participated in the event, or even had a change in beliefs after the event occurred. Situations with no clear moral choice may complicate

**Moral injury:** When a moral distress occurs, but is unresolved or evolves to include guilt and shame that negatively impacts your life. Manifestations vary but may include social isolation, self loathing, avoidance of similar situations, apathy, anger, anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts.

### Hope:

The first step is understanding that there is HOPE for forgiveness. You don't have to be fully committed to it, but you must at least have hope. If you can't find it, borrow it from a friend or a mentor who's been there.

### Expose:

It is time to expose your suffering to yourself. Accept that you were in a morally complex situation and are suffering as a result. I recommend writing this down, getting your thoughts on paper can be very freeing. As you expose your suffering, cling to hope and remember it is well complemented by **grace**. Give yourself grace! Look at the situation as if a loved one was carrying the burden you are. Would you want to help them through it? This is not a fault finding mission. This is to help you understand what happened. Sometimes removing the emotion and simply stating the situation as bullet points. "First this happened, then..."

### Assess:

Take a moment to look at how your moral distress or injury is impacting your life. What are you experiencing and how is it impacting your life? How would your life be different if you could overcome these challenges?

Guilt	Anxiety	Intrusive thoughts	Overcompensation
Shame	Depression	Reoccurring memories	Social Isolation
Fear	Self Loathing	Nightmares	Avoidance

### Let go:

Find a trusted friend, mentor, or support group and disclose the situation. Share with your confidant that you don't need them to "fix" the problem, just someone to listen and have compassion. Allow them to witness your suffering, and embrace their support.

### Mend:

Find forgiveness and let go of the suffering. That doesn't mean avoidance. It doesn't mean denial. It means accepting the situation for what it is, and finding forgiveness. Self forgiveness may be more important than receiving forgiveness from others.

### Evaluate:

Review each of the steps and ask "why or why not" as you go along. Have you gained Hope? Did you find any hidden areas of your story? Are any of your symptoms getting better or worse? Did Letting go help? Have you found forgiveness from others or yourself?

# Your H.E.A.L. M.E. journey...

**H**ope found in...

**E**xpose my suffering by...

**A**ssess the impact...

**L**et go by sharing with...

**M**end through forgiveness of...

**E**valuate the changes...

No two **H.E.A.L. M.E.** journeys are the same. Moral distress & injury are as unique as the experience. If you have suffered multiple or repeated events they may require different interventions to heal. You may also find that you need to repeat steps of **H.E.A.L. M.E.**

Find Support on Facebook:  
[H.E.A.L. M.E. Community](#)  [Moral Injury Support](#)

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