

IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Briefing XXIV

Moral Stress Amongst Healthcare Workers During COVID-19: A Guide to Moral Injury

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This guide to moral injury during COVID-19 has been developed as a practical resource for healthcare workers and organisations to better understand the range of moral emotions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and to develop organisational and individual strategies to mitigate risks of lasting harm.

“Moral injury refers to the psychological, social and spiritual impact of events involving betrayal or transgression of one’s own deeply held moral beliefs and values occurring in high stakes situations”.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, healthcare workers have been under intense stress making critical decisions like triaging life-saving care when resources are limited or postponing ‘non-essential’ care such as psychotherapy for patients with mental health conditions. If this moral stress is not addressed, it can cause long term injury – moral injury.

This guide provides recommendations for organization, team and individual supports for healthcare workers.

Support for healthcare staff in managing these stressors is critical if we are to avoid the most severe harms. This is a responsibility that is shared across all levels of an organisation.

<https://www.moralinjuryguide.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Moral-Injury-Guide.pdf>

Explanatory video:

<https://vimeo.com/435899612>