

*A lot of things  
really make sense  
when you're  
doing them  
over there.*



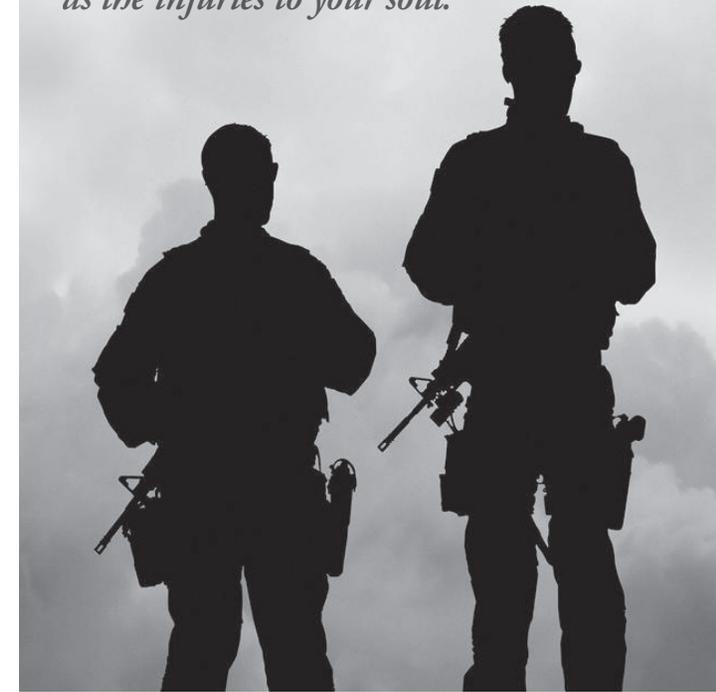
*But when you come back, it's just like,  
"How did I do that?" It's just like a totally  
different world. Everything is kind of muted,  
and I'm never really happy. I don't really  
enjoy things. I just feel hopeless and listless.  
And I just feel like I don't fit in with the other  
kids my age. It's just like ... I don't know.  
It's just really hard to relate to anyone, I want,  
more than anybody else, to find a meaning  
to my experience over there, and something to  
feel good about. But I just can't find it.*

– Iraq Veteran, Soul Repair: Recovering from  
Moral Injury after War

## Our mission

**VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA  
OF ILLINOIS** partners with  
the people we serve to create  
transformational and lasting  
change in their lives through  
programs that support,  
empower and transform.

*There are many invisible wounds of war...  
but perhaps none are as painful  
as the injuries to your soul.*



we are here to help



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recovering from  
**MORAL INJURY**  
after war



## What is Moral Injury?

The military is very effective at training young men and women to become warriors. But how do you unlearn being a warrior when it's time to come home and be a husband, wife, father, mother, brother, sister, friend? How do you leave the moral baggage of war behind when it has had such a profound effect on your soul?

Moral Injury is defined as a complex wound of the soul. It is caused by one or more of the following:

- Having to make difficult moral choices under extreme conditions
- Experiencing morally anguishing events or performing morally anguishing duties
- Witnessing immoral acts
- Behaving in ways that profoundly challenge one's moral conscience and identity and the values that support them.



*No one truly “recovers” from war. No one is ever made whole again. I strive each day to forgive and absolve myself of guilt and to live with the wounds of war that will never heal.*

– Quote from a Vietnam Veteran in *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*

## How can Moral Injury affect me?

Moral injury causes people to experience profound feelings of:

- **GUILT**
- **BETRAYAL**
- **REMORSE**
- **DESPAIR**
- **SHAME**

The feelings can vary in intensity over time. Some people may experience stretches of time when they feel “normal” and then go through other periods of time when they feel **UTTERLY DEBILITATED BY FEELINGS OF ANGUISH OVER WHAT THEY EXPERIENCED DURING COMBAT.**

While many people who have moral injury can be leading very stable and productive lives outwardly, their inner pain and torment can deeply affect their relationships and emotional well-being over time.

Moral Injury is a **WOUND OF THE SOUL** that can have devastating effects on the heart, mind and body if left unrepaired.

While moral injury is considered an ancient wound of war that has been well documented for centuries, its effect on Veterans over the past 60 years has been largely unaddressed because, for so long, it was confused with PTSD.

**MORAL INJURY IS NOT PTSD** and receiving treatment for PTSD does not address the symptoms of moral injury.



## How do you recover from Moral Injury after War?

Repairing moral injury is a unique and deeply spiritual journey that one must take with the assistance of compassionate and informed support. While this is a **SPIRITUAL JOURNEY** that must reconnect a person to the deepest parts of themselves, **IT IS NOT A RELIGIOUS PROCESS** that requires any particular theological or denominational orientation.

We offer Veterans who are struggling with moral injury an opportunity to heal the injury of their soul by **HELPING THEM REPAIR THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEMSELVES.**

Our program combines individual sessions with a trained Moral Injury Repair Facilitator and the power of group support sessions with other Veterans.

The individual sessions focus on helping the individual develop their own narrative of their experience and identify the ways in which it has affected their life. It also serves as an introduction to the 12-step model of moral injury repair developed by the Soul Repair Center in Texas.

### How do I join the program?

Any Veteran who served in combat and is emotionally and mentally prepared to participate in a 12-step program is eligible to join.

To make an appointment for an individual orientation meeting with the Moral Injury Repair Facilitator, please call **312-564-2444** or email us at **MIRepair@voail.org**.