

Reflecting On and Recovering From Moral Injury

Name the injury

Describe the incident, action or event that occurred.

Describe your involvement and role.

Name the student(s) involved and their role(s).

Name the adult(s) involved and their role(s).

Identify the value, moral belief or expectation of yours that was violated.

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Describe the impact of this moral injury on your thoughts and feelings. Do you feel any of the following: guilt, anger, shame, frustration, fear, exhaustion, anxiety, indignation or disillusionment?

How has this moral injury impacted your work and your attitude toward your work?

Show self-compassion

Be kind and caring to yourself rather than self-critical.

How did I behave in ways that are consistent with my values? What good did I do? What good did I try to do? What can I praise myself for in regard to this situation?

Frame imperfections in terms of shared human experience.

How did I behave in ways that are inconsistent with my values? What was I up against? When have I seen others in similar situations struggle or fall short in similar ways?

See things clearly without ignoring or exaggerating problems.

How do I measure this injury against the full arc of my career and the size of my contributions to my students and school?

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Maintain a connection and support to the student

Which students were harmed the most in this situation?

How can you realistically remain in contact with the student(s)?

What are three things you can reasonably commit to doing to continue supporting the student(s)?

Who can serve as an ally in your continued support of the student(s)?

Recommit to students who are still there

How has this moral injury impacted your relationships with other students?

What are three things you can do to recommit to the students you currently work with?

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How would these commitments help you recover the values, moral beliefs and expectations you hold?

Work toward responsive discipline

How might alternative school discipline practices and policies have prevented this moral injury?

What are three things you can do—big or small—to help move your school in a more positive direction with regard to discipline?

Show compassion to school leaders

When you think about your moral injury, do you harbor any negative feelings against any colleagues or administration?

What specifically do you think those colleagues or administrators ought to have done?

What judgments or biases are implicit in those feelings?

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Is there a fairer or more compassionate way to see things? What are the consequences for your work with these colleagues if you continue to harbor these feelings?

Moving forward

What are three insights you have gained that can help you recover from moral injury in the future?
