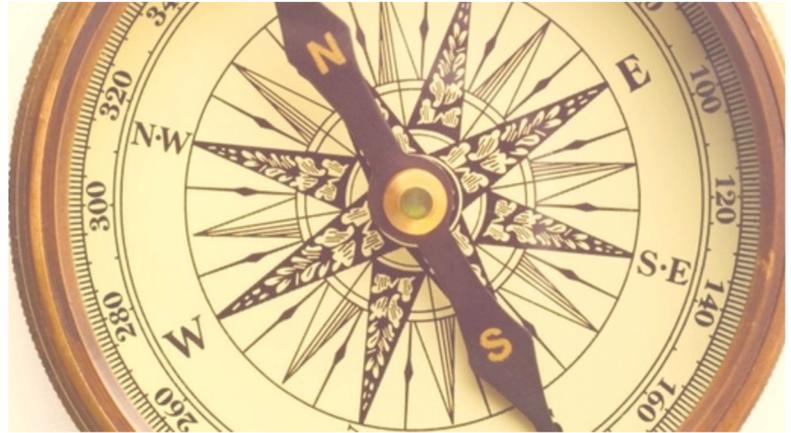


VOLUME 8 ISSUE 1
FEBRUARY 2026



MORAL INJURY

ISTSS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWSLETTER

**STAY IN THE LOOP!
JOIN THE SPECIAL
INTEREST GROUP TODAY:**

1. Log in to the ISTSS website as a member
2. Click "Edit Your Profile" on the right side of the page
3. Click the "SIG Choices" tab
4. Check "44 - Moral Injury"
5. Click "Save" – You're a member!



@ISTSS_MI_SIG



ISTSS Moral Injury SIG Group

Thank you for your continued support and work towards a better understanding of Moral Injury,

<https://istss.org/membership/special-interest-groups/moral-injury-sig/>

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International Society
for Traumatic Stress Studies

MISSION STATEMENT

The Moral Injury Special Interest Group (SIG) aims to bring together clinicians and researchers from across healing disciplines and related fields including philosophy and ethics, military culture and history, and religious/spiritual studies in order to provide a professional home for moral injury discourse and development. In gathering ISTSS members from across these disciplines and the world, this SIG will facilitate a rich scientific conversation and will advance the state of the science in conceptualization, assessment, and intervention for moral injury.

Though the concept of moral injury has recently regained a great deal of popular interest, the field is in its infancy. At present, essential conceptual distinctions need refinement and the potential paths to moral healing require paving.

Addressing these areas will be the primary objectives of the Moral Injury SIG, and will be approached in the following ways:

Advocacy

Advocate for rigorous clinical and scholarly work that attends to cultural and contextual factors in this field.

Communication

Disseminate high quality scholarship in the moral injury field to ISTSS members and to the broader international community. Establish and maintain an active SIG listserv to facilitate direct and wide-spread sharing of new and upcoming literature, training, etc. of interest to SIG membership

Collaboration

Support collaborative exploration of moral injury between members of the SIG, facilitating submission of proposals on moral injury and related topics to ISTSS Annual Meetings and other appropriate venues and nurturing research on moral injury and healing.

CHAIR ADDRESS

Dear Moral Injury SIG Members,

Happy New Year! We hope you were able to enjoy a beautiful and restful end to last year and that the start of the new has been a steady one. We have many new things to announce and many things to look forward to this year at our SIG. We are grateful and excited to be able to share all of it with you.

But first, as we have done for the last couple of years, it is critically important for us to acknowledge the reality of the times in which we are living. The first year under the Trump administration has been a difficult one for those of us who are aware of the psychological and physical violence being inflicted on some of the most vulnerable populations among us, including federal workers, families who depend on federal aid or assistance (financial or otherwise), and immigrant communities of color. Not to mention the broader population, which is being forced to bear witness as these groups endure some of the worst moments of their lives. There can be no doubt that moral injury is occurring and spreading among us, even as we write this to you all.

We reiterate our steadfast belief in our discipline's code of ethics, which calls on us to uphold beneficence and nonmaleficence, justice, integrity, and respect for people's rights and dignity in all that we do in our roles as mental health professionals. As such, it is incumbent upon us, as advocates, practitioners, and investigators of mental health and trauma, to meet this moment. How we study moral injury, how we intervene, and how we educate our communities about it will dictate how effectively we are able to support our country through the worst of it.

With that in mind, we would like to share some of what we plan to offer the SIG this year. First and most importantly, I (Erika) find myself in the bittersweet position of formally announcing that Dr. Valentina Stoycheva is stepping down as Co-Chair of our SIG, while also introducing Dr. Ryan Steadman as her highly esteemed successor. We are deeply grateful for Dr. Stoycheva's innovative leadership over the past few years and for her dedication to fostering the continued relevance and study of moral injury within the broader trauma discourse.



We wish her the very best in her future endeavors and look forward to continuing to engage with her as she remains an active member of our SIG. At the same time, I am thrilled to welcome Dr. Steadman, whose thoughtfulness, collaborative spirit, and deep commitment to the study of moral injury make him an exceptional addition to the SIG's leadership. In this issue, you will find a brief note from both Dr. Stoycheva and Dr. Steadman.

In the same spirit, we are thrilled to welcome our newest Student Chair, Meg Denny, who comes to us from the University of Montana where she is currently completing a PhD in Clinical Psychology. Ms. Denny is also deeply committed to the expansion of our understanding of Moral Injury as is evidenced by her thesis: Hidden Wounds: Moral Injury in Youth Exposure to Domestic Violence. We are beyond pleased to have her on board.

Next, we are happy to share that we will continue to host Book Chats throughout the year. We introduced our Book Chats last year as a way to inform the SIG of the newest and latest research on moral injury, facilitate discourse, and build our community. We are honored to have Dr. Sonya Norman for our very first Book Chat of the year which will take place on Monday, February, 23rd 2026 at 12 pm EST. We will be discussing Dr. Norman's book, Trauma Informed Guilt Reduction Therapy: Treating Guilt and Shame Resulting from Trauma and Moral Injury. We encourage you all to bring your lunch and your questions and comments for Dr. Norman on that day.

Finally, please feel free to reach out to either one of us if you would like us to spotlight your work in upcoming SIG newsletters or if you are interested in having us host a Book Chat for your book on Moral Injury. We look forward to connecting with you in the coming year and to staying connected as a community.

With gratitude and solidarity,

Erika and Ryan

— INTRODUCING DR. STEADMAN

Hello everyone!

I'm excited to be stepping into big shoes as the new co-chair this year, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of this community. For those who don't know me, I'm a licensed clinical psychologist and combat veteran in Arlington, Virginia, where I run a private practice serving veterans, servicemembers, and their families. Much of my work centers on helping people make sense of experiences that disrupt values, identity, and meaning, as well as navigating the effects of trauma and moral injury.

What has drawn me to ISTSS and this SIG is its commitment to thoughtful scholarship, clinical competence, and open, curious dialogue across disciplines and perspectives. I value spaces where we can think rigorously together, ask hard questions, and support one another in doing this work well, and I'm looking forward to furthering that mission. As we move into the new year, I'm hopeful about strengthening our sense of community, expanding shared knowledge, and creating opportunities for learning that are both intellectually honest and practically useful.

Given the current state of our world, careful attention and rigorous work on trauma and moral injury are more important than ever. I'm excited to collaborate with you and look forward to connecting when we have the opportunity.

Sincerely,

Ryan Steadman, PsyD



A FAREWELL FROM Dr. Stoycheva

Dear Moral Injury SIG community,

Much has happened since I took the position of MI SIG co-chair three years ago. In the past year alone, we have seen the negative and harmful impact the current political landscape continues to have on disenfranchised and minoritized individuals. We have witnessed racism and violence, but also solidarity in our communities; an increase in nationalism, divisiveness, and white supremacy, but also powerful messages of unity and resistance. This is all to say, we have a lot of work to do in learning how to transform moral injury into collective care, principled action, and durable change—on a national and global scale.

As an MI SIG co-chair, it has been my absolute honor to be a tiny speck of sand in the ocean and to do my part to help strengthen and grow our community, to get to know many of you, and to learn from your meaningful work. The time has come for me to pass the torch, and I do so with equal parts sadness and joy—knowing that the MI SIG is in great hands, and that together, we will continue to meet this moment with courage, care, and a shared commitment to healing.

With gratitude,
Valentina Stoycheva



— UPDATING THE DSM

In exciting and long-awaited news, Moral Injury has been added to the DSM as a Z-code, allowing clinicians to formally document exposure to morally injurious experiences and their associated distress within medical records. Although Z-codes do not represent psychiatric diagnoses, they provide standardized terminology for capturing clinically relevant psychosocial and contextual factors that affect health, functioning, and treatment planning.

The inclusion of Moral Injury as a Z-code represents an important shift in how morally injurious experiences can be recognized within both clinical and systems-level frameworks. Z-code status provides shared language for documenting moral suffering and its functional impact without pathologizing it as a discrete psychiatric disorder.

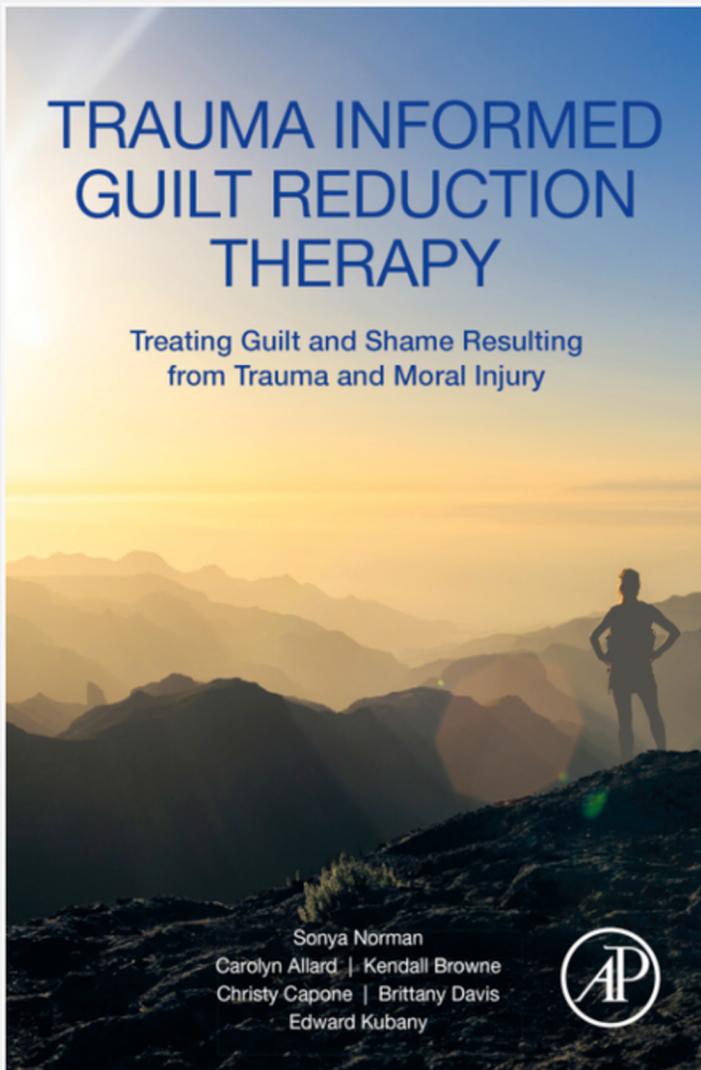
This supports more precise case conceptualization and interdisciplinary communication, while also creating new opportunities for tracking service utilization, informing research design, and strengthening the visibility of moral injury across healthcare settings. Over time, consistent documentation may help clarify prevalence, clinical trajectories, and treatment response patterns, while signaling growing institutional recognition of moral dimensions of trauma that extend beyond traditional disorder-based models.



— JOIN US FOR A BOOK CHAT!

In the spirit of creating a space for getting to know each other and our work, fostering dialogue, and learning from each other, we are delighted to invite you to our first Book Chat of the year.

This time we have the honor of being joined by Dr. Sonya Norman who will be talking with us about her book, *Trauma Informed Guilt Reduction Therapy: Treating Guilt and Shame Resulting from Trauma and Moral Injury*.



Trauma Informed Guilt Reduction Therapy (TrIGR) provides mental health professionals with tools for assessing and treating guilt and shame resulting from trauma and moral injury. Guilt and shame are common features in many of the problems trauma survivors experience including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, substance use, and suicidality.

This book presents Trauma Informed Guilt Reduction (TrIGR) Therapy, a brief, transdiagnostic psychotherapy designed to reduce guilt and shame.

Monday, February 23rd
at 12 PM EST

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Please note that Book Chats are not an endorsement of the books themselves, we do not stand to gain from book sales in any way, nor do we intend to highlight certain authors over others. If you have published a book on Moral Injury and would like to be invited as a guest next year, please let us know. We would be thrilled to create more space for discussion and learning.

— TRAINEE OPPORTUNITIES

The following is an up-to-date list of training sites that offer opportunities in moral injury (clinical, research, or otherwise) within the U.S. If you would like your site listed here, please contact Meg Denny (student chair) at meg.denny@umontana.edu.

We also like to spotlight a trainee. If you'd like to nominate a trainee, let us know!

Training Site	Training Level Offered	Contact Information
<p>VISN 17 Center of Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans Waco, TX</p>	<p>Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow</p>	<p>Dr. Sheila Frankfurt O'Brien sheila.frankfurt@va.gov</p>
<p>Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System Temple, TX</p>	<p>Psychology Intern</p>	<p>Dr. Sheila Frankfurt O'Brien sheila.frankfurt@va.gov</p>
<p>Road Home Program: Center for Veterans and Their Families Rush University Medical Center Chicago, IL</p>	<p>Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow</p>	<p>Dr. Brianna Werner brianna_werner@rush.edu</p>
<p>Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center Denver, CO</p>	<p>Psychology Intern & Postdoctoral Fellow</p>	<p>Dr. Jacob Farnsworth jacob.farnsworth@va.gov</p>
<p>Loma Linda VA Medical Center Loma Linda, CA</p>	<p>Psychology Postdoctoral Fellows via Holistic Mental Health</p>	<p>Dr. Bryan Goudelock bryan.goudelock@va.gov</p>
<p>San Francisco VA Healthcare System San Francisco, CA</p>	<p>Psychology Intern & Postdoctoral Fellow</p>	<p>Dr. Shira Maguen shira.maguen@va.gov</p>

— TRAINEE OPPORTUNITIES

(continued)

Training Site	Training Level Offered	Contact Information
VA North Texas Health Care System Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	Postdoctoral Fellow	Dr. Wyatt Evans wyatt.evans@va.gov
Dr. Brett Litz's Laboratory Boston, MA	Email for Current Opportunities	Dr. Brett Litz litzb@bu.edu
VA Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention Aurora, CO	Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow: 2-year VA Advanced Fellowship in Mental Illness Research & Treatment	Dr. Lauren Borges lauren.borges2@va.gov

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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Boyer, L., Llorca, P.-M., Taylor, O., Demazeux, S., & Boussat, B. (2026). Moral injury as a governance signal in public hospitals. *Journal of Epidemiology and Population Health*, 74(1), 203170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2026.203170>

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Hawkins, M. P. (2026). Moral Injury in Elite Sport: Trauma in the Failure of the Athlete's Quest. *Journal of Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-026-02574-w>

Hyatt, C. S., Fulton, T. M., Guelfo, A., Lathan, E. C., Turner, J. A., Turner, M. D., Currier, J. M., Mekawi, Y., Merrill, N., Powers, A., & Fani, N. (2026). Structure and correlates of the Moral Injury Exposure and Symptom Scale for Civilians (MIESS-C) in a community sample with high trauma exposure. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 17(1), 2617839.
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Im, S., & Woo, S. (2026). The Impact of Combat Exposure on Suicidal Behavior Among U.S. Military Personnel: The Moderating Roles of Moral Injury and Stigma. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, jclp.70105. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.70105>

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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McDaniel, J. T., Henson, H., Hunter, Y., Albright, D. L., & Robinson, A. (2025). Moral Injury in Student Military Veterans and Academic Success: A Pilot Study in the USA. *Journal of Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-025-02493-2>

McDaniel, J. T., Redner, R., Roberts, D., Ezigbo, U., & Higgins, S. T. (2026). Moral Injury and Nicotine Dependence from Electronic Cigarettes Among Women Veterans: A Behavioral Economic Perspective. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 1(6). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10826084.2025.2610670>

Peteet, J. R. (2026). Moral Dimensions of Anxiety and Its Treatment. *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2026.2615875>

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

We invite SIG members to submit relevant articles of no more than 500 words. Submissions may be data-driven, descriptive, theoretical, clinically oriented, etc. provided that they are relevant to the field of moral injury. Consistent with our mission to bring together clinicians and researchers from across healing disciplines and related fields, we hope to consider a range of submissions.

Articles should be no more than 500 words (including references, tables, and figures). At least one SIG member should be an author on all submissions, though non-members may contribute in any role. As always, collaborations among members are highly encouraged. Submissions should be addressed to the SIG Chairs:

Erika Guzman, PsyD
drerikaguzman@gmail.com

Ryan Steadman, PsyD
ryan.steadman.psyd@gmail.com