

Acknowledgement of Moral Injury represents major step forward in mental care health for service related injuries

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, October 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The recent update to the DSM-5-TR formally acknowledging moral injury through the addition of a “moral problems” code under Other Conditions That May Be a Focus of Clinical Attention marks a major step forward for mental health care, says Fardous Hosseiny, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families, in recognition of World Mental Health Day.

“For too long, the profound suffering that comes from moral injury—when a person experiences, witnesses, or is part of actions that violate their deeply held values—has been misunderstood or left unnamed,” said Hosseiny. “This recognition helps validate the experiences of Veterans, first responders, and health care providers who have carried these moral wounds, often in silence.”

Moral injury differs from posttraumatic stress disorder in that it involves deep moral, ethical, and spiritual conflict rather than fear-based trauma. Hosseiny noted that this distinction matters greatly: “When we only view these experiences through the lens of PTSD, we risk missing the moral and existential dimensions that define them—and in doing so, we limit recovery.”

Since its inception in 2019, the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families has been leading understanding of and dialogue about moral injury through research, knowledge mobilization, and direct engagement with Veterans, Families, and clinicians. The Institute has developed educational toolkits and resources, led and supported research on moral injury in Veteran Families, and delivered webinars to guide clinical and community response. It also convenes the Canadian Moral Injury Research Community of Practice, which provides a forum for critical dialogue and collaborative initiatives on moral distress and moral injury in Canada.

“This inclusion in the DSM-5-TR not only validates the experiences of those affected, but also creates a foundation for more focused research, clearer clinical pathways, and new treatment approaches that address not just symptoms, but also the moral dimension of healing,” Hosseiny said. “It opens the door for the development of validated tools, enhanced clinician training, and greater access to care that honours the complexity of these experiences.”

Hosseiny emphasized that while there is still much work to be done, the recognition represents meaningful progress. “This milestone brings us closer to a future where moral injury is fully understood, researched, and treated with the depth and compassion it deserves. At Atlas, we will

continue to lead and collaborate with partners across Canada and beyond to ensure this recognition translates into real, lasting change for Veterans, Families, and all those affected.”

“The DSM-5-TR’s reference to ‘moral problem’ represents a formal recognition within clinical classification systems that moral challenges may be relevant to mental health,” said Dr. Sara Rodrigues, Director, Applied Research at the Atlas Institute and co-Chair of the Canadian Moral Injury Research Community of Practice. “The Community of Practice convenes researchers from across Canada whose work examines moral injury and moral distress in public safety, healthcare, military and Veteran populations and their Families; this reference supports ongoing efforts to advance understanding in these areas.”

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ABOUT THE ATLAS INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES

The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families works with Veterans, Families, service providers and researchers to bridge the divide between research and practice so Veterans and their Families can get the best possible mental health care and supports. The Atlas Institute was originally established as the Centre of Excellence on PTSD and Related Mental Health Conditions, through the Minister of Veterans Affairs’ November 2015 mandate letter, with funding and budget announced in the March 2017 federal budget.

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