Moral Injury Panel (CO State Library) - November 17, 2023

Definitions

Moral Injury - "Moral injury is the damage done to one's conscience or moral compass when that person perpetrates, witnesses, or fails to prevent acts that transgress one's own moral beliefs, values, or ethical codes of conduct." (Moral Injury Project, Syracuse University)

What It's Not:

Burnout - "Burnout is a form of exhaustion caused by constantly feeling swamped. It's a result of excessive and prolonged emotional, physical, and mental stress. Burnout happens when you're overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to keep up with life's incessant demands." (WebMD)

Compassion Fatigue - "Compassion fatigue is the cost of caring for others or for their emotional pain, resulting from the desire to help relieve the suffering of others. It is also known as vicarious or secondary trauma, referencing the way that other people's trauma can become their own." (Canadian Medical Association)

Core Values of the American Library Association

Access	**The Public Good**
Confidentiality/Privacy	**Preservation**
Democracy	**Professionalism**
Diversity	**Service**
Education and Lifelong Learning	**Social Responsibility**
Intellectual Freedom	**Sustainability**

Real World Examples of Potential Moral Injury in American Libraries

Missouri Public Libraries were in danger of losing state funding over "obscene" materials (Missouri Independent)
https://missouriindependent.com/2023/05/31/missouri-rule-takes-effect-putting-library-funds-in-jeopardy-over-obscene-material/
Brooky Parks fired from Erie Community Library after being told to cancel programs geared towards LGBTQIA+ and POC youth (CBS Colorado)
https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/high-plains-district-library-reaches-settlement-brooky-parks-former-erie-librarian/
Highest number of challenged and banned books ever recorded by the ALA in 2023 (American Library Association)

https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/book-ban-data#:~:text=OIF%20documented%201%2C269%20demands%20to,book%20challenges%20reported%20in%202021.
Budget Cuts to school libraries in the wake of COVID (School Library Journal)
https://www.slj.com/story/During-covid-libraries-prioritized-electronic-resources-fiction-slj-2021-spending-survey
Florida schools removing books on race from school libraries (The New Yorker)
https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-the-south/why-some-florida-schools-are-removing-books-from-their-libraries

History
Moral Injury is a concept that's been studied primarily in veterans and military service members. It has gone beyond the realm of war and the military to include law enforcement officers, civilians experiencing community violence, and health care workers. (National Center for PTSD)

Resources
- **Moral Injury: A Working Definition**, Dr. Rita Brock (05.12.20) (Youtube) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJtuUguqVVo
- **Working Toward Wellness: Exploring Trauma-Informed Librarianship,** Leah Dudak (02.14.23) (Library Journal) https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Working-Toward-Wellness-Exploring-Trauma-Informed-Librarianship
- **Moral Injury**, Sonya B. Norman, PhD and Shira Maguen, PhD (National Center for PTSD, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp
- **fixmoralinjury.org** (created by and geared towards health care professionals, but useful in understanding the concept) https://www.fixmoralinjury.org/
- **The Shay Moral Injury Center**, Volunteers of America https://www.voa.org/moral-injury-resources/
- **ALA Advocacy,** https://www.ala.org/advocacy/
- **Protections for Public Workers Act in Colorado,** https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb23-111

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