Reframing Distress: Why Moral Injury Matters

Wendy Dean, MD
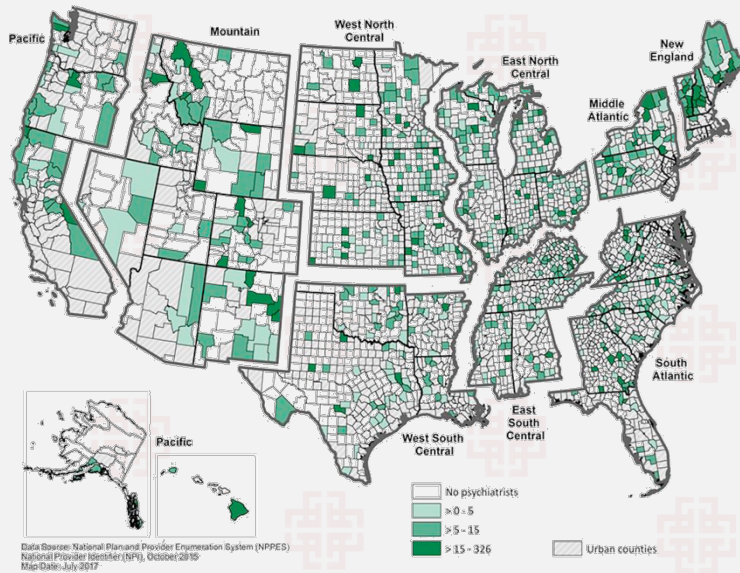
July 10-11, 2024 - NASEM Workshop

Addressing Workforce Challenges Across the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care
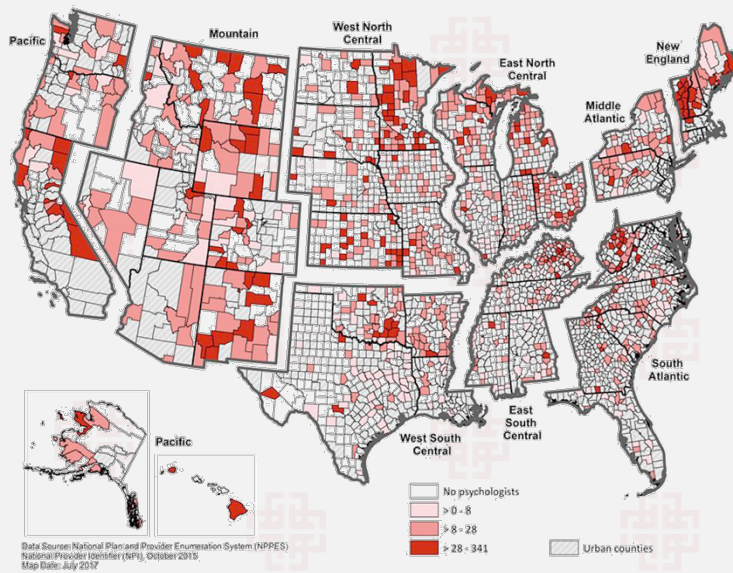
DISCLOSURES

- HRSA Award 1U3OHP45374-01-00/22-M05R

- LeighHealth – speaker's agent

- Cofounder, Moral Injury of Healthcare, Inc., a 501c3

   - None of these activities involve products used in patient care -

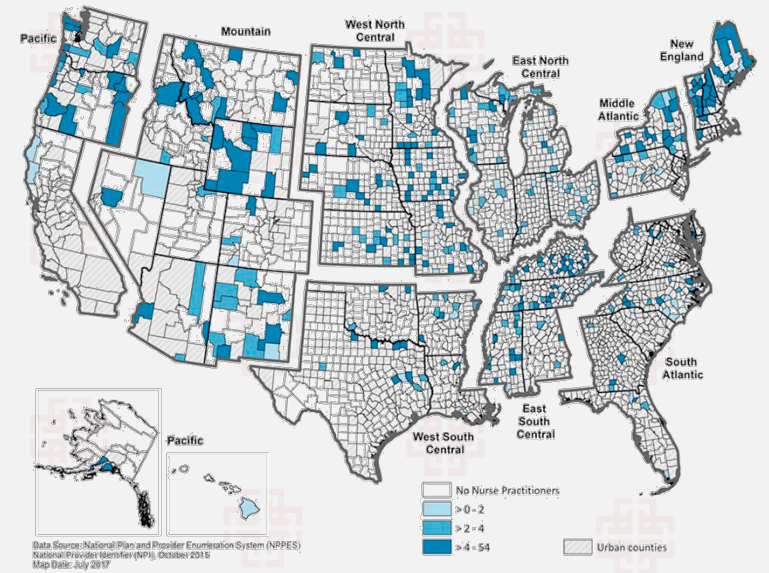# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE - 2018

Psychiatrists

Psychologists

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners

Holly, C, Andrilla, A, Patterson,DG, Garberson, LA, Coulthard, C, Larson, EH. Geographic Variation in the Supply of Selected Behavioral Health Providers. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 54(6) Supplement 3. 2018. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2018.01.004.

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APRIL 2023

https://www.thenationalcouncil.org
/news/help-wanted/

83% of the nation's behavioral health workforce believe that **without public policy changes,** provider organizations won't be able to meet the demand for mental health or substance use treatment and care.

ACCESS TO CARE

90% are concerned about the ability of those not currently receiving care to gain access to care.

87% are concerned about the ability to provide care in the event of another health crisis in the future.

CASELOADS & SEVERITY

NEARLY **2 in 3** Reported increased client caseload.

MORE THAN **7 in 10** Reported increased client severity since the COVID-19 pandemic.

93% have experienced **burnout.**

62% have experienced **moderate or severe burnout.**

HELP WANTED

48% say the impacts of **workforce shortages** have caused them to consider **other employment options.**

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I *KNOW* HOW TO WORK HARD

Matt Ramsey, MD
Orthopedic Surgeon
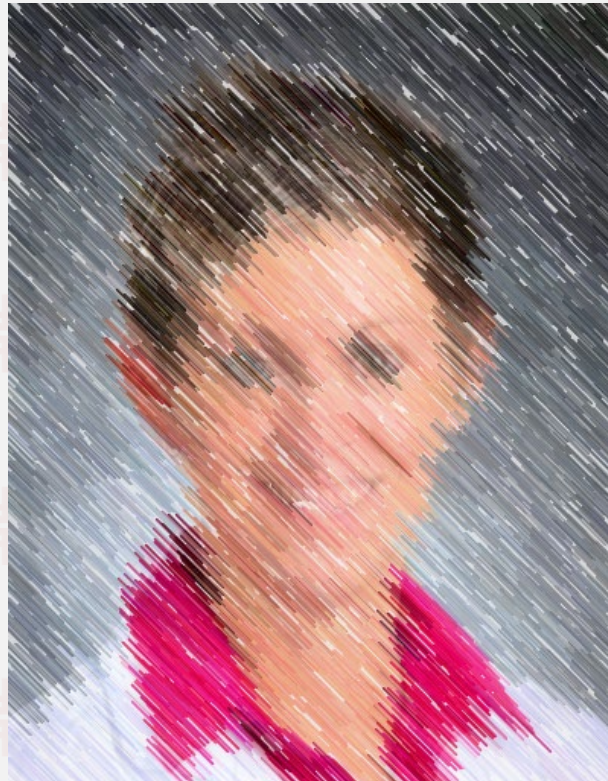
Isabela Rodriguez, MD
Psychiatry

Ray Brovont, MD
Emergency Medicine

BURNOUT & MORAL INJURY

OPERATIONAL DEMANDS

Establish & Assert Work Boundaries

LIMITED RESOURCES CHAOS ENDLESSNESS

Adapt to Chronic Stress

Chronic Work Stress

BURNOUT

Identified stressors that are unaddressed or unrelenting can seem like betrayal

Exhaustion
Ineffectiveness
Depersonalization

RELATIONAL RUPTURE

Moral injury that is unacknowledged or unattended to may also lead to burnout

Frustration
Anger
Shame

PERCEPTION OF BETRAYAL (Shay)

Acquiesce to Betrayal

Transgression Deeply Held Moral Beliefs (Litz)

MORAL INJURY

Assert Limits: Resist Speak Out

Acknowledge and Repair Betrayal

Relational Repair

Dean, et al. Federal Practitioner. April 15, 2024

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

WPCHANGE.ORG
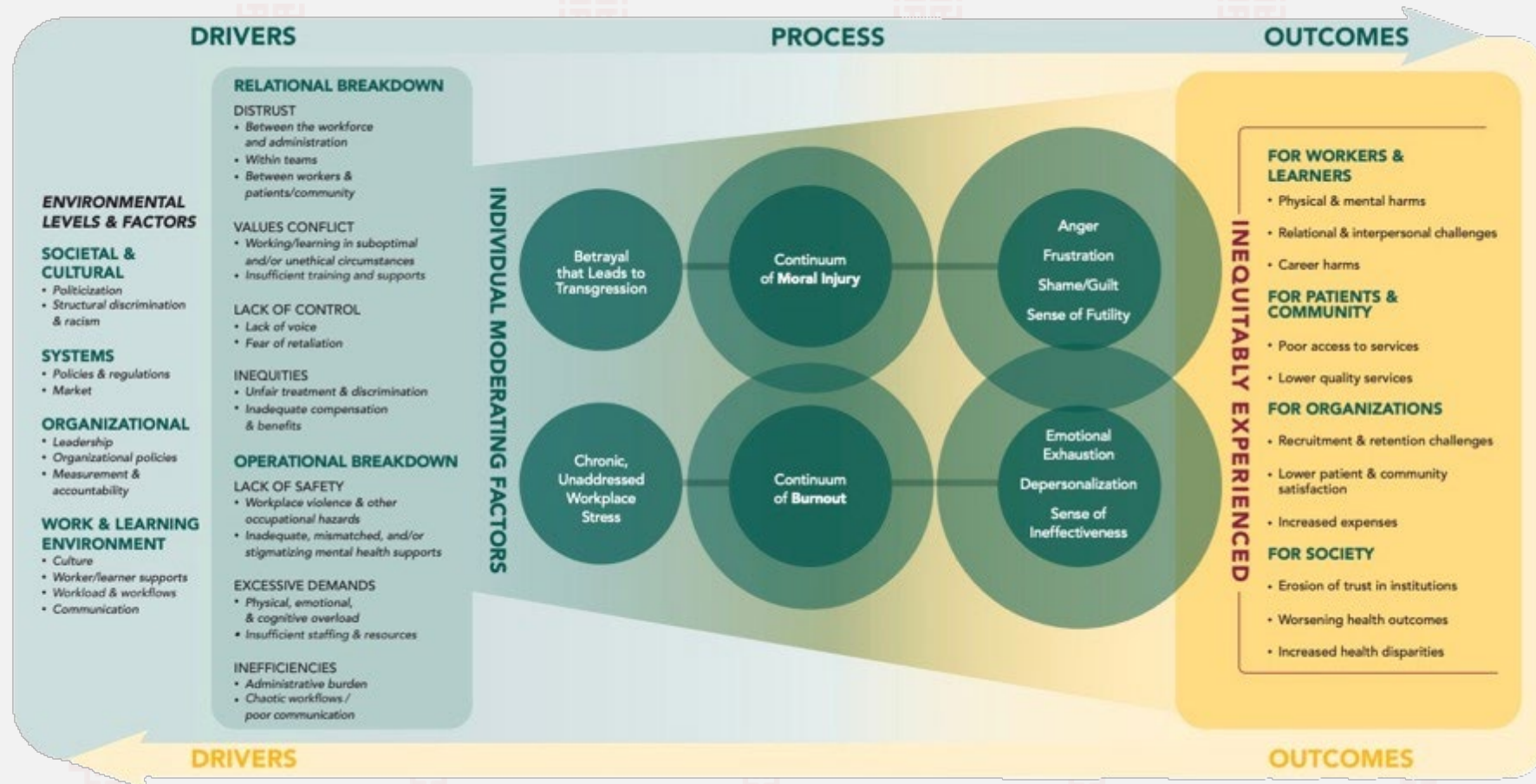
"Healthcare workers aren't quitting because they can't handle their jobs. They're quitting because they can't handle being unable to do their jobs."

Even before COVID-19, many of them struggled to bridge the gap between the noble ideals of their profession and the realities of its business. The pandemic simply pushed them past the limits of that compromise.

Ed Yong
The Atlantic
16 Nov 2021

SEPTEMBER 13, 1970

A Friedman doctrine—
The Social Responsibility Of Business Is to Increase Its Profits

By MILTON FRIEDMAN
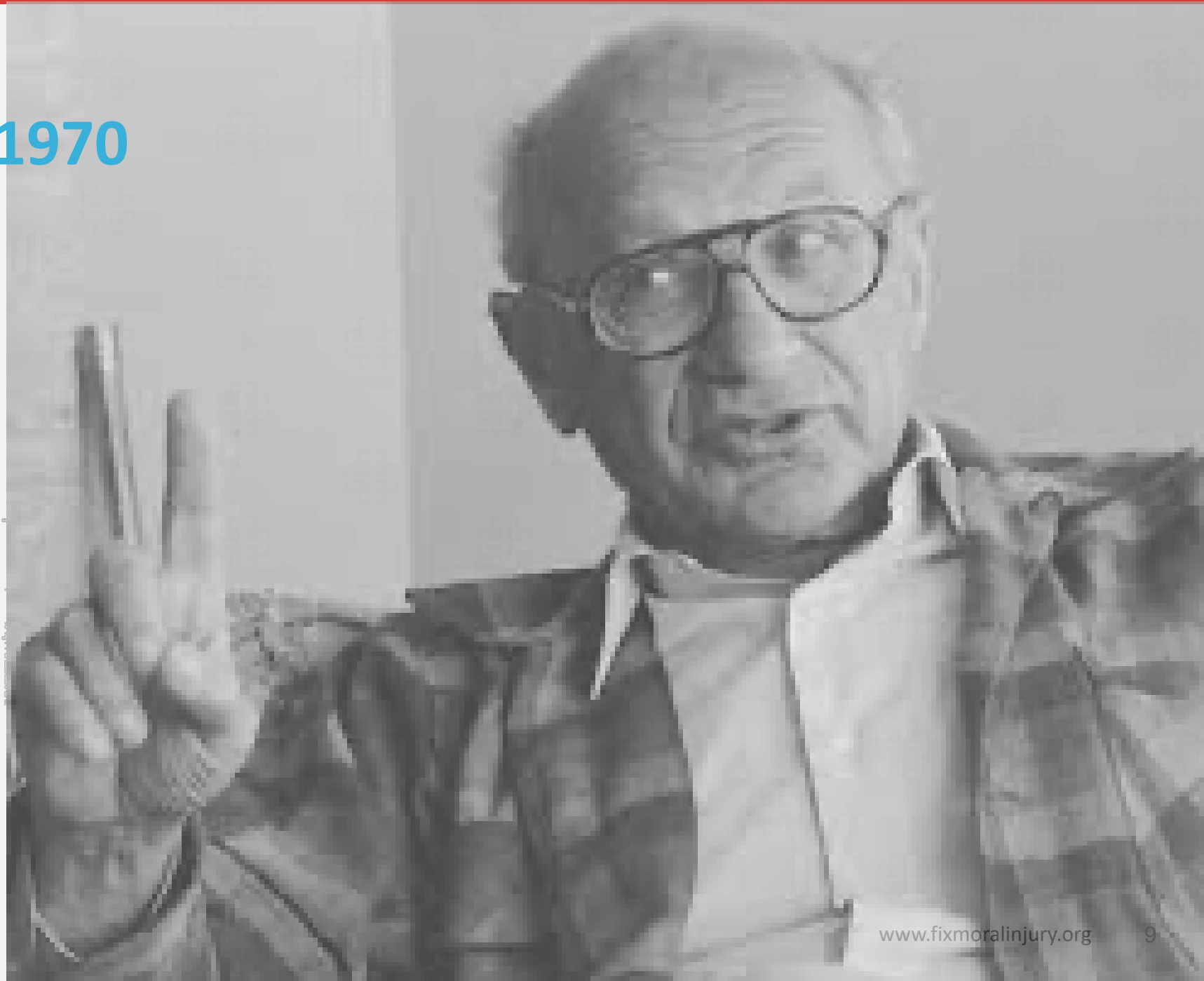
CONSOLIDATION & VERTICAL INTEGRATION

BEWARE MEDICALIZING AND PATHOLOGIZING

Burnout/moral injury ≠ psychiatric disorder

Different than BPAD, MDD, Anxiety

Often normal responses to abnormal situations

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

RECOVERY
Individuals following a crisis
Provide accommodations & support
— Support recovery/return to function

TERTIARY PREVENTION
Individuals significantly impacted or affected
Problem triage and crisis management
— Mental health supports
Crisis management

SECONDARY PREVENTION
Individuals with identified needs or challenges
Provide opportunities to alleviate existing problems or modify prevailing conditions to prevent escalation
— Address drivers of distress
Stall escalation

PRIMARY PREVENTION
Populations or environments at risk for poor outcomes before problems emerge
Reduce/lessen risk factors and promote/strengthen protective factors
— Reduce environmental risks
Ethical & moral frameworks

PRIMORDIAL PREVENTION
Population level (all people)
Address social, economic, and structural policies that affect health and well-being, and are embedded into mindsets and daily practices to prevent risk factors from occurring
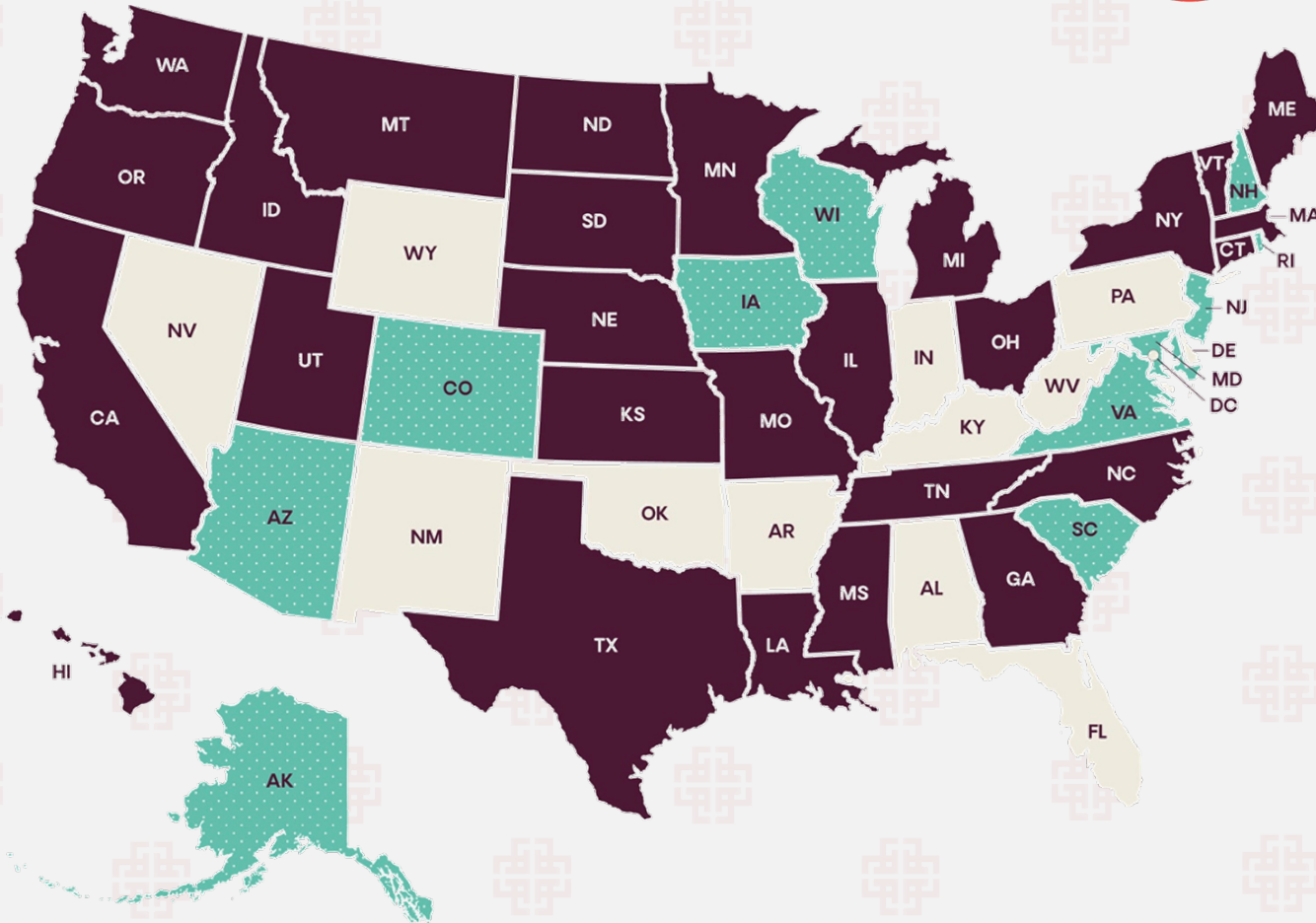— Structural determinants
Change incentives

https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/8228e700f6e369df9382ac8e0d3976c1/primary-prevention-convening-brief.pdf

LICENSING REFORM

States where medical licensure applications were consistent with our recommendations.

States where medical licensure applications are in progress of being audited and changed.

States where medical licensure applications were inconsistent with our recommendations or where applications could not be accessed for review.

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

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TERTIARY PREVENTION
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Problem triage and crisis management — Mental health supports / Crisis management

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STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

HOW WE CHOOSE TO DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES & WHO DECIDES

https://gisgeography.com/high-resolution-world-map/

www.fixmoralinjury.org

"MORALLY CENTERED" ORGANIZATIONS

Values-Aligned

Wise

Human

Trustworthy

Mentoring

Just

Courageous

HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT: LEADERS

Walk the walk. Talk the talk. Fight for right.

What leaders need

- Recognition of their moral and ethical values

- Education & training about moral challenges

- Transparency for their goals

- Recognition, resources and support for their own wellbeing needs

- Opportunities to acknowledge and discuss conflicts in their own values and practice

What we need from leaders

- Embody moral leadership

- Act faithful to their word

- Acknowledge, challenge, address and resolve moral transgressions

- Consider the moral impact of their behavior and decisions

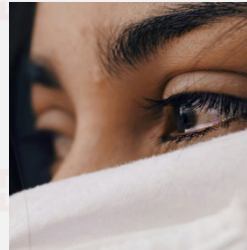- Challenge sources and incidents of moral transgressions

TRISTAN HARRIS

FORMER DESIGN ETHICIST AT GOOGLE; FOUNDER OF THE CENTER FOR HUMANE TECHNOLOGY

Pre-tragic
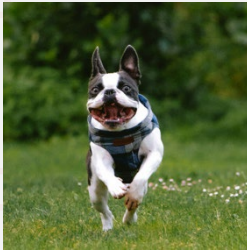
In Tragedy

Post-tragic

"We don't want to metabolize the tragedy, so we stay in naïve optimism."

"Then there's the person who stares at the tragedy and gets stuck [in depression or nihilism]"

" . . . accept and grieve through . . . the realities we are facing."

"It's humanity's right of passage. You have to go through the dark night of the soul and be with that so you can be with the actual dimensions of the problems that you're dealing with and you're honest about what it would take to do something about it. . . . I think we need to get good at holding each other through to the post-tragic."

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DON BERWICK, MD - IHI

MORAL MATTERS S1E3

"If we are healers,
we have to get engaged.

If you're
feeling helpless,
act."

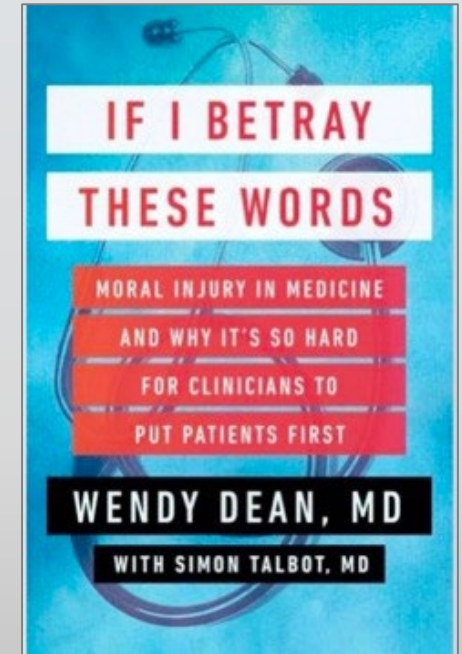www.fixmoralinjury.org

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Podcast

Podcast

Podcast

Book
Hardcover & audio
Paperback 9/10/2024

wdean@moralinjury.healthcare