Innovations in Counseling (Part 12 Session 10)

Soul Cry: The Lived Experience of Moral Injury Among Black Male Police Officers in the Context of Undue Police Violence Against Black Citizens
Webinar Follow-Up Question and Answer Session With Avery Rosser, PhD, NCC, ACS, LPC, CPCS

Question from K. Riggins:
Could the "What happens in this house, stays in this house" mentality also intersect and correlate with Black trauma and stigma?

Answer from Presenter: Yes, this mentality often perpetuates silence around issues of trauma, mental health, and systemic injustices within Black communities. It aligns with cultural stigma that discourages seeking external help, which can exacerbate unresolved trauma. For Black police officers, this stigma can be twofold—stemming from their professional culture and personal community, compounding the moral injuries they experience.

Question from J. Bjork:
Do you have a therapeutic modality you would recommend for working with those who struggle with moral injury?

Answer from Presenter: I recommend using a combination of trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) and narrative therapy. TF-CBT helps process and restructure traumatic experiences, while narrative therapy empowers individuals to rewrite their story, finding meaning and reclaiming their sense of self.

Question from Anonymous:
How do you think these officers feel about police reform and/or police abolition?

Answer from Presenter: The perspectives vary significantly. Some officers view reform as necessary to bridge community trust, while others may see abolition discussions as undermining their roles. However, many feel conflicted, understanding the systemic changes needed while grappling with feelings of personal accountability and organizational loyalty.

Question from S. Feliz:
How do you hope this research could support Black police officers long term? What new resources/programs/avenues do you wish would be implemented into police forces nationwide based off your findings so far?

Answer from Presenter: I hope this research fosters awareness about the unique challenges Black officers face, leading to targeted mental health resources, peer support programs, and cultural competence training within police forces. I envision national implementation of wellness programs tailored for officers of color, alongside robust mentoring and community-focused training to reduce moral injury triggers.

Question from U. Page:
Has there been follow-up with your participants to see if they've reached out for support—community, mental health support, etc. since speaking with you?

Answer from Presenter: Yes, periodic follow-ups revealed that several participants sought therapy or connected with peer support groups. However, a few expressed hesitancy, citing concerns about confidentiality and stigma. This highlights the need for accessible, culturally sensitive support systems.

Question from Anonymous:
I live in an area that has a low percentage of the Black population. Is there a significant difference for Black police officers who serve in communities with low Black populations in general, especially when they are less likely to have many Black peers to have similar experiences?

Answer from Presenter: Yes, Black officers in such areas often experience heightened isolation and alienation. The lack of shared experiences with peers can exacerbate feelings of invisibility and marginalization, intensifying their moral injury and mental health challenges. Peer networks or virtual support communities are vital for mitigating these effects.

Question from L. Koen:
As someone who doesn't live in America, do Black officers speak about being gaslighted or not believed regarding moral injury and, if so, by whom?

Answer from Presenter: Yes, Black officers frequently report being gaslighted by colleagues, superiors, and even community members. Their experiences with moral injury are often dismissed or minimized, particularly within predominantly White institutions, further alienating them and compounding their psychological distress.