



## Soul Injury® at a Glance



- **What is “Soul Injury”?**
  - A penetrating wound that separates one from their own sense of self that causes one to feel personally defective, inadequate, or unworthy.
  - The concept originated with a group of VA hospice nurses who cared for 10,000 dying Veterans; the nurses witnessed SOUL INJURIES firsthand as they surfaced unbidden on combat Veterans’ deathbeds.
- **What are the essential qualities that characterize most SOUL INJURIES?**
  - Unmourned loss and unforgiven guilt/shame that is often manifested as a sense of emptiness, loss of meaning, or a sense that a part of self is missing.
  - Disruption of a person’s fundamental *identity* which shrinks their sense of inner goodness and beauty fueling a haunting sense that they might be defective or tainted.
  - Lack of vitality, vague *emptiness*, profound *aching* or sense of meaninglessness caused by disconnection from the part of self carrying the pain
- **Who is at risk for developing a SOUL INJURY?**
  - Victims of sexual assault, crime, accidents, natural disasters, bullying, abuse, neglect, domestic violence
  - People who have experienced heartache, loss of personal health or a loved one’s health, death of a loved one, or betrayal by a significant other
  - Minorities and marginalized members of a society, culture, or group
  - Stoic cultures that hide or are ashamed of expressing emotional pain
  - Veterans & First Responders, their families, civilians who experienced a war zone
  - Personal and professional caregivers vulnerable to “burn-out,” “compassion fatigue,” and secondary traumatic stress
- **Why should we be addressing SOUL INJURY?**
  - Unmourned loss and unforgiven guilt become stored in peoples’ bodies, minds, and spirits sabotaging their lives and generating both physical and emotional symptoms.
  - Re-owning and re-homing the part of self carrying the pain and guilt starts a healing process. By revitalizing the weary, wary heart, hope emerges that “restoreths the soul.”
- **How does care for SOUL INJURY and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) differ?**
  - In both PTSD and SOUL INJURY, people shift from trusting themselves to trusting their fear.
  - PTSD focuses on managing symptoms, whereas restoration from SOUL INJURY includes *opening up* to the symptom and connecting with the part of self *generating* the pain.
  - PTSD treatment helps people manage their triggers and control anxiety; soul restoration focuses on disarming the heart through grief, love, forgiveness, and self-compassion
- **What is a Soul Restoration ceremony?**
  - A ceremony carefully crafted to provide the utmost psychological safety and education about the roles that unmourned loss and unforgiven guilt play in keeping SOUL INJURY alive
  - Exercises to take people into their soul where they can experience true self-compassion
  - Self-care tools for continued integration and healing after the ceremony is over
- **What is Opus Peace?**

Opus Peace ([www.opuspeace.org](http://www.opuspeace.org)) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization whose vision is to start a movement to help people with SOUL INJURIES learn how to love, forgive, and trust themselves to navigate in the world again by disarming their heart while cultivating personal intimacy with scattered aspects of self.

Want to host a Soul Restoration Ceremony? Contact LtCol (Ret.) Kathy Lowrey Gallowitz, R.N., M.S.N., “The Connector” at [kathy@vanguardveteran.com](mailto:kathy@vanguardveteran.com) or cell phone: (270) 845-7286.