

Soul Injury® at a Glance

➤ What is “Soul Injury”?

- A spectrum of wounds that range from traumatic to insidious caused by denying the reality of our own experience which cuts us off from the essence of our sense of self
- 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?

- 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
- Penetrates into the deepest parts of our being even though our ego keeps trying to pretend that it does not fully exist.

➤ Who is at risk for developing a *Soul Injury*?

- Victims of sexual assault, crime, accidents, natural disasters, bullying, abuse, neglect
- 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, not being the “favorite” child.
- Stoic cultures that hide or are ashamed of expressing pain
- Veterans, families of veterans, civilians who experienced a war zone, first responders & their families
- Personal and professional caregivers vulnerable to “burn-out” or “compassion fatigue”

➤ 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 Posttraumatic 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* ceremonial workshop?

- A 5-8 hour ceremony carefully crafted to provide the utmost psychological safety
- 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
- A “Fallen Comrades” ceremony for Veterans and a “Releasing Ceremony” for Caregivers
- Self-care tools for continued integration and healing after the ceremony is over
- Referrals for: one-on-one counseling, EMDR, massage, art therapy, and community resources
- Soul Restoration ceremonial workshops enhance treatment for PTSD, not replace it.



➤ What is *Opus Peace*?

- *Opus Peace* (www.opuspeace.org) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization whose vision is to start a movement that helps 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. For more information, visit the Soul Injury website at www.soulinjury.org or call (727)755-4265.