

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Institutional (Healthcare) betrayal; Grief; Suicide; Mental Health; Moral distress; Community and shared experiences.

*"I went down a rabbit hole after last week's group trying to capture the grief, disappointment, and feelings participants shared. **It resonated deeply and helped me make more sense of my own grief.** It was **learning** these terms that actually helped validate, affirm and name my experiences (of grief)."*

Examples of institutional betrayal include ignoring reports of harm or mishandling complaints related to mistreatment, bullying, discrimination, and other forms of misconduct. **Unsafe staffing levels** and **insufficient resources** hinder the provision of safe, dignified, and high-quality patient care. Protecting abusers within the system, blaming or punishing the victim, and creating systemic barriers to justice are also examples of institutional betrayal.

The impact of institutional betrayal on individuals and their health is significant. It can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, (c)PTSD, burnout, and career regret. **Moral distress arises** when individuals know the right ethical action to take but are prevented from doing so due to institutional rules, lack of resources, or other obstacles. This can force individuals to act against their core personal or professional values, causing emotional and psychological discomfort. **Trust** in institutions and authority figures diminishes, straining interpersonal and professional dynamics. **Self-perception can be affected**, leading to increased self-doubt and shame.

The long-term ramifications of institutional betrayal include turnover and attrition. *Prolonged loss of trust* significantly increases the intent to quit, damaging overall retention and future emergency workforce readiness. *A reduced sense of safety in society can also occur, making*

individuals reluctant to seek help in the future. Additionally, the healing process can be prolonged, hindering recovery and well-being.

Healing from institutional betrayal involves acknowledging the betrayal, recognizing the harm that has been done, and prioritizing safety. Creating safe environments for both nurses and patients, fostering a culture of accountability, and establishing accessible and effective channels for reporting and addressing concerns are crucial steps in this process. **Seeking support through therapy, support groups, and survivor networks can also be beneficial. Advocacy is another important aspect,** as individuals can use their voice to advocate for institutional accountability. **Finally, self-care is essential,** with a focus on healing, rest, and personal growth. ***By creating systems in which individuals feel heard, supported, and protected, we can work towards healing from institutional betrayal and fostering a more just and equitable healthcare system.***