

From Idea to Reality

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The StoryWagen, Kansas City, MO

2018 SENT Seminar Participant

*Last September, the NBA Incubate Initiative welcomed its largest SENT Seminar cohort yet! The annual four-day training opportunity equips Disciples social entrepreneurs of faith for leadership and change as they nurture emerging health and social service ministries. This project, **The StoryWagen**, aims to start a conversation on methods of moral injury intervention by using digital storytelling and a mobile recording studio (in a Volkswagen bus) to collect stories of people who are suffering from moral injury.*



My name is Jose Martinez from Kansas City, MO and I participated in the SENT Seminar that was conducted by the National Benevolent Association. I am a bi-vocational church planter and a chaplain. This is important because my experience as both a chaplain and church planter led me to come to the NBA's SENT seminar. These two seemingly different ministries collide in my project called The StoryWagen. As a church planter, I have an entrepreneurial streak to start innovative ways to express the Christian faith. As a chaplain in both the military and at a hospital, I walk with people of all faiths in their joys and pains, wherever they are in their life's journey.

Throughout my ministry, I have been heavily involved with the study of moral injury. What is moral injury, you might ask? In short, it is an injury to one's psyche when one violates, corroborates, or could not prevent acts that transgress their own moral and ethical values. Moral injury is a newer field of study and there are symptoms similar to those experienced in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This field of study grew due to many veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom that were experiencing PTSD but were dealing with symptoms that were beyond the scope of evidence-based treatments such as prolonged exposure therapy and cognitive processing therapy.

Therefore a dimensional approach, versus a categorical approach, must be taken when intervening with people suffering from moral injury. Moral injury is not included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-V) like post-traumatic

stress disorder, however many researchers understand that moral injury quite often accompanies PTSD latently. While treatments for PTSD focus on emotions such as fear, despair, and horror; moral injury interventions focus on emotions such as guilt, shame, and sorrow.

The goal of The StoryWagen is to assist faith communities in bringing awareness and intervening in moral injury within their neighborhoods because moral injury affects everyone. To achieve this goal, we will develop resources that help these communities understand moral injury through digital storytelling. Additionally, we will develop interventions that faith communities can employ that will help their neighbors address moral injury. You may be asking why faith communities? As mentioned before, moral injury is a dimensional issue. The dimension that moral injury affects is the spiritual dimension. That is why The StoryWagen is focusing on educating faith communities to help in this matter, to help in the work of soul repair. This work is important because even though moral injury is not a mental health issue, it does affect mental health.

Now great, there is this big idea but how do we go from a big idea to a successful reality? This is where the SENT seminar and the NBA come into the picture. I was provided with the necessary foundations and support to start this endeavor. Although I have plenty of experience and training with planting a church, there are some differences between planting a church and starting a nonprofit. It was the SENT Seminar that showed me what areas are a little different from church planting. Furthermore, one of the most important things I gained from the seminar was the knowledge that I am not on this journey alone. I was able to create friendships with colleagues from various parts of not only the continental United States but also from Canada and Puerto Rico. If you are wanting to start an innovative endeavor in the nonprofit world but do not know where to start, I suggest looking into the SENT seminar with the NBA. The experience will enrich you not only professionally but also personally.

The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at nbacares.org/incubate