Mapping moral distress

Addressing moral distress requires identifying its sources and the emotions you’re experiencing, outlining the conflict, and naming the internal and external constraints. You can then take steps care for yourself and act to resolve the distress.

- **Source(s)**
  - COVID-19 pandemic
  - Scarce resources (e.g., personal protective equipment [PPE]), shifting care standards

- **Emotion(s)**
  - Anger, fear, anxiety, sadness
  - Helplessness, powerlessness

- **Obligations**
  - Caring for patient vs. protecting self
  - Caring for the individual vs. the community
  - Obligation to work vs. protecting loved ones

- **Internal**
  - Lack of preparation/training
  - No time to build confidence in skills and abilities

- **External**
  - Rapid policy/procedure changes
  - Communication disruptions
  - Conflicting expert voices

- **ACT**
  - Engage in self-care strategies
  - Engage leaders and experts to understand the “why”
  - Report PPE shortages and discuss conflicting obligations with colleagues
  - Speak up and stay safe, take the time needed to don PPE safely, inform your patients