



ARTS & MEDIA

COMMUNITY IDEAS



ARTISTS



MEDIA MAKERS



DEFINITIONS



THE HEALING POWER OF THE ARTS: A GUIDE FOR ARTISTS, MEDIA-MAKERS & COMMUNITIES

The National Day of Racial Healing takes place annually on the day after Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The observance grows year after year as people living and working in towns, cities, neighborhoods and organizations across the country work to create connections and share a sense of belonging.

Racism affects all of us in different ways. It influences who has a shot at opportunities for wellbeing, like employment, a decent income and access to capital, a good education, proper health care, advancement and leadership. It affects whether people feel a sense of belonging at work, school and in the community.

Racial healing is the process of better understanding our own experiences and those of the people around us, as well as why things are as they are in our organizations and communities.

Each year, the National Day of Racial Healing is an opportunity to gather family, friends, neighbors, community members and colleagues to:

- Get to know each other.
- Cultivate trusting relationships.
- Learn about each other's diverse backgrounds, culture, perspectives and lived experiences.
- Share information on the history or current realities of racism.
- Brainstorm ways to take actions that increase empathy, advance racial equity, create common ground and build solidarity.

WHY ENGAGE THE ARTS & CREATIVITY?

At its heart, racial healing is about building authentic, trusting relationships characterized by the way we all care for each other's well-being. Engaging in the arts and creative experiences can empower us to cultivate empathy, increase understanding between people, resist injustice

and open the imagination to new possibilities for the present and future.

COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

- During the National Day of Racial Healing 2019, organizers in Richmond, VA hosted a 2-day immersive arts experiences, where nearly 400 people organically created a community arts show and a unique cross-racial social space that's rare to find in the city. [Read their story.](#)
- In Chicago, the premier Goodman Theater coached fifteen women in the art of storytelling as they prepared to share stories of racialized experiences with a standing-room-only crowd, hosted by the National Museum of Mexican Art. [Read more.](#)
- In 2022, creativity, expression and the written word provided a catalyst for reflection when approximately 50 people gathered at the Mississippi Museum of Art to engage with author and MacArthur Genius Kiese Laymon and storytellers Talameika Brice and Aurielle Marie. The Black Youth Project provided art supplies for attendees to engage their creativity during the event. [Read more.](#)

IDEAS FOR COMMUNITIES

Gather community members of all ages to:

- Make social justice posters together with guidance and resources from [Favianna Rodriguez](#).
- Use [Artworks to Discuss Social Justice Issues with Students](#), a lesson plan guide from the National Gallery of Art.
- Write poems or draw pictures about a world without racism.
- Collaborate on a community art display.
 - Paint a racial healing themed mural, with permission from the property owner.
 - Go for something less permanent, like a collaborative sculpture made from objects found in your community.
 - Hang a community photography exhibit by printing meaningful photos from participants' cell phones.
- Document community stories using the video camera on your cell phone. Talk to elders and kids, long-time residents and new arrivals about what they love about the community and what they would change.
- Witness your community through writing. Gather a group to take a walk around the block. Encourage each person to pause near something that draws their attention -- a building, a tree or plant, a sign or decorative element, even cracks in the sidewalk. Spend 10 minutes stream-of-consciousness writing about what you see. Reconvene and share your writings with each other.
- Engage in a community sing-along.

ARTISTS

Artists, performers, writers, media creators and cultural institutions facilitate community encounters with challenging topics, history and truth.

- Host an arts-rich event for your community.

- Team up with a community center, school or other organization to create a mural or public art piece around themes of racial healing, racial equity and justice.
- Watch performances from previous National Day of Racial Healing events:
 - Musicians Lizz Wright and Maia Sharp created the song [Painted Sky](#) for the National Day of Racial Healing 2018.
 - EGOT winner John Legend and Detroit-based poet Reyes refreshed Nina Simone's Civil Rights anthem, [I Wish I Knew How it Felt to be Free](#), during the W.K. Kellogg's signature program in 2022.
 - Hip hop artist and fancy dancer Supaman closed 2022's signature program with his song [Why](#).
 - During the 2021 signature event, poet laureate Amanda Gorman collaborated with singer Milck to honor the victims of police violence with [Say Their Names](#).
- Host a discussion among fellow local artists about [decolonizing your artform](#) or reflect together on Sarah Lewis' TED Talk,

[How Images Shape our Understanding of Justice](#).

- Use our [Conversation Guide](#) to hold a racial healing conversation among artists and/or audiences.

MEDIA-MAKERS, FILMMAKERS & JOURNALISTS

- Have a look at [Pop Culture Collaborative's resources](#) to reflect on the impact of pop culture.
- Commit to hiring and casting people of color by adopting an [inclusion rider](#) in your production company's policies.
- Host a discussion for colleagues and consumers of local media. Discuss: Whose voices are at the forefront? Whose voices are missing? What complete stories need to be told? How can media-makers and the community work together to uncover and share those stories?
- Work with colleagues to conduct a media assessment of your news coverage and share the assessment across your company or sector. See page 56 of our [Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Implementation Guide](#) for a media assessment framework.

- Explore resources provided by professional organizations to enrich journalism and improve coverage of specific communities. These include:
 - [Multicultural Media Correspondents Association](#)
 - [National Association of Black Journalists](#)
 - [Indigenous Journalists Association](#)
 - [National Association of Hispanic Journalists](#)
 - [Asian American Journalists Association](#)
 - [The Opportunity Agenda](#)

DEFINITIONS

WHAT IS RACIAL HEALING? WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY?

We offer these definitions as you and your collaborators think about ways to observe the National Day of Racial Healing. Racial healing and racial equity are terms gaining a lot of traction right now, but sometimes it's easier to brainstorm ideas when everyone starts from a place of shared understanding.

Racism keeps us disconnected and prevents us from living in a country where everyone has an equitable shot at opportunities.

Racial healing is at the heart of racial equity. It is about people building relationships and trust to develop shared goals and a collective will to create and sustain racial equity.

Racial equity affirms that all people, regardless of their racial or ethnic group identification, skin color or physical traits, deserve an equal opportunity to experience well-being in a just society. Achieving racial equity means that a person's identity would not determine how they are treated or predict life outcomes.

Racial healing is a process that restores individuals and communities to wholeness, repairs the damage caused by racism and transforms societal structures into ones that affirm the inherent value of all people.

When people come together to build relationships based on trust and mutual respect, they are better able to bridge divides and work together to transform systems and structures.