

# National Day of Racial Healing

January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## What is the National Day of Racial Healing (NDRH)?

Started in 2017 by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, National Day of Racial Healing is a chance for all of us to self-reflect, to band together as individuals, organizations and communities and have frank, open and honest conversations about our shared values, and how racism affects all of us. It is a day in which we are called to explore our common humanity, and build the trust, connection and relationships needed to create a more just and equitable world.

Falling the day after Martin Luther King Jr. Day, NDRH invites us, through events, conversations, and community and individual activities, to collectively brainstorm #howweheal from the effects of racism. Fundamental to this day is a clear understanding that healing is at the core of equity when it comes to reckoning with the racialized history of the United States.

## What is Racial Healing?

Racial healing is the experience shared by people when they speak openly and hear the truth about past wrongs and negative impacts created by individual and systemic racism. It helps build trust and relationships between individuals and communities, so we can all work together to change the systems and structures that still affirm inequity.

Without racial healing and building trust, changes in policies or practices are short-lived. Through healing and relationship-building, we can collectively develop new values that affect our everyday decisions in areas of policy making, hiring, education and housing – to name just a few.

## What is Racial Equity?

Racial equity refers to the fair and just treatment of all individuals, irrespective of their race or ethnicity, ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities, resources, and privileges. We strive to build societal structures where a person's racial identity does not determine how they are treated nor predict life outcomes.

Racism impacts all of us, whether we are aware of it or not. The effects of racism are evident everywhere: in the places where we live, learn, work and play, in our social interactions and in our systems and policies. Systemically, racism is one of the biggest obstacles to solving the challenges we face in our communities. Achieving racial equity requires both systems transformation and racial healing.

## Why is Racial Healing Important?

- **Building Trust:** Addressing historical wrongs and acknowledging the impacts of racism helps rebuild trust between individuals and communities, creating a foundation for collaboration.
- **Collective Well-being:** Racial healing contributes to the overall well-being of society by addressing the deep-seated wounds caused by racism and promoting mental and emotional health.
- **Social Justice:** Racial healing is integral to the pursuit of social justice, aiming to rectify systemic inequalities and dismantle structures that perpetuate discrimination.
- **Equitable Opportunities:** It paves the way for equitable opportunities, ensuring that individuals from all racial backgrounds have access to the same resources, education, and socio-economic advantages.
- **Economic and Educational Advancement** Eliminating racial disparities contributes to a more inclusive and robust economy by harnessing the talents and potential of individuals who haven't had the chance to succeed. It also empowers people to learn about diverse histories and perspectives.
- **Long-term Social Change:** Racial healing is a catalyst for lasting social change, inspiring individuals, and communities to actively engage in dismantling discriminatory systems and advocating for equality, paving the way for new ways of living and engaging with each other.

## What Can We Do, In The Arts?

- **Educate Yourself!** [The National Day of Racial Healing](#) website is a great place to start, covering topics like separation and segregation, systemic inequities in the law and economy, and how to go about a collective narrative change in what and who we prioritize in our society and our communities.
- **Engage!** Racial Healing is all about truthful and honest conversation. Whether it is self reflection starting with these [prompts](#), or starting a conversation with your friends, family, and colleagues with this [helpful guide](#) on where to start.
- **Create!** We are artists, after all! Use art to engage your community, and create change by stirring emotions, challenging norms, and sparking conversations. Throughout history, artists have always played a pivotal role in creating change in social and racial justice movements. This NYT Article: [Art that Confronts and Challenges Racism: Start Here](#), like the title suggests, is a great place to start!
- **Other Inspiration:**
  - Watch Musicians Lizz Wright and Maia Sharp, who created the song [Painted Sky](#) for the 2018 National Day of Racial Healing.
  - John Legend and Detroit-Based Poet Reyes refreshed Nina Simone's Civil Rights Anthem, [I Wish I knew How it Felt to be Free](#) for the 2022 National Day of Racial Healing.
  - Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman and singer Milck honored the victims of police violence with their collaborative piece entitled [Say Their Names](#) for the 2021 National Day of Racial Healing.