

**THE TRUTH, RACIAL HEALING & TRANSFORMATION COALITION  
AND W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION PRESENT**

# **NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING TOOLKIT**

**JANUARY 17, 2017**



**ENDING ALL DISCRIMINATION BASED ON DIFFERENCE**

**OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI [WINTERINSTITUTE.ORG](http://WINTERINSTITUTE.ORG)**

# CONGRATULATIONS!

If you're in possession of this toolkit, you're interested in leading a dialogue session that may help move you and your community forward in a positive way. The materials included in this packet are not meant to be the panacea for healing all wounds, but they will allow you to lead a group in discussing race relations and provide ways to positively impact race relations in your community and beyond.

Included in this packet, you'll find the following tools:

1. National Day of Racial Healing Press Release
2. The Welcome Table Guideposts
3. Why Circles?
4. The Story Circle (Guidelines for the Story Circle)
5. How to Ask Open & Honest Questions
6. Dialogue Circle Agenda

Thank you for taking the lead in holding such an important discussion in your community, and we hope that you'll consider this the first of many! If you have questions regarding anything included in this packet, please feel free to reach out to us at [www.winterinstitute.org](http://www.winterinstitute.org) or 1-662-915-6734.

-The Staff at The William Winter Institute for  
Racial Reconciliation



# NATIONAL DAY OF RACIAL HEALING

## PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

January 7, 2017

Contact:

(Please insert name of local contact)

(Insert City of Origin)

The City of (Insert City of Origin) proudly collaborates with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) and more than 130 organizations for a National Day of Racial Healing on Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017.

("Quote from local organizer")

On that day, Jan. 17, our city leaders plan to (state planned activity) in an effort to heal the wounds created by racial, ethnic and religious bias and build an equitable and just society where all children can thrive.

In the next few weeks, WKKF and its Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) collaborating organizations will carry out a variety of events to mark the first ever National Day of Racial Healing. The TRHT, community, corporate and non-profit partners represent a collective network of nearly 300 million Americans.

"Communities, organizations and individuals are being asked to acknowledge that there are still deep racial divisions in America that must be overcome," said Dr. Gail Christopher, senior advisor and vice president for TRHT at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. "We have to come together to heal and commit to truth telling, engaging representatives from all racial, ethnic, religious and identity groups in genuine efforts to increase understanding, communication, caring and respect for one another."

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti.





# WHY CIRCLES?

## THE FIRST AND FUTURE CULTURE

EXCERPT FROM CHRISTINA BALDWIN'S CALLING THE CIRCLE: THE  
FIRST AND FUTURE CULTURE (2009)

“Over and over again I hear people express their longing to know what to do, how to apply personal consciousness to the world in some healthful way. I believe we can apply consciousness to heal the world -- and we already are. Great power lies within us what has been missing is the mechanism for organizing this power. I believe this mechanism of empowerment and action is the circle.

“[This] kind of Circle . . . is a council of ordinary people who convene to create a sacred space and from that space, accomplish a specific task, and support each other in the process. Because it has a sense of containment, the Circle has a beginning, middle, and end that are framed through simple rituals appropriate to the group. The Circle has a shared verbalized intention so that everyone knows why they are gathered. The Circle self-governs and corrects its course through the adoption of common sense agreements of behavior. And when confusion arises, or the way is momentarily lost, everyone agrees to fall into reflective silence, refocus on the group's highest purpose, and follow protocols for problem solving that reestablish trust and cohesion. In such a Circle leadership rotates, responsibility is shared, and the group comes to rely deeply on spirit.

“Relying on spirit means that people perform simple ritual and consistent re-focusing to acknowledge the highest intention of the group. The center of the circle literally and figuratively serves a sacred space, a place where everyone's commitment to cooperation dwells. And when we don't know what to do next, in circle it is appropriate to stop the action and create an environment in which people, each in his or her own way, commit themselves to asking for guidance. We grant ourselves permission to slow down, watch for what is needed, and see how we might do our part.”



*the*

# STORY CIRCLE

## *guidelines for the story circle:*

- 1.** Sit in a circle. The value of sitting in a circle is that it emphasizes that all voices and stories are equal. If there is a large group, divide into multiple circles of 10 to 15 people each, with a designated facilitator for each group, if possible.
- 2.** Start with a prompt. (For example, “Tell about the first time you noticed that race was an issue, ‘the elephant in the room.’”) The facilitator tells their story first to give others an example and help things get started. As the first to go, the facilitator sets the tone for the group, so “go deep” in your own story.
- 3.** Divide and share time equally, usually limiting time to 2-3 minutes each. The storyteller’s “neighbor” keeps their time with a timer and gently hands the timer to them when they have 30 seconds left, so they know to begin wrapping up their story.
- 4.** Remind the group that confidentiality is very important.
- 5.** Listen actively and use empathetic senses, not critical senses. We too often converse to debate, not to listen. The story circle is about listening.
- 6.** Everyone does not have to tell a story. They may pass on their turn. The group will come back to them at the end to see if they would like to tell one. Silence is ok.
- 7.** Speak from your own experience and don’t generalize to others.
- 8.** Do not write. This is an oral process.
- 9.** Listen to the story that is being told, and do not think about the story you are about to tell. The circle will bring you one when it becomes your time.
- 10.** Listen while each person tells their own story. No interrupting or asking questions; there will be time for crosstalk at the end.
- 11.** You don’t have to agree with any story being told, but you do have to accept each person’s right to tell their own story.
- 12.** When everyone has had an opportunity to tell their story, the group engages in crosstalk. Ask questions or make a statement, thinking about common experiences or themes that came up.



# *how to ask*

# **OPEN & HONEST**

# **QUESTIONS**

- 1. The best single mark of an open honest question is that the questioner could not possibly anticipate the answer to it.**
- 2. Ask questions aimed at inviting the person to explore their concern rather than satisfying your curiosity.**
- 3. Ask questions that are brief and to the point rather than larding them with background considerations and rationale, or paraphrasing what they have already said.**
- 4. Ask questions that go to the person as well as the problem - questions about feelings as well as facts.**
- 5. Trust your intuition or gut, even if it seems off the wall.**
- 6. If you aren't sure about the question, be quiet, wait, and if it keeps surfacing, ask it. Write it down before asking it, if that helps.**
- 7. Watch the pacing of your questions. Questions coming too fast may feel aggressive, and can cut off the deep thinking that can arise in this process.**
- 8. Avoid storytelling, or behaviors that call attention to your self.**
- 9. The best questions are simple questions.**
- 10. Avoid questions with yes or no answers.**
- 11. Avoid questions with right or wrong answers.**

# LEADER AGENDA

**SESSION LENGTH:** 1.5 – 2.5 hours (depending on group size)

**IDEAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:** 15-25

**SUPPLIES NEEDED:** Chairs for participants, copies of the Guideposts handout, sticky notes, pens

**ROOM CONFIGURATION:** Chairs placed in a circle

## 1. OPENING THE CIRCLE (5 MINUTES)

Provide the group with information regarding the National Day of Racial Healing and its purpose. The press release in this packet will provide the specific information about the day. Also let participants know that this circle is one of several that will be taking place across our state, and beyond. This will be a brief meeting in that it's not meant to heal all wounds, but is meant to be a step forward in that direction via relationship building through story-telling, dialogue and bridge-building.

## 2. WHY CIRCLES? AND GUIDEPOSTS REVIEW (15 MINUTES)

Share with the group the reason behind the circular seating format. Refer to the document in this packet that explains circles (Why Circles?). Also, in the packet is a set of "rules" called Guideposts (The Welcome Table Guideposts). Ask for random volunteers in the circle to each read one of the Guideposts out loud. Once all Guideposts have been read aloud, ask participants which of them they find easiest to adhere to. Then ask which ones they may find difficult to abide by. Finally, ask if everyone agrees to abide by the Guideposts while in the circle. Remind them that it's important to remember that what's said in the safe space of the circle, stays in the circle.

## 3. INTRODUCTIONS (45 MINUTES)

There is also another tool, The Story Circle: Guidelines for the Story Circle, included in your toolkit to help you as a leader better understand how to conduct a story circle. Ask each person in the circle to provide the following information: their name, where they live in the community and the story of their names. Example: "My name is Ann Marie Jones. My mother named me Ann in honor of my grandmother; Marie is in honor of Marie Antoinette because my dad lived in France for a while and was fascinated with the culture, and Jones is my family name from England/Wales..." Begin each "ask" such as this by modeling and sharing your own story before other participants begin. Give each person about 2 minutes each for these introductions.

## 4. OUR EARLY EXPERIENCES (25 MINUTES)

Our early experiences play a large part in shaping where we are and who we are today. This prompt will have us to explore this in more depth. Present the group with the following question: "What is your very earliest memory of coming in contact with people different from you, and how did it impact you?" Allow participants to voluntarily share their experience. Again, if a participant chooses not to share in the large group, skip them and come back to them at the end to see if they wish to share at that time. If not, it's OK. Participants should be allowed to speak with no comments or questions from other participants. This is a listening exercise.



# *healing circle* LEADER AGENDA CONT.

## **5. OUR CURRENT STATE (15 MINUTES)**

Now you will have the group explore where we are today by asking them to break out into triads (groups of three). They will each take turns sharing while the others listen. Review with participants how they are to ask open and honest questions, which is outlined in one of the documents included as a part of this packet. Give each person about 3 minutes to talk without interruption and then a minute or so for “open and honest” questions from the other two triad members. They will come back to the circle after about 15 minutes total. Ask groups to share what they heard. The question for the triad is: “How would you describe the overall state of race relations in your community?”

## **6. VISIONS OF THE FUTURE AND WHERE WE WANT TO GO (20 MINUTES)**

Let the participants know that this is a visioning exercise where they’ll be asked to consider and actually visualize the future. This will also be a breakout exercise with participants breaking into different groups of three, taking turns listening and asking questions, and then coming back into the larger circle to share. You will ask the visioning question, then allow about 2 minutes for them to close their eyes and visualize what it is you’re asking: “When you close your eyes and think of a community where race is not an issue, what do you see?” You can have sticky notes for participants to jot down their thoughts and then post them on the wall after sharing, or you can simply ask for volunteers to share. Participants should never be forced to share if they choose not to, but allow time for all to share.

## **7. CONSIDER THIS (20 MINUTES)**

Challenge participants to think of what can be done, within their sphere of influence or others to help our communities/country heal, by asking the following question: “What steps can we community members take to improve race relations?” This will be a large circle discussion, and allow participants to share their thoughts. Participants should reflect on the Guideposts and not judge the recommendations/suggestions lifted up by others.

## **8. CLOSING THE CIRCLE (5 MINUTES)**

Thank participants for being here today and opening up. By doing so they have reached across the racial divide in an effort to share and to understand. Ask them to consider the following: “How can we each connect with others who are concerned about the things that we lifted up today? Should we, as a group, continue to expand this type of dialogue and get more community members involved? How can I personally help with that?”

Ask participants to stand and say one word that describes how they feel leaving the circle today. Once everyone has spoken, thank them again and close the circle.