

April 25th, 2018 AAC&U and ALA Healing Circle Facilitator Training Webinar Transcript

Tia: Good afternoon. Welcome to AAC&U's and ALA's webinar on racial healing circles. I am Tia McNair the Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Student Success at AAC&U and we are very pleased that you have decided to join us this afternoon. We're just going to wait about a minute or so, so that our colleagues can join us and make sure everyone is online. If you're having any technical difficulties please use the chat box for that particular issue. We're hearing a little bit of a feedback. Hold on.

If you're having any technical issues please use the chat box for that. We're just going to wait probably another 45 seconds or so. Okay. Let's go ahead and get started because our time is limited and we have a lot to cover this afternoon. So as I said welcome to our webinar and first before we get started I want to say thank you to our funders. Newman's Own Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for making our part in the TRHT effort possible. I also want to introduce our wonderful and esteemed panelists this afternoon. The ones who will be leading us through the discussion of racial healing circles. This is Dr. Gail Christopher. She is the founder of the Ntianu Center for Healing and Nature and the former senior advisor and vice president of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Next to her is Mee Moua. Principal, inter-dependent group and consultant for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and next to her on the end is Mike Wenger, senior consultant on race relations at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and also a senior fellow here with us at AAC&U. So we want to thank them for joining us this afternoon. Just another quick technical difficulties a reminder. If you have any difficulties with your technology or anything like that please use the chat box for that and our IT office that is with us here will be able to respond immediately to you.

If you have any questions that you would like to pose throughout the webinar please use the Q&A feature that is at the bottom of your screen. That would be wonderful and that's a way for us to facilitate the questions and we'll be able to take a catalog of those that we would use or address in the third part- Well for the last part. The last 30 minutes of this particular session. I want to also turn it over very quickly to our colleague at the American Library Association Jodie Gray. She is director of the office for diversity, literacy and outreach services. Jodie?

Jodie: Thank you. I'm so please to be here. The American Library Association is happy to be partnering with the Association of American Colleges and Universities to bring you today's webinar. One of ALA's strategic directions is specifically to address equity, diversity and inclusion in the association in our profession and with the communities that are served by libraries, so this is a very exciting opportunity to partner with Kellogg. We also wanted to express how grateful we

are to Kellogg for providing us with a grant to integrate the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation framework into our existing great stories club program.

This program targets underserved teen audiences in reading and discussion on three theme related books and then participating in programs that are led by a racial healing practitioner and with the librarians at the various sites. I just wanted to say that very quick welcome and then I'm going to hand it right back to you all to do the rest of the session. Thank you.

Tia: Thank you Jodie. Thank you so much. We're going to just go over a brief agenda so that you'll know what to expect this afternoon. We're going to first talk about the purpose of racial healing circles and their role in the TRHT process and then Gail, Mee and Mike are going to talk about the guiding principles and key elements of racial healing circles, the characteristics and skills needed in co-facilitators, how to actually develop discussion prompts for a racial healing circle, facilitating a racial healing circle and the next steps for those interested in pursuing racial healing circle facilitator training.

We are actually very pleased to have the best of the best in the racial healing circle facilitators join us. They're shaking their heads on there and you can see them doing it, but that's absolutely the truth. I'm just going to step out and turn over to them as we begin this conversation this afternoon. Thank you.

Gail: Thank you to you. There you go. Alright. Let me begin by acknowledging the hard work and commitment on the part of the partnering organizations and the funders and the Kellogg Foundation and just to say what a pleasure and privilege it is to be doing this affirmative work in these critical times in our society. We're also on the eve of a monumental day in history. Tomorrow there will be a museum opening in Montgomery, Alabama that is actually the first acknowledgement of the dark history of lynching, of murdering of African Americans and of other people of color actually throughout the country and they will be honoring the memory of those people and their families and their communities.

Change is occurring. It may not be as fast as many of us would like, but change is happening and there is a definite relationship between this process of racial healing and the change that is occurring that we need to see. The goal of the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation work and it is really an American adaptation of the truth and reconciliation process that has been used all over the world. But the ultimate goal is embodied in this vision statement. The transformation we envision is a world in which the false ideology of a hierarchy of human value has been jettisoned.

I use the term jettison. I'm an old Star Trek fan and I just loved it when they would jettison something. It was gone. It disappeared, so we want this ideology, this false notion of a taxonomy of the human family that is hierarchal in nature. We want it to be gone. It has to be uprooted. Done away. With. It's a deeply

rooted belief and it has had really significant consequences throughout centuries. The belief and its consequences will no longer shape our collective experiences or our individual experiences and that is what will happen when the transformation is complete.

So the racial healing circles are part of the process. There's a much broader framework, but within that framework we developed a methodology that accelerates the building of relationships and the nurturing of commitment to this work. The circles introduce a process through which deep storytelling and deep listening enhances our capacity to embrace our common humanity and if you sit through a racial healing circle and it's done effectively and efficiently typically you have spent five hours listening to and I believe feeling, the experiences of diverse people who you otherwise might never have encountered. And as a consequence of that immersion experienced you are different. You will never see people in the same way and that's the power of the experience.

We learn to see ourselves in one another. We learn to approach difficult of racism and the necessary changes we need to see in our society through a deep lens of empathy. A deep lens of understanding and a sense of relatedness that we didn't have before and that we believe will undergird foster the transformation that has to happen.

In the webinar today we're going to talk about the background and the key elements of TRHT and that's at a very high level. We're going to talk about exactly what is a racial healing circle, the critical importance of storytelling, what a racial healing circle is and is not and it's very important to distinguish what it is not. We're going to touch on the questions that are emerging about language. You have heard many, many different iterations. You've heard diversity, equity and inclusion, you hear conversations about race, you hear us talk about the belief in racial hierarchy. We're going to try to bring some clarity to some of those issues and then we're going to talk about the evidence that's emerging over the last decade as to the effectiveness of this process of bringing people together in racial healing circles.

The key elements of the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation effort of which the racial healing circle is a part basically as I said it's a co-designed, co-collaboratively launched with principal funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and with funding from many other philanthropic partners around the country to create a truth and reconciliation process for American modeled after TRC's that have been implemented over 40 countries around the world. Now we say Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation. We don't say truth and reconciliation because we want to honor the unique history of the United States, which was grounded in separation, which was grounded in the false ideology of a taxonomy of human value. From the taking of the lands from the native people to the enslavement to the racialized immigration policies. This idea that there is some hierarchy of worth and value that they're a superiority

to one group of people who have certain physical characteristics and inferiority for others that this is part of the essence, the genesis of America.

So it's not that we want to come back to something we ever had because we never had it. Rather, we want to transform our country into one that really embodies its aspirational statements of life, liberty and the right to the pursuit of happiness for all people equally. We created a framework for doing this work, which is grounded in five key elements. You've heard them. Those of you that are involved in this process I'll just summarize them very quickly. The first is narrative change. We know now in this century that the human brain is wired to remember stories. Stories create our reality. Stories create our experiences.

And so it's very important that the stories that we share are authentic stories that are broad in nature and representative of the true history of our country and the true multiple perspectives of today. Narrative is key. Then we move into the second key element, which is racial healing of which this process is a part. We then move into the answer to the question, "How has the taxonomy, the false ideology of a hierarchy of human value, how has it been sustained for so many centuries?"

We came up with three key- I call them buckets. That's a very scientific term. And the reason we have these three buckets versus discrete policies because we want people to keep focused on the broader effort, which is transformational. We don't want people to this only if we legislate this it's fixed. If legislation were going to fix this it would be fixed because we've had lots of legislation over the years and all it takes is a new political administration oftentimes to reverse not only legislation, but executive orders. It is transformation that we seek.

So these three critical elements of our social infrastructure if you will that have perpetuated this belief in a hierarchy of human value. The first is separation. We stay separate from those that we perceive as other. We hold onto not only our biases, but our permission to discriminate and to oppress. The other is the law. In America from its beginnings, our legal systems have embodied and reflected and have been used to reinforce the false ideology of a hierarchy of human value. And then our meteoric rise to be the strongest nation in the world economically was based on the exploitation and the taking of lands. The exploitation of people.

So our economy was built on this notion of hierarchy of human value. Those are the five elements of the framework for TRHT, narrative change, racial healing, separation, the law and the economy. And many of you know we had an extensive group of organizational partners whose collective reach is estimated to be 200 million people who worked on a set of recommendations driven by clear vision and these elements of the TRHT framework.

So what is the circle? The circle is a process that is happening all over the country, specifically in the 15 places where the work has been funded to be

implemented at organizations where we bring people together. We bring people together so that they become immersed in a five hour experience. A day long experience of listening and sharing and connecting in a very affirming and productive way. Most importantly they leave those experiences, we leave those experiences more aware of our common humanity and we were going into the experience. If you take nothing else away from today know that the process enables us to relate more meaningfully and powerfully and in an affirmative way to our common humanity.

We do this through storytelling and storytelling is just what we're wired to do as human beings. And by being focused and intentional of the nature of the stories we cut through the noise in the conscious and unconscious of our cognitive processes. So storytelling is at the heart of this work. The racial healing circle is not a conversation about race. You know how people say, "We need to have a conversation about race." Maybe somebody needs to do that. But the racial healing work is beyond a conversation about race. The racial healing circle is an experience. It's an experience of engagement with the purpose of overcoming the perceptions of the other. Overcoming the biases and engaging in a very human and connected way.

It is not restorative justice although restorative justice is a powerful tool that is also circle based and story based. But its purpose is different from the racial healing circle. Sometimes restorative justice practices or practitioners make very good racial healing circle facilitators, but it is not the same as restorative justice. It is also not- And I'll invite Mike and Mee Moua to weigh in here. It is not a community dialog about hot issues. It is not a community gathering after something has happened that has separated or traumatized a community to come in and voice the emotion and the anger and the pain and the trauma that has been experienced. It's a very different process that is orchestrated and coordinated to bring about a specific outcome that enhances our capacity to do the work going forward.

Mike, do you want to add anything about it is not?

Mike: Yeah. It's not training. It's not trying to problem solve on a specific issue. It is in essence creating the conditions that then enable us to work constructively towards a solution to a particular problem. But it is not the solution. It is pre-requisite to working on a solution.

Gail: Mee Moua, do you want to add anything?

Mee: I just want to add that the racial healing circle is most effective when it is used in tandem with- Or practiced in tandem with the other strategies around the other- What Gail has scientifically call the buckets, right? And so people always say, "Can we just do the circles?" I think it is best practices and is most effective is how Gail has actually taught us how to do it is that you do them in tandem so that the circles actually create that fertile ground or as our friend Dushaw

Hockett says, "The lubricant of the heart and the mind" gave it to creatively approach the tough conversations that we need to engage in when we end up at the economy and the separation in the law. Strategies that needs to be permanently deployed.

Gail:

Excellent point. For years people would say, "It's either/or." It's either with what they would say, "Race relations." This is not race relations work by the way. I want to be clear about that. People would say, "You're either doing race relations work," or, "You're doing structural racism work." Our contention is that you're doing all of the above and to reinforce what Mee Moua has just said you need this work as part of "fertilizing of the ground" if you will for the other work. But you have to do both structural work and healing work and this is one methodology of a process of building up, expanding the community if you will.

They talk about the coalition of the willing to expand that coalition so more people are engaged and they're not afraid. It's important to understand that this is not about race. It is about racism and racism is one of many isms that allows us to become separate and to create the perception of the other. And so it is the ism. It is not the social construct of race that we're focusing on. We're focusing on this ideology that has made that social construct so toxic in our society.

It's important to be willing to say that's what we're doing. It's different from diversity, equity and inclusion. It's different from conversations about race. It is a way expanding this circle of people who are willing to confront and overcome if you will. Confront is a harsh work. I'm going to say willing to face and engage and be involved in a transformational process that will allow us to jettison this insane notion that some people are better than others by virtue of their physical characteristics.

And then the evidence of the effectiveness of the racial healing circles. We've been doing them now for well over 10 years under the auspices of the W.K. Kellogg foundation in this particular way. I've been building this approach and methodology for I think maybe 35 years. It first became evident to me as a holistic healing practitioner, holistic doctor that people change their behavior and their perceptions more readily through small group engagement processes and that led to other work over the years. We have practitioners around the country who are engaged in this work and their communities- Next slide. Is this just some beautiful faces. I opted to show their faces because they're so diverse and that's part of the healing. Coming together with people whose life experiences, the cultural norms and values are different that's yours.

But to somehow learn to respect them, to be engaged with them, to be respected by them that in and of itself is a healing process and these are folks all across the United States who can be tapped- Resources and time permitting to be helpful to you and your work in your communities. We do know that there's certain physiological and biochemical changes that occur in the process of the

racial healing circles. We know that oxytocin levels rise, the stress hormones are reduced when people share in this kind of affirmative and positive way. And the circle methodology in and of itself that's grounded in indigenous cultures that go back through Antiquity and we see the circles in sacred monuments all over the world. We see them in temples and churches. The circle, this idea of the interconnected reality of humanity is modeled for us in nature as well as in those things that we value.

I'm going to leave it there in terms of the evidence. We don't have double blind controlled studies. Maybe one day we will, but we certainly taken around 5000 people through the process over these years and the positive affirmations are legendary and documented in much of our literature. And I'm going to turn it over to Mee Moua and Mike now to talk about the guiding principles. I'm going to go through them quickly and then I'll turn it over. Correct? Yeah. It's an invitation. No one has to participate in this process by force, by demand, by requirement. It is always an invitation to participate.

You have to have a diverse group of people no less than- Well we recommend no less than 16, no more than 25 for a circle. But in order for that circle to reflect the diversity that you need it to, for it to be authentic and valuable, the invitation has to come from someone who's credible in each of those diverse groups. You will ask someone of the Jewish community to invite Jewish people to participate in a racial healing circle. You'll ask someone from the Muslim community to invite people from that community to participate and it goes on and on and on. You probably need to create a planning team that enables you to do the effective outreach to create the broader circles.

Now we say 16 to 25, you could have 50 of them going on simultaneously if you have the capacity, the physical plant and the facilitators. Now, we believe it has to be co-facilitated. The co-facilitators embody and model the power of bringing different people together. The co-facilitators differ in gender and age, in geography, in life experience, in identification in terms of racial and ethnic and gender, but it's always co-facilitated by two people. We bring people into a circle. I've talked about this circle, but within the circle we also subdivided pairs or dyads to provide for more intimate sharing and then there is the use of introductory racial healing circles sometimes for very large groups and Mike Wenger will talk more about that later.

And we want to go over with the skills and the capacities that are needed in co-facilitators. Some people say, "What are the must haves? What are the non-negotiables?" As someone in the healing profession my non-negotiable is always do no harm and we want that to be seen as one of the qualities that our co-facilitator should bring into the circle. The intention to lead with love, to be affirming and to have the capacity to minimize, mitigate or prevent emotional trauma and harm in this experience. You need people who are wise in human interaction and human relations, who have enough self-awareness and self-learning not to have to be spewing anger or hatred themselves. We need

facilitators who can literally lead with love in the process and that's what we have in that slide you just showed.

You have all those people around the country. They can facilitate a circle and have genuine caring in regard and respect for everyone in the circle no matter who they are. Those are the key elements and I'm going to turn it over to my co-presenters here who are wonderful, who've been committed to this work for a very long time and are doing tremendous work all over the country.

Tia: Before you get started can I just ask a question? Your question is can you please repeat what you said about the time frames?

Gail: Okay. Ideally, racial healing circles depending on the numbers of people engaged should be no less than three hours and probably five. I said that we want a minimum of 16 people and a maximum of 25. Mike and Mee Moua will talk more about how much time you have to give to make sure that each pair or dyad has an opportunity to self-express and to engage with one another. The time is used up in the process. That's why it has to be three hours minimally. Five hours probably maximally with some breathing and breaks in there. Thank you for that question. Yes?

Mee: I think you want to touch a little bit on the use of the 45 to 90 minutes that you set principles?

Mike: Yeah. There are- We've been doing the three to five hour healing circles, but we've also done what I would call several introductory healing circles for very large groups with very limited time. These run about 40- A minimum of 45 minutes to about 90 minutes they can- We've done the with as many as 300 and 350 people and the way that works is we do a brief introduction, then we share a prompt with them and I'll talk about the prompts in a few minutes. They share their stories related to the prompt at the tables at which they're sitting.

It gives them and then they process it at their tables as well. It gives people just a taste of what a racial healing circle can be like. It doesn't accomplish what a full racial healing circle can accomplish, but it does give people a taste and hopefully the desire to engage in the broader racial healing circle.

Mee: Could you give examples of the types of settings where that's appropriate though?

Mike: Yeah. We've done them at a couple of conferences where there were 300 people sitting at tables of 8 to 10 people each and as I've said we do a brief introduction about what TRHT is and what racial healing circle is, then we give people at the tables a few minutes to respond to a provocative prompt unlike the longer racial healing circles we don't pair people intentionally. We can't do that, but we can do this with as many as 300, 350 people give them a taste of what a racial circle is like and that hopefully whets their appetite.

Mee: Groups like the American Library Association or the Independent Sector or the Council of Foundations. Large groups have annual meetings that was one of orderly-

Mike: The Academy of- The American Academy of Pediatrics. We did that with them with the black and latino MBA associations where they had hundreds of people and we could not simply do the normal racial healing circle that we do or with American Library Association or Independent Sector where we did 90 minute circles and the difference in those is that not everybody got a chance to share their story. But I'll talk more about that when we talk about the prompts.

Mee: Perfect. And just one last thing on this slide before we move to the next set of slides. Gail talked about how important the invitation is and that it should be personal. Personal to the recipient as well as personal to the person extending the invitation. The content of the language of the invitation is very important. We don't want to invite people to a dialog when our intention is for them to have a heart experience. We need to really- To have some integrity in the bulk of the language and the content of our invitation that mirrors what their experience is going to be like when they're in this circle.

And then the last thing I will say is that Gail talked about how important it is to have an organizing group to have the capacity to do this type of personal invitation and the reason for that as we've been doing this work we know that we- Putting a flyer together and putting flyers all around a campus will not get the participants that we need or want with the diversity of representation and actually the information that we need in order to curate the dyads for the people to have meaningful conversations in the introductions, but meaningful experiences as they share their stories.

And so creating a flyer or doing an open invitation on a website or announcing it as an event and give it a time and a date and hoping that people will show up. People will show up, but it will not have the complexity of the diversity of representation that I think could and should make the experience as rich as we can possibly can make it. So I just want to make a note on that point.

Alright. So for the remainder of the time that we have with you all before we get to the Q&A section Mike, Gail and I will try to get to all of these elements, which we call the deep diving into the elements of a racial healing circle. I will talk briefly about the welcome and the brief introductions to open the circle. I will talk briefly about the touchstones and how we use them. We'll move into sharing with you re-introductory prompts and how important that is. The deep reflection prompt, which really is the what I call the meat and potatoes of the racial healing circle. We'll also talk about what I alluded to earlier how important the dyads are to the conversation and then processing the deep reflection prompt in the full group and how important the synthesis and the closing of the circle is to the full experience of the participants.

Actually I'll hold on this. I want to briefly go back to the welcome and the brief introduction. As co-facilitators we feel that it is very important to signal to the group who are in the circle two things at the beginning of the circle. It's important to formally open the circle by welcoming all the participants in the circle and it is important to announce the intentions for the circle clearly to the full group. And part of the opening of the circle is to do something to invite the participants to be fully present and to announce what the intentions are for the day.

So what we often say is that part of the reason for wanting to make sure that we have very thoughtful, skilled, wise co-facilitators is that actually that first step of welcoming people into the circle and setting the intentions of circle is very important and I think in some traditions they would say, "Making that space sacred." Right? Or declaring that space to be an intentional space for all the participants.

Once we've done that then as in gathering we're going to engage as a group. Before we proceed further we bring the group together for a group agreement. And in our practice- Now, different communities may choose different documents or different agreements to do that. But in our practice we use this set of agreements called the touchstones and a summary of the touchstones are on the screen. Many of you who've participated in circles with us are very familiar with this. But we feel that it is very important for us to have a common set of agreements that will guide and govern how we show up for each other in the circle, how we interact with each other in the circle and it's a reminder of how we will make a commitment to showing up for each other even after a circle.

If you look through the touchstones listening deeply, no fixing, suspend judgment, identify assumptions, speak your truth, respect silence, maintain confidentiality. When things get difficult turn to wonder. Be 100% present and presume welcome and as Gail mentioned earlier always by invitation. We emphasize the fact that the intention of the circle is for deep heart sharing to occur. But it is a never do-or-die. We will invite you to flex and bend, but not to the point of breaking, right?

And so it's always wonderful to have this reminded that it is by invitation. And what we often do is that we would distribute the touchstones and announce that it is our intention to look to the touchstones as I've said a group agreement and how we conduct ourselves. And then we invite people to look at the touchstones and we invite people to read the full touchstones beyond these headings into the circle. As grownups or as people with different kind of learning skills it's important to both be able to see the words, but to also hear the words and to both visually and orally have it be formed.

And then in some of the circles that we have done we actually would have a blank sheet that's available and invite the group to add any additional group

agreements that may be- People would like to acknowledge beyond what we have in the touchstones and together we invite a vocal acclimation that we will abide by these touchstones or these agreements as part of our group agreement. Mike?

Mike:

Okay. I want to talk about the prompts that we use. I want to emphasize that in this case we're talking about the three to five hour racial healing circles rather than the introductory racial healing circle. I want to also emphasize the importance of having co-facilitators. When one is facilitating a portion of the racial healing circle the other is scanning the room trying to take the temperature of the room, trying to make sure that we're on target with what we're trying to accomplish. The importance of having two co-facilitators in the room is critical.

We use two types of prompts. After the welcome and introduction in which people simply go around the room, state their name, where they're from, that sort of thing very briefly and we get through the introduction of the co-facilitators and the touch stones. We then generally do what we call re-introductory prompts. These are brief prompts. They're designed for two purposes basically. One is to relieve any tension or anxiety that may exist in the room and the second is to ease people into a deeper sense or a deeper place of reflection.

What our colleague and friend Dushaw Hockett calls the interactional introduction as opposed to the transactional introduction. There are a number of re-introductory prompts that people use. The two favorite ones- These are four examples. The two favorite ones that I like are- First one is to share a story about a recent time when you laughed hard or smiled wide. That gets people in a very relaxed state of mind and you can hear laughter all over the room. And then the second gets people into a deeper sense of reflection. Share the name of a person who shaped and molded you into the person you are today and/or the person you are becoming.

Typically, these are 30 seconds or a minute each. Typically, you pick your partner. You're sitting in a circle of say 20 people. You find somebody who you don't know or don't know very well and for the first prompt you find a different partner who you don't know or don't know very well for the second prompt. They're typically 30 seconds or a minute each and we try to time them to keep them brief. And it gets people- The other thing it does is it gets people up and walking around the room so it creates a little bit of energy in the room.

Sometimes people use three of these prompts. If there's enough time we usually use just two. When that's done people sit back down again and we generally ask three or four people to share their time when they laughed hard or smiled wide and three or four people to share the name of the person who shaped and molded them just so that there is some sense of interaction with the entire group. We then move to the deeper reflection prompt. For these

again in twosomes or dyads, but for these we try to assign partners in advance. We try to make it so that each dyad is composed of two people who come from different racial or ethnic backgrounds, different geographic areas, hopefully diverse gender, that sort of thing, but we try to do that in advance to ensure that we are talking with somebody who is not by our particular racial or ethnic background, geographic area, that sort of thing.

When putting together the dyads we consider the group and their backgrounds. In developing the prompts, the deeper reflection prompts we consider these five points. One the group and their background. If we're doing this for the American Academy of Pediatrics that might suggest one type of background. I'll give you some examples in a minute. If we're doing it for the American Library Association that might suggest a different type of background- A different type of prompt. If we're doing it for the association of American Colleges and Universities that might suggest a different kind of prompt.

When developing the prompt consider the group and their backgrounds. Consider the size and diversity of the group and the amount of time available. That's important to do the timing because you want in these three to five hour racial healing circles, you want the opportunity for everybody to share their story in the larger group as well as in the dyads. Make it affirming. We started out as Gail can tell you about 10 years ago with a prompt that asked people to share a time when they were hurt, when there was something negative.

Gail: Could I just-

Mike: Yes.

Gail: We asked people to share why they do this work because these were all people who were doing racial equity work and ironically most people move into this work from a personal trauma.

Mike: Right.

Gail: And so what we ended up getting was a lot of pain and it was learning for us in terms of how we can shape a prompt that would affirm and move us forward. At the same time it would touch deeply. I just wanted to-

Mike: Yeah. I think that's a critical point. That is not to say there are not situations where sharing trauma or why people got into this work is important, but it's not for these racial healing circles. It has to be affirming because you want to create a positive, affirming environment. It has to be relevant to the circumstances and it has to be- It has to invite authentic stories that are likely to have common elements so that people through the sharing of their stories can begin to see themselves in one another and it should be clear and succinct as well.

I'll give you a couple of examples of some prompts we have been developing. Mee Moua and Dushaw Hockett and I for the American Library Association. So there are three books that the ALA is using and we've developed some suggested prompts for each of the three books and they reflect what's in the book. So one of the books is March, Book One by John Lewis, which some of you may be familiar with. It's sort of a rendition of John Lewis' history getting involved in marches, but it's written for younger people.

One of the prompts that we developed was to tell a story about a time when you needed to show courage or overcome fear and you did. How did it make you feel? What impact did it have on your life? On the lives of others? That illustrates a critical element of the prompts. We're trying to move people into a heart space and away from a head space. It's not about how do you think about something, but it's how do you feel. Another prompt we developed for the Miss Marvel comic book was how do you identify? Think of a time when you were proud of your identity. How did this make you feel? What did it enable you to do or to be?

The point that I want to illustrate is that these prompts need to be about feeling. They need to help you go deep into your heart, into your gut if you will and out of your head. And one of the challenges in co-facilitating racial healing circles is to try to keep people in that heart space rather than in that head space and that's a challenge that we have to be conscious of all the time. There are a number of other examples. We can share plenty of examples with you if you'd like, but what I want to do is illustrate a deep reflection prompt. I want to model it because that's what we do in the racial healing circles. The co-facilitators model the prompts in order to create the kind of environment that will allow people to feel vulnerable and to be able to go to their heart space.

What I want to do is share a personal story about a time when I overcame, challenged, changed and/or stood up to what I felt was a false narrative about myself or my identity group and how that moment made me feel and how it influenced me and changed my life and the life of others. And I'll try to keep this brief. Normally we allow about five minutes for each person to tell their story in dyads. We give them a few minutes first. Three or four minutes to think about it because you want them to have some time to think about the story they want to share. Five minutes each to share their stories and then come back in a large group to share their stories.

The story I want to share relates to an early experience I had. I was an interracial marriage and my soon-to-then-be wife who is African American wanted me to meet her mother and her mother she's from rural North Carolina and had spent her life working as a domestic for white families. And when we first met it was a very tense meeting and when I left she told her daughter whose name is Tempy that I was a white devil and she should not have anything to do with me at all. And despite the fact that we decided to get married the phone calls between Tempy and her mother were tense. Her mother decided she was not coming to

the wedding and nothing could persuade her to come and as the wedding drew closer it became a very tense situation. I found myself being angry and frustrated and not understanding.

The wedding was on a Saturday. On Thursday. Mrs. Bellamy simply showed up. We were living in Charleston, West Virginia. She simply knocked on the door on Thursday afternoon and she just walked in. She didn't say why she had changed her mind. She didn't say anything. Just walked in and took over. She came to the wedding and she had a really wonderful time. Then the next time I saw her was on Easter Sunday. Now I'm Jewish and I'm from Brooklyn, New York and I had never been to church on Easter Sunday and I had no clue about the significance of church on Easter Sunday.

So we arrived in rural North Carolina on Saturday and Tempy and I went out, had a little too much to drink at night and had no intention whatsoever of getting up to go to church in the morning. But Tempy's parents lived in a wood frame house, which was heated by potbelly stoves and it was in North Carolina Sunday morning in April and it was about 80 degrees outside and we had gotten in about 4:00 in the morning and about 6:00 in the morning I woke up thinking that I had just gone to hell because the potbelly stove had been stoked and she basically burned us out of bed on there. It's the only way to say it. And we went to church that morning and I learned a lot.

And here are the points of the story. The first thing it did her whole sense of me being a white devil forced me to empathize with the pain of Jim Crow racism in a way I never had been before. I had been involved in the Civil Rights Movement, I was this white knight from Brooklyn. A college student who was going to save the world. I had no clue about the pain that people in this situation of Tempy's mother confronted every single day of their lives. I began to understand in a way that I never had before our common humanity. I had learned that we all laughed at the same things, we cried at the same things, we were sad about the same things, we rejoiced about the same things, we were angry about the same things.

It made me far more passionate both professionally and personally and it made me humble because it demonstrated to me in a way that it never had before and in a way that I can't imagine another experience demonstrating how little I knew about racism and how much I'd never be able to know about racism. And it was that experience that in essence changed my life both personally and professionally and has led me on a journey through the last 40 or 50 years of my life. I'm 76 years old. I have been on this journey all of my life and I know what I know and I know how much I don't know and never will be able to know. That has made me humble and passionate at the same time.

Mee:

Thank you Mike. Thank you. Well, Mike and I are your co-facilitators or we're modeling that capacity in that capacity, so I'm going to briefly share my own response to this prompt the reflection question about sharing a personal story

about a time when you overcame, challenged change and stood up to what you felt was a false narrative about yourself or your identity group. And my story went back actually to when I was in middle school. We were the only family of color in a predominantly all white neighborhood. Predominantly all white city actually.

One day my mother was trying to teach me how to do embroidery by big bay window when three boys from the neighborhood came riding across our front yard on their bikes and as they went by the window one of them threw a handful of eggs at the window and we were so shocked that before we could hardly comprehend what happened they came back from the other direction and the second boy threw another handful of eggs at the window. By then, I was so angry that I went up to the window to get a better look at the boys because I wanted to know if they were from my school and as I was making eye contact with one of them he came right up to the window, he looked at me and he spat at the window.

And as the eggs and the spit - It was just streaking down the window I just became so angry and so enraged that I went to my closet. Now I was the captain of my T-League team and I had all the baseballs and all the bats at my house. It was my job to take them to practice. I went into my closet and I took out three of our aluminum baseball bats and I set them at the door. I turned to my parents and I said, "Since you haven't done anything about this situation I'm going to go out there and take care of business." Well my father looked at me in typical Asian father fashion he said, "You know you're barely 90 pounds, not even 5 feet tall. You're going to go out there and take care of them? Forget it. You'll end up in the hospital and then your mother and I will have to take time off work to come see you."

But my mom came up to me and she hugged me and she said that she understood where my anger was coming from and she said to me- She said, "These people don't know who we are. They don't know where we come from. They don't know what we're like. They do this because they don't know us." And she said, "And the fact is in the reality of living the rest of your life in this country as a Hmong American, as an Asian American you will never be able to be white. You will never be able to change the color of your hair or change the color of your skin and someone, somewhere will never like you because of the way you look." And then she said, "But you can study hard. You can graduate from high school and you can go away to college and then you can come back home and you can get a really good job and maybe become their boss."

She said, "For the rest of your life someone, somewhere will just not like you because of the way you look. But people will have to respect you because of who you are." And I remember that story so crisply because it literally changed the trajectory of my life and it made me reconnect to finishing high school and going away to college and it literally made me who I am today. Now I did share with Mike and Gail that I always caveat to that story is that- Actually if they have

been just one more Hmong girl my age at that time in that time at that city I think I would have founded the first Hmong girl gang because that was how disrespected and how angry I felt.

But my mother's words really helped me to have perspective and it has made a difference in my life.

Tia: Thank you for sharing.

Mee: Thank you. And so we- I know that we're at the point where we want to reserve maximum time for your questions. But I'm wondering if you would give us a couple of minutes of the Q&A time for the last element that we would like to share with you and that is that after as Mike said folks in the circle share their stories. When we have time we actually want to make sure that after each person sharing of their story that there is a collective group reflection or what we call affirmation. And when we have less time we try to get at least two or three people to share their stories and then we go into a group reflection or affirmation and these are the questions that we would ask.

What about this story or these stories touched you, inspired you, resonated with you or what elements did you hear in each of these stories that may have reflected your own experience? And so using the two stories that Mike and I have shared with you I'm wondering if we could invite you and Seth you tell me if this is possible, but I'm wondering if I could invite three people who are in our audience to actually share a quick one to two minute reflection on affirmation back to us based on what you have heard from Mike and I in two of our stories. What touched you? What inspired you? What resonated with you? Are there elements in our stories that you heard that reflect your own experiences? Three people reflect back or affirm. Maybe one to two minutes each. Any instructions I should give? Do people raise their hands or how do we invite participation?

Tia: We can do that. Okay. And they invite you here and they work once to say anything first and go onto others.

Mee: Yes. That's good.

Seth: I think we should have a raised hand.

Tia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mee: I think we have a raised hand.

Tia: We do.

Mike: Someone invited you to talking.

Gail: Maybe they invite email I guess.

Seth: I think we have this person. JPJ.

Tia: [inaudible 01:01:07].

Mee: So JPJ, we're going to invite you to reflect. How about Shanice Campbell?

Gail: We surprised our technical folks.

Mee: We sure did.

Tia: I mean that wasn't here.

Mee: We're trying to, but yes.

Tia: But if we don't get it to come through we certainly encourage you to share amongst yourselves.

Seth: Make sure that you should it.

Mee: How about Sheila?

Seth: You could switch positions based on where it is in the chat section.

Mee: Yeah. In this chat section would be welcome. Absolutely and anybody in our room here want to share our response.

Tia: I'm going to jump in because [crosstalk 01:02:28].

Mee: Alright. I know you can.

Tia: There were a couple of things in both of the stories that Mike and Mee Moua shared with us are one with the tradition, of the Southern Traditional heritage that actually touched me very personally that with my background and where I grew up in the south in Virginia. That was very powerful to me and then the connection between the difference in the people that you date and you engage with because when I was growing up I was- I would date people of a different race and it was not very welcomed in my family and the struggles that I had with my father who has since deceased all that particular part. That I was able to relate with that.

And Mee Moua when you were talking about the people who spat at you and your initial anger. I remember a time when my sister and I were at the mall and our car broke down and instead of people helping us they called us slurs and was very negative and had the anger and the level of wanting to do something at that particular time I immediately was able to connect with that feeling and the power of that. That connection was right there.

Mee: Thank Tia. Thank you for sharing and it just illustrates- I'll imagine and I wanted to just summarize. You've got 25 people in a circle, you've deliberately designed it so that they are different and unique in their own right. You've paired them up throughout the day. They've received a prompt that has some relevance to their work or their community or their challenge. They've shared these intimate stories with one another. Ideally they have captured the essence of those stories with the larger group and the larger group has given positive affirming feedback to everyone.

You leave there as if you had this shower of love and understanding essentially and that's some of the- That's the nature of the experience. We've tried in this to capture the nuts and bolts of it, but we want you to see it more as a symphony that all plays together and you get caught up in the harmony of the humanity that emerges. Now, that doesn't mean that it's soft and fluffy and feel good only, but it's transformational in a sense that you've expanded the circle of people who simply know that the fallacy of a hierarchy of human value is a lie and no lie can live forever.

And as we do this were live forever. I meant to say. And as we do this work we expand the circle of people who get that completely and who are willing to create an America that no longer embodies and flex that fallacy and they're more willing to do the work because they have a deeper trust in one another. And one of our practitioners is Rob Corcoran and he's in Virginia and he frames all of this work as building trust. We think that this circle process helps to accelerate the pace for building trust and we don't want to oversimplify, but we've seen it work and we invite you to participate in it.

Tia: Thank you. Many people have shared through story [crosstalk 01:06:01].

Gail: Oh great.

Tia: ... Through the webinar chat.

Mee: Alright. Thank you for sharing.

Gail: Thank you for sharing. And I want to thank Mike and Mee Moua and Tia and we're going to now hear your questions and the responses if you have some.

Tia: Yes. Thank you so much. We do. We actually have several questions that we want to get to and thank you all three of you for being wonderful facilitators this afternoon. The first one that came in early on was about the initial invitation and the strategies and Gail I know that you said that is very important for people from similar groups to invite others within their circles to join to every invitation to come to the group. There was a question about- So how did- What are the strategies for that initial invitation to that person? [crosstalk 01:06:47]. We get that person there before they invite others to those circles or

what are some possible strategies for that because we all know that there are those that maybe first to this.

Gail: Well I can tell you from our experience there are people in your community and your university town on your campus who care about this work. And so you reach out to the known leaders and sit down with them and let them know your intention, let them know your engagement in this national process and you ask them to support you in this work. And if you get five people and you probably will then you say, "Who isn't here that should be here?" Collectively you ask that question who's not represented in the room? And then you ask each one of them to help broaden that circle so that you do have enough people to do the outreach.

One of the strategy- An additional strategy is what I think the American Library Association, the Independent Sector have done, which is that if you are having annual conference or an annual meeting a good way to introduce folks to the idea or the experience of the racial healing circle and always with the caveat that it's not a full circle, but it's an introductory circle is to offer it as a concurrent session at a conference. And even with the restriction on time of a 90 minute introductory circle I can tell you and I know Jodie and mainly on Nicole you can attest to this that just even in that 90 minutes people feel like they've had this transformative experience where they're deeply connected to the people in the circle with them and always lots of questions, lots of follow up. How do we do this? How do we do a racial healing circle in our community?

And so sometimes talking about it is important. The personal invitation is always important and sometimes we have to create opportunities for people to be introduced to it. There's nothing like going through an experience and wanting more that actually invitees deeper conversation about, "How do I take this and do the real thing?"

Mike: I would also make the point that at the conferences where we've done this even though people were not sure what they were getting into there's been standing room only. I wouldn't say standing room actually. We've had to turn people away because our limit of 25 people to a group. That's happened in every case turning people away and in the times when we've done these 45 minute sessions with 300 people even then it's just the barest essentials of a racial healing circle. Barest introductions. We've had people who left there feeling different. Feeling in some way transformed.

Now I think it's important to make the point you can't do this once even in a three to five hour racial healing circles. These have to be done over and over again what we're trying to do is transform the myth that has existed in this country for 400 years. But in every experience we've had the responses have just been incredible.

Gail: Other questions?

Tia: Yes. So that actually answered- You answered two because we have another one about the demonstration and a larger function that you mentioned that you're wonderful. You all did that. Thank you. There's another question on tips on racial healing circles with your internal staff because you know each other so well.

Gail: We've done those by invitation of organizations who want to do it and I think that sometimes we have found that people are surprised that they come into the circle with a perception that they know each other well and yet the process, I mean I always say I trust the process. The process is designed for people to share heart stories and have heart connections. And even in situations where people perceive that they know each other well people are tremendously moved by the revelations and the heart connections that they make in the circle.

And so again I trust the process and the process, particularly for groups we think who know each other well it is especially important to pay attention to the pairing of the dyads, but it's also especially important to think and do a lot of the prep work around the prompt or the reflection question because again that will get into the deep heart sharing and the revelations that come through.

Mike: Yeah and I would add to that. Mee Moua and I have co-facilitated a number of racial healing circles together and we've known each other for probably 15 or 20 years and I learn something new about her every single time. When I heard the story about the baseball bats it was a revelation to me and I had no idea of the challenges that she confronted. Now, I did in some intellectual sense understand the challenges she confronted as an immigrant, but I had no clue beyond the intellectual knowledge of the challenges she really confronted, so it has brought us closer together I think.

Even though we've known each other for a long time and have worked together in several different settings, when we co-facilitate we learn more about each other.

Tia: We have a number of questions to get through in the last 15 minutes. I'm going to just do rapid fire here.

Gail: Okay.

Tia: Can you give some examples of how to keep folks in the heart space during a circle?

Gail: Could you maybe read a couple two or three questions at time?

Tia: Sure. Okay. That was the question about keep folks in the heart space. The other one is if you have eight students attending a book club. So they have the teacher, myself. Are we able to do a healing circle with 10 people or if not

should they invite students and teachers? The next one is if the purpose of the approach of the racial healing circles are not to deal with issues of race, but to lay the foundation for conversations about racism how do you develop prompts like the one that has been discussed that will get people to think about those topics? I'll stop at those three if you want to address. Then we'll get to the next.

Gail: Well I think and we'll move back and forth I'm sure. The heart space is facilitated by the nature of the prompt as well as the emphasis on the story.

Tia: Okay.

Gail: The story is from one's life experience and therefore it touches memories and the language in the prompt focuses on feeling. Now, the co-facilitators can reiterate that as they open it up and the two people in the pair can help prompt each other to stay in that space or the head space is reflected through analytic terms and sort of stepping back saying- But if you really tell them your story it's hard to do that from other than embodied experience for the heart space. That would be one emphasis there.

Yes you can do a group of 10. Ideally you have more, but I'll just be short and say yes you could do a group of 10. You want it to be an even number so that you could certainly have pairs and the co-facilitators for sure. Now this last question I don't- You want to contextualize the *raison d'être*. You want to say, "This is why we're doing this." What we are doing is focusing on our common humanity, which counters the fallacy of a hierarchy of human value or racism. You're doing this work to demonstrate and to reveal and to experience how absurd the notion of racism is.

It is not- It is about racism. I don't want you to leave this thinking that it's not. But it's not an abstract theoretical conversation. It's an experience that allows you to really deepen your own belief in the absurdity of racial hierarchy. That gives you stronger muscles and stronger capacity, commitment and indeed authenticity as you move forward to you address issues of discrimination and other realities in the community. But it's important to make sure that you're doing this work for a purpose and the purpose is the experience of connecting at a level that is deeper than the superficiality of racial hierarchy.

Tia: Well someone just asked, "Then do you spend time during the session intentionally defining racism, but based on what you just said. You would approach it in a way that is..."

Gail: You have established from the beginning that this is a racial healing circle that is part of the THRT work and you've established that work's purpose is to jettison the false ideology of a taxonomy of human value to get rid of the notion of racism and to build our capacity to do that. So you set that up and begin.

Mee: In our family we have a favorite quote and it's a quote from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King who says that "darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can." And for me this work is about that. It's actually about driving out darkness with light and addressing hate with deep love. And so when people say, "You do the racial healing circle, but nowhere do we have an intense discussion about anti-racism or hate in the conversation." And what I say is, "We are doing the work of likeness and of love." And that deals very directly with it. It's just not the traditional way, we blend how to do it. But this is the way to get to transformation is that [inaudible 01:18:22].

Mike: I have another Dr. King quote that I like to use and often in introductions. "We've learned to swim the sea like fish. We've learned to fly the air like birds. But we haven't learned how to walk the Earth as brothers and sisters." And that tends to set the context as well.

Mee: And that's exactly what I think people are struggling with that are asking some questions right now. They're saying, "Well how do you work with groups of individuals that are in the midst of experiencing racial tension being able to come from this place of light and hope and love when you're trying to bring those people together?" And the question is maybe this is out of place for the healing circles as more, but that's a different conversation we're having. I want you- If you could take a minute to address that as I go through and I'll answer more questions.

Gail: So we used to have visuals that describe this work as two separate types of work. We used to say there were two pillars. It was the pillar of structural racism and the pillar of racial healing and we evolved to get away from that and we now think of it as a continued one. And where you enter is shaped by the reality of the experience. So you may enter a conversation in your community about an incident, but you understand that in order to really deal with that incident you need a healing circle. You need a healing experience so that you can let the air out. You can create an environment that is grounded in fundamental truth. When you say Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation the fundamental truth of which we speak is our common humanity. Our equity that we deserve to be treated equally and we want to nurture- It's like a flower that only grows if it gets enough water and it gets enough light.

And so this experience is helping to provide that light and it's a circle. So you may enter into it because something happened on your campus, but you make a space for this to occur and the group of people who've been through that experience they then go and they deal with a definition or a challenge that they decided that they're going to take on, but they do it from a different place. I'll give it a quick illustration. After the Ferguson verdict you had young leaders doing die-ins all around the country and part of me was a little disturbed because they were replicating the sit-in strategy. But what they failed to understand was that the sit-ins were to mimic if you will the desired states.

Die-ins were in fact doing just the opposite. They were reinforcing the worst. The [inaudible 01:21:31], right? And so being an element or an agent for transformational change has to focus on the desired state. It has to focus- The work that you do has to take you where you want to go. It can't be 90% immersed in what we don't want. Even the symbolism of it. Over the years I've been blessed to design many interventions and processes, but the guiding energy behind this approach is moving people into the experience of the desired state. The desired state is connection and affirmation and love and appreciation for our common humanity. From that strength place we can then together tackle the things we need to tackle.

Mike:

Yeah. Let me provide another illustration of that. We were in Charlottesville a number of months ago to do a racial healing circle for the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and we learned that after the events of last summer in Charlottesville that there were a number of gatherings of groups to discuss what happened. And what happened in those groups is the tensions erupted and people were shouting at each other and insulting each other and rather than accomplishing anything in some ways to reference what Gail said earlier about do no harm, in fact those gatherings did do some harm because they didn't solve the problem. They didn't get people any closer to figuring out a way forward. They simply allowed people to get their anger out.

Now I'm not- I think there are a number of strategies that are useful, but what the prerequisite to finding common ground, the prerequisite to helping people move forward together from a place of common humanity these racial healing circles where we learn to see ourselves in one another where we learn to embrace our common humanity. If we can create that foundation first then moving forward to dialogs to dealing with specific issues to trying to find common ground on difficult issues becomes a lot easier because we're coming from a place of mutual love and respect as opposed to a place of anger.

Tia:

Well this is- Unfortunately this is going to be our last set of questions. Then what we will do is compile the additional remaining questions and send them to you and then we can send them out. But for the next round of questions we have, this is a larger question so I think that we will need to put this on with the response about evaluation practices and metrics for racial healing circles. That one I think you can probably need to address afterwards because of what we addressed. Here's this one is, "What if someone wanting to discuss something that affirms their identity spends more time reinforcing their privilege and their feelings of persecution and exclusion in a way that actually may ascribe someone else's hurt. Can you move from a place of reconciliation and affirmation to thoughtful confrontation in the healing circle?"

Okay. So the question is about, "If you have people who really don't know each other in the healing circle is there lasting quality to that experience in a one-time only group? What is that ..." Let me see. Let me get one more- To get one more question is before we go. How can the co-facilitators help participants

think of a relevant personal story and help them express their story in an articulate, precise and succinct way without rambling or getting off topic?"

Okay. I thought you would like that one. That's the last one. For everyone else we will- I'm sorry. We're not going to be able to get to all of your questions, but we will definitely catalog them and send them to Gail and Mike and Mee Moua and then we will send that back out to everyone if that's okay.

Gail: [inaudible 01:26:20] discussion about the next steps.

Tia: Yes because we want to get next steps. I have just a quick conversation about that before we leave and know we are running out of time. We want to address some of these questions.

Gail: Okay. I'll quickly say that because we are talking about an experience and a process. Most of the evaluation metrics and approaches will be qualitative in nature, but because it's part of something larger we'll also be looking at the quantitative levels of participation and engagement. The metrics of diversity. Those things that we've identified as the hallmarks of a section of practice. We'll be looking to see if those were adhered to, but again that's a deeper conversation.

Now, depending on the design of the prompt we've never had someone hurt another person by pushing their identity experience of privilege. We haven't had that experience. That's a "what if" question and we'll have to- I think if you set it up right and you have the facilitators and you sat and you set up your agreements properly and you truly have created a context that speaks to the principles I don't think the risk of that is very high. If you're really coming from a heart space you're in that space with another person. You're dialoguing and you are aware of how what you're saying is affecting the other person. You're engaging and it's your story. It's your sharing.

Mike: The touchstones at the beginning are really crucial and having everybody buy into those.

Gail: Now in terms of question number three about who really don't know each other we were amazed. The reason we developed this process was part of our predecessor in terms of we want a- We did a five year initiative called America Healing and our goal was to create an expanded community and practice. What we found was that people built relationships and connected at deeper levels, and even if they didn't do a lot of those enough of those emerged to achieve our goal of expanding the network of participation. And it's okay if you never see that person again. You have heard something about the experience of a Native American or an Asian American, pacific islander or a native Hawaiian or an African American that you might never have had the opportunity to hear and understand and feel from a heart space. What was that last one?

Tia: Let's see. Affirming your identity.

Gail: Yes. Affirming- No that was number two.

Tia: That was number two.

Gail: The last one had to do with controlling the amount of time and keeping people from rambling.

Tia: Yes. Thank you.

Gail: Yes. That has to do with the efficiency and effectiveness of the prompt and the timekeeping of the process. When people are in dyads they have a certain amount of time to share their story. When the co-facilitators, model it they adhere to those same time constraints and you do have agreements and you have a process that's printed and public for everyone to see. You actually hand out sheets to people so you keep each other on track.

Mike: And one of the- One of our colleagues was in my then racial healing circles, Monica Haslip has a little bell. We wanted the co-facilitators who keeps time for each section. When time is up she rings that little bell and people respect that.

Tia: I think you address this question earlier, but we had it and I just want to make sure that we get this clear with everyone. Using the terminology of racial healing circles whether or not is it perfect for people to actually use that terminology? Can they change the terminology? That was- You addressed that earlier, but there is still another question about that so I want to make sure that we have clarity in that before we leave.

Gail: Well people can say and do any number of things. If you are part of this process of Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation the second core component of the work is racial healing. And so you want to say racial healing circle. Now I know some of you are afraid that people don't want to come to that, they will be turned off by that. They'd much rather come to a diversity circle or a-

Tia: A listening circle.

Gail: A listening circle or an inclusion circle. I think that's choosing to escape the purpose for which this effort has been designed. So from the standpoint of participation in this effort these are racial healing circles. Is that helpful?

Tia: Yes that's very helpful.

Mike: Let me add as a white guy here that I think too often in my experience people will find any reason that they can to avoid talking about race. Talking about race is difficult. Talking about racism is difficult. It raises emotions. I think this process is a beautiful process for dealing with it in a positive and affirming way,

but we miss something when we allow people to call it something that it isn't. We need to deal with racism and we need to be upfront about doing that. And the other thing that I'd say is despite the fear and I understand the fear that people will be turned off every time we have done this we have had to turn people away. So I think the evidence is that people are hungry for this sort of thing and I think while I understand the fear and I had some of that fear in the beginning I have become convinced that fear is misplaced that in fact people are hungry to talk about this and are hungry to find ways to bring us together.

Tia: Thank you. Thank you all. I mean it's been so powerful and touching and moving and informative and very helpful to us as we move forward in the TRHT efforts. So thank you so much for joining Gail-

Gail: Thank you also.

Tia: ... And staying. And Mike thank you. And I just want to say thank you. You can't see them, but they're in the room to our AAC&U project staff. Some of them are listening at their desk. They're also to- Seth I mean from our IT office thank you so much for being the behind the scenes person and Veda, and Siah and Connor and Jacinta and I mean from just a whole group thank you all so very much. We will address, we will catalog the questions that we have right now for you and then share them with Gail and Mee Moua and Mike and the one of the things that we're going to do is we're as you participated in this webinar we're going to send you a link to a quick survey for you to fill out about the webinar. I mean it's literally going to take you probably under a couple of minutes to do this, but also to let us know as a group here whether or not you're interested in additional support for racial healing circles and for us to know that.

We need you to fill out the questionnaire that you're going to get so that we can move forward with next steps. Okay. Thank you so much for joining us this afternoon. Have a wonderful evening. Thank you.

Gail: Thank you

Jodie: Thank you.

Mee: Thank you.

Mike: Thank you.

Mee: Thanks everybody. Bye.

Gail: Bye.

Jodie: Bye.