

National Day of Racial Healing

By: Erin Doan (*she/her*), VP, Administration, Middletown Campus

Happy new year! As we emerge from the hustle and bustle of year-end holiday celebrations, we have an opportunity to reflect on the past and think about goals and opportunities for the coming year. We're all aware of Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Day being celebrated in January. The office is closed and it's a day to contemplate the Civil Rights Movement in this country and the impact MLK's teachings have had on our country.

A newer, and lesser known day of recognition is the National Day of Racial Healing. This annual observance takes place on the Tuesday following MLK Day – when racial healing activities happen in homes, schools, businesses, and communities across the United States with the goal of creating a more just and equitable future for our children. This year, the National Day of Racial Healing is celebrated on Tuesday, January 16.



What is racial healing?

Racial healing is the experience shared by people when they speak openly and hear the truth about past wrongs and the negative impacts created by individual and systemic racism. It is the work we all can do that leads to community, organizational and systems transformation. It is an ongoing process that restores individuals and communities to wholeness, repairs the damage caused by racism, facilitates trust, builds authentic relationships, and bridges divides.



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.

Racial healing promotes racial equity, the condition where people of all races and ethnicities can live in a society where a person's racial identity does not determine how they are treated nor predict life outcomes. Achieving racial equity requires both systems transformation and racial healing.

To observe this day and promote racial healing in your community, attend a local event or virtual activity that gives you the opportunity to hear the personal experiences of others. You can also check out YouTube videos or podcasts that feature the stories of individuals facing racism in their lived experiences. Plan or join an event that raises awareness of the need for racial healing in our communities, or advocate for policy and system changes that promote equity for all.

Last year, NBC News created a 14-part digital series titled, “Changing the Narrative of Communities Across America.” The series not only shed light on how communities around the country are battling system racism, climate injustice, and economic inequity, but also showcased how they are working together to change the narrative in their hometowns. [Click here](#) to watch any of the episodes.