



Methods of collective healing for humanitarian leaders

Cultural practices create a sense of community and belonging. In instances where people were forcibly displaced or their freedom to practice their culture was oppressed, this can be an incredibly healing and liberating act, and vital for protecting people from cultural genocide. Cultural practices may include:

- Preparing and eating food
- Dancing
- Singing
- Speaking mother tongues
- Wearing traditional clothing
- Practicing traditional holidays
- Creating traditional arts or crafts

Reflection question: What are some of your favorite cultural practices?

Collective rituals like prayer, sharing a meal together, holidays, playing a sport or a game, or even just ritualistically spending time together is a great way to cultivate spaces of belonging for people. With time comes trust, and participating in rituals can help people feel like they are safe and supported in their healing journey. Just the act of creating a ritual in of itself can be healing.

Reflection questions:

- Do you have any collective rituals that you partake in?
- What collective rituals might we be able to establish within this organization to help promote collectivity?

Storytelling allows us to share our personal and collective histories with others. They are vitally important for our spiritual wellbeing and are a communication tool that we can use to connect and relate to one another. Storytelling is one of the oldest practices in humanity; we are all products of storytelling.

"Shame dies when stories are told in safe spaces." - Ann Voskamp



Reflection questions:

- Can you think of a time where you heard a story and felt a sense of comfort, security, or acceptance because of it?
- How can we use storytelling as a way of promoting a supportive community and collective healing within our organization?

Activism or confronting the injustice that caused the individual or collective wound can be very liberating and healing for people. Many individuals and communities gain a sense of comfort from addressing a problem, knowing that it won't injure others the same way it injured them. Helping others is also a way to collectively heal because we connect with other people and cultivate a sense of meaning in our own lives.

Reflection question:

- What are some ways we can address injustices that may have caused physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual wounds to our community or community members?