



Guiding Principles

Healing our communities is not for the faint of heart. It requires teams of committed individuals who are prepared to work together over a long period of time, and who are willing to model the change and the new relationships that they are calling for in the wider community. Three key guiding principles can help connect communities: honest conversation, personal responsibility and acts of reconciliation.

Honest Conversation Everyone at the Table

Open and inclusive dialogues are at the heart of this approach. These dialogues are initiated and sustained by individuals of every viewpoint and participants are drawn from all parts of the community. The commitment to these dialogues often leads to new partnerships.

In honest conversations, everyone who has a stake in the movement towards constructive change comes to the table and remains engaged in the process of transformation. This means moving beyond the comfort zone of our own isolated experience. Most of us are more comfortable interacting with those who share our social background, political views and cultural values. But no constructive change will occur as long as we only deal with those with whom we agree and demonize those with whom we disagree.

In honest conversation, everyone is welcome to participate—even those from whom we feel alienated. People are more likely to respond positively to being approached as potential allies than as enemies. Honest conversation aims to encourage the best qualities in each person rather than confirm the worst.

Business, education, religious organizations, cultural institutions and the media all have vital roles to play in this conversation. Government leaders must be engaged in a bi-partisan approach.

Honest conversation allows each participant to share his or her personal experiences and to be open to hearing the experiences of others. It illuminates the realities of how racial, economic and cultural divisions impact our communal life and it can open the way to common action.