

Breaking the Cycle: Healing Race Through Immersive Praxis and Collective Transformation

An Executive Summary of the Healing Race Portal Research Project:
Capturing Six Years of Longitudinal Impact, Process, and Transformation

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Healing Race Portal (HRP) is a global initiative designed to address and mitigate the harmful impacts of racialization through a unique praxis of reflection and action. Over six years, HRP has developed a scalable and replicable platform that engages participants through tech-augmented experiences at sites of racial wounding. These experiences — combining a 4-step SelfTalk Storytelling™ (ST2™) and Embodied Active Resonance Listening™ (EAR™) methodology, plus pOint™ meditation and pOint Praxis™ — allow participants to metabolize the historical, generational, and epigenetic trauma caused by racialization. Biometric studies show that while conversations about race typically elevate stress, HRP's methodology reduces it, affirming the potential for long-term racial trauma healing on a massive scale.

HRP Mission

HRP's mission is to foster critical awareness, heal racial trauma, and empower communities globally. It combines community-driven storytelling technology with a carefully designed methodology to help individuals reconnect with their human dignity and a sense of belonging. The intervention creates pathways for healing by engaging deep-seated memories of racial harm, helping participants process trauma stored in their bodies. HRP is accessible and portable, with its intended impact extending to key prospective sites of racial trauma worldwide, such as Gorée Island, South Africa, the Sydney Jewish Museum in Australia, and Israel/Palestine.

Research and Evaluation

Research and evaluation have been central to HRP's growth, validating its ability to foster emotional healing and social transformation. Using mixed methods, including biometric and narrative studies, the research captures the intervention's immediate and long-term effects on participants. The data indicates that HRP's methodology significantly reduces stress and promotes critical consciousness of racialization. It has informed its adaptation from a five-day format to a two-day or even four-hour session, broadening its accessibility and impact.

Key Research Findings:

- **Reduced Stress:** Biometric data collected from OURA rings showed a significant decrease in stress levels among participants during and after HRP sessions, particularly during Embodied Active Resonance Listening™ (EAR™) exercises.
- **Shift in Understanding of Racialization:** Before HRP, 49% of participants identified as Black, 29% as White, 18% as Mixed-race, and 5% as Asian. After engaging, participants demonstrated a deeper understanding of racialization as a system of oppression that impacts individuals and society.
- **Increased Self-Awareness:** Participants reported significant shifts in their self-perception and a stronger connection to their cultural identities.
- **Empowerment and Action:** A majority of participants (72%) reported feeling more empowered to address racial injustice in their communities following their participation in HRP.

HRP's goal is to transform sites of racial trauma into environments of healing, empowering individuals and communities to process and overcome racialization's pervasive effects. By focusing on personal and collective healing, HRP envisions a future where racial differences are celebrated and people work together for a more just and equitable world. The ongoing action research process will ensure that HRP continues to evolve, bringing lasting transformation to participants globally.

HRP Theory of Change

Healing Race Portal (HRP) envisions a future where spaces once defined by racial trauma are transformed into environments of healing, growth, and empowerment. Our work focuses on collaborating with individuals and communities in their efforts to heal from the harmful effects of racism by instigating a reconnection with their shared humanity. This process fosters both personal and collective transformation.

Key Objectives:

- **Mitigate the harmful effects of racialized worldviews:** HRP provides tools to help people recognize shared humanity beneath visible differences like skin tone and culture.
- **Address the isolation and trauma caused by racism:** HRP supports participants in healing from racial trauma by creating spaces that facilitate emotional and physical processing.
- **Promote collective empowerment:** By addressing systemic racism, HRP helps communities come together to celebrate differences and envision a future built on equity and connection.

How We Work

- **Transform trauma into healing:** HRP partners with communities to create safe environments, turning cultural institutions and sites of racial trauma into places for healing, emotional processing, and equitable engagement.
- **Disarm, disrupt, deconstruct, and design:** These four phases guide participants through a process of dismantling conditioned responses to racism, challenging oppressive narratives, and imagining more just and inclusive futures.
 - **Disarm:** Help people let go of defensiveness and automatic responses tied to racial conditioning.
 - **Disrupt:** Challenge ideas of superiority and inferiority ingrained in people's self-identity.
 - **Deconstruct:** Break down harmful beliefs and systems that uphold racism.
 - **Design:** Create a more healed, connected body – personal and collective – where we shape our lives to achieve equality and understanding.

Long-Term Vision

HRP aims to reshape how society views and engages with race by turning spaces traditionally associated with trauma into areas for learning and healing. By fostering a sense of shared humanity and connection, HRP participants move from personal healing to taking action on racial equity. Through this work, we help create a world where diversity is celebrated, and everyone can engage fully across racial and cultural lines.

HRP is a transformative experience that blends personal healing with social action, promoting lasting change in people and communities.

Accessible, Scalable, Global Model

The HRP model is adaptable and has reached over 1,000 participants worldwide. Through partnerships with institutions and communities, HRP uses place-based immersion and embodied practices to catalyze healing, combining technology with historical reflection to facilitate truth, reconciliation, and repair on a global scale.

Healing Race Portal (HRP) Project Description

The HRP intervention is a structured approach designed to heal the deep divisions caused by racialization and promote both personal and collective transformation. It focuses on two main components that foster healing:

- **Catalyst Site** – A space for immersive experiences tied to the historical and collective trauma of racialization.
- **Instructional Methodology** – A carefully designed set of practices that guide participants through healing.

Core Practices

HRP uses four key practices to help participants process racial trauma and promote healing. These methods are designed to interlock and work together, offering a pathway for both personal and collective transformation:

- **Collective Reflection** – A practice where participants reflect on shared experiences of racial trauma, fostering understanding and connection.
- **SelfTalk Storytelling™ (ST2™)** – A storytelling process where participants vocalize their internal narratives about race, helping to externalize and process those stories and memories.
- **Embodied Active Resonance Listening™ (EAR™)** – A somatic-based practice guiding the listeners whose attention, affect and careful witnessing are critical to the process of surfacing and releasing racial trauma stored in the bodies of both tellers and listeners.
- **pOint™ Meditation** – A mindfulness technique used to ground participants in the present moment, easing the emotional intensity of trauma work.

These methods form a cohesive process that moves participants from experiencing trauma to healing and social repair.

HRP Priming

The HRP Priming Session is a preparatory practice before participants engage with the catalyst site. It helps individuals:

- Drop into awareness and their bodies.
- Situate personal experiences within the broader context of racial trauma.
- Build emotional and cognitive tools to process intense memories that may arise.

Civil Return Walk

The Civil Return Walk is a guided walk through sites historically tied to racial trauma. This practice encourages:

- Reflection on emotional, physical and sensory reactions to the environment.
- An embodied awareness of the shared collective trauma.
- Movement from personal isolation to a sense of collective unity.

HRP Catalyst Site

The Catalyst Site is a tech-enhanced platform that immerses participants in the history of racial trauma through:

- **Spatial Photogrammetry and 3D Photography** – These technologies allow participants to explore locations tied to racial trauma in an immersive way, reflecting on their personal and collective histories.

This experience helps surface and release stored trauma, creating space for healing and transformation.

HRP Project Evolution Timeline

- **2017:** The project began with the publication of *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*, a book exploring the intersection of race and spirituality and the path to liberation.
- **2018–Present:** HRP hosted several five-day retreats and camps in Colorado, New York, and British Columbia, Canada, engaging participants in healing and reflection on racial trauma.
- **2020–2022:** One-day retreats and healing circles were held across various U.S. locations, offering shorter yet impactful sessions for participants.
- **2023:** HRP was piloted at the Environmental Grantmakers Association in Montgomery, AL. This event marked the shift from a five-day retreat to a four-hour session designed to reach larger and more diverse audiences.
- **Summer 2024:** HRP evolved into a two-day retreat and action research project, integrating biometric feedback using OURA rings to track participants' physiological responses. The group included 11 diverse stakeholders, each with varying levels of prior experience with HRP.
- **Fall 2024:** HRP was featured at Transformative Change's first Being Black Healing Black event, hosting 38 attendees, 16 of whom participated in the HRP Action Research Study.

Research on the Effectiveness and Impact of HRP

Over the past six years, 1,066 people have participated in Healing Race Portal, with 107 involved in key research studies. These studies include a longitudinal study, two HRP+OURA Ring pilot studies, and an evaluation focusing on Black and mixed-race Black participants. Their ages ranged from 25 to 81, with an average age of 51, and the participants came from 37 U.S. states and 9 countries.

Key demographics of the 107 participants involved in our key research:

Black: 49%

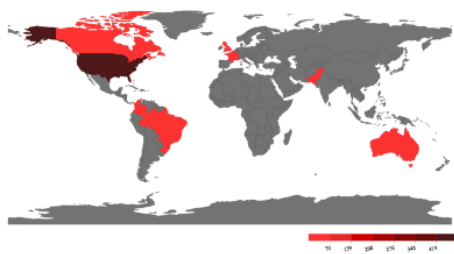
White: 29%

Mixed-race: 18% (including Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, Multiracial Latinx, Latinx-White, Afro-Latinx, and Indigenous-Black people)

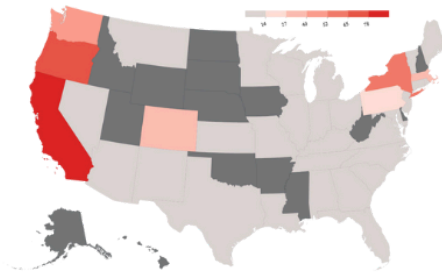
Asian: 5%

These studies offer insights into HRP's impact across diverse backgrounds

Sum of frequency by Country



Sum of frequency by State



^map distribution of 1,066 participants worldwide who have engaged with HRP across the United States, as of 2024.

Research Methodology

Healing Race Portal uses a combination of methods to assess its impact on healing racial trauma and reshaping personal and collective narratives of race. This includes interviews, reflection circles, storytelling, and biometric data from OURA rings to evaluate short- and intermediate-term effects. HRP's adaptable design ensures it stays responsive to participants' needs through ongoing feedback. The program measures emotional, social, and physical outcomes through community evaluations, surveys, and biometric data.

Data Collection and Impact: From 2017 to 2024, HRP gathered data through interviews and reflections, adding biometric data in 2024 using OURA rings to track stress levels during sessions. The study emphasizes how participants' emotional and physical states shift, focusing on the broader healing impacts.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Key Finding #1: Shifting Perspectives on Racialization and Healing

Racialization: Before HRP, participants generally viewed racialization as a system that assigns value based on race. After HRP, 87% of participants recognized racialization as a deeply ingrained trauma with significant emotional and psychological harm.

Healing Race:

- Before HRP, 62% of participants saw healing race as an individual process.

- After HRP, 84% viewed healing as a communal, action-oriented approach that involves reclaiming identity and engaging with their communities.

Key Finding #2: The Transformative Power of the Catalyst Site

The catalyst site is central to HRP's process, offering a powerful space where participants engage deeply with the historical and emotional dimensions of racialized trauma. Through immersive experiences that highlight the legacies of racial oppression, participants encounter emotional and sensory breakthroughs, which often lead to the release of pent-up grief, anger, and discomfort. This shared experience is especially significant for Black participants, who describe the site as a place of communal validation and support, fostering a sense of belonging and collective processing of trauma.

Participants report experiencing a form of embodied healing at the site, likening the emotional release to a cleansing process. The site allows them to confront internalized narratives imposed by society, helping them reconnect with their ancestral histories and the resilience of those who came before them. These experiences enable participants to access a deeper, more authentic sense of self, free from the constraints of societal expectations tied to race.

The catalyst site's transformative power lies in its ability to facilitate both individual and collective healing. By engaging with the complexities of racial trauma in a space that encourages vulnerability and emotional release, participants experience personal empowerment and a profound shift in how they relate to their identity and community. This space becomes a conduit for healing that transcends personal reflection, offering a path toward collective healing and solidarity.

Key Finding #3: Initiating Awareness and Transformation Through HRP's Sequential Methodology

HRP's step-by-step approach moves participants from initial awareness of racialized trauma to profound personal and collective transformation. This structured process includes several key elements:

- *Priming for Awareness*: Condensed into a 2-hour session, priming helps participants emotionally connect to personal and collective histories, preparing them for deeper engagement with the catalyst site.
- *Collective Reflection*: These sessions create a communal space for processing personal and historical identities, promoting individual and collective healing through shared understanding.
- *Narrative Reconstruction*: Practices like SelfTalk Storytelling (ST2) and Embodied Active Resonance Listening (EAR) allow participants to reframe personal and collective narratives, helping them confront trauma and reclaim agency and their humanity.

- *Somatic Practices*: Physical activities like rocking, humming, and movement help release trauma stored in the body, supporting emotional and physical healing.

This comprehensive approach prepares participants emotionally, physically, and intellectually, guiding them through transformative experiences that deepen their understanding of racialized trauma and foster healing on multiple levels.

Key Finding #4: Facilitator-Guided Reflection and Continuous Engagement

Master facilitators play a crucial role in HRP by guiding participants through structured reflection sessions that create a safe space for deep emotional exploration and healing. These sessions allow participants to process their racialized trauma while fostering a sense of community and shared healing.

Facilitators help participants connect personal experiences with broader collective narratives, providing validation and support as participants express complex emotions like grief, anger, and pain. Their guidance encourages vulnerability and strengthens interpersonal connections, allowing participants to engage more fully in their journey. The facilitators' ability to create intentional, safe spaces is critical to the success of HRP's collective healing impact.

Key Finding #5: Cumulative Effects on Identity and Self-Perception

HRP's methodology leads to profound shifts in participants' identities and self-perception through deep self-reflection and transformation. Participants gain a new awareness of their racialized experiences and a transformed sense of self, feeling emotional release and empowerment.

Participants report confronting racial injustices with a mix of comfort and anger, recognizing that healing is an ongoing process. Over time, storytelling and self-reflection enable participants to evolve their narratives, fostering deeper compassion, forgiveness, and personal growth. This ongoing process helps them embrace their evolving identities, understanding that healing is continuous and transformative.

Key Finding #6: Redesign and Pathways to Action

HRP encourages participants to shift from personal healing to community-focused engagement, leading to self-actualization and broader social change. Through HRP's theory of change, participants critically examine how whiteness, supremacy, and domination appear in their lives, prompting them to live more authentically and align with values of liberation, accountability, and collective well-being.

This transformation goes beyond personal growth, motivating participants to engage in social justice work, join community groups, and embrace a values-driven life. They emphasize the

importance of continuous reflection and action, recognizing that healing race is an ongoing process that shapes their relationships, work, and social justice efforts.

Key Finding #7: Biometric Feedback Highlights Stress Dynamics and Healing in Post-HRP Period

Early results and data from wearable biometric devices – OURA rings, specifically – captured during SelfTalk Storytelling (ST2), indicated heightened stress responses, while Embodied Active Resonance Listening (EAR) helped mitigate these stress reactions. In the six to eight days following the HRP experience, data show that participants experienced an intensification of stress followed by relief from stress. Biometric measures like sleep quality, restfulness, and resting heart rate suggest a significant psycho-physiological release during this period. Participants' journal entries reflect similar themes of transition, racial trauma, and healing, with many using body-centered practices like breathwork and movement to manage stress. These findings show how HRP catalyzed emotional and physical release, bridging mental, emotional, and physiological healing.

Discussion

Healing Race Portal has significantly addressed racial trauma and fostered personal and communal healing. Through a structured methodology that incorporates historical reflection, narrative reconstruction, and embodied practices, HRP effectively helps participants confront and process deep-seated racial wounds. The analysis highlights how HRP successfully achieves its goals, creating transformative experiences that disrupt internalized oppression and inspire new self-perceptions and active roles within communities.

Impact and Achievement of Goals

HRP's theory of change focuses on transforming sites of racial trauma into places of healing and empowerment. The intervention is designed to immerse participants in truthful historical narratives that confront systemic racism, and the findings show that HRP achieves this by promoting deep emotional engagement. Participants report significant shifts in their understanding of racialization, healing race, and their cultural identities.

The sequential intervention methodology—priming, catalyst site reflection, SelfTalk Storytelling (ST2), Embodied Active Resonance Listening (EAR), and pOint Meditation—guides participants through a holistic journey of racial healing. This structured approach disarms conditioned responses, fostering emotional breakthroughs and allowing participants to reclaim agency in their personal and collective lives. Facilitator-guided reflections deepen participants' understanding, helping connect personal healing to broader social contexts and actions.

Most Significant Outcomes

- **Identity transformation:** Participants reported deep shifts in their self-perception and a stronger connection to cultural roots, leading to a sense of self-actualization.
- **Community engagement:** HRP catalyzes change at the individual level and within communities. Participants often report that their HRP experiences inspire them to engage in social justice work and redesign their personal lives around equity and healing.
- **Action and Redesign:** HRP's emphasis on creating new ways of being and challenging systemic injustices generate momentum for more expansive healing. Participants leave the intervention with a heightened awareness of the need for social change and are motivated to act in their personal and professional environments.

These findings support HRP's broader mission of fostering personal and systemic racial healing, showing its potential to serve as a model for equitable, lasting social transformation.

Limitations and Areas for Improvement

The current research design presents some limitations in fully capturing the sustained impact of HRP:

- **Short-term focus:** While short-term studies effectively capture immediate emotional responses, they may not fully reflect the long-term integration of learning or sustained behavioral changes.
- **Challenges in long-term tracking:** Long-term studies can be challenging due to factors like participant retention and the influence of external events on individual experiences.

To address these limitations, future research should prioritize:

- **Developing robust long-term follow-up mechanisms,** including surveys, interviews, and other methods to track participant progress and identify long-term impacts.
- **Implementing more rigorous data analysis techniques** to better isolate the specific effects of HRP from other influences.

Furthermore, enhancing post-intervention support is crucial. Many participants expressed a desire for continued support to integrate their learnings into daily life. Suggested improvements include:

- **Developing ongoing support programs,** such as online platforms, reflection circles, or mentorship programs, to help participants maintain and deepen the practices introduced during HRP.

Conclusion

HRP has demonstrated significant potential in fostering racial healing and self-transformation. By facilitating critical consciousness, narrative reconstruction, and community-centered healing,

the program empowers participants to join with others in confronting systemic racism while fostering personal and collective liberation.

To further strengthen the program, future efforts will focus on:

- **Increasing accessibility:** Expanding outreach to diverse communities and adapting the program to reach underserved populations.
- **Enhancing long-term support:** Implementing robust post-intervention support mechanisms to maximize the impact of HRP.
- **Refining evaluation methods:** To more comprehensively capture the sustained impact of the program.

By addressing these areas, HRP can continue to evolve and serve as a powerful catalyst for personal and societal transformation, creating pathways for healing that dismantle systemic injustice and empower communities to thrive.