

Peace Principles

Guide



Prepared by Root Cuthbertson 2021; text adapted from Deborah Benham and Jon Young 2018. Diagrams used by permission.

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Origins

The names 'Connection 1st' and '8 Shields' refer to a nature-based framework, created to organise a collection of design principles, practices, and activities for deep nature connection and community-building. Since 1983, the framework has been developed by [founder - anthropologist and naturalist - Jon Young](#), his mentors and teachers, and an international community of practitioners. In 2022 Young launched the [Connection 1st membership platform](#) which now hosts much of the [previous 8 Shields material](#). The framework is organised according to the 8 compass directions, with the term 'Shield' referring to a set of related principles and practices, rather than an item of war. For example, the Sunrise Shield or 'petal' includes beginnings, newness, birth, early morning, springtime, 'new shoots', and the qualities of inspiration and welcome. While the framework originated in the northern hemisphere, in the southern hemisphere the north and south directions can flip so the framework becomes a mirror image.

Based on observations of nature and an understanding of nature-connected cultures, the framework does not derive from any one tradition. The late elder M. Norman 'Ingwe' Powell and Jon Young surveyed hundreds of children and adults to assign meaning to each of the 8 directional archetypes. Much consideration has been given to how the framework can best avoid cultural appropriation while also honouring the traditions which have inspired it.

The Peace Principles are one aspect of the Connection 1st / 8 Shields framework, intended to help support conflict resilience in groups.

Lineage of the Peace Principles

Between 1990 and 2000, Jon Young and other members of his team had a series of conversations with [Jake Swamp](#), Judy Swamp, and Mike McDonald, members of The Tree of Peace Society, and of the indigenous Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Young agreed to a treaty, similar to the [Two-Row Wampum treaty](#), which governs relations between Haudenosaunee people and non-indigenous people.



The three Peace Principles, articulated in the treaty and adopted by Young's team, are non-indigenous interpretations of concepts found in the traditional Haudenosaunee story of The Journey of the Peacemaker and the [Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace](#). A fourth principle, inspired by [the practice of ho'oponopono](#), was developed separately by Jon Young and his team in consultation with Maka Io Kalani Keualani Souza, Mahealani Henry, Ipo Torio, Kamahalo Ka'uhane, Puna Dawson, and other traditional indigenous Hawai'ian members of the [Kanuikapono Charter School](#) on Kaua'i.

A note on capitalisation. Some indigenous languages, when written or translated, have specific capitalisation conventions. Capitalisation can be used to indicate respect, relationship, personhood, or being-ness. In this document, certain terms, like 'Peace' and 'Peace Principles,' are capitalised to show respect for the original Haudenosaunee terms from which they come. In the same spirit, other terms like 'Unity', 'Good Message' and 'Healing', which are interpretations of traditional terms, even though they are not direct translations, are also capitalised.

The Peace Principles are shared here with appreciation and gratitude for the wisdom of indigenous cultures. Jon Young and the organisations he is affiliated with are committed to good relations with all indigenous peoples, including reciprocity, representation, financial, and cultural support. If your group adopts these Peace Principles, please consider making a similar commitment, and please honour the lineage of the principles.

Overview

In recent years, western medicine has begun to recognise the value of prevention in addition to treatment. The focus has begun to shift toward integrated health, well-being, nutrition, and environment; aiming to prevent disease, before illness has occurred and symptoms are present.

Similarly, the Connection 1st / 8 Shields approach to conflict resilience emphasises cultivating conditions for Peace rather than waiting until conflict resolution is needed. What conditions promote well-being, harmony, and resilience? What conditions allow conflicts to become part of a creative process, rather than potentially damaging or harmful?

What is the definition of Peace?

Peace is not simply the absence of conflict, nor a static state of being tranquil all the time. Peace is best described as a state of connection with one's self, the natural world, and other people -- resting on a foundation of inner quietness, gratitude, and other attributes of connection. Peace is the ability of an individual, a relationship, or a system to navigate conflict, difficulty, or challenge, and to come through that, ideally stronger and more connected on the other side. Peace is an ability to allow for disturbance or disruption without collapse, and is related to resilience.

What is Resilience?

The ability to experience disturbance, turbulence, or imbalance, and then return to a state of balance. Having processes and pathways to restore balance. Here are two definitions:



“The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, function, or development of that system.” – Ann Masten (2014)

“The process of harnessing resources in order to sustain well-being. A sense of hope that gives meaning to suffering and helps to link the past to the present and the future.” – Catherine Panter-Brick and J. F. Leckman (2013)

Three Levels

In 2017, after conversations with peace activist [Satish Kumar](#), the three Peace Principles were aligned with the three levels of Peace described in the Vedas and Upanishads:

- the internal (associated with an individual's body and mind)
- the physical (associated with others, including people, animals, and nature)
- the divine (associated with aspects and energies beyond typical human perception).

[An ancient Vedic tradition](#) involves invoking Peace ('Shanti') three times, so as to promote Peace at each of these three levels.

These three levels correspond to the first three principles, and to three axes of the framework. Several practices support each axis with various ways to promote Peace.

1. The Peace Axis: personal Peace.
2. The Good Message Axis: interpersonal or relational Peace.
3. The Unity Axis: collective Peace.

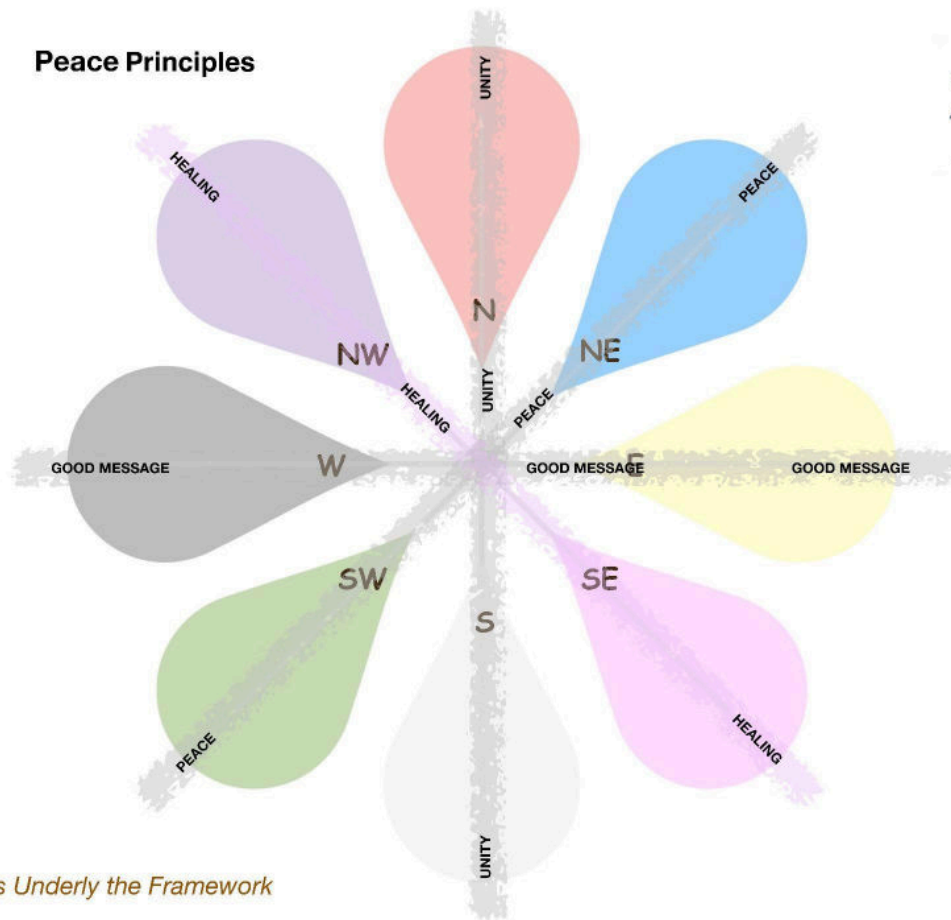
1. The Peace Axis: personal Peace (NE-SW or SE-NW)

How does it feel to be at Peace in ourselves? How can individuals cultivate personal Peace? How do individuals recognise when they are out of sorts or out of balance? What techniques help individuals return to personal Peace?

The personal Peace axis maps practices that support personal Peace in the mind and in the body. At one end of the axis are practices to support Peace in the mind, like mindfulness meditation, or nature-based practices like sensory meditation, walking or sitting in nature. At the other end of the axis are practices to support Peace in the body, like nutrition, rest, wellbeing, and safety.



Peace Principles



Principles Underly the Framework

For groups:

How can groups support personal Peace, in the mind and in the body? How can a group support individuals to feel good, and to access their Personal Peace while in the group? How can the group promote individual resilience and wellbeing so everyone can bring their best selves to the group?

For example, how does a group bring everyone's minds and hearts together for their shared endeavour? In groups using an 8 Shields or Connection 1st approach, this might look like sharing gratitude or a five-senses meditation. In other groups, where this practice might feel unfamiliar or edgy, this can look different. Maybe a moment of silence, or time to think and write about an agenda item before discussing it.

Peace in the body can include looking after individuals' wellbeing in various ways -- health and safety policies, physical comfort, room and space, food and water, time for breaks and vacations. In many modern workplaces, individuals often feel a lot of anxiety and stress. What are some ways the group can help to reduce stress, so people can feel more spacious and able to show up in their full selves?



2. The Good Message Axis: interpersonal or relational Peace (E-W)

How do individuals communicate with each other? How do people manage their interpersonal relationships? The Good Message axis maps practices that support good communication and community-building. At one end of the axis, good greeting and orientation practices help people feel welcome. These can include circle processes, such as a round of names and 'checking in', which support inclusion and all voices to be heard. At the other end, listening to people's stories, honouring their contributions, and celebrating their unique 'gifts' to the group, can help people feel valued, with a sense of belonging in the community. These practices help build a sense of Peace and trust in relationships.

For groups:

What are the shared agreements about interpersonal communication? Are there agreements to communicate authentically, honestly, cleanly, or with compassion? to use I-statements? to reflect on one's own part in the communication? to tease apart emotional responses from any information that's needed? Is there space for both positive or celebratory feedback, and for constructive or challenging feedback? Is feedback shared in a good way? given and received in a way that feels safe and clean? Are there regular opportunities, times and places, for feedback and appreciation?

Are there ways to navigate tensions? When there is heated or blocked communication, are there ways to address that in a constructive way? Are there support mechanisms and infrastructure in place to help that happen? Does the group provide trainings or a handbook? Are there identified mediators, peacemakers, or skilled people someone can go to for help?

Groups can provide infrastructures to support good communication, and teach people how they can access and use them.

3. The Unity Axis: collective Peace (N-S)

How do people cultivate Peace and unity in communities, organisations, and other wider social systems? How can groups work together well? How do groups co-create a sense of shared purpose, values, agreements? to perform optimally for the good of the whole? The Unity axis maps practices that support a big picture sense of direction and overview at one end, like shared vision, mission, aims or objectives; and the more detailed grounded elements at the other end, like processes, policies, agreements, and project plans.

For groups:

Groups benefit from a clear vision balanced by clear ways to get things done. Roles and practices which support direction and coordination often sit at one end of the axis, understanding the various other group roles and practices needed and how they interact.



The other end of the axis is where the many details that help the group achieve its purpose sit; like a Handbook or Manual of organisational policies, operational procedures, job or role descriptions, pathways for internal communication and sharing information.

The Unity axis can be an easy place to start when introducing the Peace Principles to a group. A shared sense of both overall purpose and agreed ways to achieve that purpose, can bring alignment and Unity to a group. For example, an analogy that often makes sense for a group or organisation is to imagine everyone on a ship together. Everyone shares an idea of the group's ideal destination or the desired outcome for the ship's journey. Everyone knows their role on the ship, is able to work together smoothly, and knows exactly what needs to be done. That group has a much better chance of getting where it wants to go.

4. The Healing Axis: (NW-SE or SW-NE)

This axis is in a slightly different category than the other 3. The first three axes present principles and practices which support a group to develop Peace and conflict resilience. If the first 3 principles have all been well implemented, and conflicts and tensions are still arising, it's likely because there is something else present that people are bringing from the past, such as a personal, family, or cultural wound, sensitivity, or trauma. In groups using a Connection 1st or 8 Shields approach, the term Healing refers to acknowledging and addressing anything from the past that may be having a difficult impact on the present or the future.

Sometimes this shadow of the past is called psychological trauma or historic trauma. It could be from an individuals' own experiences or upbringing, or from further back than that. It may have been passed intergenerationally over time through families, cultures, or communities. It can affect individuals' relationships with each other, and how they behave in groups (for more information on psychological and historical trauma, see [Compassion for Challenging Behaviour](#), and see references below). This is why Healing – finding ways to address the shadows of the past, like grief and trauma -- is an essential part of this framework. As part of a Healing process, individuals can make commitments to 'inner tracking' - reflecting on and bringing understanding to their emotions and sensitivities, and the things that can trigger their reactions.

For groups:

The Healing axis includes practices which can be the most unfamiliar to introduce to a group or organisation. Many modern westernised societies, workplaces and community groups may not encourage people to show up in their wholeness. The practices on the Healing axis can feel like they are more relevant to individuals than to a group. These can involve transparency around personal sensitivities, uncomfortable emotions, psychological wounds, or habitual patterns that individuals can bring to a group. The practices of this axis may feel uncomfortable to a group that is less comfortable with relational or collaborative group culture.



Many people find it hard to leave the difficult emotional parts of themselves at home. However much they may try to act 'professionally,' or to only present their most pleasant aspects, their more difficult aspects can still show up in a group setting.

If the group doesn't have ways to support individuals with their sensitivities and difficult emotions, if there is no agreed way to express these in a good way, this can become problematic. Challenging emotions can build up into resentment or anger, leading to more explosive conflicts, or withdrawal from the group. Or emotions may leak out inappropriately, leading to more challenging or tense interactions (see [Inquiry - Emotions](#)).

People can easily misunderstand each other's behaviour if they don't know where that behaviour is coming from. Groups can provide opportunities for individuals to increase awareness of each other's preferences and sensitivities, and normalise a culture of acknowledging and addressing difficult emotions. Groups can provide the infrastructure that supports emotional literacy and resilience. This begins to normalise the many processes for Healing the issues -- individual, relational, or systemic -- that most people from modern westernised societies bring with them when they join a group.

Groups can identify supportive and appropriate times, places, and ways for processing emotions. And maybe separate those from appropriate times and places for more operational work. It can be helpful to have both. Groups can provide times and places for healing and processing, as well as times and places for operations and strategy (see [Making Space for Uncomfortable Emotions](#), see [Task-Process-Relationship](#)).

Healing is a huge topic with a wide spectrum of different approaches and perspectives. The enclosed list of resources and references is not at all comprehensive or complete. The shadows of the past, like grief and trauma, can show up in many ways, so there are many different ways to begin to address them. There's no one-size-fits-all approach for every individual or group.

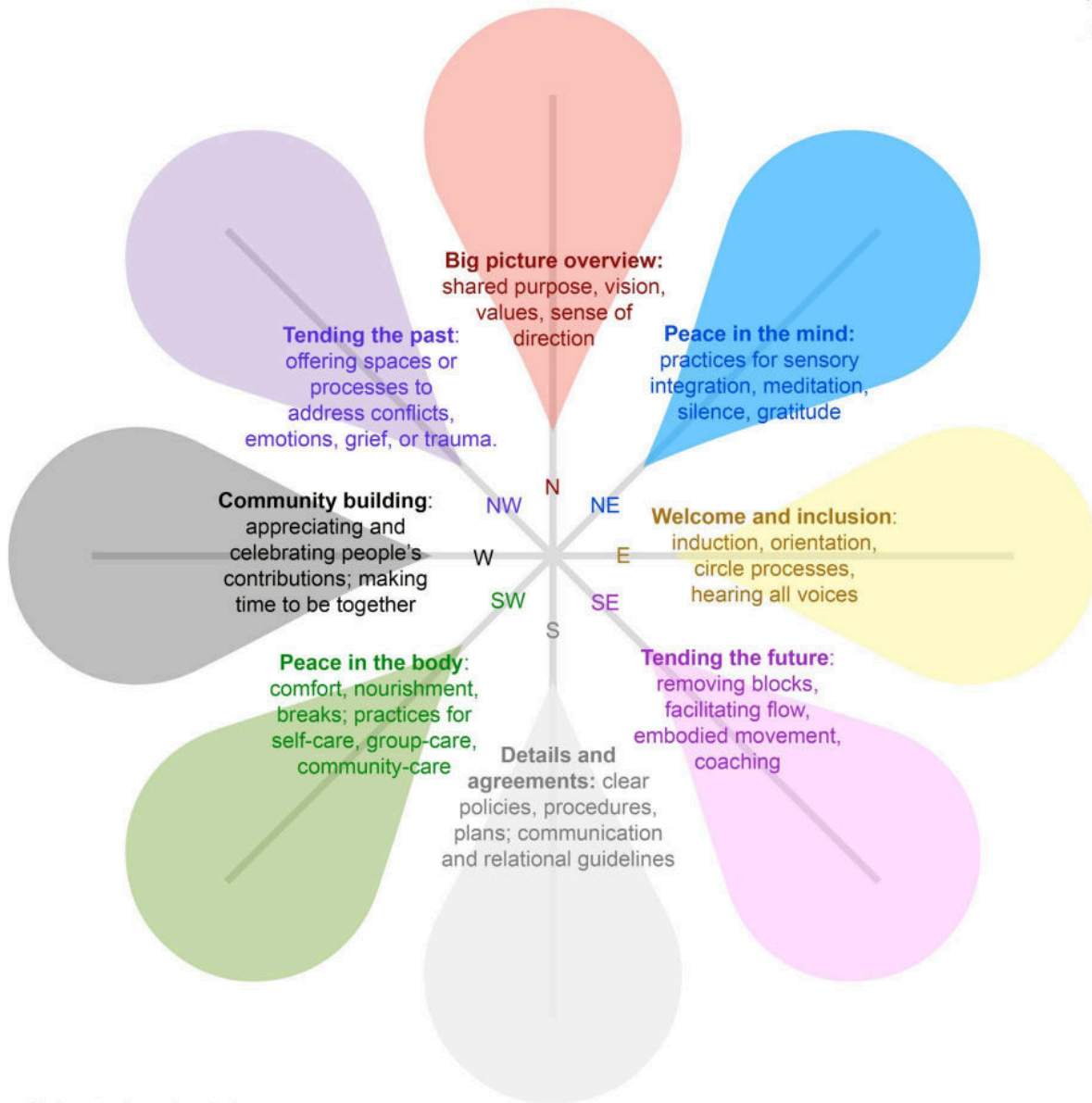
Activity

You might try using the Peace framework as a tool, to map what your group is already doing to support Peace and conflict resilience, and what you might like to develop further.

The next pages diagram the framework with a northern and southern hemisphere orientation. You can use it as is, or adjust it, and make copies that you offer to group members. Individually or in small groups, write practices that your group uses, which you feel fit into each section of the framework. This can be followed by a discussion to identify areas of Peace Building and conflict resilience where you feel your group is strong, and areas where you might want to offer more attention.



Peace Principles Activity:
Southern Hemisphere



Peace Principles Activity:
Northern Hemisphere



Related Resources

[Identifying People and Groups to Help You](#)

[How to Create Partnerships](#)

[How to Build Networks](#)

[Regional Networks Guide](#)

[Design a Regional Network Workshop](#)

[How Groups Develop](#)

[How to Run Effective Meetings](#)

[Connective Activities for Meetings](#)

[Virtual Teams](#)

[From Founders to the Future](#)

[Succession for Long Term Success](#)

[Moving to a Core Group](#)

[Inquiry - Emotions](#)

[Making Space for Uncomfortable Emotions](#)

[Compassion for Challenging Behaviour](#)

[Task-Process-Relationship](#)

[Effective Groups](#)

[Leaderfull Groups](#)

[Transition in Group Culture](#)

[Group Agreements](#)

[Decision Making](#)

[Working Together Well](#)

[Building Trust](#)

[Offering Appreciation and Gratitude](#)

[Action-Reflection Cycle](#)

[Guide - Mentoring](#)

[A Just, Fair, and Inclusive Transition](#)

[Respect for Diversity](#)

[Enhancing Cultural Competence](#)

[Unconscious Bias](#)

[Mainstream/Margin in Groups](#)



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Wikipedia. "[Shanti Mantras](#)."
Wikipedia. "[Two-Row Wampum Treaty](#)."

Personal Peace Axis

Transition Network's [Personal Resilience](#) resources.
Masten, Ann S. "[Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth](#)." Child Development. 2014 Jan-Feb; 85(1):6–20. doi: 10.1111/cdev.12205.
Panter-Brick, Catherine, Leckman J. F. Editorial commentary: "[Resilience in child development—Interconnected pathways to wellbeing](#)." The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. 2013; 54:333–336. doi: 10.1111/jcpp.12057.

Good Message Axis

Transition Network's [Conflict Resilience](#) resources.
[Facilitating Meetings](#) - Seeds for Change
[Facilitation Tools](#) - Seeds for Change
[Effective Groups](#) - Seeds for Change
[Group Agreements](#) - Seeds for Change
[Anarchic Agreements](#) - Seeds for Change
[Making Changes in Your Group](#) - Seeds for Change

Unity Axis

Websites

[Common Fire Foundation](#) (Kavitha Rao and Jeff Golden).
[Communities for Restorative Justice](#) (Jean Bell, Joan Turner, Jennifer Larson Sawin).
[Cooperation Works Cooperative Development Network](#).
[Enlivening Edge](#) (Frederic Laloux).
[Evolving Organisation](#) (Nick Osborne and Justine Corrie).
[Group Facilitation](#) (Kavana Tree Bressen).
[Holacracy](#) (Brian Robertson).
[Neighborhoodocracy and Children's Parliaments](#) (Edwin John).
[Seeds for Change](#) (Kathryn Tulip, Matthew Herbert).
[Sociocracy For All](#) (Jerry Koch-Gonzalez, Ted Rau).
[Sociocracy 3.0](#) (James Priest).
[Tools for Change](#) (Bill Aal).
[Université du Nous](#) (Lydia Pizzoglio and Laurent van Ditzhuyzen)



Videos

John, Edwin 24:54 "[Neighborhood Parliaments in India.](#)" 2017
Koch-Gonzalez, Jerry 4:00 "[Sociocracy, The Operating System of the New Economy.](#)" 2016
Osborne, Nick 6 x 10:00 "[Self Organisation: Beyond Hierarchy.](#)" 2015
[Sociocracy for All videos.](#)

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Zimmerman, Jack and Virginia Coyle. (1996). *The Way of Council*. Bramble Books.

Healing Axis. Grief, Trauma, Healing

Websites

[Animas Valley Institute](#) (Bill Plotkin).
[Body Informed Leadership](#) (Madelanne Rust-d'Eye).
Bolad's Kitchen and [Flowering Mountain](#) (Martín Prechtel).
[Collective Trauma Summit](#) (Thomas Hübl).
[Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition](#) (Francisco de Roux).



[Family Constellation Institute](#) (Mark Wolynn).
[Gabor Maté](#).
[Grief Tending](#) (Sophy Banks).
[Healing Turtle Island](#) ([Sherri Mitchell](#)).
[Ho'oponopono](#) (Morrnah Nalamaku Simeona).
[Integrative Community Therapy](#) ([Adalberto de Paula Barreto](#)).
[The Mindsight Institute](#) (Daniel Siegel).
[Orphan Wisdom School](#) (Stephen Jenkinson).
[Starter Culture](#) (Claire Milne).
[Thomas Hübl](#).
[The Trauma Resource Institute](#) (Miller-Karas, Elaine).
[Traumatic Stress Research Consortium](#) (Stephen Porges).
[Turtle Island Institute](#) ([Melanie Goodchild](#))
[Unsettling America](#): Decolonization in Theory and Practice.
[Wisdom Spring](#) (Sobonfu Somé, Susan Hough).
[Whole Health Medicine Institute](#) (Lissa Rankin).
[Work That Reconnects](#) (Joanna Macy).

Audio and Video

Banks, Sophy. 1:12:01 "[What Makes a Healthy Culture.](#)" 2020
Hübl, Thomas. "[Healing Collective Trauma.](#)" 2018
Macy, Joanna ([Work That Reconnects](#)) 13:00 "[Pain for the World.](#)" 2005
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Prechtel, Martín (Bolad's Kitchen and [Flowering Mountain](#)) 22:00 "[Grief and Praise pt 1;](#)"
20:00 "[Grief and Praise pt 2;](#)" 28:00 "[Grief and Praise pt 3.](#)" 2015
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Definitions

Grief

“The normal and natural emotional reaction to loss or change of any kind, particularly to the loss of someone or something to which a bond or affection was formed. It often involves a combination of conflicting emotions caused by the end of a familiar pattern of behavior.”

– Friedman, Russell (2013). “[Best Grief Definition](#).” – Wikipedia. “[Grief](#).”

Historic Trauma

“The cumulative emotional and psychological wounding of an individual or a generation caused by traumatic experiences: events with an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds the ability to integrate the emotions involved. It is directly associated with the unresolved grief that accompanies continued trauma.”

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