



Program Evaluation of Healing of Memories Workshops

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Table of Contents	Page
Acknowledgments.....	2
Chapter one	5
Introduction and Methodology	5
Programs of the Institute for Healing of Memories	5
Healing of Memories Workshops.....	5
Youth Development Program.....	5
The evaluation project	5
Objectives.....	5
Methodology	6
Design of the instruments.....	6
Administering questionnaires.....	6
Structured interviews.....	6
Interview sampling criteria.....	6
Confidentiality agreement.....	7
Challenges in the interview methodology.....	7
Data analysis	7
 Chapter Two	 8
Analysis of interviews: South Africans	8
Background and demographic information.....	8
Part I: Personal issues stimulated by participants' narratives.....	8
Part II: Perceived changes in self-understanding.....	9
Part III: Ability to let go of painful personal issues or emotions.....	9
Part IV: Ability to internalize a new and more positive sense of self or other.....	9
Part V: Changes in perception of the nation's history and its impact on the sense of self	10
Part VI: Changes in perceptions of communities other than one's own.....	10
Part VII: Adequacy of follow up.....	11
Part VIII: Additional comments about the workshop experience	11
 Chapter Three	 12
Analysis of interviews: Refugees	12
Background and demographic information.....	12
Part I: Personal issues stimulated by participants' narratives.....	12
Part II: Perceived changes in self-understanding.....	12
Part III: Ability to let go of painful personal issues or emotions.....	13
Part IV: Ability to internalize new and more positive sense of self or other.....	14
Part V: Changes in perception of the nation's history and its impact on the sense of self.....	14
Part VI: Changes in perceptions of communities other than their own.....	14
Part VII: Adequacy of follow up.....	15
Part VIII: Additional comments about the workshop experience.....	15

Chapter Four.....	16
Analysis of Interviews: Facilitators.....	16
Background and demographic information.....	16
PART I: Motivation for becoming a facilitator.....	16
Part II: Sense of connection to the Institute, value, and appreciation.....	17
Part III: Assessment of current training, suggestions for improvement, and need for continuing education.....	18
Part IV: Experience of listening to participants stories.....	19
Part V: Facilitators' evaluation of the workshops' effectiveness.....	19
Part VI. Suggestions to meet the needs of particular populations, such as refugees, prisoners and people with Aids.....	21
Part VII. Additional comments.....	21
Chapter Five.....	22
Analysis: End of workshop questionnaire.....	22
Chapter Six.....	26
Analysis: Post workshop questionnaire, 4-12+ months after the workshop	26
Chapter Seven.....	31
Summary.....	31
Recommendation.....	32
Conclusion remarks.....	33
 Appendices	
Appendix A: End of workshop questionnaire.....	34
Appendix B: Post workshop questionnaire, 4-12+ months after the workshop.....	36
Appendix C: Interview protocol for South Africans and refugees.....	39
Appendix D: Protocol for interviewing facilitators.....	40
Appendix E: Confidentiality agreement.....	42

Chapter 1. Introduction and methodology

1. Programs of the Institute for Healing of Memories

1.1. Healing of Memories Workshops

Healing of Memories workshops are weekend long experiences that give participants of varied racial, political and cultural backgrounds an opportunity to come together and tell their stories in an atmosphere of deep listening and mutual respect. Workshops are led by trained and experienced facilitators, but they do not necessarily have professional qualifications.

On an individual level, participation in a Healing of Memories workshop provides an experiential way to let go of feeling such as anger, hatred, prejudice and guilt and create a more positive meaning for suffering. It can therefore be considered as one step on the journey to psychological, emotional, and spiritual healing and wholeness.

Although the emphasis is on individual healing, mutual understanding and reconciliation arise from the opportunity to listen to others who have had quite different experiences. Participants come to understand how their nation's history has shaped personal emotions and views. People are often surprised at their ability to empathize with someone who might previously have been perceived with distrust. In this way, the process implicitly contributes to reconciliation in the larger society by changing the attitudes of its individual members.

1.2. Youth Development Program

Facing our Past, Facing Ourselves Workshops are offered in schools in cooperation with the Department of Education. These engage young South Africans in the history of their country. We also conduct Youth Peace Academies which are residential camps held over several days during school holidays. The Youth Program was not included in this study.

2. The evaluation project

2.1. Objectives

Though for many years, we administered an evaluative questionnaire at the end of each workshop, we decided in 2005 to develop a more rigorous evaluation process. The new protocol was instituted in October 2005. Findings from then until December 2006 are reported here. Results provide useful information about our methodology and its impact, firstly for ourselves, and secondly for others involved in similar work.

The specific objectives of our study were to learn from workshop participants:

- how they experienced the process of the workshop itself,
- whether they were able to let go of painful feelings from the past,
- whether they changed their perception of participants different from themselves, and
- whether the effects they report are enduring.

From our interviews with facilitators we hoped to learn:

- what motivates them to do this work,
- how they see the workshops' effect on participants,
- how they experience their connection to the Institute, and
- what suggestions they have for improving the workshops or their working environment.

We confined our study to the Healing of Memories workshops because the Youth Program has its own evaluation. We also decided for logistic reasons to confine our study to workshops in the Western Cape. Workshops targeted for prisoners were excluded because of problems in obtaining access to inmates for interviews and because of questions about the reliability of the evaluations under prison conditions. Workshops targeted for people with HIV/Aids have somewhat different objectives and were excluded for that reason.

2.2. Methodology

2.2.1. Design of the instruments

Two types of instruments were used: written questionnaires and structured individual interviews. The former had the advantage of reaching a large sample, whereas the latter gave us access to the in depth experiences of workshop participants and facilitators.

Proposed questions for the written questionnaires and interviews were vetted by staff and senior facilitators and revised after feedback. We also solicited feedback on our design from New Nation Consulting, Inc., a firm recommended by one of our funders.

Answers on the written questionnaires required circling a numeric scale ranging from agreement to disagreement with a prepared statement. Each questionnaire also included some open-ended questions requiring narrative answers. Interview questions were intentionally open-ended.

2.2.2. Administering questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered to workshop participants at the conclusion of each workshop; thus the return was effectively 100%. The education and literacy level of participants can be a problem in completing written questionnaires and an adequate explanation at the time they are administered is essential. We tabulated results from 17 different workshops. For a copy, see Appendix A.

We also sent out questionnaires to participants who had taken a workshop 4-14 months previously. The sample consisted of all participants who had taken a workshop between July 2005 and April 2006 (160 participants in all). We received 33 responses (21%). For a copy, see Appendix B.

2.2.3. Structured interviews

We interviewed three different groups: South Africans, refugees, and facilitators. Refugees attended workshops that were specifically targeted for them, partly because in many instances they lived together in a refugee facility and also because many felt more secure with fellow refugees.

The interview protocol for South Africans and refugees was substantially the same (Appendix C). Participants were interviewed from 4-12 months after attending a workshop. The protocol for interviewing facilitators was quite different, in keeping with our different objectives (Appendix D).

2.2.4. Interview sampling criteria

The sample consisted of 8 facilitators, 8 South Africans, and 7 refugees, making a total of 23. Two lists were drawn up, one of all South African participants for the period from July 2005 to December 2006 and the other of the 20 presently active facilitators. Each list was divided into classes according to age, race and gender. Insofar as possible, interviewees were selected from each list to achieve a balance of these categories, though inevitably logistic considerations limited our choices. Women predominated among the refugees. Names were drawn from the period from July 2005 to December 2006, and interviewees were selected to achieve a balance of different countries.

2.2.5. Confidentiality agreement

A confidentiality agreement form was handed to the respondents and explained at the outset (Appendix E). The agreement expressed appreciation to the respondent, explained the purpose of the interview and how the Institute might use the respondent's comments. All respondents signed the form. Interviews were recorded if the interviewee gave permission. All but one person did.

2.2.6. Challenges in the interview methodology

- It was sometimes difficult to move the interview along when interviewees wished to prolong it.
- Because of transportation or child care problems; interviewees usually preferred the researcher to come to them, which made difficult finding a quiet place especially in the refugee center.
- Interviewees frequently canceled appointments because of demands of family, employment, and other problems.
- Analysing and summarizing lengthy narrative data is complicated and inevitably has a subjective element.

2.3. Data analysis

Interviews were recorded, with the exception of one at the beginning of the project and another in which the respondent declined to give permission. In all, 7 interviews of South Africans, 6 interviews of refugees, and 8 interviews of facilitators were recorded. The interviewer listened to each recording and summarized it in a written narrative. Narratives for the two interviews not recorded were prepared from notes. This report was compiled from the written narratives. Recordings were used to clarify uncertainties and as a source of direct quotations. Narratives were searched for common themes, for comments that bore directly on our research questions, and for constructive criticism. The library of recordings is available for future research.

Numeric answers to the two questionnaires were summarized in tabular form and answers to open-ended questions were organized around the questions asked and common themes.

Chapter 2. Analysis of interviews: South Africans

Background and demographic information

Interviews were conducted either 4-6 months or 12-14 months after the workshop. The sample consisted of five women and three men ranging in age from 20s to 60s. Workshops they attended had an average of 21 participants (range = 12-35). Participants were mainly African and coloured, with some whites.

Comments were overwhelmingly positive. A representative sample from the eight respondents is discussed below reflecting the topics that the questions addressed.

- Part I: Personal issues stimulated by participants' narratives
- Part II: Changes in self-understanding
- Part III: Ability to let go of painful personal issues or emotions
- Part IV: Ability to internalise a new and more positive sense of self or other
- Part V: Changes in perception of the nation's history and its impact on the sense of self
- Part VI: Changes in perceptions of communities other than one's own
- Part VII: Adequacy of follow up
- Part VIII: Additional comments about the workshop experience

Part I: Personal issues stimulated by participants' narratives

Question: What were the main issues that came up for you when you told your story?

A common theme concerned racial tensions. One participant came from a multiracial family and grew up in a coloured township. She spoke about hatred and anger between township children towards children in her family who were different. "My mother is a coloured and we were living in a coloured township during the apartheid era. Hatred, division and high tension amongst children of different race groups made living there difficult. Added to that was a problem of protecting my two brothers from my mum's previous husband. I had not realized that I have been carrying that level of anger in my life before the workshop."

Two white participants spoke poignantly about the pain of being rejected by the white community because they fought against apartheid. "As soon as we identified with black people, we were seen as Communist. White people would not have anything to do with us, even Christian people. We had to leave the Church because black people were not allowed to come to church." (They were treated as if black).

Two participants mentioned discrimination because they were black. "My father had a small business but he could not run it because he was black. White people used to come and destroy everything in his house because he was not permitted to run the business as a black man. When I grew up, that anger came up and I decided to fight against the apartheid regime."

Language was used to separate people during the apartheid years. There is much pain associated with these experiences. One white person said, "One does not need to be black to be discriminated against. I was treated unfairly because I am English speaking. Not being an Afrikaner, I was always treated as a stranger in my own country."

Hurt and anger deriving from apartheid sometimes became intertwined with family problems. "When I attended a workshop, it was an opportunity to talk about the tension, hatred and division amongst children from different races within my own family during the apartheid regime."

Part II: Perceived changes in self-understanding

Question: Did you make a shift in the way you see your story? Explain.

Telling their story appeared to relieve participants of negative feelings and enabled them to move forward. All mentioned making an internal shift. “Sharing my story in the small group was like being born again because I could look into myself and dig out the more personal issues that were really bothering my life.” Another participant said, “What made an impact on me is that I was not the only person who suffered. That helped me to see myself not as a victim but as a survivor.”

A number of people found that drawing their life story with crayons opened a new way of looking at it. Six spoke about the healing role of having their story recognized and honored. “I learned to acknowledge the past and accept it.” Fr. Michael Lapsley often speaks of the role that acknowledgment plays in the healing of individuals, communities and nations. People often have knowledge of what happened to them, but once the wrong has been acknowledged, the healing journey can begin.[♦]

Part III: Ability to let go of painful personal issues or emotions

Question: Were you able to let go of anything painful about your past? If so, what?

Respondents spoke movingly of letting go of anger, frustration, and guilt. Several mentioned giving up hatred and unwillingness to forgive. People were realistic, in that they understood that this was only one step. For example, “I managed to let go of anger and guilt caused by apartheid while I was growing up. It is not to say that all my pain has gone, but when I look at the picture of how I was before the workshop, I realize that at least my pain is not the same now.”

Some people reported making concrete changes in their lives as a result of the workshop experience.

“I was carrying anger and hatred towards my mother for so many years. This stopped me from forgiving and reconciling. During the workshop, I realized that I am the one who is carrying the burden and this burden is destroying me. Soon after the workshop, I decided to go and talk to my mother. I reconciled with her and I forgave her. We have started a new relationship since then.”

In summary, the workshops encourage participants to pay tribute to their losses and share both their painful and their wonderful experiences with others. In the process they came to understand themselves more deeply and are able to integrate both the negative and positive elements of what they have experienced.

Part IV: Ability to internalise a new and more positive sense of self or other

Question: Were you able to embrace something new and positive? If so what?

Four people spoke of opening their heart to forgiveness and even reconciliation. One person put it this way, “The workshop helped me to embrace the sense of forgiveness in me. I realized that if I do not forgive, it will end up poisoning me, and then I will spend the rest of my life carrying anger and hatred. By doing so, I will pass them to the young ones by teaching them not to forgive.” Another interviewee said, “After a workshop, I decided to reconcile with my parents and husband after thirteen years.”

[♦] Father Michael Lapsley SSM: Towards Effective Anglican Mission, an International conference on Prophetic Witness, Social Development and HIV and Aids. (14 March 2007)

Some people gained a great deal from witnessing the work of other participants, “There was a coloured man and a black woman in the workshop. They stood up on the first day and said, ‘We want you to know that we hate white people with all our hearts, souls, and minds.’ At the end of the workshop on Sunday, both of them asked forgiveness of every white person in the workshop. Every white person got a hug from them.” Similarly, a person in another group said, “As a white person what changed me was to see reconciliation taking place right before my eyes in the workshop.”

Participants sometimes made use of the workshop in dealing with family issues. We quote one story at length:

“I was very angry towards my parents and husband before attending the Healing of Memories workshop. I carried this anger for many years until I tried to commit suicide just before my first workshop. I was angry because my parents did not take care of me since I was born. I was angry towards my husband because he was abusing me, physically and emotionally. I have been carrying this heavy anger for many years.

“When I attended the workshop, I felt better, relieved. I realized that I had been carrying a heavy burden in me for many years without sharing with anybody. I have learnt not to blame and judge others but to focus on myself. I decided to forgive my parents, my husband and let go of my anger and frustration. After the workshop, I visited my mother and asked for forgiveness after 15 years. I shared my experience with my husband for the first time. I do not have a plan for committing suicide anymore. I am living in a more positive way. I keep telling myself not to go back where I was before the workshop.”

Facilitators are trained to identify participants who need professional follow-up, and this person was referred for individual counseling to continue the work that she began in the workshop.

Part V: Changes in perception of the nation’s history and its impact on the sense of self

Question: Did you change the way you view how your nation’s history has affected you?

One aspect of healing can involve a new perception of the meaning of lived historical events. While not a major aspect of the changes participants noted, several mentioned such a perceptual shift. For example, one person said “I understood that apartheid history did affect all of us whether black people, white people or the coloured community. I do not need to carry (my old misperception) around with me and continue to be angry about it.”

Part VI: Changes in perceptions of communities other than one’s own

Question: Did you change the way you view communities of people different from yourself?

Participants seemed to be saying that the workshops provided an opportunity to try out new ways of relating to issues of diversity, mutual understanding, and reconciliation through lived experience in the workshop itself. For example, “I was a white person in a predominantly black group. Nevertheless, through the small group sharing I felt accepted as I am and encouraged to be myself. It is important for me to be accepted by the black people because of the history of our country.”

Six respondents of varying racial identities mentioned a willingness to forgive, share and listen to other communities. “I changed the way I view white people in South Africa and I decided to accept them. I could sit and share my story with the white people (in my group) without being angry.” Or, “I am treating everybody as equal without any kind of distinction in terms of colour, race, and culture after the workshop.” One person put quite eloquently her sense of responsibility for creating a new society, “If racial division was originally South Africa’s choice as a nation, then ending that divide is an individual choice as well.” While it would be easy to dismiss some of these statements as reflecting a sort of post

workshop euphoria, the interviews took place many months after the workshop experience. Thus, comments like these may well reflect a permanent internal shift.

Part VII: Adequacy of follow up

Question: Would you have liked some follow up experience or was the workshop itself enough? If you wanted a follow up experience, what would you have liked?

Although two people thought the workshop was sufficient, six others wanted more, especially attending more workshops. “I am no longer carrying the same level of anger that I was carrying before. I am looking forward to attending more workshops.” Another person said, “I would like to attend more workshops and also I would like to see all my children be part of this healing process.”

Most participants said painful memories continued arising after the workshop and some of them were disappointed because of a lack of follow up. For example, one person said, “It was an enormously great experience but unless it is followed up, much will be lost. It was not followed through.” Participants from several organizations and churches were sometimes disappointed in their hopes for a reunion for their group. For example one respondent said, “They promised us a reunion to be held within a month after a workshop. Afterwards there was a deafening silence for a whole month until I contacted a leader of the group.”

Although participants were aware of the possibility of reunion meetings with their fellow participants and one-day second phase workshops and some of them had availed themselves of these, nevertheless these experiences were not seen as sufficient. Rather, interviewees suggested other kinds of follow up, such as individual counseling, facilitators keeping in touch with participants through physical visits and telephone calls, and attending more Healing of Memories workshops. Because the workshop is such an intensely personal experience, many wanted some kind of personal attention afterwards and felt disappointed when it was not forthcoming.

The type of follow up desired can take different forms. For example, one person made a commitment to assist the Institute as a volunteer with a particular task that had great meaning to her. She mentioned that a facilitator promised to contact her about this, but never did so. “I was so disappointed and upset that the facilitator who promised to call me never did.” This example illustrates that facilitators must be very careful about making promises unless they feel a firm commitment to follow through. Failure to do so can damage the person’s relationship to the Institute, has the potential to undo some of the positive value of the workshop, and at worst can actually harm the person.

Part VIII: Additional comments about the workshop experience

Question: Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your experience?

One respondent thought that the Institute is focused too exclusively on apartheid and, for some reason, did not feel able to move into other sorts of personal issues. “I believe that the hate people are carrying is not only because of racism and apartheid. A lot of hatred comes about because of people being bitter about their marriage, difficulties at the work place, and the presence of authoritative persons in one’s life such as teachers, parents and politicians. The Institute can be much more effective if it is willing to broaden its focus on the kind of hatred that needs to be healed in people. I don’t think the workshop gave me an opportunity to come to closure on my hate.”

Despite this one comment, the majority of respondents saw the workshops as a great benefit to the country and would seize any opportunity to recommend them. “A programme like the Healing of Memories workshops is invaluable at the point where we are in South Africa. Black people, white people and coloured desperately need the Healing of Memories workshops.” Another respondent said, “I am happy for the work of the Institute for Healing of Memories in bringing white people, coloured and black people together—something the South Africans have never experienced before.”

Chapter 3. Analysis of interviews: Refugees

Background and demographic information

South Africa is facing an influx of refugees from conflicts elsewhere on the African continent. Many are highly traumatized because of experiences in their home countries, in their journey to South Africa, and because of discrimination and xenophobic violence here. For logistic reasons and the preference of most refugees, the workshops were usually, though not always, comprised only of refugees.

The researcher aimed for a balance of different countries. There were six women and one man from six different countries including Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The interviewer was multilingual in French, English, and several African languages, which made it possible for refugees to speak whatever language was comfortable for them.

One person said at the outset that she is still too fragile after the Rwandan genocide to talk about the issues that came up for her in the workshop. She said that the workshop was heavy for her, partly because she was not properly prepared, and she did not share much of herself in the workshop. The researcher respected her request and the interview was discontinued. Interviewees ranged in age from 20-29 to 50-59 with an average age between 28-37.

Comments are summarized using the same categories as for South Africans, as the question protocol was identical.

Part I: Personal issues stimulated by participants' narratives.

Question: What were the main issues that came up for you when you told your story?

Six refugees spoke of extreme events, such as violence, killing, and other persecution that they witnessed in their home countries. They lost friends and relatives, had their property destroyed, and spent long periods not knowing if they would live or die—all of which has resulted in much traumatization. For example one refugee said, "I came to the workshop with heavy pain, frustration, depression and sadness. I've carried anger towards my country for so many years." Another spoke about becoming HIV positive from her husband. Refugees also spoke of problems in South Africa such as xenophobia and the lack of material assistance from the South African government and the United Nation High Commission for Refugees. "Now I am facing other kinds of frustration and depression, not because of being in a war situation, but because of xenophobia in South Africa and life itself as a refugee without any assistance."

Part II: Perceived changes in self-understanding

Question: Did you make a shift in the way you see your story? Explain

Six people mentioned that, after hearing others' stories, they realized how much other refugees had suffered. This realization helped them decide to let go of some negative feelings that hindered them from moving forward.

"When I came to the Healing of Memories workshop, I felt relieved after sharing in the small group. It was my first time-sharing my story honestly and openly. I could see that other participants were listening to me when I was expressing my feelings, and I was very much respected. I realized that my pain is not the worst; others have felt the same, even greater pain than mine. I decided to start the process of dealing with my feelings such as anger, depression and frustration."

Three respondents said that the more they shared their story, the more they gained a new sense of how they could cope. For example, “Sharing gave me space and time to identify other negative feelings that I never realized before. I learnt to be gentle to myself and to others. I realized that, the more I share my story, the more I feel relieved and am able to face other challenges.”

Even though refugees live together in one shelter, they often do not talk to one another and rarely share traumatized painful memories. To the extent that sharing promotes healing, the opportunities for healing were very limited. Lack of trust and culture differences were mentioned in the interviews as barriers to this sharing. “I live in the refugee centre with stress and depression that I carried from my country. The women there do not get time to talk to one another because everybody is busy with her problems and there is lack of trust among us. Also, we do not have a safe place that allows us to meditate and share our experiences in privacy.”

Some respondents mentioned that it was a privilege for them to move away from the miserable conditions of their daily lives and stay for three days in a quiet, safe place. This in itself may have been an important part of the healing. “It was good for me to go out of the refugee centre and sleep over for a weekend. The venue was good and I slept alone in my own room, which was different from the way I live in the centre with three people in a small room. I felt relaxed and happy that weekend and I was able to reflect upon my past experience.”

Some of the refugees are very fragile because of the trauma they still carry. For them, it was difficult to cope with the painful feeling stirred up during the weekend. This underlines that proper briefing is very important before a workshop in order to prepare participants for the experience and to allow those not ready to tell their stories to opt out. Failure to do this can retraumatize people. For example the Rwandan who declined to be interviewed said, “I am still fragile and I am not ready to talk about my past experience. When I get in touch with my painful feelings, I become depressed because of thinking too much about what happened. I was not prepared for the workshop and I had no clear understanding of what it was about. Because of that, the workshop was heavy for me from the beginning and I could not talk.”

Several refugees spoke about the drama used at the beginning of the workshop as an emotional trigger. Based on their comments, we recommend not using a drama that contains threatening scenes with refugees because some become frightened and this has an adverse effect on them. In general, refugees are a more fragile population than is typically the case for South Africans. For the latter group, the apartheid years are more than a decade past and they appear as a group to be less vulnerable.

Part III: Ability to let go of painful personal issues or emotions

Question: Were you able to let go of anything painful about your past? If so, what?

Despite their vulnerability, refugees spoke of letting go of depression, disappointment, anger, resentment, frustration, and stress. Six of them said that they felt relieved at the end of the workshop because of having an opportunity to share their stories in a safe place for the very first time. “It was my first time to talk about myself honestly and openly in a safe place. It was an opportunity to reconcile, forgive, and experience humility.” Another said, “Some of the pains that I was carrying around inside me have gone. I stopped planning to commit suicide after the workshop.” Since the interviews took place several months following the workshop, it seems that the gains endured; otherwise it is unlikely that they would have been reported in such a positive light.

Part IV: Ability to internalise new and more positive sense of self or other

Question: Were you able to embrace something new and positive? If so what?

By the end of the workshop refugees felt much more connected with each other. “The workshop was the opportunity for us to get to know each other. Although we live together, we do not know one another very well. After a workshop, we became united and friends because we realized that we all, as women refugees, have common feelings and the same challenges.”

Especially noteworthy, one respondent who is living with HIV/ Aids said that the workshop brought back her strength and that she felt encouraged to live with her HIV status and make peace with her husband.

“I was infected HIV/Aids from my husband. I carried anger with me towards him for so many years. I tried to kill myself and kill him several times. I was even carrying a knife with me to kill him. Since I attended a workshop, I am no longer carrying a knife. I learnt about forgiveness instead of blaming him and myself. I was encouraged that I could live with Aids and carry on my normal life. I accepted my status for the first time since I was infected. I learnt to be gentle to myself and others.”

Part V: Changes in perception of the nation’s history and its impact on the sense of self

Question: Did you change the way you view how your nation’s history has affected you?

“As long as I cannot return home and am still living in difficult situations, it is not easy to change my view towards my country, because I lost everything and I am suffering.” Despite this, several refugees said that after the workshop, they decided not to keep on carrying anger and disappointment towards their government’s leaders and their country’s history. Some were inspired by South Africans, “I was badly affected by my country’s history. After hearing South Africans’ stories, I looked back on my past and decided to deal with my feelings and not to keep on carrying my negative attitudes towards my country, because I cannot change anything about it, and I am destroying myself instead of building myself.”

Some refugees, who left their countries at a young age do not know where they fit into history and yet realize that they are much affected by it.

“I was seven year old during the genocide in Rwanda. I could not identify who is Hutu and who is Tutsi and I did know what was going on. I spent the rest of my life in diaspora and I cannot even speak French. I was told about hatred and anger between the two groups by the society that I am living in. This is confusing me, as I could not understand it and I have never experienced it. Healing of Memories was an opportunity to move away from all that and learn more from other participants about how I could cope with the situation in order not to repeat the same mistakes from the past. I learnt forgiveness instead of being taught revenge.”

Part VI: Changes in perceptions of communities other than their own.

Question: Did you change the way you view communities of people different from yourself?

Several interviewees spoke of changing their negative perceptions towards the South African community. One said of South Africans,

“I have changed my negative attitudes. I could not understand them. I used to ask myself questions like ‘Why do South Africans hate foreigners?’ I was very angry towards them. During the workshop when I heard their stories and what they went through during the apartheid regime, I felt sorry for them. I realized that everybody is in the same boat towards healing and that South Africans and refugees have common feelings.”

In this respect it may also have helped that the workshops are organized and led by South Africans.

Healing of Memories workshops are one way to engender new relationships among the refugees from different countries and to build a common refugee identity. For example,

“The workshop brought different ethnic groups together. It took away my fear of allowing myself to share my experience with people from other countries and to learn what is happening in other parts of Africa. Before I attended a workshop, I could not understand why people from Cameroon become refugees, and I had never heard of a war there. During the story telling, I had the opportunity to be with someone from Cameroon and to listen to what they went through. I became aware that there is a conflict there although it is done secretly. I changed my negative perceptions towards the Cameroonians refugees because of hearing this story. I stopped judging refugees from other part of Africa for coming here.”

Part VII: Adequacy of follow up

Question: Would you have liked some follow up experience or was the workshop itself enough? If you wanted follow up experience, what would you have liked?

All respondents without exception mentioned that follow up is very necessary after a workshop and all wanted additional workshops.

One person who had attended several workshops said, “I will never get enough workshops because each and every workshop I learn a new experience. After a workshop, I come back home with a new sense of life. Follow up workshops encourage me to go further in my journey and give me strength to face other challenges that I come across in my journey. I look forward to more.” Another person mentioned a need for counseling, and another recommended continued contacts among participants and facilitators.

Part VIII: Additional comments about the workshop experience

Question: Anything else that you would like to tell us about your experience

Three refugees spoke of recommending that their friends and relatives attend a Healing of Memories workshop. “I realized that having someone to talk to and someone who could listen to me can help me move beyond traumatized thinking and depression. I can recommend that all refugees attend a workshop because all refugees have been traumatized by their past experiences.”

A few refugees mentioned that they did not have a clear conception of the purpose of the workshop when they arrived. They said that the organizers should have briefed them carefully beforehand. “I felt frustrated at the beginning because I cried and it took me a long time to understand.” Where orientation had been provided, respondents were happy at knowing what to expect.

Chapter 4. Analysis of Interviews: Facilitators

Background and demographic information

The facilitators we interviewed demonstrated an impressive commitment, having facilitated 3-9 years, with an average of 25 workshops each. In addition they all had had experience with special groups such as refugees, prisoners, and people with HIV/Aids. One person had facilitated in Zimbabwe.

The sample consisted of 8 facilitators, 3 men and 5 women, who ranged in age from 30s to 69+ years. There were 3 coloured, 3 blacks, and 2 whites. Comments are summarized as follows:

- Part I: Motivation for becoming a facilitator.
- Part II: Sense of connection to the Institute and whether facilitator feels valued and appreciated.
- Part III: Assessment of current training, suggestions for improvement, and need for continuing education.
- Part IV: Experience of listening to participants' stories.
- Part V: Facilitators' evaluation of the workshops' effectiveness.
- Part VI: Suggestions to meet the needs of particular populations, such as refugees, prisoners and people with Aids.
- Part VII: Additional comments

PART I: Motivation for becoming a facilitator.

Questions: What motivated you to begin facilitator training? What continues to motivate you, given all the time you put in? What benefit do you receive from doing the work?

Most said the work furthered their own healing journey and that they had been strongly motivated by their first workshop experience. This was expressed powerfully by one person,

“It was a great opportunity to open up my problems and talk to somebody who could listen in my first workshop. I was able to deal with issues such as anger, hatred and pain that I had been carrying for so many years. Because of these changes in me, I felt that through the facilitation work, I could continue to move beyond the negativity that I was carrying around with me.”

Another facilitator said, “This type of work is like a medicine to me in terms of personal changes in my own healing journey.”

All said the work encouraged them to embrace reconciliation and forgiveness and they recognized that this made them more effective facilitators. “I cannot deal with other participants feelings unless I deal with my own. As a facilitator, I should understand the concept of forgiveness before encouraging other participants to forgive.”

Similar observations were made by Undine Kayser who interviewed Healing of Memories participants and facilitators for her doctoral dissertation at the University of Cape Town. She concluded that those who gained the most personally from Healing of Memories work were facilitators who had continuing connection with the Healing of Memories process”♦

♦ Undine Kayser: Engaging the Apartheid Past through ‘Healing of Memories’ in a post-TRC South Africa. Doctoral dissertation, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cape Town, February 2005.

Six people mentioned the importance of their participation in meetings of the Counseling Working Group, a peer administrative and planning group, and said that teamwork and clear communication between facilitators and Institute staff were important. Several spoke of learning from observing other facilitators, and said that facilitation enabled them to improve listening skills and become more confident leaders.

All were motivated by what they saw as the need for reconciliation and forgiveness among South Africans and others such as refugees who are living here. All were inspired by the changes they see in individual participants. "I continue to be motivated by seeing participants dropping the burdens of the past . . . listening to a participant saying, 'I do not need to carry that anymore. I do not need to hold it that much. I want to go back home with rightness.'" Facilitators clearly believe that the changes they witness truly make a difference in people's lives.

They also appreciated the opportunity to encounter diverse groups of people. One pointed out that "during the apartheid regime, black people from different parts of Africa were hindered to come to South Africa." Significantly all facilitators valued the Institute's work in other parts of Africa and the world. Remarkably, this is true even though very few actually participate directly. Nevertheless, they have a strong commitment to the worldwide mission of the Institute and see it as South Africa's gift to the world.

Part II: Sense of connection to the Institute, value, and appreciation.

Questions: Do you feel valued and appreciated by the Institute? How much a part of the Institute do you feel?

All facilitators agreed that they feel appreciated, valued, and connected to the Institute through phone calls, occasional gifts, flowers sent on special occasions, facilitators' stipends, an end-of-year party, and involvement in activities such as meetings and conferences. One said, "I do feel that we are a family. I feel caring not only for me but also for other facilitators." Another person who had received a small gift said, "Last year I got a bag as a present from the Institute. I felt appreciated, committed, and on a par with the Institute's family."

While comments were overwhelmingly positive, there were a few resentments about specific incidents, including perceived favoritism on the part of the staff. We will not present details, as these would reveal the identity of the individuals involved. Rather, we will make some summary comments.

It is entirely natural that staff members will feel more drawn to certain facilitators than others. The parallel here is with facilitators who feel especially attuned to particular participants in a workshop. In both cases, individuals must be self-aware and guard against favoritism. That said, in our opinion it is likely that staff had good reasons for making some of the decisions that caused resentment, and that the problems mentioned may have arisen from a lack of transparency rather than favoritism. It is never easy to tell a facilitator something he or she may not wish to hear, but failure to do so can have damaging effects on the person and on morale. Regularizing an evaluation process for facilitators that everyone, without exception, undertakes might well prevent these occasional problems.

A few facilitators requested that they be advised in advance about unusual participants at a forthcoming workshop. They had in mind such things as whether there were refugees, people with Aids, highly educated or foreign visitors, or very highly traumatized individuals. They said that this advance information helped them prepare themselves emotionally for the demanding work.

Part III: Assessment of current training, suggestions for improvement, and need for continuing education

Questions: What was the most valuable part of training? What was the least valuable part? Do you have suggestions for improvement of the training? Would you like some form of continuing education? What would be most helpful?

Skilled facilitators are the bedrock of the services we provide and facilitator training is one of the most important functions that the Institute undertakes. Training is segmented into several modules and each develops critical skills that make a decisive and lasting impact on the facilitator-trainee and ultimately on workshop participants. It teaches facilitators how to listen to one another and to workshop participants, how to understand and accept emotions, how to create an energized and compassionate workshop atmosphere, and how to work cooperatively in a team.

Facilitators agreed that listening skills are the most central part of training. “The most valuable part of training was learning how to listen to one another. Equally important was learning to communicate listening skills to workshop participants so that they understand that the main purpose of the Healing of Memories workshops is to listen to one another.” Several people spoke of the value of learning how to deal with their own negative feelings that were stirred up by participants, as well as how to deal with participants' anger and hatred. One person talked of learning to keep an appropriate sense of boundaries while facilitating.

When asked for suggestions for improving the training, all spoke of the need for more training in listening and counseling skills. Three quarters said there needed to be more emphasis on facilitators learning how to debrief following the workshop, and one person wanted more integration of counseling theories with Healing of Memories practice. Other valuable suggestions included offering body movement exercises, conflict resolution skills, training in reading body language, more information on sensitivity to different cultures, and specific techniques for working with people with HIV/Aids.

One person wondered why a substantial proportion of people who complete the training do not continue as facilitators and pointed out that resources used in the training then are a loss for the Institute. This could be a valuable subject for future research.

One lead facilitator, who has given permission for her comments to be used in full, felt that as an organization we need to invest more in follow up with both participants and facilitators and that procedures need to be regularized. Speaking primarily about self-care for facilitators, she said,

“Another aspect that needs to be revisited is follow up with different groups after the workshops. This is another area that I think is weak. I know sometimes various ones of us occasionally try to phone or even visit with participants and facilitators after a weekend. Always I try to call facilitators afterwards, to check how they have been since the workshop. But all that we are trying to do is not enough. We need to sit down as facilitators and staff and think seriously about follow up. Follow up for facilitators is not simply rehashing the stories of the workshop but it is to ask, ‘How am I since the last workshop? How have I been with my family and friends? How have I been with my business? How have I been with my God since the last workshop?’ How this could be done and when it could start, I do not know, but we need to begin.”

Part IV: Experience of listening to participants stories

Questions: How is the experience of listening to other people's stories for you? Does it bring up old memories of your own? Do you carry away an emotional burden after a workshop? If so, how do you deal with that? How could we help you to lighten that burden?

All facilitators reported disturbing thoughts and feelings and the surfacing of old memories, though they said they do not let these affect their work. Three quarters reported that they carry away an emotional burden afterwards, but that they did not allow themselves to be affected negatively. Two facilitators, though, had a different point of view; "I might feel emotional after listening to a painful story but I do not carry it away with me." Fully half said that hearing others' stories inspired them in their own ongoing journey. One facilitator said, "Listening to many stories helps me to acknowledge and come to terms with the baggage that I have been carrying around in me and to be able to off-load that baggage in my own healing journey." Personal growth is a benefit many facilitators experience from their work.

Facilitators cope with emotional after effects in creative and varied ways. All stressed the importance talking with other people including especially fellow facilitators. Several mentioned quiet time; two spoke of attending prayer meeting; one described relaxing at a beach, and another mentioned massage. Other helpful activities were listening to music, singing, and consulting with an experienced supervisor. Everyone interviewed stressed that the Institute needs to do more to help lighten the burden by organizing regular debriefing sessions. They said that at present these tend to be haphazard at best.

In summary, facilitating intensifies the benefits of Healing of Memories work and in addition it imparts valuable leadership skills. In her 2005 study of the Institute's work, Undine Kayser made a similar observation:

"Having had an opportunity to listen to hundreds of personal stories of the apartheid years, the workshops have given facilitators an ongoing window into the past and present realities of other Capetonians; something which they found valuable in their lives and work as teachers, community facilitators, social workers, conflict mediators, church ministries, counselors, projects managers and in other professions."[♦]

Part V: Facilitators' evaluation of the workshops' effectiveness

Questions: Do you personally have a favorite part of the workshop? What is it? Why is it your favorite?

The closing celebration is devised by the group and is a reflection of its collective experience. Six facilitators said it is their favorite part of the workshop because of the change they see in participants.

"I always feel amazed by seeing the differences in participants from Friday to Sunday when they are getting ready for the celebration, how they are aware of the journey they have traveled, have new insight into their life, and are making one or two steps with hope for the future." Other facilitators spoke about the value of the opening drama or the drawing exercise, and the story telling in the small group. Half mentioned the construction of a personal peace symbol out of clay that represents whatever of value each person will take away.

These comments reinforce the special importance of the experiential exercises, which both aid and in some ways add meaning to the story telling that is at the heart of the work.

[♦] Kayser. Ibid.

Question: General speaking, how honest and forthcoming are participants in expressing their thoughts in the small groups? How good a balance do you think we strike between encouraging disclosure and yet not pushing people beyond their comfort zone?

There was overwhelming agreement among the facilitators that there is a close relationship between participants' ability to express themselves with honesty and transparency and the skill of the leader in drawing them out through gentle questioning. This skill is a combination of effective training and the life journey of the facilitator.

Several people pointed out that participants also influence each other in creating an encouraging and safe space. Consequently, one person said it is the responsibility of the facilitator to help participants learn how to interact with each other.

“Facilitators should keep on reminding participants of the ground rules such as confidentiality and gentleness, because it does not stick straight away. Because it might be the first time in many decades that some participants talk about themselves, and receive respect from one another. All this contributes to their realizing that a workshop is a safe place.”

Interviewees stressed the importance of facilitators knowing themselves and having a commitment to the Healing of Memories process so that they create a safe space for everyone. Cultural, ethnic, racial and gender differences are some aspects of diversity that facilitators are sensitive to and care must be taken to be even handed with all participants.

Question: Based on your experience, do you think the workshops have a lasting effect on participants? Why do you say that?

Six respondents reported that former participants asked their help in organizing another workshop. This corroborates Institute records which show that individuals and groups often return for additional workshops, that former participants recruit friends and family, and that some come to follow-up events such as second phase workshops and reunions. From this one can infer that participants received something valuable that they wanted to continue.

Facilitators also receive encouraging anecdotal feedback from former participants.

“I met with a former participant one day. He said, ‘I was in your small group. Since that workshop, my life has been changed and I felt relieved from what I was carrying for many years. I learnt how to forgive and to reconcile. Everybody in my family and community around are asking me what happen in my life because they see me as a new and different person since the last workshop. I would like to bring my sister to a workshop’”.

Another facilitator said, “The participants kept on phoning me after the workshop in the hope of seeing me for further counseling.”

This anecdotal feedback suggests that many individuals who take Healing of Memories workshops do achieve a lasting effect and can influence their friends and family. Facilitators pointed out that it is up to a participant to follow up his or her work by, for example, talking or writing a letter to someone from whom the person is estranged. Any of these personal follow up actions, can be a very significant step towards consolidating the gains made at the workshop. Investigating what follow up actions participants take after completing a workshop would be a fruitful area for further research.

Question: From your viewpoint, what is it about the workshop that promotes healing? Is it a similar process for everyone or do people differ a great deal in what they take from the workshops?

Facilitators identified almost every aspect of the workshop as promoting healing. One person articulated this as follows, “Any part of the workshop could be the trigger even up to the very last minutes of the workshop.” All facilitators agreed that people differ a great deal in what they take from the workshop

because of differences in backgrounds, experiences, cultures, the issues that they bring, and the situation that they go home to.

Question: How successful do you think the workshops are at promoting mutual understanding among participants that come from different backgrounds and experiences?

One person expressed the feeling of many by saying,

“During a workshop, the participants feel that they are all together on the same journey of healing no matter what their backgrounds and experiences. At the end of a workshop, they realize that they have common feelings that make them feel as a family and understand each other. We have been divided by our race and ethnicity but we all are struggling to move forwards without becoming prisoners of anger, hatred, bitterness and pain in an ongoing journey towards peace and reconciliation.”

Part VI. Suggestions to meet the needs of particular populations, such as refugees, prisoners and people with Aids

Question: If you have facilitated with different groups of people such as different racial or ethnic groups, refugees, people with AIDS, prisoners, or people from other countries, have you noticed any differences among these groups that we should be aware of?

One facilitator voiced a perception of common humanity by saying, “People are people and pain is pain.” At the same time, the interviews were rich in their recognition of the special characteristics of particular groups. The special sensitivity of refugees has been noted previously and people with Aids cope with painful discrimination and rejection. Speaking about these special needs, one person said, “I noticed that people with Aids and refugees need special follow up more than other ordinary groups. This could be done through visits and phone calls from the Institute and will make the participants with Aids and disabled refugees feel accepted in the South African community.”

One person highlighted occasional language difficulties. “Translation could slow the workshop process but it does not make it impossible. It is important for translation to be done effectively because the meaning of words can be altered significantly by changing the intonation of one's voice.” Another person commented that when participants, particularly from Europe and North America, are mixed with South Africans, the foreigners are reluctant to talk about themselves and prefer to hear from the South Africans. This creates a problematic dynamic in such a workshop that has to be sensitively handled.

Part VII. Additional comments

Several facilitators discussed problems of logistics that they saw as quite serious. Most revolved around transport to the workshop site. Several mentioned waiting for, in some cases, several hours to be picked up and then arriving too late to welcome participants. As a result they arrived tired and upset, which is not the best frame of mind to begin facilitating. Transportation for participants is also an issue and sometimes delays the beginning on Friday evening. This not only cuts into the time available, but also may make creating a stable and safe atmosphere for sensitive emotional work more difficult.

Finally, one person mentioned that the written evaluation form can be difficult for participants to understand, but that part of the problem may be that facilitators often hurry over this procedure without taking the time to carefully explain the numerical scale and how to complete it.

Chapter 5. Analysis: End of workshop questionnaire

Results were analysed representing 387 questionnaires from 17 different workshops. The questionnaire contained eleven questions, eight of which were quantitative. Responses to the quantitative questions are summarized in table form below, while answers to the three open-ended questions are summarized narratively.

Question 1: Were you able to tell your story as fully as you wanted to?

I did 1 2 3 4 5 I could not

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	219	71
2	50	16
3	18	5.8
4	11	3.5
5	10	3.2

Average is 1.5

Question 2: Were your limits respected so that you were not pushed to go further than you felt comfortable doing?

My limits were respected 1 2 3 4 5 I was pushed

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	241	79
2	31	10
3	10	3.2
4	6	1.9
5	18	5.8

Average is 1.4

Question 3: If there were people in your group who were much different from you, were you able to identify with their experience?

Did identify very much 1 2 3 4 5 could not identify at all

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	179	59
2	72	23.9
3	17	5.6
4	13	4.3
5	20	6.6

Average is 1.7

Question 4: Do you have more or less painful feelings now than when you began the workshop?

Less painful feelings 1 2 3 4 5 more painful feelings

Scale	Respondents	Percentages (%)
Much less pain	178	62.8
Some what less pain	76	26.8
About the same amount of pain	16	5.6
Somewhat more pain	9	3.1
Much more pain	4	1.4

Average is 1.6

Question 5: Did the facilitators distribute time fairly or did they spend too much time with one or a few people?

Distributed time fairly 1 2 3 4 5 too much time with a few

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	228	75.2
2	36	11.8
3	10	3.3
4	10	3.3
5	19	6.2

Average is 1.5

Question 6: Did the facilitators handle disagreements or conflict in the group in a constructive way?

Very constructive 1 2 3 4 5 not constructive

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	175	74.4
2	27	11.4
3	9	3.8
4	3	1.2
5	21	8.9

Average 1.6

Question 7: Did facilitators encourage people to express feelings as they told their story or did they allow people simply to relate the facts?

Encouraged feelings 1 2 3 4 5 did not encourage feelings

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	236	77.8
2	37	12.2
3	9	2.9
4	5	1.6
5	16	5.2

Average 1.4

Question 8: Taking the whole experience into account, would you say you moved forward, remained in about the same place, or moved backward?

Scale	Respondents	Percentages (%)
Moved forward	282	93
Remained about the same	20	6.6
Move backward	1	0.3

Question 9: Please make any comments you wish about the celebration

The narrative comments indicate that people left the workshop with a renewed sense of self worth and a willingness to contribute to the healing of others. “The celebration was an eye opener to me. It helped me see that there are many other people who have had experiences similar to mine and I could contribute to the healing of the South African community.”

Question 10: Are you different at the end of the workshop than you were at the beginning? Please tell us how?

Workshops were highly appreciated by the respondents, who said that the experience helped them better understand their past and how to deal with feelings that they have carried for many years. Comments centered around three themes, namely, forgiveness and reconciliation, feeling less pain, and understanding other people. A few typical examples are given below.

Forgiveness and reconciliation

- The workshop was an opportunity to tell my story. It made me feel respected acknowledged and moves me forward towards reconciliation and forgiveness.
- I am feeling very happy because I realized that I have to forgive. If I do not forgive, I am hurting myself.
- Being in this workshop, I am willing to forgive a policeman who killed my brother’s son. After this workshop, I will go to him and tell him that I forgive him
- It feels much different to talk about my confusion and pain and to hear other’s stories. It made me take the step of boldness into my destiny and to get the inner healing to be changed and transformed and be relieved. I am able to ask for forgiveness.

Feeling less pain

- I was amazed by the ability that I had to express my deepest most sensitive feelings of pain, guilt, and disappointment. As a person who is always very reserved, I found some sense of comfort by listening to others story, by relating and acknowledging that I am not alone.

- I feel very released from the hurts and anger that I was holding onto.
- When I first walked in the room, I never imagined that anybody could have made a positive impact on all that I have been carrying with me for the last six years. At the end of the workshop, the burdens had been taken off me.
- I feel much more relieved of the baggage that I carried around so long.
- My burdens I had been carrying so many years have been loaded out of my soul.
- Being in the small group, I felt relieved after sharing my story. Before the workshop, nobody knew what I went through during the apartheid regime. I kept it inside and it caused anger, racism and hatred. This workshop was an opportunity for me to share my experience for the first time.

Understanding other people

- I was a white person in a predominantly black group. I felt separated from them because of language and culture. Nevertheless, through the small group sharing, I felt accepted as I am and encouraged to be myself. It was important for me to be accepted by the black people because of the history of our country.
- The workshop was breaking chains of silence among different race, colour and ethnics.
- I realized that my pain is not the worst. Others have felt even greater pain. I got strengths to move on in my life.
- I have been greatly encouraged to realize that people from a diversity of backgrounds and life experiences are being brought together in love.

Question 11: Please write any other comments you would like to make about the workshop?

Some respondents spoke about the experience of being together in a workshop as a multiracial group, whether white, black, or coloured. Many of them appealed to the Institute to reach out to the entire South African community and offer a programme of workshops in other South Africa provinces. Most responses expressed appreciation to the Institute and the facilitators.

Chapter 6. Analysis: Post workshop questionnaire, 4-12+ months after the workshop

A total of 160 post-questionnaires were mailed to all participants who attended a workshop between July 2005 and April 2006. A total of 33 responses were returned (21%). Among those who responded, the average time since completing the workshop was 8 months (range 4-14 months). Responses to the quantitative questions are summarized in table form below, while answers to the three open-ended questions are summarized narratively.

Question 1: How diverse with respect to age was the workshop?

Very diverse 1 2 3 4 5 not diverse

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	15	46.8
2	7	21.8
3	8	25
4	1	3.1
5	1	3.1

Average is 1.9

Question 2: How diverse with respect to race was the workshop?

Very diverse 1 2 3 4 5 not diverse

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	13	40.6
2	7	21.8
3	5	15.6
4	5	15.6
5	2	6.2

Average is 2.2

Question 3: How diverse with respect to gender was the workshop?

Very diverse 1 2 3 4 5 not diverse

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	18	54.5
2	4	12.1
3	6	18.1
4	1	3.0
5	4	12.1

Average is 2.1

Question 4: At the time of the workshop, did you feel that your story was respectfully listened to?

I felt respected 1 2 3 4 5 I did not feel respected

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	23	69.6
2	6	18.1
3	2	6.0
4	1	3.0
5	1	3.0

Average is 1.5

Question 5: At the time of the workshop, did you feel that you were able to let go of painful feeling about what happened to you in the past?

I was able to let go 1 2 3 4 5 I was not able to let go

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	14	42.4
2	6	18.1
3	10	30.3
4	2	6.0
5	1	3.0

Average is 2.1

Question 6: At the time of the workshop, did you leave feeling that the experience helped you to have more positive feelings about yourself?

Helped me a lot 1 2 3 4 5 helped me very little

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	19	57.5
2	7	21.2
3	5	15.1
4	2	6.0
5	0	0

Average is 1.7

Question 7: At the time of the workshop, did you leave feeling more or less optimistic about the future of your country than when you arrived?

Much more optimistic 1 2 3 4 5 much less optimistic

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	14	42.4
2	12	36.3
3	3	9.0
4	3	9.0
5	1	3.0

Average is 1.9

Question 8: Now as you look back on the workshop, how much were you changed by it?

Changed a great deal 1 2 3 4 5 not changed at all

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	9	27.2
2	12	36.3
3	10	30.3
4	2	6.0
5	0	0

Average is 2.2

Question 9: Now as you look back on the workshop, how much did it change the way you view your own racial or ethnic group?

Changed a great deal 1 2 3 4 5 not changed at all

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	11	34.3
2	12	37.5
3	6	18.1
4	3	9.0
5	0	0

Average is 2.0

Question 10: Now as you look back on the workshop, how much did it change the way you view other racial and ethnic groups?

Changed a great deal 1 2 3 4 5 not changed at all

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	12	36.3
2	12	36.3
3	5	15.6
4	3	9.3
5	0	0

Average is 2.0

Question 11: Now as you look back on the workshop, do you feel more or less optimistic about the future of your country?

Much more optimistic 1 2 3 4 5 much less optimistic

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	11	33.3
2	14	42.4
3	4	12.1
4	3	9.0
5	1	3.0

Average is 2.1

Question 12: Now as you look back on the workshop, how would you rate the workshop's overall effect on your life?

Quite positive 1 2 3 4 5 quite negative

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	20	60.6
2	6	18.1
3	7	21.2
4	0	0
5	0	0

Average is 1.6

Question 13: Considering how you feel about the workshop now, how strongly would you recommend that a good friend take the workshop?

Recommend strongly 1 2 3 4 5 definitely not recommend

Scale (1-5)	Respondents	Percentages (%)
1	26	78.7
2	6	18.1
3	0	0
4	1	3.0
5	0	0

Average is 1.3

Question 14: (Optional) Please write anything else you wish to tell us about your response to the workshop.

The following are comments from participants, 4-12+ months after the workshop:

- As a coloured person, I felt that the workshop was an opportunity to hear other race's experience. I felt that it was not really concentrating on the coloured group. I realized how forgiving black people are.
- The workshop changed my life extremely well. I learnt to believe in it and myself and to look upon myself with esteem. I learnt to respect other people's perspective and embrace one another's culture. I stopped discriminating against other people since then.
- The Healing of Memories helped me a great deal to face and deal with the hurts that I have been carrying around with me. My pain was not cause by racial/ethnic discrimination. Instead it was caused by the rejection from both parents. Since the workshop, I managed to talk to my parents and was able to forgive and love them—something that I was not able to do before the workshop.
- The workshop helped me to respect other people whom I meet on daily basis.
- The workshop was an opportunity to tell my story, to listen to others as well and to express my feelings. The confidentiality of the workshop made me feel free to talk. We are no longer the prisoners of the past but the victors of the future. These are the words that keep on coming out to my mind since the workshop.
- "I would like you to continue doing this workshop. It has a very positive effect on people including myself."

In one instance we were able to compare the end-of-workshop questionnaire with the same respondent's post-workshop questionnaire several months later. Immediately after the workshop:

"I was able to understand my pain and anger that I have carrying so many years. Telling my story for the first time was such a wonderful experience—something that has never happened before in my life and that makes such a difference."

And thirteen month later:

"The Healing of Memories helped me a great deal to face and deal with the hurts that I have been carrying around with me. My pain was not caused by racial/ethnic discrimination but was caused by the rejection that I have experienced by both my parents. I have learnt to forgive and to love in spite of my experiences. Thank you so much for your help in realizing and identifying the problem."

This is an indication that the effects the respondents report are indeed enduring.

Chapter 7: Summary, Recommendation, and Conclusions

Summary

Participants highly appreciated the workshops, were able to let go of painful feeling from their past, often opened to the experiences of others, and these benefits appear to endure.

All participants interviewed and most who responded to the questionnaires found the workshops to be a positive and life-affirming experience. In many different ways, they indicated that they changed their attitudes and behaviours and learned to be more aware and understanding of themselves and others. They returned for additional workshops and referred family, friends, and neighbors. Feelings of anger, hatred, guilt, and resentment came up in all workshops. Even those who were quite self-aware were sometimes surprised at the intensity of their feelings, and many people were led to acknowledge more fully than ever before the impact that their past had on them. Most reported that they felt empowered to free themselves of the past and let go of pain.

Feeling thus empowered, quite a few persons were able to open their hearts to the experience of ‘the other.’ Although at the beginning of a workshop it often appeared that everyone had a different story, as the workshop proceeded, participants began to discover what unites them, grew in empathy for others including those different from themselves. Many began to take at least one step towards forgiveness and reconciliation including one person who left prepared to forgive the policeman who had killed a brother’s son. A few reported taking concrete actions after the workshop to reconcile with persons from whom they had been estranged for many years.

Since all those interviewed had taken a workshop many months previously, the strength and consistency of their positive comments, as well as answers to the post workshop questionnaire (see below) strongly imply that the gains made are enduring. More systematic follow up would no doubt help people consolidate the gains they have made. Future research might also inquire whether and how participants made specific behavioral changes.

Facilitators appear to be motivated by gains in their own personal growth, by an altruistic wish to help others, and by patriotism. They are a remarkably dedicated and sophisticated group. Their comments and insights were exceedingly rich and helpful and revealed how perceptive and skillful they are as group leaders. They made many recommendations for improvements, some of which are highlighted below. Nearly all said that leading workshops deepened their own healing, and they spoke in moving terms of feeling a part of the Healing of Memories family. They reported forming lasting and meaningful relationships within the mixed facilitator team and that this helped them to better cope with conflict in the work place and elsewhere and to improve their leadership skills.

Facilitators also talked with great satisfaction of witnessing changes they helped to foster in others as the workshop progressed. Finally, they have a deep commitment to South Africa and see themselves as helping to create a more humane and caring society based on a respect for diversity. One person said that he decided to become a facilitator because, “I wanted to do something to build my country.”

An unexpected finding was that when facilitators belong to a different racial or ethnic group than participants and are thus seen as ‘the other,’ this can be a catalyst for mutual understanding and reconciliation. The implication here is that even when there is not much diversity among the participants at a workshop, the diversity brought by the facilitators can be very important. The Institute has had

difficulty in recruiting white participants in sufficient numbers but has a number of white facilitators. One black participant spoke movingly of his experience in which his group leader was a white woman and the impact that that had on him because he felt deeply cared about by her. He had arrived quite angry at whites and reported, “I became quite naughty (in the group) and she said, ‘It’s time to go on,’ in a gentle way without retaliating at me.” He then talked of how that was a turning point for him in his relationships to whites. In a similar way, one refugee spoke of having changed her perception of South Africans because of the South African facilitator.

Recommendations

Facilitators made several concrete suggestions for improvement based on problems they identified. For participants, they recommended,

- Better briefing of participants in advance. Participants sometimes arrive not having understood the purpose of the workshop,
- More attention to explaining the written end-of-workshop evaluation, especially how to use the numeric scale from 1-5. They said that this is something that people can comprehend if it is explained carefully, and the quality of the feedback we get will be markedly improved,
- Improvement in transportation, which is often chaotic, resulting in both facilitators and participants arriving late. This creates an unfavorable atmosphere to begin the weekend.

With respect to facilitator self-care, they recommended,

- more regular and thorough debriefings, which they said tend to be haphazard,
- that they be advised beforehand of any unusual participants, such as foreigners, academics and professionals, or heavily traumatized persons. This helps them prepare emotionally.

A few resentments surfaced, which in our view can be corrected by careful attention to procedures, standards for evaluating facilitators, transparency in their application, and by forthrightness on the part of those making decisions.

The researchers have several programmatic recommendations.

- Follow up for participants need serious attention. We recommend that a second optional weekend workshop be instituted as a form of follow-up. Participants nearly unanimously asked for it, even though they were aware of reunions and second phase workshops. We suggest that the second weekend workshop be restructured specifically as follow-up and not just a repeat of the first. This might include, for example, asking participants to report on gains and difficulties following their first experience.
- A preliminary orientation meeting with prospective refugee participants is essential. This prepares them for the emotional work and allows those who are not ready to opt out.
- Fruitful areas for further research include,
 - documenting what behavioral changes participants have made following a workshop.
 - devising an appropriate protocol and implementing an evaluation program for our HIV/Aids work,
 - devising an appropriate protocol and making appropriate arrangements to evaluate the effect of prison workshops.
 - arranging for evaluation of Healing of Memories work in other countries.

Concluding remarks

A Healing of Memories workshop is, in our view, quite a special affair. Father Michael often describes the workshops as “story telling in the context of journey.” That journey is crafted from a number of different elements, all of which play an important role in creating the healing experience. In addition to story telling in small groups, these elements include a warm welcome, a safe residential space, nourishing food, crayon drawing, relaxed time together for bonding, making a personal peace symbol of clay, and a liturgy of celebration devised by participants as a group effort. In fact, one could think of the entire workshop as a sort of liturgical journey that moves, as the best liturgies do, to a hopeful climax, drawing people along with it. Facilitators, in particular, were articulate in identifying the role played by the various elements. The healing power of the workshop experience has to be understood in this holistic way and it is one of features that distinguishes Healing of Memories workshops from counseling or therapy.

Undertaking this research has been a humbling and uplifting experience. Beyond the specific comments that people made, everyone we spoke with, whether staff, facilitators, or participants, revealed an unmistakable, if sometimes inexpressible sense that they are involved in a very special and solemn mission. This sense is what binds together the Healing of Memories family in its diversity and motivates its members in their various capacities to give their all. It is a priceless asset.

Appendix A: End of workshop questionnaire

For most questions below, there is a scale of 1-5. **Number 1** represents your most **positive** response, while **number 5** represents your most **negative** response. You may have a response in between these two possibilities. Please circle the number that fits your experience. For example, in the first question below, if you were able to tell your story fully, you would circle 1; if you felt cut off so you could not finish, you would circle 5. If it was somewhere between these two extremes, you would circle the number that fits your experience.

1) Were you able to tell your story as fully as you wanted to?

yes, I did 1 2 3 4 5 no, I couldn't

2) Were your limits respected so that you were not pushed to go further than you felt comfortable doing?

yes, my limits were respected 1 2 3 4 5 no, I was pushed

3) If there were people in your group who were much different from you, were you able to identify with their experience?

yes, did identify very much 1 2 3 4 5 no, could not identify at all

If the question does not apply, write N/A_____

4) Do you have more or less painful feelings now than when you began the workshop?

much less pain_____

somewhat less pain_____

about the same amount of pain_____

somewhat more pain_____

much more pain_____

If the question does not apply, write N/A_____

5) Did the facilitators distribute time fairly or did they spend too much time with one or a few people?

distributed time fairly 1 2 3 4 5 too much time with a few

6) Did the facilitators handle disagreements or conflict in the group in a constructive way?

very constructive 1 2 3 4 5 not constructive

If the question does not apply, write N/A_____

7) Did facilitators encourage people to express feelings as they told their story or did they allow people simply to relate the facts?

encouraged feelings 1 2 3 4 5 did not encourage feelings

8) Taking the whole experience into account, would you say you moved forward, remained in about the same place, or moved backward? *(Please check one.)*

moved forward _____ remained about the same _____ moved backward _____

9) Please make any comments you wish about the celebration.

10) Are you any different at the end of the workshop than you were at the beginning? If you are, please tell us how. If you are not, please tell us why not.

11) Please write any other comments you would like to make about the workshop?

12) Would you be willing to be interviewed over the telephone about your workshop experience? If you are, please give us your name and contact details below.

There is no need to give your name unless you are willing to be interviewed.

Name _____

Telephone _____ Mobile phone _____ (14/10/05)

Appendix B: Post workshop questionnaire, 4-12+ months after the workshop

Dear Friend ,

Some months ago you attended a Healing of Memories Workshop. We thank you for your participation. We would like to ask your help in order to find out to what degree the workshops have a lasting effect. Only you and your fellow workshop participants have this important information.

*Please help us by taking a little time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. The questionnaire is not long and should take only a few minutes. **Do not put your name on it because we want your responses to be as honest as possible.***

We've provided a self-addressed envelope with a stamp that you can use to return the questionnaire. Even if you do not have time to fill it out, please return the unused questionnaire to us.

Thank you. We appreciate your help very much.

*Mongezi Mngese
Workshop Coordinator*

1) Approximately how long ago was the workshop that you attended? _____

*For the questions below, there is a scale of 1-5. The **first** number represents your most **positive** response, while the **fifth** number represents your most **negative** response. You may have a response somewhere in between these two possibilities.*

Please circle the number that best fits your own experience. For example, in question two below, if the group was very diverse with respect to age, you would circle 1; on the other hand, if the group was not at all diverse with respect to age, you would circle 5. If it was somewhere between these two extremes, you would circle the number that represents how diverse the group seemed to you.

The questions on this page ask you to tell us how you were feeling about the workshop then, at the time you took it. The questions on the next page ask how you feel about the workshop now, several months later.

2) How diverse with respect to age was the workshop? (Please circle one)

very diverse 1 2 3 4 5 not diverse

3) How diverse with respect to race was the workshop? *(Please circle one)*

very diverse 1 2 3 4 5 not diverse

4) How diverse with respect to gender was the workshop? *(Please circle one)*

very diverse 1 2 3 4 5 not diverse

5) At the time of the workshop, did you feel that your story was respectfully listened to? *(Please circle one)*

yes, I felt respected 1 2 3 4 5 no, I did not feel respected

6) At the time of the workshop, did you feel that you were able to let go of painful feelings about what happened to you in the past? *(Please circle one)*

yes, I was able to let go 1 2 3 4 5 no, I was not able to let go

7) At the time of the workshop, did you leave feeling that the experience helped you to have more positive feelings about yourself? *(Please circle one)*

helped me a lot 1 2 3 4 5 helped me very little

8) At the time of the workshop, did you leave feeling more or less optimistic about the future of your country than when you arrived? *(Please circle one)*

much more optimistic 1 2 3 4 5 much less optimistic

9) Now as you look back on the workshop, how much were you changed by it? *(Please circle one)*

changed a great deal 1 2 3 4 5 not changed at all

10) Now as you look back on the workshop, how much did it change the way you view your own racial or ethnic group? *(Please circle one)*

changed a great deal 1 2 3 4 5 not changed at all

11) Now, as you look back on the workshop, how much did it change the way you view other racial and ethnic groups? *(Please circle one)*

changed a great deal 1 2 3 4 5 not changed at all

12) Now as you look back on the workshop, do you feel more or less optimistic about the future of your country? *(Please circle one)*

much more optimistic 1 2 3 4 5 much less optimistic

13) Now as you look back on the workshop, how would you rate the workshop's overall effect on your life? *(Please circle one)*

quite positive 1 2 3 4 5 quite negative

14) Considering how you feel about the workshop now, how strongly would you recommend that a good friend take the workshop? *(Please circle one)*

recommend strongly 1 2 3 4 5 definitely not recommend

15) *(Optional)* Please write anything else you wish to tell us about your response to the workshop. You may use the back of the page.

Appendix C: Interview protocol for South Africans and refugees

Interviewee _____ Date of interview _____

Telephone # _____ Mobile phone # _____

Address _____

Venue of workshop _____ Date of workshop _____

Interviewer _____

Affiliation of interviewer (if not IHOM staff or volunteer): _____

- 1) What were the main issues that came up for you when you told your story?
- 2) Did you make a shift in the way you see your story? Explain.
- 3) Were you able to let go of anything painful about your past? If so, what?
- 4) Were you able to embrace something new and positive? If so what?
- 5) Did you change the way you view how your nation's history has affected you?
- 6) Did you change the way you view communities of people different from yourself?
- 7) Would you have liked some follow up experience or was the workshop itself enough?
- 8) If you wanted follow up experience, what would you have liked?
- 9) Do you have any suggestions about what we might do to improve the workshops?
- 10) Please add anything else that you would like to tell us about your experience.

Appendix D: Protocol for interviewing facilitators

Basic data about the facilitator

- Name, gender, age, race.
- How many HOM workshops have you attended as a participant?
- How long have you been a facilitator?
- How many workshops have you facilitated?
- Have you facilitated with special groups such as refugees, people with AIDS, prisoners, or in other countries.

Motivation

- What motivated you to begin facilitator training?
- What continues to motivate you?
- What benefit do you personally receive from doing this work?

Connection to the Institute

- Do you feel valued and appreciated by the Institute?
- How much a part of the Institute do you feel?

Training

- What was the most valuable part of training?
- What was the least valuable part?
- How could the training be improved?
- Would you like some form of continuing training? If so, what would be most helpful?

The emotional effect of listening

- How is the experience of listening to other people's stories for you?
- Does listening to other stories bring up old memories of your own?
- Do you carry away an emotional burden after a workshop? If so, how do you deal with that? How could we help you to lighten that burden?

Their evaluation of the workshops' methodology and effectiveness

- As a facilitator do you personally have a favorite part of the workshop? What is it? Why is it your favorite?
- Do you have a least favorite part of the workshop? What is it? Why is it your least favorite?
- Generally speaking, how honest and forthcoming do you think participants are in expressing their thoughts and feelings in the small groups?
- How good a balance do you think we strike between encouraging disclosure and yet not pushing people beyond their comfort zone?
- Do you think the workshops have a lasting effect on participants? Why do you say that?
- From your viewpoint, what is it about the workshops that promote healing? Is it a similar process for everyone or do people differ a great deal in what they take from the workshops?
- Do you think one aspect of the workshop is particularly important? If so, what is it and why?
- How successful do you think the workshops are at promoting mutual understanding among participants that come from different backgrounds and experiences?

Special needs of different groups of participants

- Do you think the workshops are equally effective with South Africans from different racial and ethnic backgrounds or are there differences we should take into account? If so, how?

- If you have facilitated with specific groups such as refugees, people with AIDS and their caregivers, prisoners, or visitors from other countries, have you noticed any differences among these groups that we should be aware of?

Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement: Interviews with Workshop Participants

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. We will be asking you some questions about how you experienced your workshop and whether or not it helped you. Be as specific as you can about what was helpful and what was not. If you have ideas about how the workshops could be improved, we'd like to know those too. Your honesty helps us improve.

Why we are interviewing you. This information is very important because what we learn from you helps us do a better job. We will take your comments very seriously. Other people, especially funders, ask us about what we have learned from these interviews. Occasionally we may want to describe or even quote comments you make and we sometimes like to include them in our newsletter.

How we will use your comments. We will not use your name without asking your permission. We may, however, describe what you have told us in a general way or even quote something you have said without giving your name. If this is agreeable to you, please read the statement and sign below.

I have read the confidentiality agreement above and consent to having my comments used in the way it describes.

Name (print) _____ Date _____

Signature _____