



Sharing your story

Guidelines for genocide survivors

It's a big deal to share a personal story of genocide

These guidelines were initiated by and written with survivor speakers who felt they needed more support and information.

The guidelines will:

- Help you decide whether now is the right time for you to share your story.
- Offer suggestions to help you prepare your story.
- Provide ideas and exercises to help you understand and respond to the emotions and memories that sharing your story may bring up.

“Both new and experienced speakers will find insights here. How you feel about your story changes: each time it's different.”

“I have been speaking for eleven years now and have used some of these methods unknowingly so can confirm their effectiveness! I'm happy to see them in print.”



You and your story

Before speaking about your experiences of genocide it may be helpful to ask yourself a few questions.

Why do I want to share my story?

It's important to understand your motivation. One way to explore this is to think about what the best outcome of sharing would be, both for yourself and for the audience.

Do I feel ready to share my story?

Is now a time in your life when speaking about your past to others is both possible and manageable? Of course, there's no such thing as complete readiness. It's normal to be unsure or nervous. Ask yourself if this is the right time for you, despite challenges that might emerge.

Do I feel safe in myself?

Do you have concerns that telling your story might bring back symptoms such as nightmares, overwhelming memories, serious withdrawal, numbness or depression? Trauma responses can happen at any time and it's good to know your own level of vulnerability. Talk it over with someone you trust before you decide. It can be especially helpful to talk with other genocide survivors who will understand at a deep level what you might be going through. This may make you feel less alone. Consider what support exists in the connecting organisation and in your community that can help assess your own readiness, minimise the chance of serious reactions, and make a plan for managing these reactions if they occur.

Do I feel safe in the settings in which I will speak?

Are you ready to talk about your experiences with this particular audience? How might the size of the audience or format for the talk affect you? Talk to friends and connecting organisations about whether this is the right place to start and steps you can take to make sure you feel safe.

“A school is a community where seeds are planted and expected to grow. Testifying is planting good seeds. Even if it is a tough testimony, the message whispers hope to the listeners.”

Window of tolerance

A helpful concept to assess your readiness to share your story is the window of tolerance. This is a term psychologists and others who work with traumatised people use to describe the space where you can remember or speak about your experiences without past trauma intruding into the present in overwhelming and unmanageable ways.

Trauma affects your brain and body. The window of tolerance is the space where you are best able to regulate your nervous system – the connections between your brain and body. Calming activities such as those listed at the end of this document, being with people who support you, and being outside in nature can help you stay within, or return to, the window of tolerance.

Window of tolerance

Overwhelmed	My window*	Absent
<p>flashbacks, feel I'm living in the past</p> <p>angry, irritable, feel like I'm fighting</p> <p>scared</p> <p>anxious, agitated</p> <p>BIG feelings – fear, terror, rage, grief</p> <p>too many memories</p> <p>broken, fragmented inside</p> <p>shame and guilt</p>	I can talk about my trauma and take care of myself.	<p>withdrawn, in a dark place</p> <p>desire to run away and hide</p>
	I can accept help and support from others when needed.	<p>frozen</p> <p>lonely, isolated</p>
	I have skills to calm my body and mind.	<p>numb</p> <p>feel dead inside</p>
	I can stay in the present while talking about the past.	<p>lost</p> <p>empty</p>
	I can differentiate between challenges that help me grow and gain confidence, and challenges that are too hard at this time.	<p>depressed, hopeless, despairing</p>
	I can be caring and kind to myself when I feel overwhelmed or shut down.	<p>contained</p>
	I can be kind to myself when reflecting on the successes and challenges of my talk.	<p>shame and guilt</p>
	I can make good choices for myself and set boundaries.	<p>crying, sad</p>

* You don't have to be perfect and be able to manage everything all the time. These statements are guidelines for assessing your window, and your capacities.

How big is your window at this time? Are any of the feelings in the overwhelmed and absent boxes familiar to you? Are there words you'd like to add?

Your window is not static but changeable. Understand that it can slam shut for a while. But overall, is your window more open than it was in the past? What has enabled this wider opening?

Feeling some agitation after sharing or feeling a need to withdraw for a while is totally normal; you cannot expect to talk about painful times without some agitation or distancing within yourself. But these feelings should be manageable and not linger too long.

Ask yourself the following questions, keeping in mind the window of tolerance and whether your answers widen or narrow the opening.

- **Who have you shared your story with and what was that like?**
 - What was the situation in which you shared?
 - How did you feel afterwards?
- **If it was positive, ask yourself why. For example:**
 - Did it release something in you?
 - Did you feel safe?
 - What created that safety?
- **If it was not positive or if you were unsure about the sharing, ask yourself why. For example:**
 - Did the person(s) you shared with respond in a way that seemed disinterested, judgmental or unsafe?
 - Did you wish afterwards that you had shared more?
 - Or did you wish you had omitted some of what you shared? Why?
- **Were you able to take care of yourself afterwards?**
 - Did you have support?
 - What was helpful?
 - What might have been helpful that didn't happen?
- **Do you understand how your emotions relate to your trauma?**
 - As one genocide survivor speaker commented, "I need to be able to understand where I am emotionally as this helps to protect myself and others."
- **How do you imagine sharing your story would be similar or different to other times you have spoken about what you went through?**

If you are ready to share your story, please read on for more guidance.

If you decide not to share your story at this time, this is not a failure of any kind. Instead, it is a positive statement about your own needs and capacity right now. It is not letting down other survivors. There are many ways to contribute meaningfully that don't involve sharing your personal experience.

Common concerns

When the Ishami Foundation and King's College London brought together a group of genocide survivors from different countries who share their stories in public, they found they had many of the same fears and challenges. They appreciated knowing that others were struggling with similar thoughts and feelings.

Here are a few of their concerns:

- I haven't suffered as much as some – do I have a right to speak?
- Is my story too horrible to share?
- Is my story too complicated to fit into the time available?
- What happens if I become emotional during my talk?
- Is pressure from others making me do more than I can?

The group members found that sharing brought relief. Their concerns were normal. Several reflected that suffering is not a competition: they all suffered and all their stories are valid. Others reported that gathering to share experiences and supporting each other was important and even enjoyable. Realising that you are not alone in your concerns enables a deeper confidence.

Preparing to share your story

You've decided to go ahead! Here are some tips to help you prepare.

- **As you begin, remind yourself why sharing is important to you.** How does your talk align with your motivations for speaking? Knowing this will help you focus on what you want to share.
- **Anticipate possible challenges.** Be clear with yourself about aspects of your story that you do not wish to speak about.
- **Make sure your preparations include emotional planning.** Put support in place. Practice the self-care and grounding activities at the end of this document.
- **Consider whether speaking aids might help you.** Some people like to make a list of the main aspects of their talk and the order in which they want to address them. Some may want to be more formal with PowerPoint slides to guide the presentation. Others like a small outline or cards with prompts. Whatever your preference, plan how you wish to organise the presentation.
- **Think about how you will structure your talk.** There are many ways to do this – none are right or wrong. Some are listed in the box on the next page. Revisiting your motivation for sharing your story can help you identify what is most important to you.
- **Talk to other survivors** about how they organise their talks.
- **Once you decide on a structure, make a list of the main points you want to make in each area of your talk,** and build your presentation around that.

How to structure a talk

You might consider the following different options:

- Going through the past chronologically – from before the genocide, to during the genocide, to afterwards. Think about how much time you wish to spend on each section.
 - Focussing more on the consequences of genocide and on recovery. You could talk briefly about what happened, before moving on to the years immediately after genocide, and how you feel now. What has changed? What has helped you create the life you have now? What keeps you going? Why did you decide to share your story?
 - Structuring your story around two or three themes. For example, how your story speaks to polarisation, violence, rescue, justice or reconciliation.
 - Structuring your story around particular people, for example your family members.
 - Starting with a vivid memory you want to describe in depth to draw listeners into your story. You'll then need to decide how to locate this in the context of your broader story. You can return to this vivid image or memory at the end of your story.
- **Do you want to rehearse your talk?** For some this builds confidence but for others it might be emotionally difficult. One option might be to rehearse the beginning and end of the presentation but not the details of what you went through. If rehearsing is important for you, perhaps ask someone you trust to listen.
 - **Think about what will happen afterwards and make a plan.** The section on what happens after you share your story offers some options.

Deciding that there are parts of your story you do not wish to share, and questions you don't wish to answer, is perfectly okay. You are in charge of your own experience and can make your own choices. A sense of control of self and body is taken away from people who have suffered violation and needs to be relearned. Clarity with yourself and during your presentation practices good boundaries and self-care.

Details and logistics are important!

Don't get so focused on the content of your presentation that you forget to make sure all the logistics are in place. Knowing how the time will unfold helps you feel settled in yourself and enables you to focus on your talk.

- **Do you have the information you need to prepare?** (audience, format, time available, group size etc.)
- **Do you have all the information and contacts you need to get there on the day without stress?** (Clear directions, public transport, address, location of reception, name of key contact, etc.)
- **If there are details that have not been provided, do not hesitate to ask.** Even if you are uncertain about asking questions or making requests, know that this will help the event be more successful for everyone.

- **What has been set up for afterwards?** It can be helpful to have someone who was present available to debrief with you. It could be good to have a quiet place where you can sit awhile before going outside.
- **You may find it helpful to look at our guidelines for schools** which provide more details about how to set up a visit from a survivor and the information you can expect to be given to you in advance. See the [Ishami Foundation website](#) for more information.

Sharing your story

Survivors often worry that they will become emotional during their presentation, making it difficult to continue. They worry that they might panic and forget everything they wanted to say. They worry that they won't be able to handle difficult questions well. It's okay if these things happen – people will understand that you are talking about difficult times in your life. But it's useful to have some strategies to draw on in challenging moments.

Responding to difficult questions

- **If a question is asked that is too painful or inappropriate to answer, allow yourself some time and take a few breaths.** Remember you don't have to answer questions that are not within your safety boundaries or questions that are outside your personal experience, such as ones about politics. It is fine to say, "I'm sorry, I'm not able to answer that question."
- **An especially difficult situation is when an audience member asks a question that engages in genocide denial.** It is deeply painful when a listener challenges the very existence of the genocide you endured. You will need to seek support afterwards, but in the moment try to stay rooted in your own experience. "I am here to tell you about my own life. This is my story, my truth, and I ask you to listen to it respectfully."
- **You do not need to be an expert on your country's history.** If you are asked a question about the past and do not know the answer, you can suggest that the teacher or organiser might be able to assist with finding the answer later.
- **It helps listeners when you model boundaries.** Listeners with traumatic stories of their own will learn that they can also choose what to share and with whom.

Emotions while sharing

Humans have emotions! We experience sadness, happiness, distress, anger, joy, guilt, shame and so much more. Emotions that arise during your talk mean that you are alive to your own experience. This is a good thing as long as you are in your window of tolerance and the emotions do not interfere with your ability to continue or the audience's ability to listen.

Sometimes, though, you may struggle to stay in the window. One survivor commented "I was fighting hard not to get emotional as I felt I didn't want people to be overwhelmed." When dealing with the legacy of genocide, preparation will help but it won't be easy. You are doing a very brave thing in sharing your story.

Many cultures also have rules about expressing feelings. If this is the case for your culture(s), it can be a challenge to notice and accept what arises while you are speaking.

Here are some tips that might help you have some choices about how to manage the feelings.

- **Before you begin,** you could let the listeners know that it is not easy to talk about your experience of genocide. Tell them that you might have strong reactions or seem like you're not feeling anything. Tell them this is normal and that you will let them know how you are doing if you need to. This gives them permission to not worry about you.
- **Once you are sharing,** if the feelings are mild but obvious, you might say: "I'm feeling tearful right now but I'm okay." If the feelings are too intense, you might say: "This part of my story is upsetting me right now, so I won't say more about it." Either way, stop and take a few breaths.
- **If you are numb, this is also a feeling.** Pause and take a few breaths, accepting this way of protecting yourself. When you become aware of numbness, breathing can help connect you to yourself and the listeners. If it's helpful, you might acknowledge that the events you endured are hard to talk about.
- **Other strategies might include adapting the activities on the self-care page.** If you wiggle your toes to feel more grounded, no-one will notice. Or take a breath in which the out breath is longer than the in breath. Or mentally tell yourself that the past is over and that you are safe now.
- **Sometimes even the most experienced speakers forget what they are saying or feel panicked.** If this happens, breathe, take a moment, and if necessary, acknowledge that you have lost your thread. If you have note cards you can glance at these as a way to remind you about your plan. If you get confused, the organiser may step in with comments or questions to give you a moment. If they don't, you could ask them to take over for a couple of minutes or help you find your thread.

"Each time I share my heavy testimony and answer the students' questions, I experience a genuine happiness in sharing our humanity."

After sharing your story

You won't know in advance how you will feel, but however you feel matters.

Feelings are just feelings, they are not good or bad. For example, we might think anger is bad because angry people hurt others. But the feeling is normal, it is the behaviour that gets us into trouble. If you distinguish feelings from behaviours, you can accept the feelings and see that you have a choice as to how you express them.

Make a plan to look after yourself after the talk, whatever emerges. Choose someone you trust (friend, family member, fellow survivor, therapist) and agree on a time to talk with them within a day or two of the talk. Setting this up in advance allows you to not worry about whether or not you should reach out. You might arrange to see different people for different reasons. One person might be helpful for talking through your responses and emotions. You might meet someone else to do something you enjoy, such as going for a walk in nature.

Some of your responses might surprise you! All your responses are okay. Not everyone responds the same way and you will respond differently each time you share your story. Be curious about how you feel.

- **For example, you might feel terrific and then guilty that you feel good after talking about genocide.** If you feel good, it's likely because you have done something empowering for yourself and something that is of service to others. Allow the positive feelings.
- **Perhaps you feel nothing at all.** Try not to be hard on yourself for feeling nothing. Know that numbness is your body finding a way to protect yourself.
- **If feelings of numbness or overwhelm are intense and don't fade, perhaps you have overstepped the window of tolerance and need to bring yourself back into balance.** Refer to the self-care activities that can give you some ideas about how to bring yourself back into balance.
- **Genocide is relational trauma: you have been hurt by others, sometimes by people you knew, perhaps even liked or trusted.** So being with others is healing. Human touch, being listened to, just hanging out with someone and laughing brings you back into relationships and connection.
- **Contact with others is helpful if you find yourself going over and over your talk in a negative way.** Reflecting on what worked and what could be improved is a healthy process of learning and growth. But if you are stuck in a negative pattern, it's time to get some outside perspective, perhaps with someone else who has shared their survivor story, or with a trusted person. This outside perspective can also help you to not see everything as your responsibility.
- **Think about feedback (positive and not so positive) that you might offer to the organiser or the survivor organisation.** This can build your confidence.

Don't be afraid to seek help if you feel retraumatised. For example, if thoughts and memories are not going away, if you are unable to separate yourself from the past, feel destabilised and struggle to manage daily life. You could go to your GP, visit the [Mind website](#) or call the [Samaritans](#) on 116 123 for urgent help.

If you do seek help, you can ask questions:

- Does the person or the agency have experience with survivors of mass trauma and genocide?
- Do they have any training in trauma?
- Do they work with migrants and refugees?
- Do they have experience with people from cultures not their own?
- How do they approach counselling and support with people from diverse backgrounds?

People can learn, a counsellor doesn't have to be an expert in everything, but you need to know enough about their approach and experience to feel comfortable with them.

Part of healing from trauma is paying attention to your own needs and capacities in the moment. If you decide that you don't want to do this again because it was too painful and too stimulating in some way, view that as a positive outcome. You have learned something about yourself and you have made a good choice. You can honour your story in other ways. And keep in mind that there may come a time when sharing your story feels right.

Self-care activities

There are exercises you can do to help yourself before, during and after talking about your experiences. This section explains how these exercises work and provides some examples.

Trauma and the body

When your body has experienced trauma, no matter how long ago, it still holds the memory of that experience. Sometimes it may seem that the dangerous past is more with you than the present.

Traumatised bodies are often hyper-vigilant, meaning that they have aroused nervous systems always on the look-out for danger. The nervous system is the way the brain talks to the body. Different parts of this system protect us at times of stress and trauma. For example, the nervous system may help us to fight, flee or freeze. After trauma has passed we may still be left with defensive patterns.

Our nervous system also helps us to rest, manage our emotions and body states and make sense of experiences. As a survivor of genocide, your body knows a great deal about vigilance and defence. You might benefit from increasing your capacity to regulate your feelings and body states to feel calmer and more at rest.

What can help?

The activities below are examples of some of the many methods that trauma-informed professionals use to help people to learn to quiet their nervous systems. They come from somatic experiencing, trauma resourcing and resilience, EMDR, ecopsychology, visualisation and meditation.

We've chosen activities that survivors themselves say are effective. These include breath, body awareness, imagery and time in nature. They all help you to be calm and rooted in the present. This means you can assess current situations and respond to what is going on around you (not to what occurred in the past).

Finding what works for you

There are many different versions of the activities listed here. You can adapt them in any way that is helpful for you. For example, you could change them to include elements of your faith, culture and traditions.

Bear in mind that although trauma affects everyone's nervous system, the ways in which we respond are also determined by our individual identity and experiences, our situation and culture. You may already calm your nervous system in different ways: through prayer, attending a place of worship, being with people who make you feel safe or being in nature.

Learn and practice these new activities in a safe place. Choose two or three activities to start with and practice them regularly.

It may take a while to get the hang of them. If you find it tricky reading the instructions while you are practicing then you could ask someone else to read them out loud for you, nice and slowly. When you get to know the exercises you will be able to do them without notes.

Doing these exercises before you leave home to share your story and again when you return helps you to be calm and alive in your body.

If any of these activities begin to stimulate painful feelings or memories do not do them. The activity is just not right for you at this time. Choose something else.

1. Breathing

Before you do any of the following exercises, take a few moments to be aware of your breathing. You are breathing all the time, it's your one constant in life. Being attentive to breathing brings you into your body and helps you begin to feel more centred in yourself. Let your breath be easy and relaxed, and then begin to notice the breath moving in and out of your body. See if you can slow your breathing a little and follow one whole breath all the way from your nostrils to your belly, and then back out. Breathe fully in and out for at least a couple of minutes. Notice what you experience as you do so.

2. Staying in the present and feeling safe

In your home sit in a comfortable, familiar place.

- Turn your head slowly to the right and take in everything that you see. Be specific: notice the colour of the wall, the frame around a photograph. If there's something that has a particularly strong feeling of safety or attractiveness, linger there a bit longer. Notice what you feel in your body as you look at the familiarity of your daily life.
- Swivel to look behind your right shoulder, still paying attention to all the details of what you see and how you feel in your body.
- Now repeat from the beginning, turning your head to the left, noticing what you see and the response in your body.
- Swivel to look behind your left shoulder, still paying attention to your experience.
- Now look at what is right in front of you. Notice what you see and your response. If you wish, look up and down.
- Finally, close your eyes and reflect on this experience and what you sense in your body.

3. Calming with rocking and tapping

This sequence can be done at any time. You may find it particularly beneficial after the first breathing exercise.

- Sit or stand in a comfortable position.
- Gently rock from side to side and allow that rocking motion to be felt throughout your body, soothing any places of anxiety or agitation.
- Now cross your arms and place your hands on your opposite shoulders and, as you continue to rock, begin to tap your shoulders, one after the other, in an alternating rhythm.
- If you like, add some self-affirming words. For example: "I care about myself, I can calm myself when I need to."
- Do this exercise when you feel stressed and want to return to your body.

4. 5-4-3-2-1

This exercise is often taught to trauma survivors. By focussing all your attention on your senses it brings you into the present moment with calmness and curiosity. Practice in a place that is safe, comfortable and familiar. Then imagine going to give a talk feeling this kind of presence, calm and attention.

- Look around you and name five things that you **see**. Be very specific, for example: I see raindrops running down the windowpane, I see a bright orange flower in the painting on my wall, I see my favourite yellow sweater that I am wearing, and so on...
- Name five things that you **hear**. For example, I hear cars on the street outside, I hear the refrigerator humming, I hear a bird in a tree.
- **Touch** five things and describe how it feels. For example: The window is cold, My sweater is fuzzy.
- Repeat this sequence again, only this time name four things you see, hear and touch.
- Repeat with three things in each category, then two, then one.

Once you are comfortable with this exercise you could do it while waiting for the bus, walking to give a talk, or on your way home after sharing your story.

5. Wiggling!

This exercise moves energy through your body in a fun way. It is a nice way to start the day, as it wakes up your body, helping you to feel alive within yourself. Some people make this a whole family activity, wiggling with their spouses and children. Then you are all helping regulate each other's nervous systems!

Once you get familiar with wiggling, you will find that it takes less than a minute, but that it will shift how you feel in your body. Wiggling means moving a particular part of your body with rapid repetitive movements that can be small or large, depending on where you are and how you are feeling. Wiggle however you like: up and down, side to side, back and forth, or in circles. Wiggle in any body position! Wiggle at any time of day!

- Wiggle your **ankles**
- Wiggle your **knees**
- Wiggle your **hips** and the **base of your spine**
- Wiggle your **shoulders**
- Wiggle your **elbows**
- Wiggle your **wrists**
- Wiggle your **fingers**
- Wiggle your **head**
- **Have a whole body wiggle!**

At the end, take a moment to just breathe and be still. Notice how your body is feeling and what emotion is most present.¹

6. Grounding and orienting

This activity follows nicely after wiggling. Once you get how it goes, it should not take more than a minute. In fact, combining wiggling with grounding and orienting can be done in a few minutes. Doing these two activities together every day will help you feel energised, awake in your body and ready for your day.

- **Sit or stand comfortably** in a safe and familiar place.
- **Start by orienting yourself in this safe space.** Slowly turn your gaze in all four directions and then up and down, paying attention to what you notice.
- **Bring your attention to how your skin feels.** Your skin is a direct connection to the world around you. Is there a breeze touching it? Warmth? Coolness? Itchy or soft sensations from your clothing?
- **Bring your attention to your breath.** It is essential for life. Breathe in through your nose. Follow the breath all the way down to your belly and then all the way back out. Take several breaths paying attention in the same way. Notice what you are experiencing in your body, without judgment. Imagine tension or other difficult sensations leaving with the out breath.
- **Notice the sensations on the bottom of your feet,** where they touch your footwear, the earth or the floor. Expand your awareness to your whole feet and notice any sensations such as warmth or cold, stillness or restlessness. If you feel tension, imagine it leaving with the out breath.
- **Slowly move your awareness up your body,** starting with your ankles and then up through your legs. Continue all the way to the top of your head. Notice any constrictions or release, any places of pleasure or discomfort. Pay special attention to the place where your skin experiences what is outside of you.
- **Continue all the way up to the top of your head.** Take a big breath and imagine it flowing through your whole body. Let it release any tension on the out breath.
- **Scan your body and your environment.** Find a place in your body that feels alive. Find something in your environment that is beautiful to you.²

7. Gratitude for life

This activity is to be done outside, in nature, in a place that is safe and comfortable, perhaps a city park, a city street with trees, a beach or woodland trail. If this is not possible, you can also look at nature through a window or focus on a plant in your home. You should give yourself at least fifteen minutes to do this activity.

- Once you have chosen your place, wander around while paying attention to everything that attracts you in some way, for example, the scent of a flower, the bark on a tree, a bird song. Use all your senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, perhaps even tasting. What does it feel like to bring your full attention to aspects of nature that are beautiful to you in some way?
- After a few minutes of walking and noticing, stop in front of something that really appeals to you. Spend some time here with this plant or place, noticing what feelings and sensations arise in you as you take time to be with something beautiful in nature.
- Before you leave, find a way to express your gratitude and your happiness that this being or place exists. Silently offer your thanks.

Coming back to this place and repeating the exercise will deepen the sense of peacefulness that you might experience. Having a photograph of this place on your phone can remind you that life is full of beauty as well as suffering. Extensive research now documents that time in nature (and even a picture of nature) regulates our nervous system.³

8. Connecting with your ancestors

This exercise invites you to honour those who came before you.

- Sit quietly, imagining your feet connecting to the earth that holds us all, on this planet that has been our home for so long.
- As you sense the earth below think of a pleasant memory of being outside.
- Consider that you belong to this earth and that you have a long ancestral lineage. No matter what joys and sorrows you have experienced in your life, you belong here. Can you acknowledge your belonging to life?
- Now ask yourself: where is my physical body most alive today? Where is my energy moving most freely? Slow your breathing a little, and on each out breath notice where aliveness shows up in your body. Is there movement in that energy? Is it changing? Be curious. This aliveness is always in you, available to you, along with whatever stresses or traumas your body holds. This aliveness is life passed onto you by your ancestors.
- Reflect on your long lineage of ancestors, the close ones and the ones going back far. Think of them like a huge network of roots. Their legacy to you is life. Honour that. Regardless of the pain they might have suffered, regardless of the loss you might feel, they passed life onto you. Thank them and notice how that feels in your heart.
- When you go to share your story, take this sense of aliveness, of connection to your ancestors and the living world, with you. Imagine your ancestors behind you, supporting you. You are not alone. Honour the aliveness you've connected to in your body, that has come to you from them.⁴

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Endnotes

- 1 Adapted from Resmaa Menakem, *The Quaking of America: An embodied guide to navigating our nation's upheaval and racial reckoning*. Las Vegas: CRP Central Recovery Press, 2022.
- 2 Also adapted from Resmaa Menakem, *The Quaking of America* (2022).
- 3 Adapted from Michael Cohen, *Reconnecting with Nature: Finding Wellness through Restoring your Bond with the Earth*, Minneapolis: Finney Company, 1997.
- 4 Adapted from an activity in an online program, Ancestral Healing Journey led by Thomas Huebl. For information see: <https://thomashuebl.com/>