

Poetry: A Tool for Healing and Liberation

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Session Goals:

- Explore poetry for healing and reflection in a professional context.
- Embrace discomfort and practice new tools.
- Reflect on Collaborative Action Network principles and offer feedback about the role you see for yourself/your organization.

Poetry: A Tool For Healing and Liberation

Quaniqua Williams

(she/her)

- DEIB Practitioner
- Advocate
- Poet



Double Helix Strand



How did Quaniqua use poetry as a reflection tool or a tool to process difficulty?

What role does art play in your life for reflection and healing?



What is poetry?

What is Poetry?

Poetry is:

- Rhythm
- Emotions
- Word play
- Creative writing
- Dialect
- Syllables
- Storytelling
- Everything
- Forgiving

Why use Poetry?

Poetry can provide an avenue to:

- Work past frustration
- Overcome mental blocks
- Say things that are otherwise hard to say/hear
- Get people/teams on the same page
- Tap into emotions
- Put language to the intangible, invisible, illogical

Art is an engaging, accessible, and meaningful way to include diverse voices and experiences in your work.

Our Goal Today

Practice our own poetry to share your vision of our work as a Network

- This might stretch your comfort zone
- Try leaning into your discomfort and practice a new way to share your thoughts and ideas
- You do not have to share your poetry publicly with everyone (but we would love to read them!)

How to do Blackout Poetry?

- Redact existing words from the source document
- Reveal a poem from what is still visible
- Maintain existing structure (e.g., words read in order)
- Poem should speak to your interpretation, key themes, meaning of main document and answer question

Why use Blackout Poetry?

- Centers the poet's assumptions – what words are important to you?
- Stays close to the data – uses the words as they appear
- Builds familiarity with the information
- Addresses mental block, fatigue, assumptions

Your Turn!

Create your own Blackout Poetry using words from the *Collaborative Action Network Shared Beliefs, Commitments, and Guiding Principles*:

1. Read the entire text and pick the words that stand out to you.
2. Think of how you might connect the words.
3. Use a pen/pencil to draw a clear shape around the words you've selected.
4. Use black marker to cover words that you will not use.

Poetry Reflection Question

Reflecting on the language from the *Collaborative Action Network shared beliefs, commitments, and guiding principles*, what do you see as the role of your organization and yourself in this work?

Craft a poem that expresses how you most want to be a part of this vision.

Table Reflection

- How was this experience for you?
- What was your process for creating your poem?
- How could you use this tool in your life/work moving forward?
- Are there any common themes among the poems at your table?

Share your poems

We want to read your poems to help us learn from one another and guide the work of the Network!

- Please gather your table's poems for an ACH team member to pick up.
- You do not have to add your name, but you are welcome to!
- Take time tomorrow to read others poems.

Old Age

