



**COMMUNITY VOICES:  
BLACK HEALING & LEARNING CIRCLES  
DANIEL MANGO**

**ABSTRACT**

*FOR NEARLY 400 YEARS, AFRICAN-AMERICANS HAVE EXPERIENCED ENSLAVEMENT, COLONIZATION, AND SUBJUGATION. THIS TRAUMA HAS LEFT ITS MARK ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY. THIS TRAUMA CONTRIBUTES TO HEALTH DISPARITIES, TO THE BLACK-WHITE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAP, TO THE EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENCE AMONG OUR YOUTH, TO THE MASS INCARCERATION OF BLACK PEOPLE, AND MANY OF THE OTHER CHALLENGES FACING BLACK FOLKS AS A COMMUNITY. RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ADVERSELY AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH BY DIMINISHING THE PERSON'S SELF-IMAGE, CONFIDENCE, AND OPTIMAL MENTAL FUNCTIONING. IN ORDER TO HEAL FROM TRAUMA, RACISM, AND THE LIE OF BLACK INFERIORITY, WE NEED A SAFE SPACE TO HEAL. BLACK HEALING CIRCLES ARE THE SPACES TO DO THIS WORK. BLACK HEALING CIRCLES ARE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT. THESE GROUPS BUILD UNITY, SOLIDARITY, AND HOPE. THEY ALSO ENHANCE BLACK FOLK'S SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-IMAGE AND SENSE OF SELF-WORTH. BLACK HEALING CIRCLES HASTEN THE HEALING PROCESS BY PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE FOR HEALING, GROWTH, AND CRITIQUE.*

**NOTES FROM ARTIST**

*THIS IMAGE IS OF ABSTRACTED FIGURES COMPILED IN THE SAME WAYS EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE MADE UP OF DIFFERENT PARTS. TOGETHER THEY SIT AND HOLD THEIR INNER FLAMES CLOSE AND IN EACH OTHER'S COMFORT. EYES WATCH THEM, WATCH YOU, OR REFUSE TO WATCH AS THE BACKDROP TO THIS HEALING SPACE. THESE FIGURES ARE SHELTERED UNDER A LUPIN FLOWER, WHICH REPRESENTS HAPPINESS, IMAGINATION, AND CREATIVITY. THE HEIGHT OF THIS FLOWER, WHOSE LEAVES REACH LIKE HANDS, INDICATES PROXIMITY TO WATER, JUST AS WE REACH AND GROW WITH COMMUNITY RESOURCES, INDICATING GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY.*