



## *Background to Healing the Memories*

*Healing the Memories began as a pilot project by KAIROS nine years ago. It is now facilitated through the Conflict Trauma Resource Centre.*

*There have been 35 weekends held to date in Northern Ireland.*

*The aim of this process is to facilitate the healing process of any individual who has suffered as a result of the 30 years of conflict.*

*Healing the Memories is seen as a step on a journey towards healing. For some people this is enough—for others the opportunity for referral to other agencies is given. It deals with issues at an emotional, psychological and spiritual level rather than an intellectual level.*

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Funded by:  
The Ireland Funds  
The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland



**Project part financed  
by the European Union  
Peace and Reconciliation Programme**

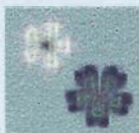
Conflict Trauma Resource Centre



# HEALING THE MEMORIES

## BACKGROUND

The Healing the Memories process was initiated by Father Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest working in South Africa.



In April 1990 the apartheid regime sent him a letter bomb. He survived with the loss of both hands and an eye. He is a remarkable man who is both a survivor and healer, working in a trauma centre in South Africa.

He retains both his faith and humour while remaining passionate on subjects relating to the dignity and basic human rights of all people.

A team of facilitators has been trained in Northern Ireland to carry out this work where it is adapted to the needs of a local situation.

## Introduction



Each of us has some personal experience of hurt and damage caused by 30 years of conflict and because of that it is important for us all to be working towards being healed.

Some of us carry obvious wounds—others carry wounds that are less visible.

Unresolved emotional issues cannot be ignored if our society is to function and move towards healing for all its members.

For healing to happen, we need to share our memories of hurt, tell our stories and be accepted/respected/listened to. We need to learn to listen to each other to get the healing process started.

Listening is a gift we can give to one another. It is offering someone space in which they feel welcome, met, safe, free to be him/herself, to be listened to and heard.

## The Workshops

Essentially each workshop is an individual and collective journey of exploring the effects of the past 30 years.

They provide a unique opportunity to examine and experience our individual journeys, while sharing with others in theirs. It is not about apportioning blame. Time is given for individual reflection, creative exercises and opportunities to work in small groups.

Healing memories does not mean we forget the past, but rather try to find a way of no longer allowing our memories to paralyse or destroy us. We need to find ways of preventing our history from being repeated, and of breaking the cycle of violence that we have lived with for so long.

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