

# ROAR Center Peer Healing Circle

## Video Transcript — Accessibility Version

**Video URL:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biAPq1nhgbE>

**Duration:** 15:38

**Published:** February 21, 2024

**Channel:** The ROAR Center

### About This Transcript

This transcript is provided to meet WCAG 2.2 Level AA accessibility requirements (Success Criteria 1.2.2, 1.2.3, and 1.2.5). It includes:

- Verbatim speech from all speakers, with light punctuation added for readability
- Speaker identification before each turn
- Timestamps synced to the video (in MM:SS format)
- Italicized bracketed notes for non-speech audio, music, and on-screen visual information not conveyed by speech (e.g., title cards identifying speakers, music cues)
- Filler words ("um," "uh") are included where they appear in the source audio. Minor false starts are retained where they affect meaning. Profanity has been partially redacted with [words omitted] per editorial discretion.

### Speaker Key

#### DR. JOSEPH B. RICHARDSON

MPower Professor of African-American Studies, Medical Anthropology and Epidemiology, University of Maryland Baltimore; gun violence researcher and co-creator of the Peer Healing Circle.

#### DAMON WALKER

Peer Healing Circle participant; West Baltimore resident; advocate for youth and people with disabilities.

#### LAMONT WHITBY

Peer Healing Circle participant; East Baltimore resident.

#### ANTONIO COTTMAN

Peer Healing Circle participant.

### Transcript

Bracketed italic text describes non-speech audio (music, sound effects) and visual-only information (on-screen text/title cards) for users who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or low vision.

Timestamp	Speaker	Content
0:00		<i>[Instrumental music plays over title card]</i>
0:27	DR. RICHARDSON	Trauma can play out differently depending on a person — right — your level of resilience. Um, it could be genetic, right, in the ways that you deal with trauma. But ultimately I think trauma is something that affects one's quality of
0:46	DR. RICHARDSON	life. My name is Dr. Joseph Richardson. I'm a professor at the University of Maryland in the Department of African-American Studies and

0:56	DR. RICHARDSON	anthropology. So I've been working with ROAR for approximately — maybe — three years
1:02	DR. RICHARDSON	now. And I've been working with Lydia Watts, the director of ROAR, also with — um — Monifa Jay
1:11	DR. RICHARDSON	Riggins. And I work as the researcher — um — with the programs that they've established in partnership with
1:20	DR. RICHARDSON	the hospital at the University of Maryland. So let me start — I'm clearly a Black man born and raised in Philadelphia, in the working-class
1:28	DR. RICHARDSON	neighborhood in Philly. And, you know, I grew up in a crack era, so
1:35	DR. RICHARDSON	I saw young men in my community who were survivors and homicide victims of
1:43	DR. RICHARDSON	firearm violence — were addicted to drugs, addicted to crack, some went to
1:49	DR. RICHARDSON	jail; others — um — you know, managed to escape that lifestyle. And, you know, I
1:57	DR. RICHARDSON	happen to be one of those people who survived it and — um — and witnessed, you know, firsthand, what it was like when someone
2:05	DR. RICHARDSON	was shot — how that traumatic stress affected their
2:16	DR. RICHARDSON	lives.
2:16		<i>[Title card: "Damon Walker — Peer Healing Circle Participant"]</i>
2:16	DAMON WALKER	Damon Walker. I'm 44, live on the West Side. I'm — uh — real active in my
2:23	DAMON WALKER	community, as far as, like, dealing with — um — you know, youth, or anybody that may be disabled. Um, so that's a big passion of
2:31	DAMON WALKER	mine. Been a lifelong resident of Baltimore. Baltimore was a very beautiful
2:39	DAMON WALKER	place. You know, I kind of didn't understand how important it was for so many Black people to be in one place at one time. And, and, and, you know, you
2:47	DAMON WALKER	saw a lot of community, a lot of family. But then it came a point where, you know, things changed, and it started feeling kind of treacherous in the streets. And
2:55	DAMON WALKER	you know, it didn't — it didn't look so sunny outside, and the dark looked even darker sometimes, you know. Especially when the drugs — and, you know, I
3:02	DAMON WALKER	started becoming aware of, you know, a lot of aspects of the streets. You know, started to see people get killed, murdered. A lot of my friends been murdered. Um,
3:12	DAMON WALKER	you know, I became — a juvenile delinquent — with
3:23	DAMON WALKER	myself. Just one night — it was New Year's Eve — uh, my mom was actually in the hospital getting surgery, and I was probably going to go home. But just
3:32	DAMON WALKER	because my mom wasn't there, I ended up going out — uh — to the club. And — uh — you know, it was a good night, it was an awesome
3:40	DAMON WALKER	night at the club. And — uh — but I was a little tired 'cause I worked a double that day. And I left out, and as I — when I was walking away, when I was
3:48	DAMON WALKER	walking, you know, to — to catch me a cab home — some three or four dudes jumped out on me, we got into a fight.

3:55	DAMON WALKER	I whipped all their asses, for real. But the first dude — he came back and shot me, and I was
4:07	DAMON WALKER	paralyzed. I mean, the peer healing group is really what we really need, you know, in the community. And — and — peer healing
4:15	DAMON WALKER	group — it could be a kitchen table, you know, at your house. You know, it could be like — brothers need to be able — like, not even just brothers — us as a people need
4:23	DAMON WALKER	to be able to do this. Because once the brothers get tight, then we got to cross the lines and make sure the families — the men and the women — rolling together.
4:31	DAMON WALKER	So I think this is something that lacks in the community. I — again, you know — I just feel like us coming together and just bearing our hearts and, and, and, and
4:39	DAMON WALKER	you know, dealing with issues — it definitely is a benefit. It's something that's always going to come back to us. And — and — and it's something that young
4:48	DAMON WALKER	people — they, you know — like, what's the core of violence? Is misunderstanding. You know, I — you know — I couldn't articulate
4:56	DAMON WALKER	myself. Now we shooting, now we fighting, or whatever the case may be. You know, it could even be the reason I got to rob this store is 'cause I can't — I can't write
5:05	DAMON WALKER	down on a piece of paper for an application. You know, I should be able to tell that to my brother, like, 'Yo, I can't read. I need some help with this.' You know. And
5:13	DAMON WALKER	and, you know — 'cause I remember: I couldn't read; my man couldn't count. So I had to help him out, you know. He had to help
5:21	DAMON WALKER	me out. But you — you know — if we could do that type of thing, I — I just know a lot of the problems in the city
5:29	DAMON WALKER	would go away. And, and, and, and that's exactly why the problems happen — because people don't talk to each other in a human type of
5:38	DAMON WALKER	way.
5:38		<i>[Title card: "Lamont Whitby — Peer Healing Circle Participant"]</i>
5:38	LAMONT WHITBY	Lamont Whitby — born in Johns Hopkins Hospital, born and raised in East
5:45	LAMONT WHITBY	Baltimore — Mord Avenue — M-B. When I got shot in my
5:53	LAMONT WHITBY	stomach, I actually was fighting somebody — with a gun — fighting two people with a gun. And it was crazy because they actually
6:01	LAMONT WHITBY	threw the gun across the street — one actually ran. I'm touching the gun — they threw it across the street. I could have just ran, or whatever. I don't know — for some reason
6:09	LAMONT WHITBY	— at 14 years old — I didn't run. All they heard was one shot. I felt it, but I ain't feel
6:18	LAMONT WHITBY	it — like, my body just got hot. And I just started walking. I was like two blocks away from my house. I just start walking, and I'm like, 'I think I'm shot'
6:28	LAMONT WHITBY	— like, but I don't know I'm shot, 'cause I lift my shirt up and I don't see nothing. Dude sees me on my steps and was like, 'Yo, what's wrong with you?' Matter of fact,

6:36	LAMONT WHITBY	make it even worse — I knocked — I remember knocking on somebody's door and I said — I said: 'If I live and I get out of this hospital or whatever' —
6:44	LAMONT WHITBY	'I'mma come and' — [words omitted] — 'the people in the house.' I knocked on the door — they slammed the door in my face — 'cause I knocked on somebody's door as I was walking. I'm glad I
6:53	LAMONT WHITBY	dismissed that. But got to my house — dude sees me, he's like, 'Yo, what's
7:02	LAMONT WHITBY	wrong with you?' I was like, 'Oh — I think I'm shot.' He ain't see it either. Knocked on my door. My father came
7:10	LAMONT WHITBY	downstairs. Got me in the house. I guess as he's figuring like something's wrong with me, he lifts my shirt
7:17	LAMONT WHITBY	up — I guess like, 'This boy's been shot.' And I blanked out from
7:24	LAMONT WHITBY	that.
7:24	LAMONT WHITBY	We come from trauma, you know. People getting shot every day — around right here — and hearing the
7:32	LAMONT WHITBY	shots, hoping it ain't going through our doors. This city is trauma. The world is trauma right now. But the city is
7:39	LAMONT WHITBY	trauma, and people mask it, and they don't know how to outlet. So this kind of — this group
7:47	LAMONT WHITBY	actually felt like an outlet for certain people. And if it comes abroad, it comes abroad. But it had to be genuine.
7:55		<i>[Title card: "Antonio Cottman — Peer Healing Circle Participant"]</i>
7:55	ANTONIO COTTMAN	My name is Antonio. I thought I would be met with compassion, right there. Nobody meeting me with compassion — it was a police officer
8:03	ANTONIO COTTMAN	that was supposed to stay right there with me the whole time. But when I first got there, they put me on this — on a — on a — um — wheelchair; they rode me back. I'm on a
8:12	ANTONIO COTTMAN	wheelchair, then they throw me on the table, and they was like, 'There's so much blood we can't tell where they hit.' So they took some scissors and they cut all my clothes off — quick — and I was — butt
8:21	ANTONIO COTTMAN	naked. I'm like, 'Okay.' Then they're checking me, they roll me over, they looking at my butt, they looking at everything, making sure ain't no more bullet holes. And then
8:29	ANTONIO COTTMAN	they was like — they ain't do no surgery. All right, we ain't got to take him to surgery. There's a police officer out there, and he was Black. And I looked at
8:37	ANTONIO COTTMAN	the police, and I don't know why, but I felt the connection — 'cause he was a Black man. I was young. So I was like, 'Hey, yo — I just got shot — am I gonna die?' I was like,
8:45	ANTONIO COTTMAN	'Is it gonna be all right?' And exactly — he looked at me and said, 'Hmph — people die every day. You
8:53	ANTONIO COTTMAN	might.'
8:53	DR. RICHARDSON	So the value of it started really with the first session
9:00	DR. RICHARDSON	we ever did. And when we started, I had asked the question — what did they want to call

9:07	DR. RICHARDSON	it? Because the first thing that you need to do when you're working in the community
9:15	DR. RICHARDSON	is you need to take a step back and let the people who are actually impacted own what it is
9:23	DR. RICHARDSON	— like, they should own it. Not me, or any scholar that's coming in to impose what we think. And they said they didn't
9:31	DR. RICHARDSON	want to call it therapy, they didn't want to call it counseling — they wanted to call it peer healing. And it's interesting how
9:38	DR. RICHARDSON	you can put those words into the universe and they become a self-fulfilling prophecy. And I'm not going to go too far into this because I don't want to implicate anyone in
9:47	DR. RICHARDSON	this conversation. But, you know, by the time we hit week four, there was — there was an issue that one of the young
9:54	DR. RICHARDSON	brothers put on the table, you know, that was about conflict. And, like, for the next two and a half hours,
10:04	DR. RICHARDSON	all the brothers that were involved in that call — like, they didn't try to necessarily talk him off the ledge from
10:11	DR. RICHARDSON	doing something. But they gave him the reality of what the consequences would be. 'I'm not here to
10:19	DR. RICHARDSON	judge you, and I'm not here to, like, persuade you either way. I'm just going to tell you — this could be your
10:26	DR. RICHARDSON	reality, if you decide to do it.' One way or the other, it allowed brothers to see — a brother from the East Side and a
10:35	DR. RICHARDSON	brother from the West Side — who probably normally wouldn't have had a one-on-one conversation, or a conversation within a
10:43	DR. RICHARDSON	group — among brothers — because where else are they connected in this way, to really express like their level of
10:50	DR. RICHARDSON	humanity and vulnerability as men? So I think that's — that's what really broke down those barriers and got men to see
11:00	DR. RICHARDSON	like the genuineness of just what it is to be a man, and all the things that, as men, we deal with — regardless of what walk of
11:08	DR. RICHARDSON	life you come from. You know, we — and — and that was the beauty of it, too. Because we had — we had dudes with
11:16	DR. RICHARDSON	different levels of education. We had dudes that was like — like Tone, he's driving a truck while he's on the
11:25		<i>[Instrumental music]</i>
11:27	LAMONT WHITBY	<i>[Voice over music] It took — I took everything for what it was. Yo, it</i>
11:35	LAMONT WHITBY	was the realest, greatest moment — because it was us. It was us. And I mean
11:43	LAMONT WHITBY	that — like, in a good way and in a bad way. I got friends of all calibers — white,
11:51	LAMONT WHITBY	Black, Indian, everybody. But I get personally offended when, if my Chinese
11:57	LAMONT WHITBY	friend — he goes through something — and he got his community to fix his problem before he brings his problem to me. By the
12:07	LAMONT WHITBY	time he gets to me and I give him advice on any problem, it's already been kind of cleared up by his community. I felt a

12:14	LAMONT WHITBY	little like — probably — like, I finally got an outlet where this is my people talking. This ain't nobody else's people.
12:21	LAMONT WHITBY	This is — all these dudes — like, come from a certain line of either Baltimore, DC — so this is like the DMV.
12:29	LAMONT WHITBY	This is Delaware, Maryland, Virginia. We here. It's only certain things you going to experience that we know. So I was like,
12:37	LAMONT WHITBY	'Yo, this is good. This is good.' This ain't — you mean? Because if somebody else was to do it — let's say somebody else was to
12:45	LAMONT WHITBY	do it, and let's say he was white, Black, or in-different — and I'm sure they'd come with the background and the knowledge, and I'm sure they could do it — but then you're like,
12:53	LAMONT WHITBY	'Yo, there's too many barriers to break down.' One: we got to break the race barrier. We got to break down the culture barrier. And we got to just break that — just — the
13:01	LAMONT WHITBY	understanding of what we go through in a day-to-day life. So it ain't going to be as genuine. And I ain't going to lie — I — um —
13:07	LAMONT WHITBY	I put on certain masks. So if I go to get a job, they ain't never going to know the side of me. So if I put that face of
13:16	LAMONT WHITBY	another person on — 'Hey, this about guy about to hire me for a job' — I'm either not going to be as genuine, or I'm getting off the phone early. Once I felt
13:24	LAMONT WHITBY	where the conversation used to go, and where it would go to — and advice I could get — even from marital advice, or
13:31	LAMONT WHITBY	from just a man just standing up on his — it was just always good and it was always
13:38	LAMONT WHITBY	comforting. No matter how crazy it got, it was always good and it was always comforting. And one of the things that
13:46	DR. RICHARDSON	— you know — Tone has said, and — uh — in his interview — which, you know, was so incredibly insightful — he was like, 'You
13:55	DR. RICHARDSON	know, the help should come from — the help should look like us, right?' And that's what it looked like
14:04	DR. RICHARDSON	in that group. The help looked like us. And it wasn't help that
14:11	DR. RICHARDSON	was help from a clinical counselor — it was help from just the next man. Like, everybody in that circle was equal —
14:20	DR. RICHARDSON	whether it was me, or was Chay, or was Edward, or was Tone, or was Damon, or was Lamont, or — you know —
14:29	DR. RICHARDSON	any other brothers that was in the — shout out to any other brothers that was in the group. But, you know, for that hour
14:35	DR. RICHARDSON	and a half, like, we were all just — me — you know — really trying to find some
14:42	DR. RICHARDSON	way to heal each other. And that's why it became a self-fulfilling prophecy — because the men, despite all the
14:49	DR. RICHARDSON	stereotypes about Black men — Black men can heal each other, if we allow ourselves to be healed
14:59	DR. RICHARDSON	by your brother — like, your brother can heal you.
15:04		<i>[Instrumental music plays]</i>
15:27		<i>[Music fades. End of video.]</i>

