As we enter May, museum-goers* are looking ahead to even more time at home, as well as mixed feelings about the reopening of our communities. There is a sense that many are reaching an emotional low point.

To be frank, I have lost quite a bit of hope. I fear that we are at just the beginning of a long and painful pandemic.

Staying home is becoming harder. Yet many fear that officials are acting too hastily to reopen non-essential businesses.

I think that we are all hopeful that life will return to normal.

Whether it is the old normal or the new normal, we need a sense of normalcy. Living with uncertainty is hard.

So we asked museum-goers how museums can help now and going forward.

**Museums can bring HOPE.**

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We are all grieving. And the challenges we are facing have marked all of us in ways both big and small, obvious and hidden. We all need respite and places that can heal us emotionally, mentally, and physically. Whether through giving us a sense of purpose, exploring what it means to be human, gaining knowledge, or allowing us to escape… museum-goers believe museums play a key role here.

**Museums can also help US.**

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We should articulate the need for more local, state, and federal revenues to support museums as sites necessary for healing and essential for education.

We are, however, in a period of great uncertainty, and our communities face an uncertain future. If museums are going to be relevant, we need to provide hope and healing now… so that we can be vital participants of the future.

Don’t wait for this to be over to try to heal. Museums can’t just be part of the hope and fear for the healing, they may be our hopefuls!

*Data Stories share research about both museum-goers (who visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums). The entire series of Museums and the Pandemic Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.