NURTURING HOPEFUL SOULS
Practices and Activities
For
Working With Children and Youth

The Hope Foundation of Alberta

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For

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Introduction

Our work over the last decade and a half at the Hope Foundation, paired with the findings of international research, demonstrates that individuals who are connected to their hope are better able to:

- visualize a positive future
- work toward goals
- build resilience.

Our work also demonstrates that an adult's beliefs and expectations can build and sustain the hope of a young person. Conversely, negative beliefs and low expectations can also damage the hope of young people.

As an adult who works with children and youth, your beliefs and expectations can build and sustain the hope of these young people. Conversely, your negative beliefs and low expectations can also damage the hope of these young people.

This resource offers information and ideas to build your understanding of hope. It also provides practices and sample learning activities for helping children and youth to uncover, connect to and activate hope in their lives. You can use these to repair or rebuild a child or youth's hope so they relearn to hope and regain the confidence and resiliency to work toward their goals.

The information, practices and sample learning activities in this resource can be used in youth groups, classrooms or with individual children or youth. The practices and activities can be adapted to meet the unique needs and varied contexts of the different groups of children and youth that you are working with.

Shared Stories

Consider the following comments and stories of how hope-focused practices and activities can affect children and youth's relationships with others and with themselves.

"Our students are now ready to set goals after having hope conversations and doing hope activities for the last six months."

–Teacher for students with behaviour disabilities

"The students were reflective, peaceful and calm when we did hope activities. This was a big change in their behaviour. They generally are very reluctant to write, but after we had done the hope activity they were more than willing to write. Some of them wrote for twenty minutes straight (when typically they would be finished writing after a minute or two.)

After the hope activities, students started to look forward to change. They began to think about what they could do for themselves and how they can make things better."

–Teacher in special education class

"I used to think that hope was just a meaningless word, but now I think it is a feeling that drives you to succeed."

–Grade 5 student

"I never used to think about hope, but now in my Hope Journal I think about hope a lot and I like to write about it. When I think about hope now I feel like I can do things like write, share my feelings, and tell people how good I feel inside."

–Junior High student

"Not long after I became the HOPE KIDS™ Manager, I responded to a call from a principal asking if I could speak to two of her staff. They were worried about their students' futures. I listened to the teachers describe the students' sadness and lack of hope and how these students needed a safe and trusting environment where they could connect with others willing to listen and comfort them. I felt that these teachers were, literally, the students' hope. They were experiencing what many teachers experience–a deep concern for children who appeared to be without hope. And, as hopeful individuals, these teachers did what hopeful people often do–they reached out for support.

After discussing hope language and other practices and activities that we used in the adult counseling program and in the HOPE KIDS™ program, the teachers decided to ask their students to represent their hope through drawings.

When I walked into the room on my next visit I saw a brightly coloured display in the hallway with the heading "Hope is Never Giving Up". The student drawings and written reflections were diverse. The teachers' worry had turned to excitement. They were now talking about possibilities rather than roadblocks.

I was quite surprised when the two staff shared a book of hope ideas they were collecting. They were planning to offer it to other teachers to use as a unit plan. The teachers enthusiastically described their plans for future hope activities. "Sometimes we feel like we are treading in places we used to be afraid to go, but we are not afraid any longer. We realize this is important work. We are starting to understand our students better and we can see that they do have hope."

After my initial work with these two teachers, the principal organized a hope workshop for the whole school staff. The presentation was just before the Christmas break and I wondered what impact it would have when teachers returned after the holiday.

Two weeks into the new year I visited the school. On that visit I heard, "We are learning about hope from our students." As I visited individual classrooms I saw students making Chinese 'hope scrolls' as part of the social studies curriculum. I saw a hope-related article in the school newsletter and I noticed a library display on hope related themes. On classroom walls I saw hope recipes, student autobiographies that included a paragraph about personal hopes, and drawings about hope. I saw hope albums and I heard a story about a student who wrote hope messages to his classmates the day before moving to another school. Hope was definitely alive and well in this school".

–Director of Educational Services,
Hope Foundation

Conversations with teachers and students demonstrated that although hope did not eliminate struggles, it motivated the teachers and students to persevere. Searching for hope, making hope visible, reflecting on past and present actions, and imagining a different and more positive future created the energy for these teachers to reconnect with and build on their own resiliency and that of their students'. This created new contexts and opportunities for personal goal setting.

Making hope visible helps us to see the world as a place of possibility. Hope counteracts fearful or cynical perspectives that immobilize us and get in the way of living a joyful and purposeful life. Exploring hope includes acknowledging the pain that accompanies hopelessness. Exploring hope helps us connect to and access hope in times of adversity. Hope enhances our ability to visualize and move toward a positive, meaningful future.

How to Use This Resource

This resource offers information, practices and sample activities that have been developed over the last decade at the Hope Foundation. This non-profit organization is affiliated with the University of Alberta in Edmonton. In keeping with the Hope Foundation's mission and principles for action, we, the contributors to this resource, invite you to join us in the quest to uncover and make hope more accessible for the children and youth that you work with.

In Classrooms

In the classroom these hope-focused practices and learning activities can be integrated across the subject areas and throughout the school day. Language arts, social studies, science, and health classes have multiple opportunities to incorporate hope-focused practices and activities.

In addition, hope-focused information, practices and activities can complement character education and service-learning projects.

With Youth Groups

For those of you working with groups of children and youth, consider strategies like the hope sharing circle for creating opportunities for talking about how to use hope to encourage and support one another. Or you may want to use the hope tree activity to help children and youth connect to and use hopeful behaviours. For still other youth, you may consider using photographs to explore hidden and protected hope.

Listening intentionally and asking hope-focused questions helps children and youth explore and build their own hope and begin to support the hope of others.

With Children and Youth-at-risk

If you are working with individual children and youth-at-risk and their families, you might consider creating family hope kits as opportunities for exploring and clarifying how family and cultural experience influences hope. Or you might use hope-focused questions to help children and youth uncover the hopes that others have of them. This kind of perspective building can motivate children and youth to see and acknowledge another side of themselves and build on these new points of view and competencies.

Create a Safe and Caring Environment

Encouraging authentic and honest conversations about hope requires a caring and supportive environment. Children and youth need to feel secure that their hopes will not be damaged or destroyed by another's actions or words. They need to trust that they will be supported when they name

a hope or fear that is stopping them from moving toward a particular hope. Building a supportive community for children and youth to share their hopes and fears requires time and patience. It is well worth the effort.

Make it Your Own

We encourage you to use the space in the margins of this resource to jot down your observations and ideas. We also encourage you to jot down questions about hope as you are working your way through this information. Taking the time to think about these questions will make your reading of the resource more meaningful.

Join a Community of Practice

Because a community of hope "not only pursues the habits of perseverance, resourcefulness, and courage, it contributes to the realization of new hopes" (Shade, 2006), an on-line discussion forum is available for you to share your ongoing insights, questions and experiences with others who are interested in learning about the power of hope. To find out more about this forum, contact the Hope Foundation at 780-492-1222 or email hope@ualberta.ca and put 'Nurturing Hopeful Souls Community of Practice' in the subject line.

Be Open to Change

We believe that, as an adult working with children and youth, as you integrate the information, practices and sample activities in this resource into your work, you will:

- Notice your own hopes
- Get to know children and youth in different ways
- Notice good things happening in your interactions with children and youth
- Help children and youth relate to each other differently.

You will also see positive changes in the children and youth you work with, including increased:

- creativity
- commitment
- self-esteem and self-efficacy
- problem solving abilities
- ability to use new strategies to deal with adversity and use hope as an antidote for fear.

As you are doing hope-focused work with children and youth, you may find parents start asking you to provide the same learning opportunities for them.

And last but not least, hope-focused practices and learning activities will create new opportunities for having fun and truly enjoying the children and youth that you are working with.

Understanding Hope

At the Hope Foundation, we have experienced hope flourishing over the last decade and a half in many different places and contexts. We continually hear stories of what is possible when individuals intentionally use hope to enhance quality of life. As a result, we see children and youth become more engaged with their own lives and the lives around them when they intentionally use hope as their guide.

We also hear the language of hope when we hear children and youth tell us how "wishing is in the head and hoping is in the heart" or that "hope shields protect us from the hope suckers in life." (Sample learning activities exploring these two concepts are included at the end of this resource.) We work with youth-at-risk who are willing to use hope language and who are willing to share their stories of hope. We see these youth transfer these new hope habits into new settings. We see these youth begin to set goals one at a time, and become more willing to take risks. We have also had experiences in which hopeful learning is uncovered, like the one described below.

"I had the opportunity to talk with 75 Grade 4, 5 and 6 students about hope and leadership. Unsure how to tackle hope and leadership in less than an hour with children I had never met, I decided to start by asking students to draw images that represented their hope. The students worked with crayons and felt markers so they could create broadly and not get bogged down with details. I encouraged them to work quietly, with minimal talk.

Some of the students were slow to start while others finished quickly. However, each child had a drawing of hope when it was time for the discussion.

We discussed how no two pictures were alike, demonstrating how hope is unique to each person. The students then dated their drawings as acknowledgement that our view of hope may change over time. If these same students were to create new pictures of hope later in the week, or even the next day, the drawings might have contained different elements.

These students were beginning to understand that hope is influenced by events in life and that there may be times when they do not feel very hopeful. They began to see why each of us needs to have many hope-focused practices and strategies to choose from when our hope is being challenged.

Our conversation that day started with the peace sign as a symbol of hope. The students talked about how hopeful leaders bring peace to others. I asked them to extend this thought by thinking about how they brought peace into their own lives. We agreed that one must have peace within to bring peace to others. One student shared how he connected with nature and especially how running water provided him a sense of peace. I encouraged the students to revisit their drawings when they are not feeling particularly hopeful. I explained that their picture might give them an idea and inspire them to make a move toward a more hopeful place and space.

After the students left for the day, the teacher commented what a difficult task it was to describe hope and yet we managed to do so in less than an hour. She was surprised that we were able to connect it to leadership in a way that made sense to the students. She was most excited by the fact that she now had some ideas for exploring how to uncover hope in both her students' lives and in her own life."

Guiding Principles

A set of working assumptions guides the work at the Hope Foundation. These assumptions have become the principles guiding in the development of the hope practices and learning activities presented in this resource.

The following guiding principles continue to inform work at the Hope Foundation.

- Hope is a complex, multi-dimensional experience.
- Hope acknowledges both the uniqueness and commonality of experience.
- The past, present and future are part of the hope experience.
- Hope is dynamic; it is a continuum of processes of outcomes and uncertainties.
- Hope is an orientation to life that enables people to live life in a personally meaningful way.
- Hope is experienced in relationship.
- Hope is strengthened in community.

The Value of Hope

There are a number of research studies that demonstrate the benefits of hope and identify the positive characteristics of individuals who have a high degree of hope in their personal lives.

- Hope is one of five character strengths that enhances life satisfaction (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004).

- Individuals who use hope as their guide, focus on success rather than failure and perceive themselves as being capable of solving problems (Snyder, Hoza et al., 1997).

- A high level of hopeful thinking is positively associated with perceived confidence, self-esteem, and academic scores (Snyder, Hoza et al., 1997).

- A high level of hopeful thinking in college students is positively associated with higher school completion rates (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, et al., 2002).

- Higher hope is linked with a greater perceived purpose in life (Feldman & Snyder, 2000).

Related and Influencing Concepts

There are number of concepts that relate to and influence hope.

Wishing, Optimism and Positive Thinking

Wishing, optimism and positive thinking open the door for hope and can provide the motivation to hope. But hope is more than each of these three concepts put together.

For example, an individual can sit on the couch and passively wish for something or use positive thinking to believe something will happen, only to be disappointed that these wishes have not been fulfilled.

Wishing often precedes or accompanies hope, but wishing by itself does not lead to the action component of hope.

Optimism is the positive feeling that something desired will occur or that generally things will turn out okay. Hope, on the other hand, is needed when an outcome or goal is less certain or especially important to the individual (Bruiniks and Malle, 2005).

Hope is about being actively engaged and taking into account:

- our feelings
- supports we have or had in the past
- past experiences
- what we are experiencing in the moment
- beliefs and expectations about what could happen in the future.

And most importantly, hope is about the behaviours we engage in that move us forward. This is why hope is so critical to goal setting.

Goal Setting and Hope

Hope paves the way for goal setting. Experiences at the Hope Foundation demonstrate that "I hope…" statements inspire individuals to consider future possibilities without censorship. "I hope…" statements can be bolder, bigger and more ambitious than the more typical goal statements. Paradoxically, typical goal statements, particularly for individuals who have experienced limited success with goal setting in the past, can actually diminish an individual's ability to move toward a desired future.

"I hope…." statements help individuals to set clearer goals and be more successful in reaching these goals.

Hope has an emotional component; therefore, hope statements speak to what is in our hearts as well as in our heads. Hope statements create opportunities to identify and explore what is most important to us.

Using specific hope-focused questions draws out the details of the "I hope…" statements. Using hope-focused questions is embedded in one of the five practices of hope that are discussed later in this resource.

Fear and Hope

Research demonstrates that fear evokes an unconscious fight or flight response. Because pathways for fear are shorter than other emotional pathways, fear can override other emotions, including hope.

Fearful responses can result in behaviours, thoughts, and feelings that create a sense of hopelessness and being stuck. Hope-focused practices and activities counteract fear. These practices create opportunities for thinking, imagining and engaging other ways of acting so that children and youth can envision and move toward a more positive future.

On the other hand, it is fear that sometimes motivates us to make change. Fear can actually encourage us to engage in more hopeful behaviours. Therefore, paying attention to how we experience fear can also help us be alert to how we can use our fears to motivate ourselves toward positive goals.

Courage and Hope

When children and youth are experiencing less hope or when their actions are unsuccessful, they need courage to increase and sustain their hope. Courage gives individuals the strength to take risks and learn from mistakes. Courage is needed to imagine a better future and consider new options, behaviours and ways of thinking and feeling. Hope and courage work in tandem to help us move into the future with confidence and determination.

Courage is a feeling that helps us stay engaged in the hoping process.

The support of people who care about us and/or a strong belief in something greater than ourselves, enhances our courage and hope.

Thinking about how we would like to see ourselves in the future helps us act from a place of courage and hope in the present moment. Understanding how hope relates to courage helps children and youth build the confidence to take the kind of risks necessary to set and reach new goals.

Imagination and Hope

Imagination has the capacity to change how we see the world and our participation in the world. This, in turn, fuels the hoping process. In his book on imagination as a healer of the hopeless, Lynch (1965) wrote, "Hope not only imagines; it imagines with" (p. 23).

Imagination often requires a mental picture. Imagination needs to be fueled by experiences from the past, and this

remembering process can bring up all kinds of feelings. Positive feelings can motivate an individual to imagine more fully, and in turn, become more engaged in hopeful behavior.

Like hope, imagination sometimes feels hidden and inaccessible. We need to find ways to ignite the imaginations of the children and youth we are working with. Literature and personal storytelling can provide a catalyst to imagine new and more positive futures. "What if…" statements also promote imaginative thinking, feeling, relating and behaving.

Learned Hopefulness

Hopeful individuals demonstrate higher levels of internal locus of control; they believe they are responsible for their own actions. They have learned that hopefulness is a positive and motivating force in their lives.

On the other hand, individuals who believe they are controlled by external events, such as fate or other people, struggle with a learned helplessness that makes them less willing to take responsibility for their own life or take action to move toward a positive future.

To promote learned hopefulness, individuals need support and encouragement to reflect on their thoughts and actions and then use their reflections to regulate their thoughts, emotions and behaviours. They can use information from their own reflections, along with information from trusted individuals, to make decisions about what actions will move them toward a positive and meaningful future.

As a Motivating Force

A number of research studies propose that hope is necessary for coping with adversity. For example, recent work with refugee and immigrant children shows that "the process of talking about hope, in itself, allows a child to begin the process of accessing strategies to enhance hope and build resilience" (Parkins, 2004, p. 52).

It can be inspiring to witness the diversity of hope that children and youth-at-risk can demonstrate in their conversations, writing and drawings about hope. They can teach us much about how young people use hope to cope with adverse situations.

Connecting to and building on hope enhances personal resiliency. Making hope explicit and intentional is one way of working toward a more robust kind of hope (Halpin, 2003).

As a Process and Outcome

Hope is both a process and an outcome. The process of hope includes the actions, feelings, thoughts and ways of relating that moves a person toward or away from a particular outcome.

The Czech poet and social activist, Vaclav Havel, (1990) describes the process of hope as "… not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out" (p. 181).

A study with Australian youth (Turner, 2003) identified four components of hope, including:

- an experience of being at-one-with
- having choices
- a driving force
- connecting and being connected.

In this study the youth described hope as "hard work". "Hope is hard work" speaks to the process inherent in reaching a sought-after goal. We need to vigilantly pay attention to what hope is in order to feel and maintain hope as we move toward a desired outcome.

Havel's description of the process of hope and Turner's Australian study demonstrate that there is an action and reflection component to hope. Understanding our hope requires reflection. In fact, there are times when *being* rather than *doing* is what keeps hope alive. Acting on our understanding moves us toward a desired outcome.

Being hopeful means being aware of and knowing how to use specific practices that encourage and support individuals in using hope as both a guide and motivator. Being mindful while making decisions about what is important about a particular child or youth's hope may awaken us and the child or youth to new or different hopes that are more personally relevant.

One of the underlying principles of the Hope Foundation's work is that hope is not a single thing, feeling, or thought. Rather, hope is a complex and multi-faceted combination of many different components working together.

A Multi-dimensional Model of Hope

Two Spheres of Hope

Before 1985, social science research tended to define hope as a one-dimensional construct–most often in relation to goals. One of the first multidimensional theoretical models of the hope process was developed by Dufault and Martocchio. This model illustrates that "hoping is not a single act but a complex of many thoughts, feelings, and actions that change with time" (p. 381). Dufault and Martocchio's model is built on the understanding that hope is a process and that this process is unique to each individual. This multi-dimensional model of hope encompasses a holistic experience across cultures and offers a framework for building on the hope of children and youth.

The model contains two *spheres* of hope: the generalized and the particularized.

Generalized hope provides :

- an overall sense of hope that things will turn out okay
- a sense of well-being and security that one will cope with whatever comes along
- a climate for developing particular hopes.

Generalized hope is exemplified in statements like:

- "I don't hope for anything particular, I just hope…"
- "Things worked out before…"
- "Hope keeps me going."

Particularized hope is a focus on something specific such as a:

- valued outcome
- state of being
- valued object.

For example, a youth, hoping for a summer job (which is a *particular* hope) may say that he knows he will get one (a more *general* hope) because he was successful in securing good jobs in the previous two summers.

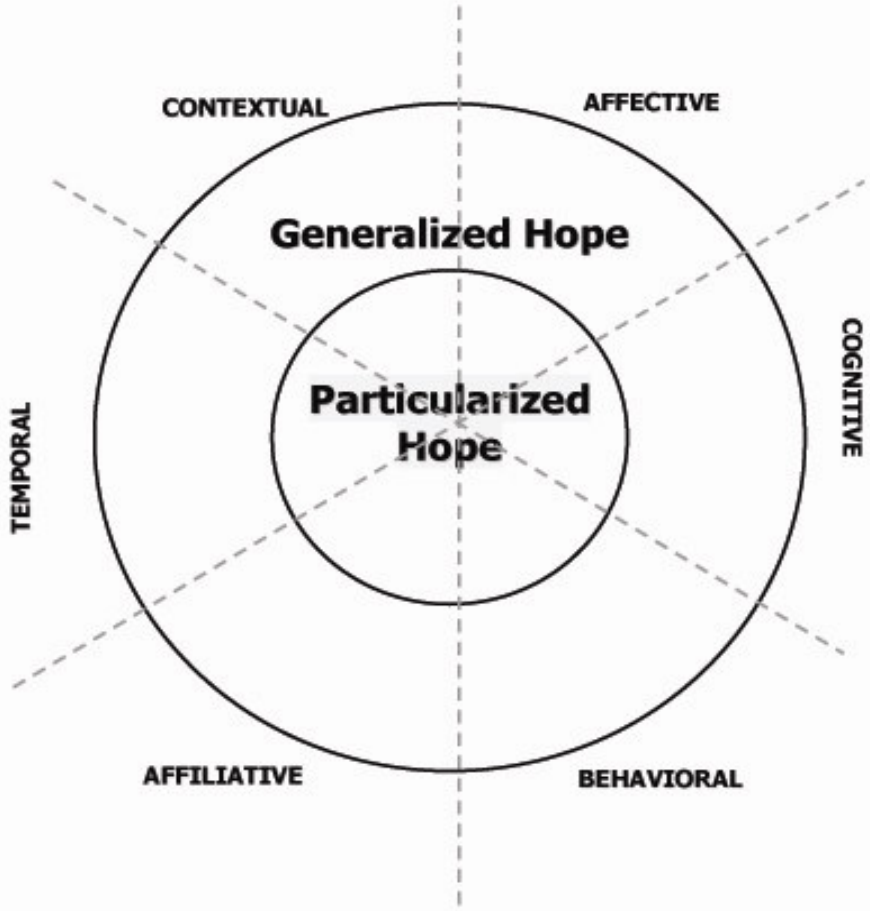
Six Dimensions of Hope

In addition, the Dufault and Martocchio model includes six *dimensions* of hope. These dimensions inform and are informed by the two spheres of hope. This six dimensions of hope are:

- cognitive
- affiliative
- affective
- behavioral
- contextual
- temporal.

These six dimensions contribute to the hoping process in varying and overlapping degrees. They can be visualized as an interconnected circle. Although at any one time it may seem that an individual may be focusing on one of the dimensions, the other five dimensions are always activated, but to varying degrees.

Dufault & Martocchio's
Multidimensional Model of Hope



Used with permission from Karin Dufault (2007)

The Cognitive Dimension

The cognitive dimension of hope encompasses how an individual:

- imagines
- sets goal
- solves problems
- sees possibilities.

This dimension is about perception; it considers *how* an individual thinks about his or her ability to set and attain goals and determine whether or not a goal is realistic. Helping a child or youth develop "I hope…." statements is part of the cognitive dimension.

The Affiliative Dimension

The affiliative dimension of hope encompasses the connections or relationships with others, including connections to a higher being or purpose. The affiliative dimension is about relationship and reliance on the strength or assistance of living things or a higher power.

The affiliative dimension is about participating in meaningful activities with significant others. Participating in meaningful activities creates opportunities for being listened to and receiving feedback and encouragement. These kinds of positive interactions enhance hope. Identifying with others through meaningful activities and interactions enhances hopeful thinking, feeling, acting, and relating to others.

The Affective Dimension

The affective dimension encompasses the feelings an individual has about a particular hope or desired outcome. People can have mixed feelings about a desired outcome. For example, there may be an intense longing as well as an anxiousness related to the uncertainty of how things may turn out when the sought-after goal is finally reached. Encouraging children and youth to acknowledge and connect to feelings about a particular hope can help to uncover new assumptions and/or beliefs that may be contributing to a feeling of hopelessness or an inability to move forward.

The Behavioural Dimension

The behavioural dimension encompasses the action part of the hoping process. There are three basic types of actions, which make up the behavioural dimension within the hoping process, including:

- **Physical actions** which are observable and specific. A child who seeks out the advice or comfort of another person is demonstrating a visible and personal physical action.

- **Mental activities** like thinking about or planning possible strategies.

- **Social and religious actions** include praying, fasting, or taking part in rituals such as a sharing circle, singing, or joining a team. They often exemplify social or religious actions so may overlap with the affiliative dimension.

It can also be helpful for children and youth to examine hopeful actions they have used in the past or have seen others use.

The Contextual Dimension

Individuals learn different things about themselves in different situations and places. Remembering or connecting to how an individual has used hope in a different setting under different circumstances and with different people can provide opportunities for a person to view his or herself from a more hopeful perspective. This new perspective can give that individual the courage to move forward.

The Temporal Dimension

Temporality encompasses the individual's ability to make choices in the present while reflecting on the past and, at the same time, imagining the future. If we want to engage children and youth in meaningful activities, we must know something about their past and future hopes. Encouraging the telling of stories can help children and youth see how they used hope in the past and consider what this can mean for their futures.

Using the Hope Model in Our Interactions

This model can be used as tool for discussing and/or recording insights that are uncovered and identified through hope-focused practices and learning activities. It also provides a context for reflecting on and transferring hopeful thoughts, feelings, relationships and activities to enhance our own and another's hope to overcome challenges. ***Appendix A*** contains a blank template of the model.

Hope Practices

"Until we address the expectations of students and provide them with a feeling of hopefulness, all the specific strategies to help them will exist in a context of defeat."

–Richard Curwin

Learning is a shared experience. A pedagogical relationship takes place when both the adult/teacher and the child or youth/student benefit from the learning experience and gain knowledge and skills that enable them to take action and move toward a desired future or outcome.

The adult's role in a pedagogical relationship is to help a child or youth move toward a future in which both the adult and child or youth envisions him or herself participating.

In a pedagogical relationship, adults must pay attention to the process unfolding during their interactions with children and youth. These processes, in turn, inform the hope-focused practices that we can use in our interactions with children and youth.

The following hope-focused practices are ones that we feel contribute to creating pedagogical relationships that enhances hopeful processes and outcomes:

- Paying attention to our own hope
- Engaging the 7 C's of Hope
- Listening with our whole being
- Participating in community service
- Encouraging reflection

These hope practices offer a starting point and are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Paying Attention to Our Own Hope

Adults must have hope if they are to give hope to the children and youth they are working with. Having hope means being able to access hope when it is needed.

Being able to access your own hope requires an awareness of what hope looks, feels and sounds like. It means knowing what behaviours to use to access your own hope. It also means being aware of what nourishes our hope and what depletes it and what kinds of things we can do when our reserves of hope are low. The better acquainted you are with your own hope, the easier it is to find hope when you are challenged by a child or youth's lack of hope.

Reflecting on questions like the following can help us become more aware of the role that hope plays in guiding our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and relationships with others.

- What do I believe about hope at this time?
- What does a hopeful child look like and sound like?
- What drew me to this resource?

- What questions do I have about hope?
- Who would I describe as a hope mentor from my childhood? What made that person a good mentor?
- What are some examples from my own life that demonstrate how I use hope in my work with children and youth?

Engaging The 7 C's of Hope

Because there was little information about hope in the research literature when the Hope Foundation began its work in 1992, one of the first tasks was that a group of individuals did an exhaustive search of what research did exist. Because many of the themes that surfaced began with the letter C, the findings from this work became known as the "7 C's of Hope".

We have included the original 7 C's in this resource because they encourage us to reflect on what conditions are necessary for us to build and maintain hope.

The original list included:

- communication
- community
- caring
- coping
- committing
- creating
- celebrating

The 7 C's can be considered in any order and in a multitude of ways. For ideas on ways to use the 7 C's of Hope, and to share ways you have used the 7 C's in your interactions with children and youth, join the 'Nurturing Hopeful Souls

Community of Practice' by emailing hope@ualberta.ca and putting 'Nurturing Hopeful Souls Community of Practice' in the subject line.

Here is a brief description of each of the 7 C's for you to reflect on.

Caring

Hope builds on and is grounded in relationship. Feeling safe and cared for helps us develop the confidence to build on existing strengths and weaknesses so that we feel competent and prepared to reach the goals that we set for ourselves.

Children and youth "need to trust what they know, because as they grow, it is this knowledge that will help them form the relationships that will sustain them as adults–relationships with friends and partners, relationships in their work world, and relationships with community and culture at large" (Raider-Roth, 2005, p. 18).

In his leadership research, Thomas Sergiovanni identifies establishing a caring and trusting environment as a prerequisite for change.

Communication

Language influences the way we view the world and how we see ourselves. Therefore, intentionally choosing words, phrases and/or questions from a hopeful perspective helps us to pay attention to how hope guides our beliefs and expectations of what is possible.

One of the best indicators of successfully changing perspectives is to hear others around us increasing their use of hopeful words and phrases.

Using hopeful language takes practice. Start with one word or phrase that you would like to use more often. Post cue cards of these phrases in prominent places that you will see throughout the day.

Examples of hopeful language include:

- "When …"
- "Yet …"(versus "If")
- "I believe…"
- "I wonder…"
- "What would a hopeful person do?"
- "Why not?"
- "What is the smallest thing we can do?"

Experiment with hopeful language and add phrases or words that you find elevate your own hope or the hope of children and youth you are working with.

Much of what is known about hope has resulted from asking intentional open-ended hope-focused questions.

Using hope-focused questions involves a partnership. This partnership is built on a:

- mutual respect for each other
- shared agreement that there are no right or wrong answers
- common belief that possibilities arise from respectful listening and sharing.

Remaining open to possibilities, through hope-focused questions, helps others to feel understood and supported. This, in turn, gives individuals the confidence to act in the present and move confidently and actively toward a positive and fulfilling future.

Hope-focused questions can be explicit or implicit.

Examples of explicit hope-focused questions include:

- "What was the experience of hope as you faced….?"
- "If you could draw a picture of hope, what would you draw?"
- "What are those things beyond the borders of your picture that influences your hope?"
- "What do I need to know about you that will tell me something about your hopes?"
- "If you could add something to that photograph or picture that would tell me about your hope, what would it be?"
- "If you could pack a bag with items that remind you of hope when you most need reminding, what would you put in the bag?"

Examples of implicit hope-focused questions include:

- "If you had the opportunity to listen to the story of one other person, whose story would you choose to hear?"

- "If there was one physical activity that would give you energy and inspiration, what would it be?"

- "If a collection could bring you pleasure, what would you collect?"

- "If you were hearing music that soothed your soul and brought out the best in you, what kind of music would you be hearing?"

- Tell me about a time when:
  –something turned out better than you expected.
  –something that was impossible became possible.
  –you thought there was no solution but then you unexpectedly found one.
  –things were going your way but you did not know it at the time.
  –things did not go the way you wanted but you were ok with what happened after all.

For more examples of hope-focused questions, see *The Counsellor's Introduction to Hope Tools* by Edey et al, 2005.

Use hope-focused questions to explore hope themes and issues in literature, history and popular culture, as well as from our own pasts and the pasts of the children and youth you are working with.

An individual's expectations and beliefs are influenced by their family and cultural background. Understanding and respecting the importance of culture is key to supporting the hopes of others.

For example, in a culture that values independence, the perception is that individuals are personally responsible for determining how they move toward a particular outcome or goal. In this type of cultural climate, an individual who practices hopeful behaviours is more likely to actively seek out the assistance and support of others who can help them meet their goals.

On the other hand, in a culture that values interdependence, it is the responsibility of the community (rather than the individual) to make sure an individual gets the support and assistance he or she needs to access and maintain hope (Weingarten, 2007).

Hopelessness occurs when an individual repeatedly runs into roadblocks while trying to reach their goals. Hopelessness can also happen when an individual replicates cultural or family patterns of not having the power to achieve a particular outcome or future. It is important to be mindful of how an individual's family or cultural stories affect their understanding of and feelings about hope. This means respectfully listening, and gently asking hope-focused questions while, at the same time, paying attention to how our own stories, perceptions and experiences of hope relate to another's experiences.

Guiding questions to help connect to cultural beliefs and expectations include the following sample questions:

- "What would I have to know about your family or culture to understand your hope?"

- "What would hope look like in your family or culture?"

- "What would hopelessness look like in your family or culture?"

- "Is there any aspect of your family or culture that makes it difficult to hope?"

- "What are sources of hope in your family or culture?"

- "If there was one symbol that would describe hope (or hopelessness) in your family or culture what would that symbol be?"

Community

Feelings of belonging are critical to sustaining hope. This is why we sometimes see youth joining negative groups, like gangs, in order to feel like they belong. Children and youth need opportunities to participate and contribute to caring communities. They need opportunities to describe what hopeful communities look, sound and feel like. They also need opportunities to reflect on how they can belong to and contribute to hopeful communities.

Creating opportunities to identify the different communities that children and youth belong to and/or feel excluded from can help define and expand their sense of community and belonging. It can also help them identify and build new skills to successfully navigate their way into and around particular communities.

Explore how hopeful communities enhance our quality of life through discussion questions such as:

- "What does a hopeful community look, sound, and feel like?"
- "What makes a hopeful community?"
- "How does a hopeful community enhance our hope?"
- "What does a hopeless community look like?"
- "What can we do to create a hopeful community?"

Coping

Hoping and coping are sometimes referred to as the "ping" twins because they work together to help us get through challenging times. To handle difficult situations more effectively, it is helpful to understand how we:

- cope with hope
- hope while coping.

Simply coping over a long period of time, with little or no hope, can make life seem difficult and devoid of possibilities. Acknowledging feelings of hopelessness can be an opportunity to identify necessary and creative solutions to the problems we are experiencing. At its most extreme, coping without hope prevents us from seeing a future in which we can freely and effectively participate. Hoping without coping may result in denying the realities of our experience, cutting us off from valuable information that could help us make more informed decisions.

It is the delicate balance and intersection between hoping and coping that is critical to the development of resilient behaviors. This in turn influences an individual's hope for the future. Our ability to cope and bounce back from difficult situations is influenced by our ability to visualize a positive future. Keeping a balance between hoping and coping helps us identify what we must do to get through a difficult situation in order to get to a more positive future. Hopeful thoughts, actions, feelings and relationships can become powerful coping strategies that help us bounce back from difficult life events. Hope-focused coping strategies allow us to step back and relax, notice new hopes and reconnect with lost or forgotten hopes.

Committing

There is a connection between hope and responsibility that is built, in part, through making and keeping commitments. Children and youth need authentic opportunities to make and honour increasingly more complex commitments. As adults working with children and youth, we have the opportunity to be positive role models and demonstrate the importance of making and keeping commitments, both to ourselves and to others.

Creating

How a person is creative and how he or she explores and cultivates interests, solves problems and expresses themselves provides clues to that person's hope. Working with children and youth, in and of itself, requires creativity, not only for problem solving, but also for developing meaningful and engaging activities.

Because the concept of hope is complex to define, images, symbols, and representations can provide a context for exploring and expressing our understanding of hope. Many of the learning activities in this resource that are designed to evoke hope involve the creative process.

Celebrating

Finding ways to encourage children and youth to actively search for something to celebrate is essential for supporting their hope.

Creating opportunities to reflect on successes along the way makes it possible for children and youth to determine what is for them, an accomplishment, and therefore worthy of celebrating.

The act of celebrating need not be elaborate, but it does require acknowledging efforts in moving toward a desired outcome no matter how small. It can be as simple as creating opportunities to acknowledge the group's efforts at a certain time each week or making a check mark on a chart each time someone in the class demonstrates a hopeful behaviour or uses hopeful language.

As an example of the importance of celebration, Hope-Focused Service-Learning, a program of the Hope Foundation, has many opportunities to celebrate, not only in the final phase, but regularly throughout all phases of the program. Students have multiple opportunities to share their accomplishments and new learning with others through activities, discussion and their electronic portfolios.

Listening With Our Whole Being

Listening with our whole being helps us to connect to another person's implicit and explicit hopes. By accepting that what children and youth have to say is an important contribution to their understanding of themselves, we acknowledge that an individual's sense of hope is unique, valid and complex. We also demonstrate that we are willing to do the hard work necessary to build on hopeful strategies. In this way we encourage children and youth to pay attention to their own hope.

Listening well includes paying attention to the silences. It is important to notice when individuals are silent or are silenced about their feelings of either hope or hopelessness. Also, being alert to moments when we find ourselves about to silence another can help us become more skillful listeners. Listening with our whole being helps us to know what kind of hope-focused questions to use to further uncover and access another's hope.

The following story demonstrates the importance of paying attention to what we are hearing when we listen with our whole being.

I was asked to close a retreat for grade six students with a hope-focused activity.

I began by sharing my hope kit with the group and then we brainstormed the kinds of things they could put in their own hope kit and the kind of things they could do when their hope is bruised or hurt.

A student raised his hand and volunteered, "Parties give me hope." The second time his hand went up, he said, "Drinking gives me hope."

I knew the class had a recent presentation on drug and alcohol use and I wondered if this young man was thinking about that presentation or if he was just trying to divert the attention of the group. I planned to ignore him if he raised his hand again. This seemed like the logical strategy for discouraging what I perceived as negative behavior.

However, when he began flailing his arm frantically in the air, I was torn. I thought "Give him a chance–No, don't dare give him a chance. If you do he'll take control of the group and this session will be ruined."

But, as usual, my 'give him a chance' side won out. My whole body sighed with relief when I heard his new contribution, "My grandfather gave me hope". His grandfather, he shared with the class, had died recently, and it was his grandfather who had most often helped him with his homework. In the follow-up art project, the young man painted puffy clouds that he later told me, represented his grandfather's sideburns.

This story did not leave me. I thought about how this young man probably had a lot more to say about his grandfather. When I talked to the classroom teacher a few weeks later, she told me the young man had just shared an essay to his classmates introducing his grandfather as his hero.

Paying attention to my role in the youth's story, I came away from this encounter with a deeper understanding of the youth, my own hope and my ability to help this youth discover more about his hoping self .

Participating in Community Service

It was Zimmerman who first coined the phrase 'learned hopefulness' when studying how providing assistance to others elevates out hope.

The Hope-Focused Service-Learning program provides a pedagogical approach for uncovering hope in the community. This program is delivered in schools and integrates community service and hope-focused practices with academic studies to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and build hopeful and resilient communities. Service-learning engages students in addressing real needs and issues in the community and actively involves them in decision-making through the lens of hope.

Through hope-focused service-learning; students:

- move beyond awareness and tolerance to acceptance and respect
- strengthen oral and written communication skills
- develop management skills
- experience personal accountability
- develop skills to work effectively with others
- build healthy relationships with adult mentors
- enhance quality of life for other people involved in the project
- use their strengths and skills to build healthy and resilient communities now and in the future
- are more likely to engage in lifelong civic engagement
- see possibilities when hope "turns the light on" instead of living in darkness and feeling a sense of hopelessness

Hope-focused service-learning projects might include such activities as:

- working on hope projects with seniors in continuing care centres
- mentoring younger students or children in daycares
- creating hopeful messages and displays for a school or other public space around issues such as bullying prevention or positive body image
- working with environmental groups or civic employees.

For more information on how to establish a Hope-Focused Service-Learning project in your school visit the Hope Foundation website at www.ualberta.ca/hope/HopeKids.

Encouraging Reflection

Hope is about being and living in the moment as much as it is about moving toward a desired future. Reflection helps individuals connect to inner hopes and in doing so, identify hopeful actions, thoughts, relationships and feelings.

Research demonstrates that creating spaces in our life to connect to hope enables us to act from a place of hope rather than from a place of fear or anger. Reflection helps us make the connection to our own hopes while uncovering, connecting to and naming a particular hope.

One of the most important outcomes of ongoing reflection is the opportunity to gain a better understanding of ourselves. Thinking reflectively and critically in a trusting and supportive environment creates opportunities to assess:

- what we know
- believe

- can do
- what we need to know, believe and do to move toward a positive and meaningful future.

We need to model and create opportunities for children and youth to reflect where they have been, are currently at, hope to go, and how to maneuver around and through the roadblocks that may stand in the way.

Van Manen (1991) describes this "ongoing practice of interpretive thinking and acting–on the part of adults, but also and especially on the part of the children who continually interpret their own lives and who constantly form their own understandings of what it means to grow up in this world" (p. 60) as part of the pedagogical relationship.

Reflection provides valuable information about an individual's progress so that individual can move forward by building on current skills, understandings, mistakes, and questions.

Reflection is a process that guides and gauges our actions, thoughts and feelings in and outside of relationships with others. When an obstacle stands in our way, we need to slow down and break down the steps to overcome that particular roadblock. When our hopes are challenged or diminished, reflection is critical.

For children and youth to be reflective, they need the support and encouragement of a trusting relationship. A trusting relationship will free children and youth from the limiting mentality that there is only one right way or a single correct solution.

Learning to reflect is similar to learning to drive a vehicle. When we are first learning to drive, intense concentration to every detail is required. Over time driving becomes a more automated process. Generally we do not learn to drive by ourselves. Until a new driver passes the driving test, a more experienced driver must be in the vehicle at all times. At the beginning the new driver relies on the feedback and suggestions of the more experienced driver. Over time, and with practice, the new driver gains the confidence and competence to maneuver a vehicle safely from point A to B, relying less on the instructor and more on his or her own judgment.

Reflection is enhanced with coaching from trusted and caring others. If feedback is discouraging children and youth can become fearful or discouraged.

Using hope-focused prompts such as "I wonder"..., "What if…" and "Tell me more…" creates opportunities for children and youth to consider other possibilities. These prompts create deeper understandings as children and youth revisit what they have learned and connect it to in new contexts in their life. This kind of on-going reflection can be incorporated into hope journals and hope folios. (Refer to page 54 to learn more about hope journals and hope folios.)

To create caring environments that encourage self-assessment, consider the following strategies.

- Share your own stories and invite children and youth to share their stories to create new understandings and explore questions about others and themselves.

- Provide written and verbal feedback to a child or youth's reflections on hope.

- Ask HARD QUESTIONS that do not have right or wrong answers and encourage children and youth to think in different ways.

- During discussion, use wait-time of at least ten seconds to create opportunities for children and youth to respond to questions and comments.

- Create opportunities for hearing and exploring alternative points of view.

- Involve children and youth in creating descriptions of outcomes that demonstrate what they understand and believe about hopeful actions, thoughts, relationships, and feelings.

- Look for, identify and build on hopeful behaviors that children and youth demonstrate.

- Provide specific and timely feedback that builds on current strengths and skills.

- Encourage children and youth to search for examples that demonstrate moving toward a chosen hope.

- Encourage children and youth to be open and willing to ask questions and engage in activities that create room for uncertainty and exploring alternate solutions.

- Create opportunities to revisit reflections and become aware of changing attitudes, ideas, and beliefs.

Sample Learning Activities

The final section of this resource is a collection of sample hope-focused learning activities to use and adapt. These activities provide practical and specific ways to put hope practices into action.

The goal of these activities is to help children and youth access and use hope as a guiding force in their lives. These activities help make explicit those inner hopes that are often hidden and difficult to articulate.

Please adapt and enhance these activities in ways that best meet the needs of the children and youth that you work with. Do not limit yourself to these sample activities–they are intended to be a starting point for your own journey of "paying attention to hope".

Representing Hope

Creating representations such as drawings and sculptures, that are free of preconceptions and expectations, and that evolve over time, allow children and youth to express and explore their hoping selves. As you use and build upon these activities, you are helping children and youth gain the skills and understandings needed to choose hope over fear and allow hope to become a motivating force in their lives.

Graphic organizers (sometimes called thinking tools) are frameworks for generating new ideas, organizing information and making connections between ideas. They make thinking visible. Graphic organizers represent visually, what we know, feel, and sometimes wonder in the moment. These visual representations, in turn, help us to articulate and act on new learning.

Examples of graphic organizers that can be helpful in hope-focused learning activities include:

- webs
- brainstormed lists such as Top ten lists
- K-W-L charts
- T- and Y-charts
- Venn diagrams.

Reflection

Because hope requires both action and reflection, we need to create a space to collect ongoing thoughts and feelings about our experiences in uncovering and exploring hopes. Because hope is unique to each person, each person's hope journal and/or hope folio will be different.

Hope Journals

A hope journal can provide a framework for personal reflection. It is a place to record experiences and personal insights and can help individuals gauge and guide their own actions, thoughts, feelings, relationships and behaviours. A journal can serve as a barometer, a compass and a telescope. In essence, a hope journal provides a space and place to pay close attention to your personal sense of hope.

Hope Folios

A hope folio is a collection of the work and related reflections gathered during hope-focused learning activities and discussion. A hope journal can be part of a more comprehensive hope folio. The hope folio might take the form of a binder or special box, and the hope journal would be a section or component of that folio. A hope folio could also be a digital collection of work, stored in an electronic file.

A hope folio might include, but is not limited to the following components:

- hope journals
- written reflections about hope (completed as part of or after a hope activity)
- graphic organizers (to generate, record and organize information and new ideas)
- hope kit (including a written record of the items in the kits and reasons why they are included)
- hope images (including drawings, photos and art project illustrating experiences and feelings about hope)

To see an example of a hope folio, visit: www.learningtohope.ca

Sample Learning Activities

Each sample learning activity in this section contains information about:

- **Purpose:** overall goal and context of the activity
- **Objectives:** specific skills, knowledge and attitudes that will be explored and applied in the learning activity
- **Time:** ranging from 15 to 90 minutes, dependent on number of participants
- **Materials:** including pen and paper for reflection, chart paper for recording group responses, and art supplies for self-expression activities
- **Process:** step-by-step plan for facilitating the activity with a group, generally can be adapted for developmental level, size and unique needs of participants
- **Reflection:** including at least two strategies for creating opportunities for participants to reflect on their learning and share their learning with others
- **Facilitator tips:** ideas for adapting activities, cues for applying hope practices and additional strategies for sustaining and extending learning.

The sample learning activities are organized around five interactions with hope, including: searching, identifying, exploring, sharing and deepening understanding.

Searching for Hope

1. Picturing Hope
2. Walk of Hope
3. Photos of Hope

Identifying What Hope Means to You

4. Symbols of Hope
5. Creating a Hope Kit

Exploring Hopeful Behaviours

6. Coping with Hope Suckers
7. Building Hope Shields

Sharing Hope

8. Planting Hope Trees
9. Sharing in a Hope Circle

Deepening Our Understanding of Hope

10. Looking Back

Picturing Hope

Purpose

To explore hope by creating a 2-dimensional picture that illustrates what we believe and feel about hope.

Objectives

Skills:	To notice things which sustain and diminish our hope
Knowledge:	To understand the importance of noticing and paying attention to things which enhance and diminish our hope
Attitudes:	To appreciate that hope changes, but that there are things unique to each of us that sustain or enhance our hope

Time

Approximately 60 minutes for the drawing, sharing and discussion

Materials

Pens/pencils/crayons or felts
Blank paper

Process

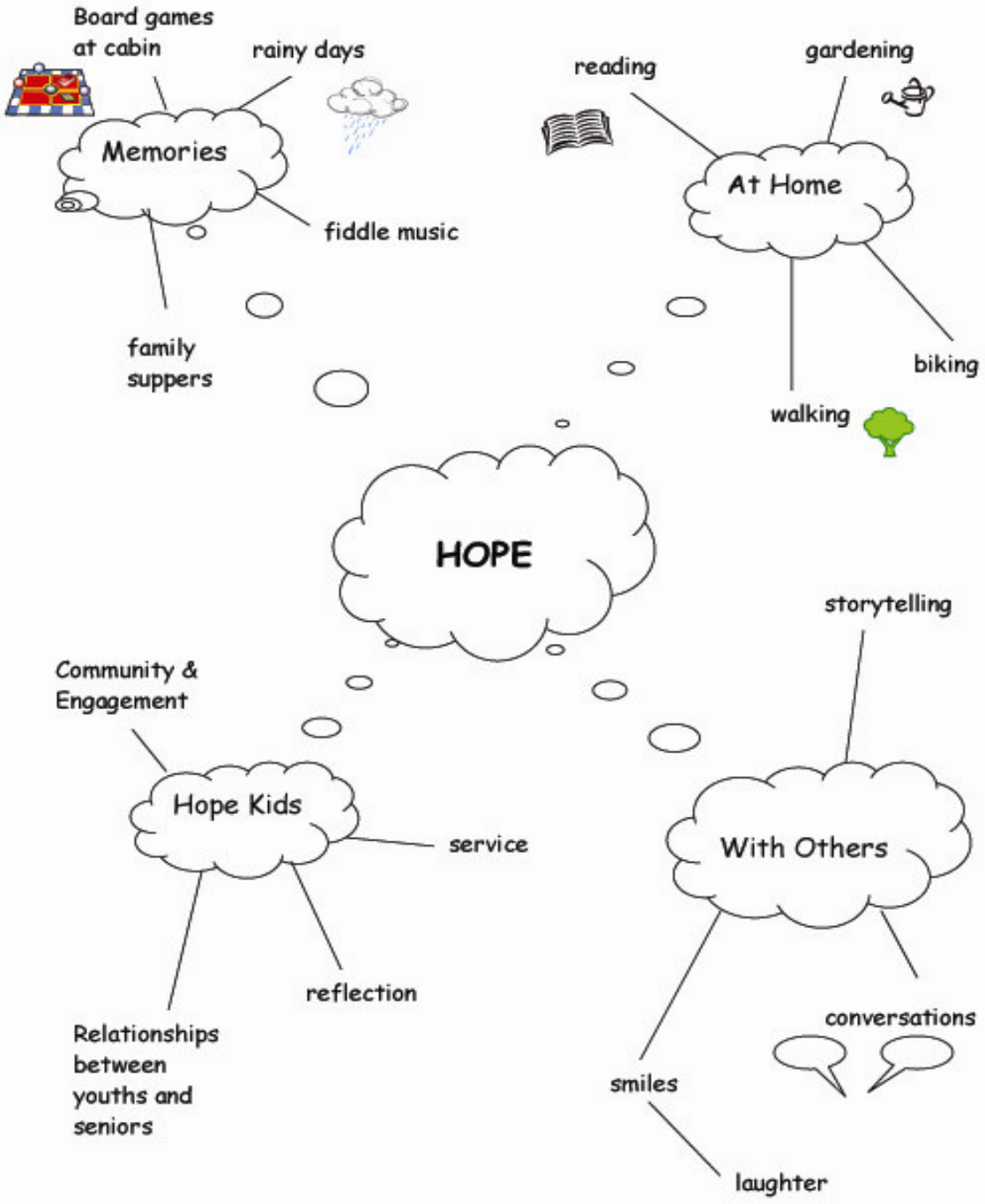
1. Ask participants to think about the word hope and how they might create a drawing to illustrate their hope. Ask, *"What pictures or symbols come to mind when you think about hope and what it means to you? Draw a picture to represent what hope means to you at this time."* Encourage participants to do this activity independently and without talking to each other. Tell participants they will have about 20-25 minutes to do this activity.

2. When the drawing time is over, invite participants to display the pictures on a bulletin board. Some may choose to share their pictures by talking about their drawings. Listen to the conversation that ensues. If participants are not comfortable sharing at this time, display the pictures without names on the front.

Reflection

- In a group discuss:
  "What do these pictures tell us about hope?"
  "What similarities did you notice about the pictures?"
  "What differences did you notice about the pictures?"
  or
- Working with a partner, use the ideas from the shared pictures of hope to create a web "What is hope?" To make a web, print the word "hope" in the center of the paper. Draw lines from the circle and begin recording words on each line that capture your thoughts about hope. Add symbols or drawings to illustrate different parts of the web.

Hope Web


Board games at cabin
rainy days
Memories
fiddle music
family suppers
reading
gardening
At Home
biking
walking
HOPE
storytelling
Community & Engagement
Hope Kids
service
reflection
Relationships between youths and seniors
With Others
conversations
smiles
laughter

Facilitator Tips

- Hope pictures should be one of the first activities to do when beginning an exploration of hope. This activity can also be repeated at later dates. Participants can deepen their understanding of hope by comparing various drawings from different time periods.

- This activity encourages participants to search within and to connect to what they know about hope. This creative and reflective experience can provide a starting point for uncovering and discovering hope.

- In order to focus on being open to what we might not realize at a conscious level, we need to refrain from labeling ideas as right or wrong or acceptable or unacceptable. We must trust that what we draw tells us something about ourselves.

- Waiting quietly for the unknown to surface sometimes takes longer than we are used to waiting.

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks, create opportunities for participants to add to their hope web. Encourage participants to date or colour code each addition so they have a record of how their thinking about hope is evolving over time.

Walk of Hope

Purpose

To help us notice how hope surrounds us in our physical environments.

Objectives

Skills:	To notice physical things in our environment that sustain our hope
Knowledge:	To understand the importance of noticing and paying attention to things which enhance our hope
Attitudes:	To appreciate that hope changes, but that there are things unique to each of us that sustains or enhances our hope

Time

Approximately 45 minutes

Materials

Pens/pencils/crayons or felts
Paper

Process

1. Review with participants what they know about hope.

2. Introduce the idea of a hope walk by asking participants to look around the room from where they are sitting and identify one or two physical things in their sight line that represents hope to them.

3. Provide a simple map of the physical area in which participants will be walking as they search for hope. Organize the group into pairs, small groups or for individuals to search in separate areas of the map.

4. Decide how long participants will walk. (Generally 10 to 15 minutes is sufficient.) Decide where and what time participants will meet at the end of the walk.

5. Talk about how you will record what you learn about hope on your walk. Each set of partners might decide to make a list of what they see that represents hope for them or they might want to record with drawings. The walk can be done silently or group members may wish to quietly discuss what they are looking for, what they see and hear, and how they are feeling.

6. When everyone has returned from the walk, ask them to share observations from their lists. Record these observations on a posted chart paper.

Reflection Activities

- Participants create a journal entry to explore the questions:
  "What did I learn about hope that I did not know before the hope walk?"
  "When I look back over my list from my hope walk I am surprised that…"
  or
- In a small group, participants discuss what was most surprising during the walk.

Facilitator's Tips

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks, encourage participants to be aware of hopeful things they notice in their physical environment. Give them opportunities to add their new observations to the posted group list.

Photos of Hope

Purpose

To explore and identify the meaning of hope, using photographic images.

Objectives

Skills:	To notice things which sustain and diminish our hope
Knowledge:	To understand the importance of noticing and paying attention to things which enhance our hope
Attitudes:	To appreciate that hope changes, but that there are things unique to each of us that sustain or enhance our hope

Time

Part 1

15 to 30 minutes to introduce activities

1 hour to take photos (or can be done independently over the week)

Part 2

45 minutes to prepare photos for display

15 to 30 minutes for sharing (depending on number of participants)

Materials

Part 1

Digital or disposable cameras

Recording sheets (Appendix B)

Pens/pencils

Part 2

Blank paper and other art supplies to create photo album

Pens/pencils/crayons or felts

Process

Part 1

1. Review with participants what they have been discovering about hope.

2. Introduce the idea of photos of hope by asking participants to look around the room from where they are sitting and to identify one or two physical things in their sight line that represents hope to them.

3. Provide participates with a digital or disposable camera and provide a hands-on demonstration of how the camera work.

4. Introduce the idea of "hope in the moment" and discuss what a photo of this might look like.

5. Discuss the parameters of the activity, including:
   - how many photos will be in each album (e.g. one to ten)
   - where and when photos can be taken (e.g., in the next 15 to 20 minutes, over the next week etc.)
   - questions to attend to while taking photos (see Appendix B)
   - how to record information for each photo taken (see Appendix C)
   - how and when film will be developed or photos will be printed (e.g., email digital file to group facilitator before next meeting, bring file to next session, print on own etc.)
   - how photos will be displayed and shared (e.g., on website, in small paper album, single photos mounted on card stock with captions etc.)

Part 2

6. When participants have their developed photos, provide time and materials to prepare them for display, either as a poster or in a photo album.

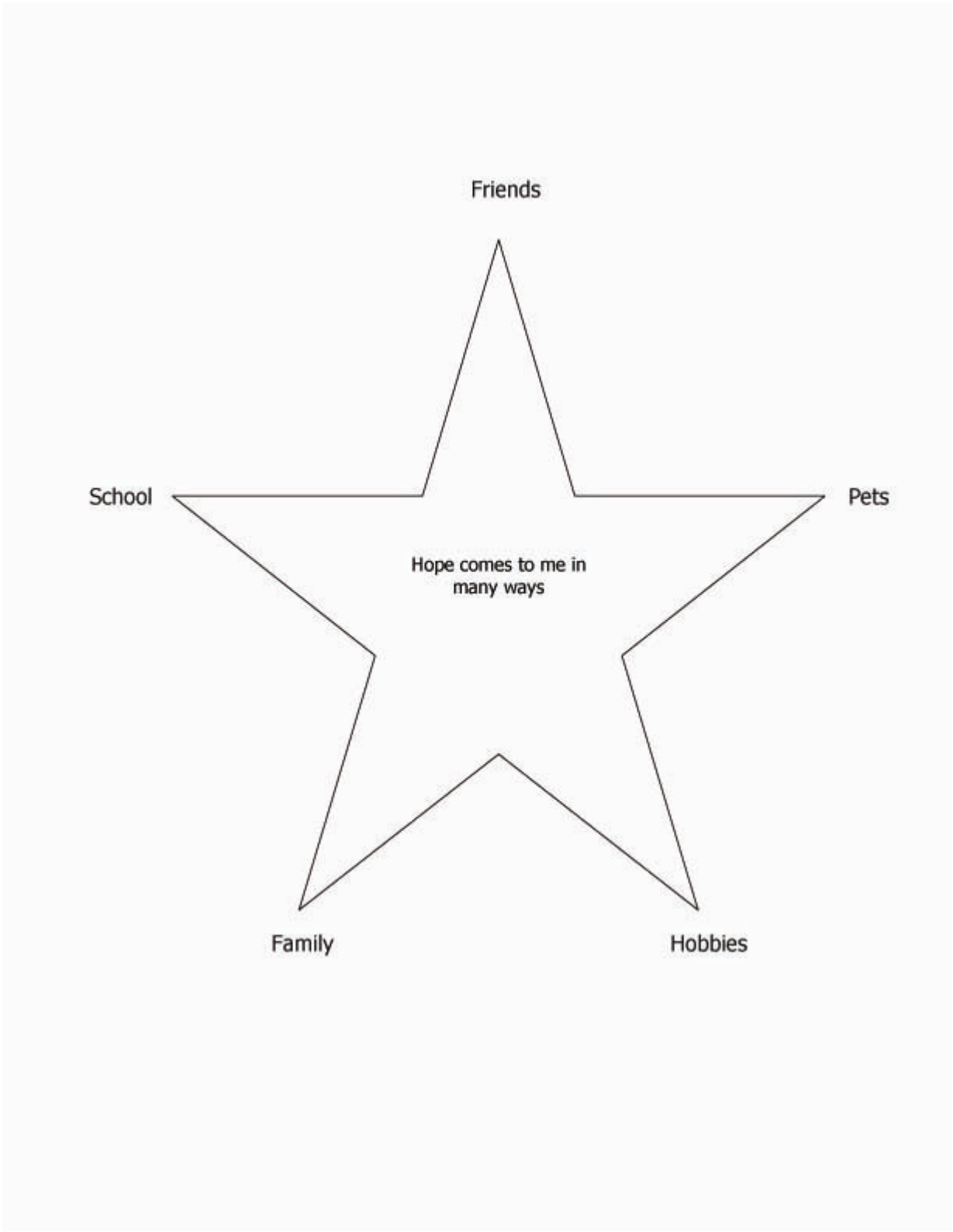
7. Invite each participant to share their photographs in small groups and explain how the photos illustrate their hope.

8. Invite participants to choose one photo to share with the large group. If space is available, consider making a "Gallery of Hope".

Reflection Activities

- In small groups, participants explore and discuss the following questions:
  "What do these pictures tell us about hope?"
  "What similarities did you notice?"
  "What differences?"
  or
- Working independently, identify five themes that emerged after looking once again at the photos. Record these themes on a star, writing one theme on each of the star points. After sharing the stars with a partner or group, record a wonder or observation about the themes.

Star


Friends
School
Pets
Hope comes to me in many ways
Family
Hobbies

Facilitator's Tips

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Post the completed stars in a place that is visible. Encourage participants to share any new ideas and/or new wonders that surface over the next few weeks.

- Over the next few weeks, create opportunities for participants to collect photos and other graphics that represent hope to them. Encourage participants to describe how these images represent their hopes. For examples of this type of journaling, see www.learningtohope.ca.

Symbols of Hope

Purpose
To identify personal possessions that symbolize hope.

Objectives
Skills: To choose objects or symbols that evoke or influence hope
To refer to and use hope symbols when hope is being challenged

Knowledge: To understand that hopes change over time; therefore, hope symbols may change over time

Attitudes: To be open to new hopes, recognizing at the same time that past hopes continue to inform present hopes

Time
Approximately 45 minutes

Materials
A personal object that represents an individual's hope (participants can choose an item that they have with them e.g., piece of jewelry, something from their knapsack or they can describe an item that is significant to them)

Process
1. Ask participants to choose something in their possession (e.g., item they are wearing, something from their backpack etc.) or describe a personal object that represents or helps then maintain hope.

2. Sitting in a circle, each participant takes one to three minutes to share their hope symbol and tell why he or she chose it.

Reflection Activities

- Participants create a journal entry to explore the questions:
  "What did you learn about your own hope as you shared your hope symbol?"
  "What did you learn about the hope of others as they share their hope symbols?"
  or
- In a small group discuss the following questions:
  "What did you notice about the hope symbols shared today?"
  "What did you learn about your hope as we went around the circle?"

Facilitator's Tips

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks, encourage participants to continue looking for other symbols that represent hope.

Creating a Hope Kit

Purpose

To create a collection of objects, symbols and/or representations that can be used to sustain hope in times of uncertainty or adversity.

Objectives

Skills: To identify and relate to objects, symbols, and/or individuals who influence their hope
To use their personal Hope Kits when their hope is being challenged

Knowledge: To understand that hopes change over time; therefore, the contents of the hope kit will change and build over time

Attitudes: To be open to new hopes, recognizing at the same time that past hopes continue to inform one's present hope

Time

Part 1

15 to 30 minutes to introduce activities
30 minutes to decorate the container that will become the hope kit
10 minutes for final reflection

Part 2

30 minutes to create legend
15 to 30 minutes for sharing (depending on number of participants)

Materials

Your own Hope Kit
Boxes (e.g., shoe boxes or paper bags) or other containers to make kits
Art supplies such as coloured paper, stickers, ribbon, etc.
Scissors/glue
Pens/pencils/crayons or felts

Process

Part 1

1. Review the concept of hope symbols and discuss examples that participants shared with the group in past learning activities.

2. Share your own hope kit and the hope symbols you have collected. Choose a few items to explain how these items symbolize and connect to your hope.

3. Discuss possible metaphors for a Hope Kit. For example, it could be like a First Aid Kit when your hope is injured or it could be like a picnic basket when you need to nourish yourself.

4. Distribute an empty shoe box or other container to each participant. Ask participants to close their eyes and think of what their own Hope Kit might look like.

5. Encourage participants to work independently. Discuss how hope is unique to each person so there is no one way to design a hope kit–everyone's hope kit will be different.

6. Provide a variety of art materials and time to decorate the container that will become the Hope Kit.

7. With participants, brainstorm a list of possible objects, symbols and representations that might sustain a person's sense of hope. Record list on posted chart paper.

8. Encourage participants to take a few minutes of quiet time to think about and make a list of what they will gather for their hope kit over the next week.

9. Gather up the decorated containers and save them for the next session.

Part 2

10. When participants have collected items for their hope kit, give them five minutes to pack their hope kit and think about what each of the items means to them.

11. Introduce the concept of a legend by sharing the legend for your own personal hope kit. For example:

Date Added	Items in Hope Kit	Why/How Item Affects My Hope
May, 2004	Bell	Reminds me to be mindful
May, 2004	Book – *The Meaning of Life*	Doing meaningful activities makes me feel hopeful
May, 2004	Photo of my husband	Someone who I can talk with about my hope
May, 2004	Picture of running shoe (on out-side of kit)	Running is an activity that helps me feel hopeful
July, 2005	Stuffed hope-opotamus	Reminds me to borrow hope when I need it
Feb. 2008	Picture of a house with a heart inside	My home is where I feel safe and secure

12. Provide participants with file cards and markers to create a legend for their kit.

13. When participants have completed the legend, form a circle and give each participant one to three minutes to share three items from their kit and explain why these item represent or inspire hope for them.

Reflection Activities

- Participants create a journal entry to describe how they might use their hope kit in the future.
  or
- As a group, discuss similarities they noticed about the group's choice of symbols and new ideas they learned about hope from this experience.

Facilitator Tips

- You may choose to provide containers or encourage participants to bring in their own containers from home.

- Hope kits or bags can also be containers of artifacts that represent an individual's cultural hope. For example, students in a Cree Language Junior High class made "Hope Bags for the Journey" with the help of an Elder. The Elder helped students bead and decorate the outside of their bags with cultural stories of hope. They also brought in culturally relevant artifacts for the students to put in their hope bags. Look for authentic and meaningful ways for children and youth to incorporate cultural artifacts into their hope kits.

.

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks, encourage participants to add and delete items in their hope kit and to keep a written record of why they chose to do so.

Coping with Hope Suckers

Purpose

To uncover and make visible those things that diminishes our hope. Naming hope suckers enables us to recognize their presence so we are better able to respond effectively to them.

Objectives

Skills:	To identify a situation that diminishes or depletes our hope
Knowledge:	To describe how hope suckers affect our thinking, feeling, relating, and behaving
Attitudes:	To recognize and accept that it is okay to feel the way we do when our hope is being challenged.

Materials

Storybook book such as *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan
Chart paper and markers

Time

Approximately 30 minutes

Process

1. Share a piece of literature, such as *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan, in which a character's hope is being challenged. Use the shared literature as a springboard for discussing times when participants' hopes have been challenged.

2. As a group, brainstorm a list of situations, experiences, and other factors that challenge hope. Brainstorm a list of feelings associated with these kinds of hope challenges.

3. Introduce the concept of "hope suckers". Explain that a group of grade eight youth came up with this term to describe behaviours and/or situations which suck at or destroy our hope.

4. Ask each participant to think about what their hope suckers are, and then, as a group, brainstorm a list of situations and experiences associated with hope suckers. Record these ideas on posted chart paper.

5. Participants work with a partner or in small groups to brainstorm a 'Top Ten' list of hopeful behaviours they have used when faced with these kinds of hope suckers. Record these ideas on posted chart paper.

6. Model hopeful thinking by providing one or two examples of a situation in which something in your life turned out better than you expected. (For example, you visited somewhere you didn't really want to go and discovered you enjoyed it or you ran out of ingredients making your favourite cookie recipe and this forced you to try using a new ingredient that made the cookies even better.) In partners, participants then take turns sharing a time when things turned out better than they expected it to.

7. Add any additional hopeful behaviours to the posted list that emerge from these shared stories.

Reflection Activity

- Participants create a journal entry to explore the question:
  "What did you learn about your hope suckers?"
  or
- Participants create a drawing of overcoming (or imagining themselves overcoming) a typical hope sucker in their life.

Facilitator Tips

- It might be helpful to share some examples of strategies for meeting challenges to hope. For example:

  "When I meet someone who talks about me behind my back I can use self-talk to remind myself that they must want my attention, but don't know how to get it any other way."

  "I have a hard time dealing with my panicky feelings when I have a test. Now that my teacher knows how tests makes me feel, we can work together to find strategies that will work for me."

  "I wonder what will happen when I get the courage to explain to my friends how uncomfortable I feel when they…"

  "I believe that if I pay attention to what I hope for as I start my work experience, I will be able to handle my fears about it."

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks create opportunities for participants to share their on-going experiences in dealing with hope suckers.

- Encourage participants to add new strategies for dealing` with hope suckers to the posted list.

Building Hope Shields

Purpose

To identify hopeful behaviours, thoughts, relationships, and feelings.

Objectives

Skills: To identify objects, symbols, and/or types of situations which diminish or deplete hope

Knowledge: To describe how hope affects thinking, feeling, relating, and behaving

Attitudes: To recognize and accept that it is okay to feel the way we do when our hope is being challenged. However, we do not have to let those feelings rule. We can choose actions and thoughts that rebuild hope and help us cope and move forward

Materials

Hope Shield template (Appendix D)
Pens, pencils, crayon and markers

Time

Approximately 60 minutes

Process

1. Invite participants to close their eyes and think about what they learned about hope suckers.

2. As a group, discuss the concept of hope suckers that challenge and eat away at our hope.

3. Review examples of hopeful behaviours.

4. Discuss ways of acting, thinking and feeling which protect individuals against hope suckers. Record these ideas on chart paper on a T-chart such as the one below:

What I Can Do	What I Can Think	What I Might Feel
Phone a friend	"When I reach out to share my frustrations, I get new ideas."	Sense of relief that there are other ways to solve my predicament
Listen to my favourite CD	"Music helps me to relax and to think about times when things have turned out better than I expected"	Relaxed and confident

5. Discuss the concept of a shield and how it protects you from harm. Brainstorm different kinds of shields in everyday life (e.g. windshields, face shields etc). Note that some shields are visible while other shields are invisible.

6. Distribute templates for a hope shield (Appendix D), and provide art materials. Invite participants to create their own hope shields, using symbols and words that represent how they can protect and defend themselves from any hope suckers in their life.

7. Display completed hope shields on the wall and invite participants to look at the other shields and see the range of strategies and ideas for overcoming hope suckers.

Reflection Activity

- Participants create a journal entry to explore one or more of the following prompts:

  Tell about a time when you have used one or more of the *activities* on your shield.
  Describe a time when you used one or more of the *thoughts* on your shield.
  or
- Work with a partner or in a small group to discuss how other people in your life act as hope shields for you. Describe a time when another person helped you overcome a hope sucker.

Facilitator Tips

- Participants may be interested in learning that the group of grade eight youth who first brought hope suckers to the attention of a hope researcher, also talked about how hope shields were needed to put over our hearts to protect ourselves from the "hope suckers" in life.

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next weeks, create opportunities for participants to add new activities, thoughts and feelings to their shields.

Growing Hope Trees

Purpose

To use a tree metaphor to create awareness of how we can make a difference in the lives of others by sharing hope.

Objectives

Skills: To create a repertoire of hopeful behaviors to access when hope is challenged

Knowledge: To understand that sometimes we have to make a conscious decision to act in a hopeful way to enhance our hope for the present and future

Attitudes: To realize we can influence our own and other's hope by intentionally making hopeful behaviors visible and easy to understand

Time

Approximately 60 minutes

Materials

Tree (silk or spray painted branches)
Construction paper
Chart paper to record ideas
Scissors
Leaf shapes (cardboard templates)
Yarn to hang leaves onto tree

Process

1. Discuss how when we are not feeling very hopeful about a situation it can help to have a reminder of what we can do to turn those feelings around.

Share the story about the group of Hope Kids volunteering in a care centre who made a display of hope trees. They wanted to remind families and residents that when they needed hope, they could choose an activity by taking a leaf from the hope tree. Now there are hospitals that have hope trees in their entryways.

2. Think about a hopeful individual. What kinds of things do they do that makes them hopeful? Brainstorm a list of things that hopeful people do. Record ideas on posted chart paper.

3. Ask each participant to choose three of these hopeful behaviours from the brainstormed list and write and/or draw these behaviours on a leaf shape.

4. Hang the leaves on the tree.

5. Display the tree in a place where others can see it such as the school library, a hallway or an entrance to a public space.

Reflection Activities

- Participants create a journal entry to explore the following prompt.
  Think about a time when you used one of the hopeful activities. What happened as a result?
  or
- In a small group, tell about a time when you used one of the hopeful activities. What happened as a result? How did you feel when you used a hopeful strategy?

Facilitator Tips

- Create an information sheet that explains how everyone is welcome to take a leaf from the tree if they need one as a hopeful reminder. They are also welcome to write a new hopeful behaviour on a blank leaf and add it to the tree. See sample directions below:

> You will find descriptions of hopeful behaviours on the leaves of this tree. Feel free to take a leaf if your hope is being challenged. Pay attention to what happens when you put this hope-focused behaviour into action.
>
> Keep the leaf for as long as you need it. If you choose to return the leaf, others can borrow hope when they need it.
>
> If you would like to share a behaviour that helps maintain or lift your hope when it is down, write a description of this behaviour on a blank leaf and add this new leaf to the tree.

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks, create opportunities to discuss how you might know if sharing the hope tree is making a difference in the behaviour and lives of others. Brainstorm ways to evaluate the usefulness of the tree.

- Encourage participants to watch for and record hopeful behaviors that they might add to the tree over the next few months.

Sharing in a Hope Circle

Purpose

To create a structured opportunity for participants to express hopeful thoughts.

Objectives

Skills: Listening, communicating and participating in discussions to access internal and external sources of hope

Knowledge: To understand how hope is both a process and outcome. It is being involved in the process that enables us to be okay with how things turn out in the end

Attitudes: To realize we can influence our own hope and another's hope by being present to what we are hearing, seeing, and feeling

Time

Approximately 60 minutes

Materials

Paper slips
Pens
Container for holding the hope slips
Small stuffed animal or other symbolic item

Process

1. Distribute slips of paper to each participant and ask them to record a hope they have for themselves using the prompt, "I hope..". Hopes might be about:
    - school
    - the future
    - about your family

2. Set up chairs in a circle.

3. Introduce the following guidelines for the Hope Circle:
   - The hopes we are discussing are anonymous. That is, we will not be talking about *who* wrote what hope.

   - After a hope is read, everyone is to take a turn either sharing a hope for that person or a offering an idea to help that person work towards their hope. For example; responding to the hope, "I hope I get to see my dad soon" participants can either answer with a related hope such as "I hope you get to talk to him on the phone soon" or with a hopeful suggestion such as "Maybe you could write your dad a letter and seal it in an envelope and then maybe someday you could send it to him."

   - Speak only when you are holding the talking stick.

   - If you do not wish to comment, simply say "Pass" and then give the talking stick to the next person.

4. Select a hope from the container and read it aloud to the group. Pass the talking stick to the first person to your left. That person speaks and then passes the talking circle to the next person. (The talking stick moves clockwise around the circle.)

5. When everyone in the circle has had a chance to respond, read a new hope and begin passing the talking stick around the circle once more.

6. Gauge the attention of the group, generally a group of older children can handle three to four rounds of the circle. Older youth may be able to sustain their attention for several more rounds of the circle.

Reflection Activity

- Participants complete the following statements in their journal:
  "In this circle I heard…"
  "I was surprised when…"
  or
- Participants draw a picture of several of the hopes that were shared in the circle.

Facilitator Notes

- It may be necessary to discuss the difference between wishing and hoping so that participants focus on their hopes rather than their wishes for materials goods. For example: Wishing happens before hoping. Wishing involves thinking and imagining. Hoping is what an individual *does* with a thought or dream.

- Hoping is about being actively engaged and taking into account:
  –our dreams and wishes
  –our feelings
  –supports we have now or had in the past
  –what we experienced in the past
  –what we are experiencing in the moment
  –beliefs about our abilities to move toward a desired future, and
  –actions we can take to move toward a desired future.

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:
Over the next few weeks, encourage participants to look for opportunities to support other people's hopes.

- To clarify the difference between wishing and hoping it may be helpful to provide some non-examples such as: "You might wish for a new video game or a million dollars. Your hopes are more about the quality of your life and relationships such as hoping to share more fun with your friends or your hopes that you will handle money well".

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks, encourage participants to look for opportunities to support other people's hopes.

Looking Back

Purpose

To become aware of how attitudes and feelings can change over time.

Objectives

Skills:	Engage in reflection
Knowledge:	Understand that attitudes and feelings change over time depending on an individual's experiences, and that these attitudes and feelings affect our beliefs and expectations
Attitudes:	Appreciate how hope influences actions, thoughts, feelings and relationships

Time

Twenty to thirty minutes with discussion

Materials

Entries from hope journals and/or hope folios over an extended period of time
Paper and pens

Process

1. Discuss how taking the time to check in on our beliefs, expectations and experiences can create opportunities for new hopes to surface. Encourage participants to think about how their understanding of hope has changed since they began recording their thoughts, feelings, ideas and questions about hope in their hope journals.

2. Invite participants to spend ten minutes quietly revisiting entries in their hope journals and/or hope folios. Encourage them to pay special attention to how their ideas, beliefs and attitudes have changed over time.

3. After reading through the journal entries, ask participants to complete the following sentence frames to post on the wall.

   I used to _____ about hope,
   but now I _____.

   I used to _____ about my hope,
   but now I _____.

   I used to _____ about myself,
   but now I _____.

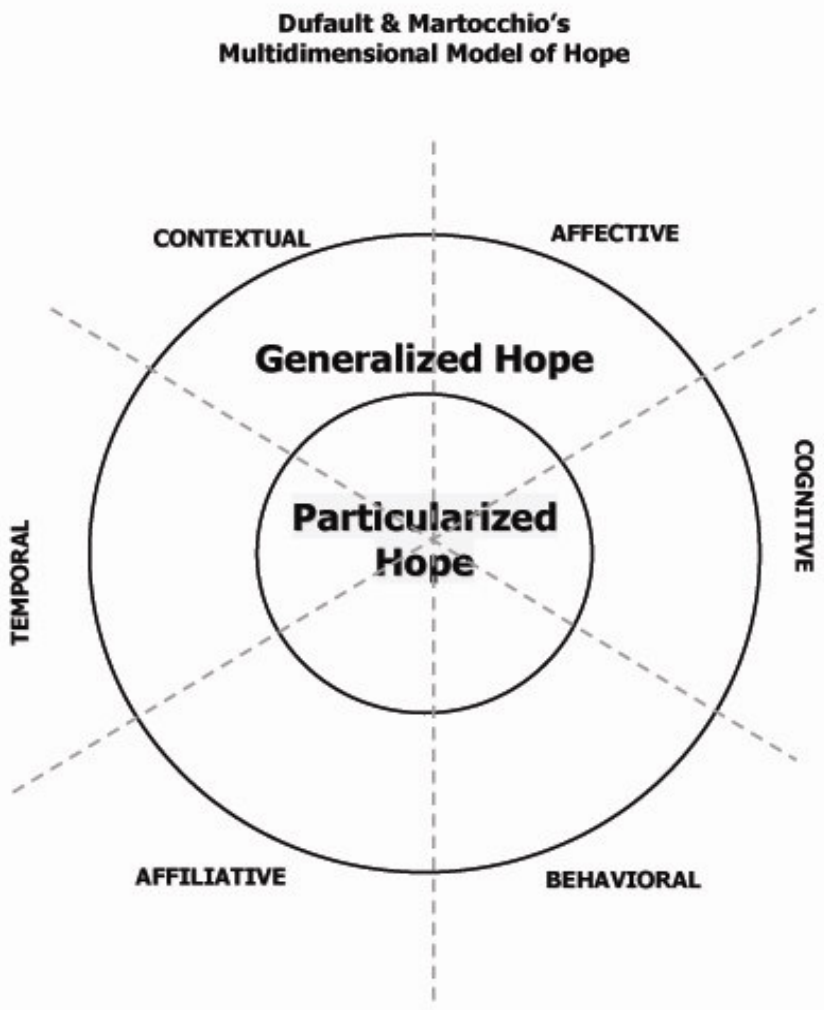
Post the completed sentences on the wall.

Facilitator Tips

To sustain and extend learning from this activity:

- Over the next few weeks, encourage participants to continue revisiting hope journals and hope folios to identify additional ways their attitudes and feelings about hope are changing over time.

Appendix A


Dufault & Martocchio's
Multidimensional Model of Hope
CONTEXTUAL
AFFECTIVE
Generalized Hope
Particularized Hope
TEMPORAL
COGNITIVE
AFFILIATIVE
BEHAVIORAL

Appendix B

Pictures of Hope

Title and/or number of photo:

1. Where and when was the picture taken?

2. Why do you want to include this picture in your hope album?

3. Tell how this picture makes you feel hopeful.

Appendix C

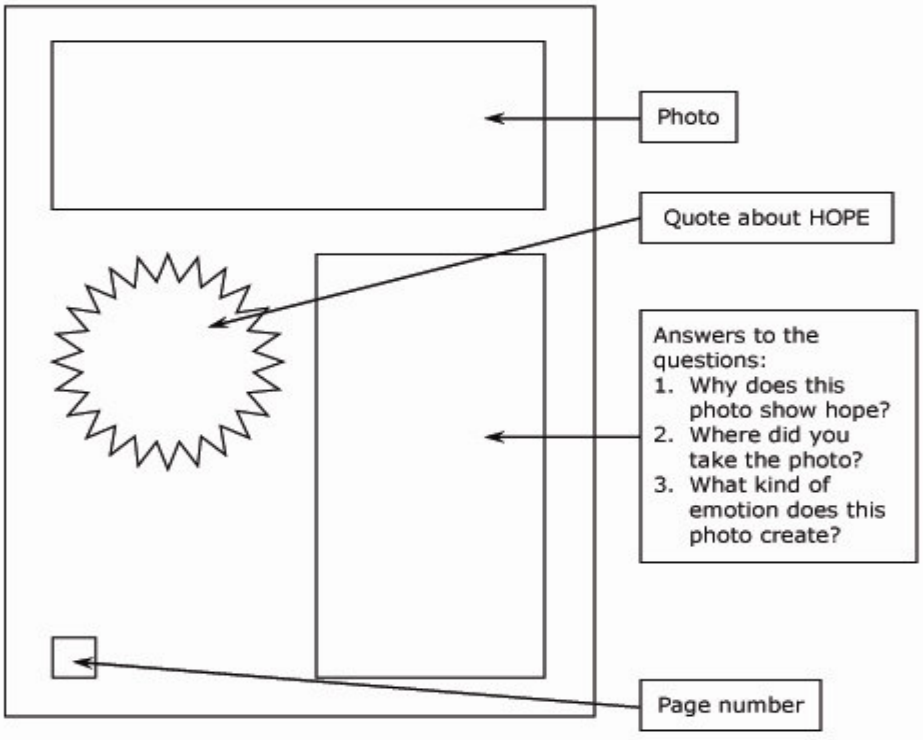
Hope Photo Album

This album is all about you—choose a design and colours that work for you.

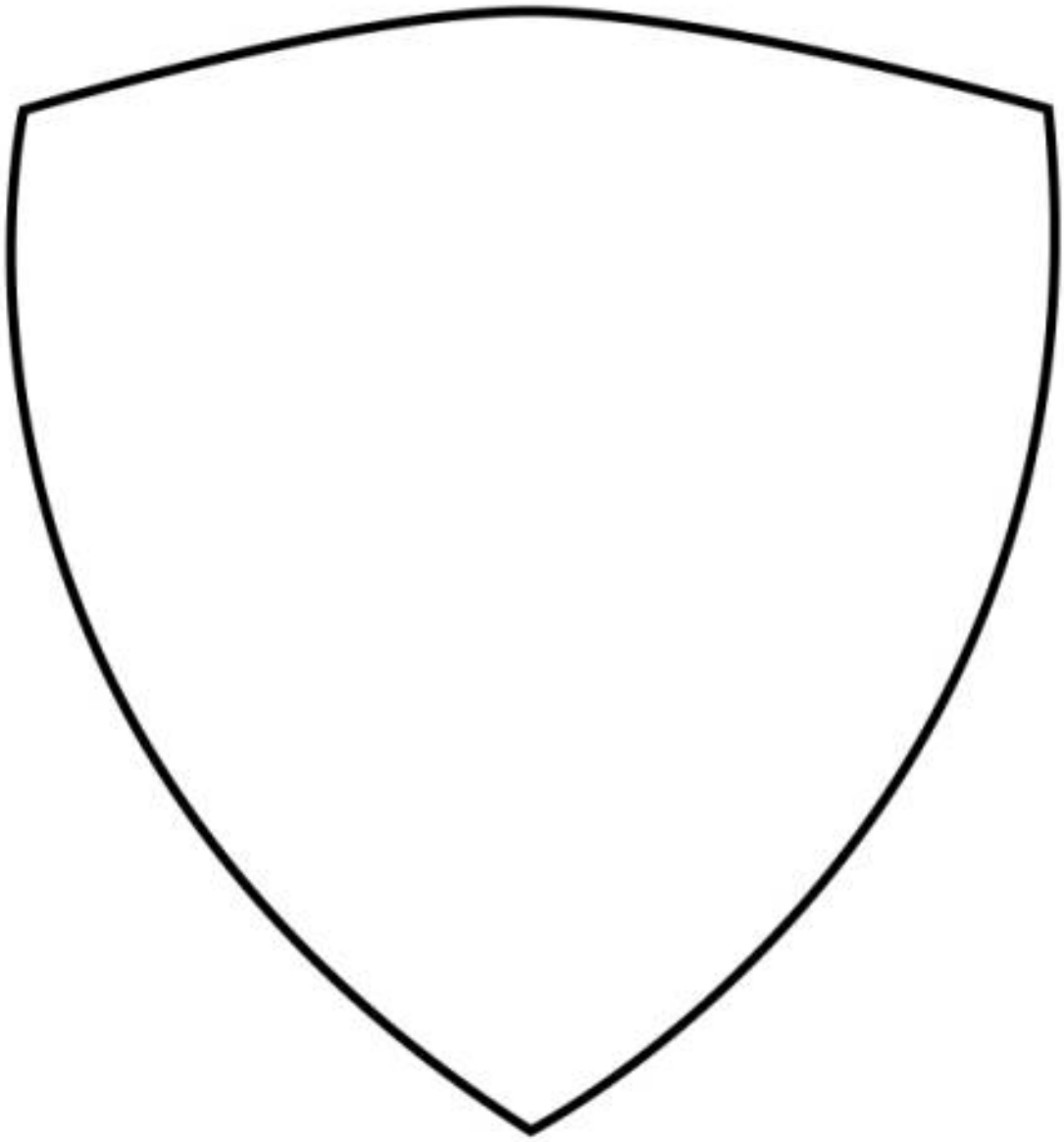
Your photo album should include:

- cover
- dedication page (inside front cover)
- table of contents
- at least 14 single pages with a photo, related hope quote, answers to the three questions and the page number
- about-the-author page (including a self-portrait)

A sample page might look like:



Appendix D



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Do you want to inspire children and youth to uncover and connect with hope? Are you committed to helping young people live joyful and meaningful lives?
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Nurturing Hopeful Souls: Practices and Activities for Working with Children and Youth offers a synthesis of current research on the healing powers of hope. It also offers practical strategies for reaching children and youth in need of hope, especially those who seem to have shut down, refuse to take responsibility for their own actions or have given up on life. These flexible and authentic hope-focused activities are powerful tools for promoting reflective thinking, hopeful behaviour, and trust in others.

Whether your work is with individuals, with small groups or in classrooms, this book will help you develop a deeper understanding of hope and how you can positively affect the lives of children and youth.