Working Intentionally with Hope In Counselling and Psychotherapy

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- Applied Research - Hope-in-Practice
- Counselling
  - Individual, Group, Couples
  - Hope of Client and Counsellor
- Child /Youth Development
- Education
- Cross-cultural
Where We’re Headed

- Definitions and research on hope in counselling
- Simple strategies for working explicitly with hope
- Where do clients say they find hope in counselling?
- Evoking the emotional energy of hope
What is Hope?

To believe that something positive, which does not presently apply to one’s own life, could still materialize” (Lazarus, 1999)

A process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfillment that is personally meaningful (Stephenson, 1991)

Hope is the ability to envision a future in which we wish to participate (Jevne & Edey)

The ability to envision a tolerable future (Hanna)
Hope Research

Hope-Lit Database

www.hope-lit.ualberta.ca/

4500 + research/theory references on hope—largely in health, psychology, & education
Positive Psychology and Hope

- Recognized as:
  - A subjective asset
  - A strength that is present in the here and now, but which is also past and future-oriented
  - A strength that acts as a buffer against mental illness (Seligman, 2002, 2011)

VIA Character Strengths & Virtues
(Peterson and Seligman, 2004)

- Courage
- Bravery
- Integrity
- Persistence
- Vitality
- Love
- Kindness
- Social Intelligence
- Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence
- Gratitude
- Hope
- Humor
- Spirituality
- Self-regulation
- Prudence
- Humility/Modesty
- Leadership
- Forgiveness and Mercy
- Fairness
- Citizenship
- Perspective
- Love of Learning
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Open-mindedness

A life of pleasure, engagement and meaning

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Hope: Overlapping Dimensions
(Scioli, 2011)

- **Hope is equated with goals** (Snyder)
  - Focus: Mastery, Agency, Self-efficacy
  - E.g., “I hope to…”

- **Hope is the belief one can endure or overcome adversity** (Health sciences)
  - Focus: Survival and sometimes Transformation
  - E.g., “Where can hope be found? In the circumstance or self?”

- **Hope is nurtured in supportive relationships** (Marcel and most qualitative research on hope)
  - Focus: Attachment – relationship - self-worth
  - E.g., “Who supports/believes in me?“(Larsen & Stege 2012)
Importance of Hope Scale and Survey Studies

- Common factors models: hope/expectancy accounts for 10-15% of change in counselling (Hubble, Duncan, Miller, 1999)

- Hope is character strength most consistently and robustly associated with life satisfaction (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004)

- Hope focused intervention – chronic pain Pre-post – higher well-being, life engagement, hope (Howell, Jacobson, Larsen, 2014)

- Hope is beneficial in virtually every circumstance which has been measured (Cheavens, Michael, & Snyder, 2005) – educationally, psychologically, physically
How does HOPE relate to other concepts and experiences?
A Simple Experiment

- I wish ....
- I hope ...
- I will ...
- (I am optimistic about ...)

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Folk-Definition of Hope  
(Bruinincks and Malle, 2005)

Hope is an emotion that occurs when an individual is focussed on an important positive future outcome. Often the individual perceives little personal control over the situation. The individual may see a positive outcome as somewhat unlikely and yet still expect it to occur.

Thus, being hopeful enables people to maintain an approach-related state despite their present inability to reach the desired outcome.
What does hope look like in counselling?

Larsen & Stege, 2012

- **Counsellors**
  - 5 Psychologists – 2-16 years exp
    - 3 R. Psych., 2 Prov. R. Psych
  - Female, aged 28-53 years

- **Clients**
  - 11 recruited thru advertising at a community service and research facility - 5 men, 6 women, aged 31-60 years
  - Issues – depression, grief, cancer, marital, physical disability, substance use & employment concerns

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Data Collection

- Videorecord – early therapy session

- Interpersonal Process Recall Interviews (IPR) 
  (a method used in both counselling and education)
  - Interview participants individually while viewing videorecorded counselling session
  - Participants comment on any salient in-session experiences with a specific focus on hope
Clients Find Hope In Relationship

“I felt hope because I could see that the counsellor-dude relationship was working”

Hope *experienced by clients in:*

- **Relational Safety**
  “She [my therapist] would listen and not be judgemental”

- **Feeling Heard and Understood**
  “Being given the time of day – that somebody’s really listening intently to my concerns and my situation”

- **Evidence of Counsellor Investment**
  “I remember her smiling more and she started to do a lot more writing. Maybe it was just more physically energized ...”
Client Hope in Supported Identity Development

- **Worthy of therapists’ attention/A worthwhile human being**

  “I hope to learn that my life has not been a waste up until now.”

- **Agency** – seeing self as capable of making a difference

  “[Hope] gives you a bit of a positive feeling that you can get there. Even if you do run into some difficulties ... hope to me is like a catalyst to what I need to do, or where I need to go, or where I need to be.”

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Client Hope in Perspective Change

- **Possibility**
  - Counsellors support clients to see and explore new possibilities

- **Reframing** – for new meaning
  - “living life in the 3rd quarter”
Temporal Dimension of Hope

- Hope is future focused

- What permits people to have a positive or engaging future focus?
Knowing who we are and remembering the “positives” in the past helps shape a hopeful view of our future.

A past positive orientation is most closely associated with high hope (McElheran, 2012)

“Sam wasn’t like us. Nobody ever told him where he come from so he didn’t have a dream of where he ought to be going”

– Alex Haley - Roots
Activating Hope: Creating a Hopeful Feeling

- Symbols can stimulate memory
- Enable clients to relate to their memories and their surroundings in a way that makes them feel hopeful.
- Get to know things about your clients that you might never discovered if focused on problems

Incorporate when appropriate
Bringing Past Hopes to the Present Using Images and Photographs

• Choose a photo that in some way represents hope to you

• It could be:
  • the image itself
  • the image reminds you of something hopeful
  • even some small part of the picture

• Talk about the photo you chose:
  1. How does it represent hope for you?
  2. Is there a story (even short)
  3. What might this photo say about your hope?
Accessing Hope Directly But Non-verbally

- Making a hope collage from magazine pictures
- Making a hope kit
- Taking a hope walk
- Choosing hope photos from a photo collection
- Hope “Graffiti”
Hope Collages – Individual and Groups

Emotional shift
Hope Kit

Hope “Graffiti”
Working with Hope

- Hope as an ally in counselling
- Attend to client struggle
- Support positive sense of self
- Shift perspectives
- Reclaim the energizing emotion of hope
  - Use images to remember hopeful stories from the past
Thank you!