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Measuring and Promoting Hope in Schoolchildren¹

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Watching young children on a playground tells all one needs to know about hope. A child's vision transforms a series of obstacles (tall ladders, hard to reach monkey bars, wobbly wooden bridges) into limitless opportunities for fun. Goals become very clear ("I am going to swing across all the monkey bars"), the plan develops ("I am going to climb the ladder, grab the bar, and swing from the first one to the second one"), and support is requested ("Can you help me up?") while confidence grows ("I think I got it. Yeah, I am doing it!").

Psychologists along with other educational colleagues (teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators) are more than passive observers of the hope of children and youth. In fact, "caring coaches" (Snyder, 1994) in the schools contribute greatly in helping students and schools become hopeful places for children. In this chapter, we explore the hope that is alive on the playground and the soccer field, and in the classroom and in the music hall. Accordingly, we describe the tenets of hope theory, along with two brief hope scales that can be used with young children and adolescents. Moreover, we summarize the hope research conducted over the last 15 years, along with its implications for use by psychologists and educators.

Hope Theory

Snyder and colleagues (Snyder, 1989, 1994, 2000a, 2000b; Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991) characterized hope as a human strength manifested in capacities to: (a) clearly conceptualize goals (goals thinking), (b) develop the specific strategies to reach those goals (pathways thinking), and (c) initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies (agency thinking). Goals-thinking is ubiquitous in youth, but often untamed and unrefined. Pathways and agency thinking are both necessary, but neither by itself is sufficient to sustain successful goal pursuit. As such, pathways and agency thoughts are additive, reciprocal, and positively related, but they are not synonymous.

Whereas other positive psychology constructs such as goal theory (Covington, 2000; Dweck, 1999), optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985, Boman, Russo, Furlong, Lilles, & Jones, 2008), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982), and problem-solving (Heppner & Petersen, 1982) give differentially weighted emphases to the goal itself or to the future-oriented agency- or pathways-related processes, hope theory equally emphasizes all of these goal-pursuit components (Snyder, 1994). For detailed



comparisons of the similarities and differences between hope theory and other theories (e.g., achievement motivation, flow, goal setting, mindfulness, optimism, optimistic explanatory style, problem-solving, resiliency, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and Type A behavior pattern), see Magaletta and Oliver (1999), Peterson (2000), Snyder, (1994), and Snyder, Rand, and Sigmon (2002).

According to hope theory, a goal can be anything that an individual desires to experience, create, get, do, or become. As such, a goal may be a significant, lifelong pursuit (e.g., developing a comprehensive theory of human motivation), or it may be mundane and brief (e.g., getting a ride to school). Goals also may vary in terms of having anywhere from very low to very high perceived probabilities of attainment. On this point, it should be noted that individuals reporting high levels of hope often prefer “stretch goals” that are slightly more difficult than previously attained goals.

High-hope individuals—as compared to low-hope individuals—are more likely to develop alternative pathways, especially when the goals are important and when obstacles appear (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991; Snyder, Sympson, et al., 1996). However, pathways are useless without the associated agency-inducing cognitions (Snyder, Cheavens, & Michael, 1999; Snyder, Michael, & Cheavens, 1999). These agency thoughts are reflected in the positive self-talk that is exhibited by high-hope individuals (e.g., “I can do this” or “I will not give up”; Snyder, LaPointe, Crowson, & Early, 1998). High-hope people are sustained by their agency thinking when confronted with challenging situations or impediments (Snyder, 1994, 1999). Thus, high-hope more than low-hope people exhort themselves to “take the next step” or to take a long-range goal and separate it into steps (i.e., “stepping”).

Nevertheless, defining hope provides little information about its development. To date, it is clear that hope is built on a foundation of contingency thinking (Snyder, 1994) and that it is socially primed (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997). Recent research (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2007b) supports previous thinking about how caregivers foster hope development in children (Snyder, 1994). Specifically, Marques et al. (2007b) identified the relation between children’s hope and their respective guardians in a sample of 256 Portuguese students. They found a significant and positive correlation, $r = .37$, suggesting that guardian hope may be related to the development of children’s hope.

Measuring Hope

Hope can exist as a relatively stable personality disposition (i.e., a trait), or as a more temporary frame of mind (i.e., a state). Similarly, hopeful thought can occur at various levels of abstraction. For example, one can be hopeful about achieving: (a) goals in general (i.e., a trait); (b) goals in a certain life domain (e.g., school); or (c) one goal in particular. Lopez, Ciarlelli, Coffman, Stone, and Wyatt (2000) provide an in-depth coverage of these latter approaches, including the development and validation of various self-report, observational, and narrative measures of hope.

Snyder, Hoza, et al. (1997) developed the *Children’s Hope Scale* (CHS) as a trait hope measure for children ages 7 through 14 years. The scale is comprised of three agency and three pathways items. An example of agency item is: “I am doing just as well as other kids my age” and a pathways item is: “When I have a problem, I can come up with lots of ways to solve it.” The CHS has demonstrated satisfactory: (a) internal consistencies (overall alphas from .72 to .86); (b) test-retest reliabilities of .71 to .73 over 1 month; and (c) convergent and discriminant validities. Furthermore, the scale has been used with physically and psychologically healthy children from public schools, boys diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, children with various medical problems, children under treatment for cancer or asthma, child burn victims, adolescents with sickle-cell disease, and early adolescents exposed to violence (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Recently, more criterion-related validation work has been done on the scale (Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2004) revealing adequate

internal consistency and support for the two-factor structure. Furthermore, a small number of studies have addressed measurement equivalence across particular cultural groups. For example, Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, and Lopez (2007a) found structural and psychometric properties in the Portuguese version of the CHS that are equivalent to the original version, such as similar mean (24.10) and standard deviation (4.01) values, comparable Cronbach alpha of .81 and the identification of a two-factor—pathways and agency—model of hope.

To measure the trait aspect of hope in adolescents (and adults) ages 15 and older, Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) developed the *Hope Scale*. This scale consists of four items measuring agency, four items measuring pathways, and four distracter items. Having been used with a wide range of samples, the *Hope Scale* has exhibited acceptable (a) internal consistency (overall alphas from .74 to .88; agency alphas of .70 to .84; and pathways alphas of .63 to .86); (b) test-retest reliabilities ranging from .85 for three weeks to .82 for 10 weeks; and (c) concurrent and discriminant validities (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991).

In the remainder of this chapter, we use “high-hope children” to describe those who have scored in the top third of the CHS or the *Hope Scale* distributions. Conversely, “low-hope children” applies to those who have scored in the bottom third of these scale score distributions. In an absolute sense, however, it should be noted that the children who score around the mean of these self-report instruments are reporting fairly frequent hopeful thinking (e.g., they mark the “a lot of the time” option, which is the fourth point on the six-point response continuum of the CHS).

Research on Hope

Over the last 15 years, researchers have gained a clearer understanding of the relationships between hope and important aspects of students’ lives. In this section, we address areas that are most salient to the activities of school professionals.

Views about the Self and the Future

Correlational findings indicate that a child’s higher hopeful thinking is positively associated with perceived competence and self-esteem or self-worth (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2007c), and negatively associated with symptoms of depression (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Indeed, researchers have reported that lower hope predicts more depressive symptoms (Kwon, 2000), and it does so independently of other coping strategies (Chang & DeSimone, 2001). Additional evidence suggests that children and adolescents (Snyder, Hoza et al., 1997), as well as young adults (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991) who report higher levels of hope also view themselves in a favorable light and have slight positive self-referential illusions.

Regarding views about the future, those with high hope typically are more optimistic, they focus on success rather than failure when pursuing goals (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997), they develop many life goals, and they perceive themselves as being capable of solving problems that may arise (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Likewise, recent research suggests that higher hope is linked closely to having a greater perceived purpose in life (Feldman & Snyder, 2005).

Satisfaction with Life and Well-Being

Accumulating evidence suggests that hope is related to life satisfaction and well-being. Some research (e.g., Gilman, Dooley, & Florell, 2006) suggests that hope scores are correlated negatively and significantly with measures of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, indicators of psychological distress and school maladjustment. In terms of direct relationships with positive

outcomes, in a sample of 367 Portuguese middle-school students, Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, and Lopez (2007c) found that hope is significantly and positively correlated with global life satisfaction and mental health.

Physical Health

Research suggests that hope may play a role in student health. Berg, Rapoff, Snyder, and Belmont (2007) investigated the relationship between hope and adherence to a daily-inhaled steroid regimen among 48 asthma patients ages 8 to 12. Participants completed the CHS, and parents provided demographic and disease-related information. Adherence was measured over 14 days by electronic monitoring of the use of the participant's metered-dose inhaler. A multivariate model with children's hope level in the second step predicted adherence. No other demographic or psychosocial variables were significant predictors of adherence. These results support hope as a significant predictor of student adherence to prescribed medication. To explain hope's role in student health perceptions, low-hope individuals may not believe their medication will provide a pathway to their goals of improved health; or, it may be that taking the medication is difficult or uncomfortable, thus affecting their agency beliefs (Snyder, 2000b). These findings highlight the need to attend to psychosocial predictors of adherence, specifically hope, and may help practitioners target these factors in their efforts to increase adherence among pediatric asthma patients.

Academic Achievement

Students with low hope experience high anxiety, especially in competitive, test-taking situations. The underlying presumption of this anxiety is that such students often do not use feedback from failure experiences in an adaptive manner so as to improve their future performances (Onwuegbuzie, 1998; Onwuegbuzie & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, Sympson, et al., 1996). That is, rather than using such feedback constructively, low-hope individuals are prone to self-doubt and negative ruminations that interfere with attending to the appropriate cues for both inputting (i.e., studying) and outputting information (i.e., test taking; Michael, 2000; Snyder, 1999).

High-hope students, on the other hand, do not derogate their abilities when they "fail," and they do not let such failures affect their self-worth over time. In this regard, the high-hope students make adaptive attributions that the "failure" feedback merely means that they did not try hard enough in a given instance, or that they did not identify the correct studying or test-taking strategies. These emphases on strategies and effort attributions may explain, in part, why hope is not significantly related to native intelligence (Snyder, McDermott, Cook, & Rapoff, 2002), but instead is related consistently to academic achievement (even when correcting for perceived self-worth and ability).

Higher levels of hope are related to greater reported scholastic and social competence, as well as to elevated creativity (Onwuegbuzie, 1999), and they are positively correlated with greater problem-solving abilities and actual academic achievements (Chang, 1998; Lopez, Bouwkamp, Edwards, & Teramoto Pedrotti, 2000; McDermott & Snyder, 1999, 2000; Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997). Not surprisingly, therefore, high-hope students have reported significantly greater academic (and interpersonal) satisfaction than their low-hope counterparts (Chang, 1998).

Given hope's relationship with perceived competence and adaptive coping strategies, it follows that high-hope grade school children have better scores on achievement tests (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997), and that high-hope high school (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991) and beginning college students (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, Pulvers, Adams, & Wiklund, 2002) have higher overall grade point averages (and fewer drop-outs; see Worrell & Hale, 2001). In these studies, the predictive power of

hope remained significant even when controlling for intelligence (children's studies), prior grades and self-esteem (high school and beginning college student studies), and entrance examination scores (beginning college student study).

Most recently, two teams of researchers have further examined the role of hope in children's academic success. Marques, Pais-Ribeiro and Lopez (2007d) explored the relationship between hope, satisfaction with life, self-worth, and academic achievement among middle schoolers. Students' academic achievement reports were obtained from their school records. Core subjects (i.e., Portuguese, English, and French languages, History, Geography, Mathematic, Physics-Chemistry, and Natural Sciences) and all subjects (core subjects plus Musical, Physical, Visual and Technological Education) were analyzed. Results found that hope significantly predicted academic achievement for core subjects as well as all subjects, while satisfaction with life and self-worth did not predict variance in academic achievement over and above that accounted for by hope.

The second team of researchers, Rose and Robinson (2007a), explored academic domain-specific hope theory (Campbell & Kwon, 2001; Kwon, 2002; Lopez, Ciarlelli, Coffman, Stone, & Wyatt, 2000) to account for more variance in academic achievement and retention. Specifically, they explored the relationship between academic domain-specific hope and academic achievement among undergraduate and high school students. Their findings indicated that domain-specific academic hope predicted undergraduate final course grades, college GPA, and high school GPA beyond the trait hope scale. A second study (Robinson & Rose, 2007) examined the relationship between general academic hope, math hope, and academic achievement among undergraduate students. Their findings indicated that general academic hope predicted college GPA and final course grades in introductory psychology courses, but math hope predicted final course grades in math classes beyond academic hope. These studies provide evidence that measures of hope may have greater predictive validity when matched to the specific academic domains each scale is intended to assess.

Subsequent research has attempted to distinguish hope from other similar motivation frameworks in predicting student achievement. Rose and Robinson (2007b) found that academic hope was found to predict academic achievement beyond demographics, self-efficacy (Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, et al., 1982), self-regulation (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990), goal orientation (Elliot & McGregor, 2001), and optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985) across an undergraduate population and a working-class, ethnically diverse, high school population. The extent to which academic hope predicts achievement beyond these motivation frameworks provides the divergent validity needed to further hope research, and to address critiques made about the lack of empirical evidence for the distinction between hope and constructs that predict similar outcomes (Aspinwall & Leaf, 2002; Tennen, Affleck, & Tennen, 2002).

Athletic Achievement

Higher hope has been positively related to superior athletic (and academic performances) among student athletes (Curry, Maniar, Sondag, & Sandstedt, 1999; Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997), even after statistically controlling for variance related to their natural athletic abilities. For example, Curry et al. (1997) reported that high-hope student athletes performed significantly better in their track and field events than their low-hope counterparts, with trait and state hope scale scores together accounting for 56% of the variance in subsequent track performances.

Based on their initial findings relating hope to sports, Curry et al. (1999) have begun a class at the University of Wyoming to raise students' levels of hope. After taking this class, students have increased confidence related to their athletic ability, academic achievement, and self-esteem (see positive follow-up reported by Curry and Snyder, 2000). In the only other reported study

investigating the relationship between hope and athletics, high—as compared to low-hope—children have reported being less likely to consider quitting their sports (Brown, Curry, Hagstrom, & Sandstedt, 1999).

Interpersonal Relationships

When hopeful thinking is stymied, interpersonal struggles may result. For instance, ruminations block adaptive goal-related thinking, and cause increased frustration and aggression against others (Collins & Bell, 1997; Snyder, 1994; Snyder & Feldman, 2000). In addition, the interpersonal problems of others can translate into lowered hope for children. On this point, children who have witnessed family members or friends who have been victims of interpersonal violence have shown lower levels of hope than children who have not seen such violence (Hinton-Nelson, Roberts, & Snyder, 1996). Conversely, higher hope has been correlated positively with social competence (Barnum, Snyder, Rapoff, Mani, & Thompson, 1998), pleasure in getting to know others, enjoyment in frequent interpersonal interactions (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997), and interest in the goal pursuits of others (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997).

Individual Differences Related to Sex and Race

The findings consistently reveal no differences in hope between girls and boys, or young women and men. Further, the posited two-factor structure has been supported in at least 10 studies across various cultures. Moreover, the differences in the hope scores of children and young adults across ethnic groups have been examined, and it appears that while not statistically significant, Caucasians tend to report fewer obstacles (e.g., oppression, prejudice) in their lives than their ethnic minority counterparts. However, minority groups have been shown to produce higher average hope scores than Caucasians (see McDermott et al., 1997; Munoz-Dunbar, 1993). To date, few studies have examined the relative levels of hope among gifted students, or students with learning disorders or physical disabilities. Hope research is needed among these populations.

Enhancing Hope in Students

As we have noted previously, even children and youth with average scores on one of our scales have considerable hope in an absolute sense. Thus, based on our sampling, the good news is that the majority of American children typically describe their thinking as being filled with considerable hope. Furthermore, even if a student has a less than an average amount of hope, it still can be parleyed into a level of hopeful thinking that makes a positive difference in her or his life. A small amount of hope can be cultivated to bolster agency and pathways perceptions that support goal attainment. Hence, we propose that psychologists and education professionals should use and refine techniques for enhancing hope in all children. Table 4.1 lists some of the basic steps associated with hope enhancement.

When working with individual students, psychologists may use a variety of standard testing instruments aimed at tapping interests and aptitudes. Added to these usual instruments, we suggest that school psychologists consider giving the CHS for the younger children and the *Hope Scale* for those who are age 15 and older. Although these scales have been used mostly for research to date, their reliabilities and validation support indicate that they may be used with appropriate precautions to measure the hopeful thinking of students in actual, applied school settings. In this regard, we suggest that attention be given to the levels of the specific agency and pathways scores. For example, it may be that the student has a full low-hope pattern (i.e., low agency *and* low pathways

Table 4.1 Steps to enhancing hope in students

Administration of the Children's or Adult Hope Scale (trait)	—The first step in this process is to have the student complete the appropriate measure of hope. The psychologist will then tally the total score and compute subscale scores for both pathway and agency.
Learning about Hope	—Once a baseline hope score is determined, the psychologist can then discuss hope theory with the student and its relevance to the change process and to positive outcomes.
Structuring Hope for the Student	—In this step, the student will create a list of important life components, determine which areas are most important and discuss the level of satisfaction within those areas.
Creating Positive and Specific Goals	—Using the important life components identified above, the student and psychologist work together to create workable goals that are both positive and specific. These goals should be salient to the student and attainable. Additionally, the student will develop multiple pathways for each goal and identify agency thoughts for each goal.
Practice Makes Perfect	—Once the student and psychologist have agreed upon these goals, the student should visualize and verbalize the steps to reach their goals. With this practice, the student and psychologist can collaborate on the most effective pathways and the agency behind the goals.
Checking In	—Students will incorporate these goals, pathways and agency into their life and report back to the psychologist on the process of goal attainment. Again, collaboration can occur to adjust or modify any disparities in actions or thinking that may hinder the successful achievement of their desired goals.
Review and Recycle	—This process is cyclical and requires continual assessment by both the student and psychologist. Once the student has grasped the concepts of hope theory, however, the student can then assume the bulk of responsibility in the implementation of hope theory to unique life experiences.

scores); or, more happily, the student may have the full high-hope pattern (i.e., high agency *and* high pathways). Additionally, the student may have a mixed pattern of high agency/low pathways or low agency/high pathways. In these mixed patterns, attention needs to turn to raising the particular hope component that is low.

Students with the least hope tend to benefit most from hope interventions (Bouwkamp, 2001), however, our research shows that virtually all students raise their hope levels when taking part in school hope programs (Lopez, Bouwkamp, et al., 2000). That is to say, mental health and education professionals may want to develop group-based approaches for raising the hopeful thinking of all students, irrespective of their levels of trait or school-related hope. Likewise, for those students who are identified as having obviously low levels of hope, special approaches may be tailored to raise their hopeful thinking.

In applying hope theory to work in the schools, we aggregate our suggestions into three categories—those involving goals, pathways, and agency. These suggestions, which we discuss next, can be applied in individual or group settings. See McDermott and Snyder (1999, 2000) or Snyder et al. (2002) for more detailed information about imparting goal setting as well as pathways and agency thinking to students.

Helping Students to Set Goals

The foundation of imparting hope rests on helping students set goals. The goals, of course, must be calibrated to the student's age and specific circumstances. Among many adolescents, who often need encouragement to set goals in various life domains, sometimes these goals relate to interpersonal matters such as wanting to feel happier or meeting new people, whereas at other times they may involve selecting a career or deciding whether to go to college. By helping adolescents to select several goals, they can turn to their other important goals when they face a profound blockage in one goal.

If the school-based psychologist first gives instruments that measure values, interests, and abilities, then specific goals can be designed for each given student. Likewise, the student can be asked

about recent important goals that are quite meaningful and pleasurable. These recent activities then may be used to generate an appropriate future goal. Once the student, with the help of the mental health or education professional has produced a list of goals, the student then should rank the importance of these goals. In this process, the student learns important skills about how to prioritize goals. Some students, particularly those low in hope, do not prioritize their goals (Snyder et al., 2005); instead, they have the maladaptive practice of impulsively wanting to go after any or all goals that come to their minds.

Assuming students have been helped to establish desired goals, the next step is to teach them how to set clear markers for such goals. These markers enable the students to track progress toward the goals. A common goal, but one in our view that is quite counterproductive, is the vague “getting good grades.” This and similar goals are sufficiently lacking in clarity that the student cannot know when they are attained (Pennebaker, 1989). Moreover, related research shows that abstract goals actually are more difficult to reach than well-specified goals (Emmons, 1992). Thus, we advocate concrete markers such as, “to study an hour each day in preparation for my next biology exam.” With this latter goal, students not only can tell when they have reached it, but they also can experience a sense of success.

Another important aspect of helping students is to encourage them to establish approach goals in which they try to move toward getting something accomplished. This is in contrast to avoidance goals, in which students try to prevent something from happening (Snyder, Feldman, Taylor, Schroeder, & Adams III, 2000). Avoidance goals work to maintain the status quo, but they are not very reinforcing to students. We have found that high-hope students are more likely to use approach goals in their lives, whereas low-hope students tend to use avoidance goals. Thus, students should be helped to abandon avoidance goal setting and to embrace the more productive approach goal setting (Snyder et al., 2002).

High-hope people also appear to be interested in other people’s goals, in addition to their own. Accordingly, we see advantages in instructing students to think in terms of “we” goals in addition to their own “me” goals (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997). For example, encouraging students to help each other on difficult math problems can create a sense of shared accomplishment while deemphasizing competition. This has the benefit of helping students to get along with their peers, and it makes for easier and more fulfilling interpersonal transactions. Related research (e.g., Batson, 1991) indicates that people who help others fulfill natural human altruism needs, and they thus have the pleasure of feeling good about themselves as they think about and attend to the welfare of others (Snyder, 1994).

Helping Students to Develop Pathways Thinking

Perhaps the most common strategy for enhancing pathways thinking is to help students to break down large goals into smaller subgoals. The idea of such “stepping” is to take a long-range goal and separate it into steps that are undertaken in a logical, one-at-a-time sequence. Low-hope students tend to have the greatest difficulty in formulating subgoals (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997). They often hold onto counterproductive and inaccurate beliefs that goals are to be undertaken in an “all at once” manner. Likewise, low-hope students may not have been given much instruction by their caregivers, teachers, or other adult figures in the planning process more generally. Such planning can be learned, however, and with practice in “stepping” students can gain confidence in the fact that they can form subgoals to any of the major goals in their lives.

Perhaps a student’s deficiency is not in stepping per se, but rather involves difficulty in their identifying several routes to a desired goal. Blockage to desired goals happens frequently in life and, lacking alternative pathways to those goals, a student can become very dejected and give up.

This may explain, in part, the previous research findings on low-hope students' high probabilities of dropping out of school (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, et al., 2002). Thus, we advocate teaching students to have several routes to their desired goals—even before they set out to reach their goals. Likewise, students need to learn that if one pathway does not work, they then have other routes to try.

Additionally, it is crucial for the production of future pathways—as well as for the maintenance of agency—that students learn not to attribute a blockage to a perceived lack of talent. Instead, we believe that a more productive attribution when encountering impediments is to think of that information as identifying the path that does not work—thereby helping one to search productively for another route that may work.

Helping Students to Enhance Their Agency

Although it may seem obvious that students would select goals that are important to them, such goals actually may reflect those imposed by their peers, parents, or teachers. As such, the student does not obtain an accompanying sense of motivation in pursuing these imposed goals. Related to this point, research indicates that the pleasure in meeting externally derived goals is fleeting (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Furthermore, when students lack personal goals that fill their needs, their intrinsic motivations and performances are undermined (Conti, 2000). Thus, goals that are built on internal, personal standards are more energizing than those based on external standards.

Helping students to set “stretch” goals also is invigorating for them. These stretch goals are based on a child or adolescent's previous performances and personally established more complex goals. Stretch goals thus can enhance intrinsic motivation and perseverance when progress is hindered.

Often individuals do not realize the impact their self-talk can have on their goal attaining abilities. Having students keep a diary of their ongoing self-talk (via a small notebook or audio tape recorder) can be helpful in determining if their internal dialogues are high (e.g., “I can ...” and “I'll keep at it ...”) or low in agency (e.g., “I won't ...” and “I can't ...”). Students sometimes are amazed at how negative they are in such self-talk. Students of various ages can be cruel to each other, but they also can be extremely critical of themselves. As such, there are plenty of sources for these negative self-scripts. We suggest that students who have low-hope internal dialogues be taught to dispute their negative, hypercritical self-talk. Teachers and mental health professionals can emphasize to such students how they can replace the ongoing self-criticism with more realistic, positive, and productive thoughts. This approach requires repeated practice before it begins to work, so it is important to inform students of this fact so as to lessen their needless discouragement.

Hopeful children often draw upon their own memories of positive experiences to keep them buoyant during difficult times. In this way, they tell themselves their own uplifting stories, or they create their own positive personal narratives (Snyder et al., 2002). In contrast to high-hope children, low-hope children may not have a base of positive memories to sustain them. These children, especially when in grade school, can be helped to create their own personal narratives. Telling them stories and providing them books that portray how other children have succeeded or overcome adversity can give low-hope children a model on which to begin building their own sense of agency. For suggested children's books, listed by specific hope-related topics (e.g., adoption, alcohol, anger, arguing, attachment, communication, confidence, crying, and death), we refer the reader to the appendices in *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There From Here* (Snyder, 1994) and *Hope for the Journey: Helping Children Through the Good Times and Bad* (Snyder et al., 2002) and to Table 4.2, which summarizes daily strategies that can be used to increase hopeful thinking. Yet another means of raising hope in children, is to see that they become involved in team-related activities. In this regard, engaging children in exciting activities that involve teamwork has been found to be effective in raising their levels of hope (Robitschek, 1996).

Table 4.2 Checklist for enhancing pathways and agency in students**Pathways****DO**

- Break a long-range goal into steps or subgoals.
- Begin your pursuit of a distant goal by concentrating on the first subgoal.
- Practice making different routes to your goals and select the best one.
- Mentally rehearse scripts for what you would do should you encounter a blockage.
- In you need a new skill to reach your goal, learn it.
- Cultivate two-way friendships where you can give and get advice.

DON'T

- Think you can reach your big goals all at once.
- Be too hurried in producing routes to your goals.
- Be rushed to select the best or first route to your goal.
- Over think with the idea of finding one perfect route to your goal.
- Conclude you are lacking in talent or no good when initial strategy fails.
- Get into friendships where you are praised for not coming up with solutions to your problems.

Agency**DO**

- Tell yourself that you have chosen the goal, so it is your job to go after it.
- Learn to talk to yourself in positive voices (e.g., I can do this!).
- Recall previous successful goal pursuits, particularly when in a jam.
- Be able to laugh at yourself, especially if you encounter some impediment to your goal pursuits.
- Find a substitute goal when the original goal is blocked solidly.
- Enjoy the process of getting to your goals and do not focus only on the final attainment.

DON'T

- Allow yourself to be surprised repeatedly by roadblocks that appear in your life.
- Try to squelch totally any internal put-down thoughts because this may only make them stronger.
- Get impatient if your willful thinking doesn't increase quickly.
- Conclude that things never will change, especially if you are down.
- Engage in self-pity when faced with adversity.
- Stick to a blocked goal when it is truly blocked.
- Constantly ask yourself how are doing to evaluate your progress toward a goal.

Enhancing Hope in Teachers

School-based psychologists typically focus on facilitating students' classroom learning and adjustment through direct intervention and consultation with teachers. Here, we use the term "teacher" to apply to those who provide education in academics and sports. As such, our recommendations should be useful for classroom teachers and coaches. In fact, we view these terms interchangeably in the sense that all teaching involves the coaching of students.

Just as young children develop hope through learning to trust in the predictability of cause-and-effect interactions with parents and caregivers, so too do school children build hope through learning to trust in the ordered predictability and consistency of their interactions with their teachers. By being firm, fair, and consistent, teachers engender hope among their students. Along with such order, we believe that the teacher needs to establish an atmosphere in which students are responsible for their actions. This is not to suggest that total obedience to authority is necessary or even desirable, but rather that students must be held to reasonably high standards reference.

With order and responsibility having been established, a teacher then can plant the seeds of trust in the classroom. Learning means taking risks, and students will not do so unless they feel assured that the teacher will respect them and refrain from demeaning them—even if their performance falls short of expectations. Whether it is in grade school or junior and senior high school, trust opens the doors to the establishment of growth-inducing stretch goals wherein students build upon previous knowledge and insights.

High-hope teachers are very clear about their objectives, both in the sense of how to master the material in each learning unit and how to attain good grades; moreover, these teachers take care to convey these objectives to their students (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, et al., 2003). This may entail having to reinforce any written instructions orally. When goals are made concrete, understandable, and are broken down into subgoals, both the teachers and students will be more likely to see growth. Likewise, we would suggest that school-based psychologists should work with teachers to focus on long-range as opposed to short-term goals (Snyder & Feldman, 2000). Children in 21st century America are focused on short-term goals, reference, and immediate gratification, but long-term goals are crucial for productive and satisfying lives.

Beyond setting clear and specific educational goals, hopeful teachers emphasize preparation and planning; accordingly, learning tasks should be organized in an easily comprehended format. It also is helpful to devise alternate exercises for use if a primary approach does not work. No matter what the exercise, however, teachers should avoid placing an overemphasis on “winning” (e.g., an exercise where one student is singled out and rewarded for the correct answer). Instead, attempts should be made to create an atmosphere where students are more concerned with expending effort and mastering the information rather than a sole focus on obtaining good outcomes (e.g., high grades or stellar athletic records; Dweck, 1999). This atmosphere is encouraged through a give and take process between teachers and students.

We believe that school-based psychologists are well positioned in school structures to be vigilant for the signs of teacher burnout and the loss of personal hopes that are all too common for teachers and coaches (Snyder et al., 2002). To reach this objective, teachers should be encouraged to remain engaged and invested in pursuing their own important interests and life goals outside of the classroom.

Ripples of Hope in Today’s Schools

Hope can flow from one person to another’s life, thereby influencing how the latter person sees the world and pursues goals. School-based psychologists can maximize the benefits of the ripple effects of hope in students and teachers through consultation and direct interventions (as discussed previously). Psychologists, in collaboration with the other professionals in the school, also can raise hope in a school building or a school district by facilitating the hope contagions that naturally occur through individual or groups achievements. In this section, we share some ideas about maximizing hopeful thinking in school contexts.

The elimination of various forms of “barriers” is essential for spreading hope in each educational community. That is, through assessment and consultation, psychologists can identify the impediments that may be hindering students’ academic performance and growth (e.g., learning problems, behavioral problems); moreover, they may generate alternate pathways for circumventing such obstacles. Additionally, psychologists may talk with students, teachers, coaches, and staff members to find any physical or psychological barriers that they may be experiencing. Included in such barriers would be schedule problems, difficulties stemming from the physical layout of the facilities, lack of resources, parental disinterest, stressful societal events and health-related epidemics.

Facilitating goal setting also is part of a psychologist’s acumen. Hope can be promoted by connecting one student’s goal (e.g., a child with behavior problems who wants to learn how to play chess) with another student’s goal (e.g., a socially awkward student who is good at chess, but likes working one-on-one). We would encourage psychologists to foster interdependence among diverse sets of students, much in the spirit of Aronson’s “jigsaw” approach. Within the jigsaw cooperative learning technique, students are divided into diverse groups in which each member of a group receives a portion of material to be learned, which must then be taught to group members. Within

each group, all students are dependent on one another and each student is considered an expert on some aspect of the material (Aronson, Bridgeman, & Geffner, 1978; see online at www.jigsaw.org/steps.htm). In this regard, hope appears to be a cooperation-linked concept by its very nature, and efforts repeatedly should be made to facilitate such linkages. Psychologists also can help groups of students or members of an Individual Education Program team set common, attainable goals. The pursuit of shared goals can positively galvanize a group. In this sense, team activities often have inherent hope-inducing repercussions for their participants. Likewise, team activities engendering school pride, when not taken to an extreme, can produce hope.

School-based psychologists who are facile at eliminating barriers and are committed to helping students and teachers pursue meaningful goals become models of healthy goal pursuit. Often, however, the sheer number of institutional obstacles may limit the time that psychologists spend in being hopeful models. Everyone's hopes can grow more easily, however, when there are common goals aimed at lessening the number and magnitudes of obstacles in school environments. As key facilitators in this process, we view psychologists as "barrier busters" who help to make the attainment of a variety of educational goals more likely in our schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented the fundamentals of hope theory to our school-based psychology colleagues. It probably is accurate to say that engendering hope already is a part of what school-based psychologists do. As such, the present hope theory ideas may help psychologists to do an even better job of molding schools into arenas where meaningful goals are set, where the parents, teachers, and students know how to reach those goals, and where everyone involved has the requisite motivations to try hard. *Hopeful thinking can empower and guide a lifetime of learning*, and psychologists help to keep this lesson alive.

Note

1. Portions of this chapter first appeared as an article: Snyder, C. R., Lopez, S. J., Shorey, H. L., Rand, K. L., & Feldman, D. B. (2003). Hope theory, measurements, and applications to school psychology. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 18, 122–139.

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