



Hope

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Hope: A Transformative Concept

The current scientific understanding of hope and its relationship to comprehensive care is based on multidisciplinary empirical research. It is defined as a fundamental human need that involves the co-creation of possibilities and the resources necessary to realize them. In this context, hope is understood not only as an emotional state but as a dynamic process that evolves over time. It is shaped by cultural factors (such as perception and expression), social factors (including age, gender, and health), and political factors (including ideologies and belief systems that may restrict or enhance its expression).¹

Globally, hope, distinct from individual optimism, is closely linked to general well-being and holistic health. As such, hope represents a subjective and unique experience, reflecting individuals' ability to imagine alternative solutions when faced with uncertainty or adversity. From a social and psychological perspective, hope is a multidimensional concept. There is a broad consensus that hope is a shared concept, playing a crucial role in individual and collective resilience.

Hope mobilizes collective action, promoting resilience and enabling lasting transformation in response to adversity and inequality, thereby contributing to a more equitable and sustainable future.^{1,3}

This reflection explores how hope can be effectively integrated into institutional and community practices, with a focus on its applications in areas such as education, technology, and healthcare. Through an interdisciplinary approach, it aims to demonstrate how hope can inspire innovation, connect communities, and contribute to building a more equitable and sustainable future, aligning with the values and objectives of *Transform4Europe*.

Hope as a Catalyst for Social Change

In the context of *Transform4Europe*, hope emerges as a fundamental foundation for promoting social and cultural transformation. The union of Universities, Communities, and Institutions in a collaborative network fosters innovation, sustainability, and the inclusion of hope as an engine for change. In this sense, a commitment is made to creating solutions that respond to global and local needs, promoting collective well-being and social justice.

Collaborative interdisciplinary research efforts have enriched our understanding of hope, integrating different perspectives.⁵ This knowledge base supports the development of effective interventions that address the multifaceted nature of hope, encompassing emotional mechanisms, sustained long-term participation in community-oriented work, and experiences of mutuality, among other aspects.

Hope serves as a catalyst for positive social change, facilitating the establishment of realistic goals and tangible pathways to achieve them, particularly within minority groups within larger collectives that seek shared objectives¹. Social movements driven by hope are evident in educational settings, where the academic community can inspire hopeful actions, fostering dialogue that promotes humanization and reduces systemic oppression.

Education and Technology: Cultivating Hope

Educational contexts serve as incubators of hope. Hope arises from the awareness of the interdependence between humanity and nature. It acts as a transformative force by fostering the ethical, cultural, and spiritual changes necessary to care for our common home. It shapes conscious education by forming responsible citizens committed to environmental and social justice in response to the ecological crisis.

The deliberate creation of hope-focused learning environments allows students to recognize realistic expectations for the future.³ These elements align with the principles of holistic curricular integration, which incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals and provides a cross-cutting approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda.

On the other hand, technology plays a crucial role in spreading hope and promoting social change. Digital platforms, such as social media and communication applications, can be used to bring communities together, share inspiring stories, and create online support networks.⁵ For example,

initiatives such as virtual forums for emotional support, discussion groups on overcoming adversity, and digital awareness campaigns have proven effective in mobilizing collective action and promoting community hope.⁵ Furthermore, technological tools can be integrated into educational programs to foster hope. Interactive apps and educational games that encourage problem-solving and collaboration can help students develop critical thinking and visualize solutions to future challenges.

Hope-Based Interventions

There is substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of hope-based interdisciplinary interventions, which enhance mental, spiritual, and physical health outcomes in communities both within and beyond university settings.

Projects and Initiatives

Among the institutional projects that use hope as a tool for social transformation, *Hope2Care* (Interdisciplinary Research Centre in Health, Universidade Católica Portuguesa) stands out, promoting research and intervention on the therapeutic use of hope in healthcare, and *Hope4Brain+*, which focuses on interventions for children with cancer and their parents. The latter uses carefully selected stories to help children work on their emotions and feelings, promoting reflections guided by healthcare professionals. The results include improvements in quality of life, comfort, and resilience for parents, as well as advances in executive functioning and a reduction in anxiety for children.

Knowledge about the role of hope in mental health has expanded through studies that demonstrate its impact on reducing depression and anxiety and improving overall well-being. Studies conducted with students during the pandemic crisis highlight the importance of hope and its benefits in contexts of emotional vulnerability.⁴ In this context, training and community programmes have included workshops and capacity-building sessions that allow participants to understand and apply hope-based strategies in their lives.⁴

By integrating research into healthcare and fostering a strong sense of social responsibility, these initiatives support students in understanding the role of hope in addressing global challenges and developing solutions for comprehensive care. An example of this is the *Hope2Care-Service* project, implemented in a neonatal and paediatric intensive care unit of

a partner hospital. It seeks to integrate hope into daily nursing practice, aiming to minimize the impacts of hospitalization, empower parents, and strengthen the bond between parents and children, promoting parental resilience.

Interventions that promote hope generally encompass counselling, mutual support groups, and holistic health programs. The planning of interventions addresses the specific needs of diverse populations, including individuals with chronic illnesses and their caregivers, those facing mental health challenges, and marginalized or vulnerable communities.

Hope as Social Transformation

The involvement of the academic community in initiatives that emphasize learning success and collective empowerment fosters a sense of belonging and shared purpose. This participation can strengthen social networks and support systems, thus increasing community cohesion.

Movements driven by hope promote social change by addressing systemic factors that influence health and well-being. By positioning hope as a catalyst for action, these initiatives motivate communities to collaborate in the pursuit of social justice and better health outcomes. Examples include “Hope in Action” photography contests, hope-centred dialogues, the “Hope Café,” and the integration of hope into the curriculum of different cycles of study and advanced or postgraduate training. The “Hope Café” represented a significant milestone in the analysis of hope as a transformative resource. The proposals and results generated will serve as a basis for future initiatives, improve training, and support the development of an institutional identity that responds to contemporary challenges.

Conclusion

Recognizing hope as a personal psychological experience and a socio-structural achievement allows communities to develop comprehensive strategies that facilitate lasting and meaningful social change. Instead of representing passive optimism, hope constitutes an active and relational process through which communities generate opportunities for change, strengthen collective capacity, and maintain a commitment to transformation, even in the face of significant adversity.

The integration of hope and community in these three dimensions demonstrates the significant impact that hope-based interventions can

have on both individuals and communities. Through knowledge promotion, service provision, and the facilitation of social transformation, hope serves as a catalyst for improving well-being and promoting positive social change.

For hope to be fully integrated into educational and community practices, it is necessary to invest in continuous professional development, strengthen the relationship between educators and students, and create spaces that encourage dialogue and reflection. By fostering a vision of a better future and instilling confidence in the ability to overcome challenges, hope-based social entrepreneurship programmes can empower communities to develop initiatives that generate both economic and social impact, promoting inclusion and sustainability.

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