

Hope: Believing that something good can come out of something bad

Since March of 2020, the world has become a very different place for all of us. As adults, we can list what we have had to endure, and can reflect on the uncertainty and pain. For our teens, however, these two years have been a much different experience. The toll that has been taken on their mental health is staggering, and many teachers, counselors, and parents are at a loss for what to do.

This month, focusing on hope is a perfect opportunity to have conversations with your child about how they are doing. For teens, one of the hallmarks of serious depression is a lack of hope. Opening the door to talk about what your child wants for their future, what they hope for in the next several years, and how you can be a part of supporting that dream will serve more than one purpose.

During your conversations, you get the privilege of dreaming with your child about their next steps. Without adding action steps or goals (you'll want to do that next, but let this part just be what it is for a few days), simply think and dream together about what might happen for them after middle school or high school.

As you talk, you will also have the opportunity to understand more about your teen's mental health status. If they struggle to find hope or to identify reasons to look forward to the future, it might be a sign to seek the guidance of a school counselor, pediatrician, or therapist.

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HOPE:

For parent reflection:

- How is hope modeled to your child?
- What messages does your child get about hope from adults in their life?
- How can you help your child find hope even when they are feeling sad or blue?

With your child:

- What do you hope for today? In the future?
- When do you have trouble having hope??
- Have you ever felt like there was no reason to have hope, or like you couldn't see a future for yourself? what do you do when you have those feelings?
- How can I support you when you are feeling low, or disappointed, or sad?

HOPE

april 2022

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WEEK ONE:

What is hope (vs a dream, wish, desire)?

Sometimes, we interchange the words hope, wish, desire. But are they all really the same? This week, we look at how a hopeful disposition is not the solution to every problem or challenge - but more of a tool that we use as we try to make our way through life.

WEEK TWO:

Picture what you want your future to look like

What do you want your future to look like? Where will you live, what will you be doing? Who will you hang out with? Sometimes, the key to having hope is to have a very clear picture of what you want in the future, so you have something to look forward to and work towards.

WEEK THREE:

How can something good come from bad?

The application this month can be problematic for some, and no one is suggesting that bad things happen for the sake of the good that can come of them. This week, we chat with Dr. Beth about how to hold onto hope even when things go bad.

WEEK FOUR:

CHALLENGE: Vision Board

Take time to visualize your best future self. This could be the future you in 5 years or 10 or 20. You get to decide! No detail is too small for this visualization exercise.