

The  
**HOPE**  
Project

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# Take few moments ...

## **In the context of your work with patients and their families:**

- What is “Hope” for you?
- How do you define “Hope”?
- If you encountered “Hope” what would it look like?
- Under what circumstances do you recognise “Hope” flourishing and growing?
- What activities and practices feed and nourish “Hope”?
- In what ways have you experienced the presence of “Hope” in your daily life and/or relationships?

# About the Hope Project

- A community psychology intervention
- Attempt at engaging alternative discourses of Hope other than those that dominate everyday life, or support a dualist discourse of Hope.
- Move from “Thin” descriptions to “Thick” descriptions (Michael White) when considering Hope in a paediatric palliative care setting.
- Richly describe Hope and explore the practices of Hope.
- Engage Outsider Witness Groups in “Katharsis” (White, 2003) moving people to new understandings and meanings.

# The Origins of the Hope Project

- My conversation with Cameron's Mum.
- Dominant discourse of Hope is dualistic – cure vs no cure
- Alerted to the impact of trauma & suffering on our patients, their families and ourselves – thin descriptions (Weingarten, 2003)
- We are sometimes the custodians of Hope for our patients and their families.
- Recognition of the importance of reflective practice.

# “Discourse” and how this relates to the Hope Project & Hope

- Post Modern view & social constructionism.
- We are all born into stories that are profoundly shaping of our identities & world view.
- Discourse – a system of internalized statements, practices and institutional structures that share common values (Freedman & Combes, 1996).
- Discourses are powerfully shaping of a person’s world view, beliefs about themselves, personal values, identities and experience of relationships.
- Discourse of “Suffering” – thin descriptions of identity, isolates, separates.

# Choosing the activity for the Hope Project

- Danger of becoming lost in Philosophical Debate about what is Hope. (Modernist descriptions)
- Doing Hope – Kaethe Weingarten (2003); e.g. Protest dances in the S.A struggle “Toyi Toyi”.
- Hope is a verb, Hope is a practice, Hope happens in community.
- Creativity – the gateway to possibility & metaphor (Weingarten, 2006)

# What did I do ... methodology?

- Outsider Witness Group/Reflecting Team process (White, 2004)
- Invited staff members to a telling of their story of Hope through a creative representation of Hope.
- Invited staff members to act as an Outsider Witness to these tellings through an exhibition of the creative representations submitted.
- Interviewed tellers.
- Interviewed witnesses.

# What was the purpose of the exhibition?

- Stories need to be told and “audienced”.
- The “tellings” of stories have the potential of Katharsis – to move people to new understandings and meanings.

# “Outsider Witness Groups” & The Hope Project

- Ritual & Ceremonies – socially performed and become defining of who we are and our identities.
- E.g. Uni Graduations, Lions Children of Courage Awards
- Movement takes place for the Teller & the Audience (Outsider Witness Groups)

Some images & sounds...



# Future possible directions for the Hope Project

- Extend the invitation to children & families
- Start a Hope Blog
- ... one day write a book about my experiences of Hope

# Invitation

- If you would like to, please could you tell me how hearing about The Hope Project has impacted on you?
- Please could you say how viewing The Hope Project has developed/shaped your understanding/definition of Hope?
- How might these shifts/changes impact on your personal & professional Life?

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# References/Resources

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