

# Support Group

## Success

*It All Begins with Hope*

Caroline S. Cooper, MS, CPS



# Presentation Objectives

- Describe the hope, transformation, and victory cycle of recovery
- Learn how to facilitate group discussions
- Practice sample scenarios to determine appropriate responses
- Write a covenant of confidentiality for a support group



- *Choose Hope*
- *Experience Transformation*
- *Recognize Hope*

# Hope

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

*Desmond Tutu*  
South African Leader  
1931-2021



# Communicating Hope

- What NOT to say to someone in despair:

“I will teach you how to have hope.”

*Every person must choose hope for themselves.*

“This group is a good place to find hope.”

*Some people may not feel that way.*

- WHAT to say to someone who needs hope.

“I believe you will find hope here.”

“God has given me hope, and I know he can do this for  
you”

# Bringing Hope to Your Group

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Merriam-Webster says that hope is “desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment.”

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Model an attitude of hope. No one is immune from pain, but we can learn to move from a place of despair to hope.

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Everyone must choose hope for themselves.

# Emphasizing Hope

You can reinforce the importance of hope without even saying a word.

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Include quotes or a devotion to inspire hope. Give the group an opportunity to discuss

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Ask group members to share something that gave them hope.

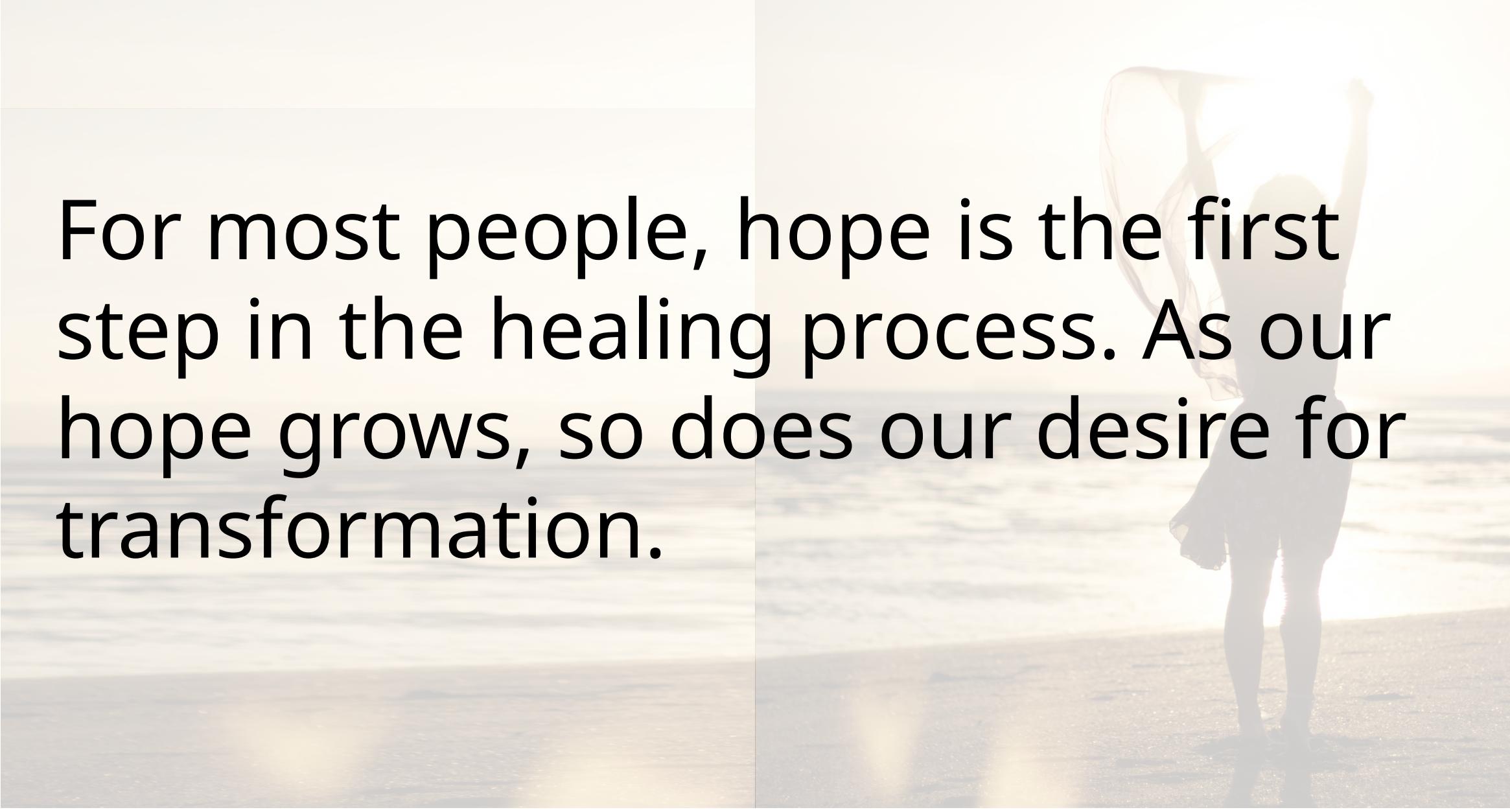
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Have prayer request cards available

sat **Group** without interacting as she usually did. This week's lesson revolved around **Discussion** leaving me. I haven't been to therapy in a while because we don't respond.

1. Read the story.
2. How could the group leader steer the conversation to a more hopeful tone?
3. What other actions could the leader take based on Joann's words?





For most people, hope is the first step in the healing process. As our hope grows, so does our desire for transformation.

# Transformation

Transformation is a process, and as life happens there are tons of ups and downs. It's a journey of discovery - there are moments on mountaintops and moments in deep valleys of despair.



# Defining Transformation

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According to dictionary.com, transformation is a change in form, appearance, nature, or character.

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Merriam-Webster defines transformation as “the act or process of changing character.”

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The Bible says we are “transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Romans 12:2)

# Definition of Recovery

*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)*

SAMHSA defines recovery as a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.

[https://www.samhsa.gov/  
substance-use/recovery](https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/recovery)

# Bringing Holistic Transformation to Your Group

## Emotional Health

- Emotions and feelings are not good or bad.
- Accept your feelings and try to understand why you are feeling that way.
- Learn to express your emotions in a healthy way.

## Spiritual Health

- “Spiritual transformation is a journey of personal growth and development that leads to a more meaningful and purposeful life.” – Google AI
- Each religion has a unique perspective on the spiritual life.

# Holistic Transformation

## Mental Health

- Catch It – Catch a thought. Accept it without judgment.
- Check It – Does this thought reflect reality, or not?
- Change It – Consider how to change an untrue thought to better reflect

## Physical Health

- Exercise and physical activity are essential for improved mental and emotional health.

# Tools for Transformation



## Emotional Health

- A safe place
- Strengths and skills



## Mental Health

- Affirmations
- Retraining thoughts



## Spiritual Health

- Enjoying nature
- Prayer and meditation



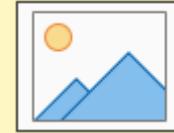
## Physical Health

- Movement
- Recreational sports

Group Discussion

en 1. Read the story.

1. Read the story.
2. How can you acknowledge Mark's transformation?
3. How can you use Mark's report as a starting point to discuss transformation?



A photograph of a person's feet in sandals walking on a sandy beach. The sun is setting in the background, casting a warm glow and long shadows. The person is wearing dark pants and sandals. The image serves as a visual metaphor for the quote about transformation.

Every step we take shapes who we are and transforms us in some way. As we are transformed, we begin to see victory in everyday life.

# Victory

Merriam-Webster describes victory as achievement of mastery or success in a struggle or endeavor against odds or difficulties

*or*

the overcoming of an enemy or antagonist



# Understanding Victory

- “I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over self.” *Aristotle, Greek Philosopher (384-322 BC)*
- “Accept the challenges so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory.” *George S. Patton, Army General (1885-1945)*
- Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory. (Proverbs 11:14, NASB, Holy Bible)

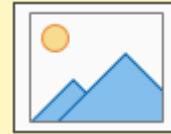
# Victory

Is victory the final step or only the beginning?



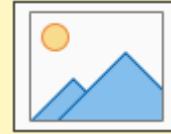
Group right peeked through the curtains, and she knew the day was unshaded. She was experiencing depression. But didn't that mean it was okay to feel bad? It was time to greet the day.

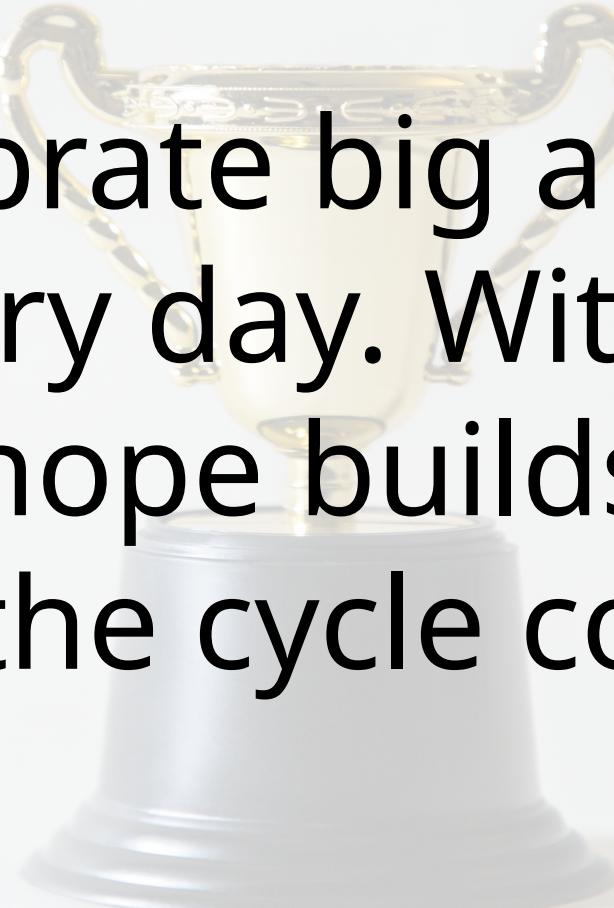
1. Read the story and discuss how it demonstrates victory.
2. If someone shared this story in your group, how could you highlight their victory?



... **Group** of his own home. Would his wife let him in? Even after the way...  
. **Discussion** to use the tools he'd learned and make the changes needed  
s grabbed him, pulled him into the home, and held on tight. Tears fell, the

1. Read the story and discuss how it demonstrates victory.
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We can celebrate big and small victories every day. With each victory, our hope builds for the future. And the cycle continues.

# Meeting Agendas

Suggestions for incorporating the cycle of recovery in support group meetings



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Suggestions for incorporating the cycle of recovery in support group meetings

- Hope: begin with readings or devotions; share testimonies of experience hope
- Transformation: share concerns and encourage each other to persevere; provide mental health and wellness activities; incorporate Bible study
- Victory: share where you need victory; share victories from the past week (any areas of success)

# Covenant of Confidentiality

## Elements to include

- Confidentiality statement
- Attendee expectations
- Leader expectations

### SAMPLE COVENANT

A covenant is an agreement or promise. By signing this document, I understand I am making a promise to the group and the leader below. This covenant is for the benefit of individual support group members and the group as a whole.

**Group Dynamics**

1. I understand this is a confidential support group. Confidentiality allows for a safe environment where we can be vulnerable in sharing. I will not repeat support group conversations outside of the group.
2. I understand this is a Christian support group that welcomes non-Christians to participate. The group will emphasize the importance of prayer and spiritual growth as essential for emotional and mental wellness.
3. I will respect the other members of this group. Everyone has a right to share openly about their situations and feelings. I will not judge others for their words, actions, or beliefs.
4. I will demonstrate respect for family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. By not sharing conversations, activities, or events with family members, friends, or others, I will not harm, accuse, or judge them for their words or actions. I will focus on my feelings, behaviors, and choices.
5. I will make attending this support group a priority. I recognize that it is necessary to take care of myself. I will attend this group as often as possible as one step towards living a healthy and productive life.
6. I will privately communicate any concerns with the group leader. Addressing potential problems within a group is essential for the group's success. If I feel there is a conflict between myself, another group member, or the leader, I will discuss this problem privately with the group leader to reach a resolution.
7. I understand that attending this support group is not a replacement for treatment by a mental health or medical professional.

**Group Leader Disclaimer:** Caroline S. Cooper, ministry and support group leader, has firsthand experience with mental illness and is a certified peer specialist (CPS) in mental health through the Missouri Credentialing Board. She is not a licensed therapist or other health care professional. I understand that participation in this group should supplement necessary medical or psychological treatment and do not hold Caroline responsible for any mental health crisis that may occur.

**Group Goals**

8. We will begin each meeting with an emotional check-in.
9. We will spend approximately 10-15 minutes of mental health and wellness training during the meeting.
10. I will spend at least 10 minutes a day in Bible reading or study.
11. I will commit to praying the ACTS prayer or other prayer format daily.
12. I will commit to being in regular fellowship with a Body of believers for additional encouragement and support.

**By signing below, I agree to do my best to uphold this covenant for my benefit as well as the benefit of this mental health support group. (Please retain this copy for future reference.)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Goals for the group (optional)

- Attendance-related
- Progress on reading assignments
- Doing homework or practicing tools

# Suggestions for Leaders

- For confidential needs, encourage members to contact you outside of group for discussing your situation
- Use handouts with wellness activities that members can do at home throughout the week
- Be prepared to provide referrals for counselors, psychiatrists, clinics, or behavioral health organizations in your location

# Questions?



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## Connect with me!

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