



DIY LIVED EXPERIENCE RESEARCH RESOURCE MANUAL FOR PEER WORKERS

Manual 7: Hope Box



STELLER: Supporting the Translation into Everyday Life of Lived Experience Research



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If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback on this resource, you can contact us at info@stellerhub.com.



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INTRODUCTION

This manual is produced by STELLER and is one of a set of manuals accompanying our DIY suite of lived-experience research resources. Manual 7 relates to the activity box resource: Hope. It assumes that you have already read Manual 1: Getting started. If you have not read that manual already, please do so now, as it contains important contextual information.

This manual contains information about the original research on which the Hope resource was based – it is important for you to understand the research in more detail to answer questions and provide the people you work with additional insight. Reflection questions encourage you to think about the application of the resource to your own life. This manual also tells you how to produce the resource and gives tips and considerations for using it with people.

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback on this resource, you can contact Anne Honey at anne.honey@sydney.edu.au or info@stellerhub.com.

About the resource

- Yeung, W. S., Hancock, N., Honey, A., Wells, K., & Scanlan, J. N. (2020). Igniting and maintaining hope: The voices of people living with mental illness. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 56. DOI: 10.1007/s10597-020-00557-z

Yeung, Hancock, Wells and Honey (2018) asked 74 people living with mental health issues to write about an experience that had helped them to feel hopeful. They analysed responses using interpretive content analysis. Findings revealed that people described two types of experiences – those that involved other people, and those that did not, where people found hope within themselves.

The STELLER research project translated some of these findings into a unique resource we called the Hope Box. The Hope Box is a plain, cardboard box which contains (1) a brief overview of the study; (2) an insert summarising the classic story of hope and perseverance *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*; (3) several coloured textas to encourage participants to make the box their own by decorating or writing on it and, most importantly; (4) seven small balls or boxes labelled with a letter, indicating a day of the week. Each ball/box contains a tiny hand-made colourful paper crane and a slip of paper with a key concept and quote/s from the study. For example, one insert contains the concept: ‘acknowledge your strengths and your positive progress’; with participant quotes “See how far I’ve come since first being diagnosed”; and “I’ve many other strengths including being an insightful, gracious, kind, compassionate, brave and determined person.”

Note from the author

Hope is an integral part of the recovery process. Developing my own sense of hope was very empowering for me. It was also important that others believed I could and would recover. It’s not as simple as a decision to foster hope and at times others carried hope for me when I could not. I hope this resource helps people on their recovery journey to develop their own sense of hope.

Karen Wells



Accessing the full article

The full article is available for purchase at: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10597-020-00557-z.pdf>. However, you may be able to access it for free through your institutional library.

ARTICLE SUMMARY

A team of Australian researchers aimed to identify the types of experiences that people with lived experience identify as igniting and maintaining hope, and those experiences most frequently reported.

Context for the study

People with lived experience of mental health challenges have said that hope is critical to their ability to recover and lead a meaningful and satisfying life. Hope is expecting and believing that the future holds good things that you value. It has also been described as reawakening after despair or believing change is possible. This paper aimed to gain greater clarity about what experiences actually provide hope.

Methods

Honours student Angela Yeung, under the supervision of a research team including Lived Experience researcher, Karen Wells, asked 74 people living with mental health challenges to write about an experience that had helped them to feel hopeful.

The study used interpretative content analysis, a research method using both qualitative and quantitative techniques, to identify new themes and ideas and which are talked about most often.

People completed an online survey, answering two open ended questions. The first question asked participants to “Think of an incident, moment or experience that gave you a feeling of hope for your future and your mental health recovery... Please tell us about his experience in as much details as you can.” The second question probed deeper into the critical hope promoting aspects of their experience by asking “Thinking about this experience, what do you think were the really important things about this experience that gave you a feeling of hope?”

Data were analysed using a technique called constant comparative analysis to identify distinct, key types of experiences and the number of participants who described these.

Research findings

While experiences that inspired hope often involved other people, people were active in finding hope within themselves.

Participants described eight hope-promoting interactions or experiences in which a variety of other people (sources) were a critical part. These experiences were:

1. Knowing I am loved or cared about (20 people):



It's the first place I have ever lived with so much support and understanding, [the] first time in my life.

2. Feeling supported (19 people):

I feel hopeful because of the help I received from people such as psychiatrists and psychologists all working together to support and encourage me.

3. Knowing others believe in my ability to recover (11 people):

Having faith in my, letting me know that I'm not that bad and realising I can change.

Many people from NSW Health and [NGO] believed in me and instilled hope for me that recovery was possible.

4. Feeling respected, listened to and believed (16 people):

Respected me and didn't attempt to force me to do anything. He gave me space to explore what my experiences might mean.

Health workers "listened carefully to what I was saying about my experiences.

5. Witnessing and hearing stories of recovery (18 people):

I found hope when I heard people share their story of recovery. The consumers' voice was hope and healing.

Knowing that they had been through similar experience gave me the greatest hope that maybe I could get to that place that they were in their recovery.

6. Learning helpful strategies and information (10 people):

The key tips and strategies that other peers discussed and ways to cope with, attitudes and ways to have a balanced life were tremendously useful.

7. Connecting and belonging (17 people):

Peer connection gave participants "a sense of involvement and acceptance."

The first experience of hope and acceptance was at Clubhouse by a member – who looked at me in the eye and smiled – just smiled at me. That smile gave me hope.

8. Contributing or helping others (11 people):

Working as a mental health peer worker – giving other people hope.

[Being a] productive member of society.

Participants also described seven hope-promoting experiences that were more internal or personally driven:

1. Finding and using helpful services and medications (18 people)



[Deciding to] attend a community CBT program.

Finding the right medication mix.

2. Finding effective self-help strategies (15 people):

These were strategies people developed through experience and reflection. They included “*practicing meditation*”, “*listening to classical music*”, “*using reflective practice*”, “*poetry and photography competitions*”, “*seeking information and trying to communicate differently, deal with my anger and reconnect with my feelings.*”

3. Self-acceptance and love (13 people):

I’ve many other strengths including being an insightful, gracious, kind, compassionate, brave and determined person.

4. Recognising my progress (7 people):

[Seeing] how far I’ve come since first being diagnosed.

I began to have hope when my energy levels improved enough, as well as my mood to start feeling like I was starting to live again instead of existing.

5. Finding a spiritual connection (6 people)

Reading the Bible gives me daily hope and true joy.

6. Doing things I love (5 people)

Playing and being successful at sports.

Purchasing a digital camera as photography was something I had enjoyed in high school.

7. Connecting with an environment (2 people)

My home always gives me hope that I’ll return to being well again and my life will blossom and flourish once again.

Final Comments

The authors thought that the findings showed that people with lived experience of mental health challenges have a critical role to play in inspiring hope in others. This is through being a role model, sharing stories of recovery, being part of an accepting community, and sharing information and strategies. Other people are also important, and it is important for consumers to try to spend time with people who care for them, respect them and believe in their ability to recover.

But hope is not just given by other people – people were active in finding hope for themselves. They used activities, strategies and environments that were uniquely meaningful to them to ignite their hope and they sought out people who would help them to maintain their hope.



VALUED FEATURES OF THE RESOURCE

The *Hope Box* was rated as favourite by the largest percentage of all the resources of those who chose it. The *Hope Box* resource was seen as helpful by 86% of our study participants. The most common things that study participants said they liked or valued about this resource were:

- The attractive presentation
- It is creative and novel
- The format made it 'like a present'
- It provided people with tangible resources and involved "hands on" activity
- The messages were empowering and simple

Here are a few things our participants said:

I felt that it was a lot of time and effort had gone into making it and preparing it. A lot of thoughtfulness... I was actually a little bit emotional when I first opened the resource.

I did find it creative, and I get attracted to creative stuff.

It's not so much writing at the time and you can just relate to it like that.

Just the little gifts that you gave. Then I took it home and I did what they say, like with the little... It's little balls, and the crane. Each day, I wouldn't open it early. I'd just do each day.

I loved that, because it was hands on. I liked the fact that it was practical activity.

One of the Peer Workers involved in using the *Hope Box* with people said:

They really liked the design, the mystery, the kind of surprise and hope that it brought I suppose in terms of reading the messages and opening it up and some of them just jumped straight into it. Some of them opened one per day.



PRODUCTION INSTRUCTIONS

The beauty of the *Hope Box* is that you can get as creative as you would like in producing it. For our study, we constructed each Hope Box ourselves, but we think that the construction of Hope Boxes would actually be a great activity to do with the people you work with. The format lends itself to people making Hope Boxes as “presents” for others. This could be done in groups or individually and in the community or in an inpatient setting. One of our peer workers came up with the great idea of “paying forward”, with people, for example, in inpatient settings who had received a Hope Box, having the opportunity to make one for someone else. We have some suggestions as to the process you might use below in ‘Constructing the Hope Box as an activity’.

For each Hope Box you will need:

- A box to put everything in – something plain is best, so people can decorate it as they like
- 7 smaller containers that fit inside the larger box. Mark each container with a letter representing days of the week (M,T,W,Th etc).
- A tiny paper crane (an international symbol of hope) that fits into the smaller container
- A couple of coloured textas or other crafty stuff to encourage participants to make the box their own by decorating or writing on it
- The following materials printed from the PDFs provided in our DIY kit:
 - Coloured strips (with theme and quotes). Cut these out then curl them up and put one inside each small container with the paper crane;
 - A double sided insert summarising the classic story of hope and perseverance *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, with pictures of paper cranes on the back. Cut this out and put it on top of the smaller containers inside the larger box.
 - A brief overview of the study. Cut this out and stick it to the underside of the lid of the larger box.

Below we have provided specifications for obtaining materials for two versions of the Hope Box that you could choose to make, though you may be able to find better/cheaper options and are welcome to mix and match, or to get creative with the resources you have.

Option 1:

- Round box available from Spotlight for about \$7.50. It is 17.5 x 17.5 x 7.5cm. See <https://www.spotlightstores.com/nz/craft-hobbies/basic-craft-supplies/timber-papier-mache/shamrock-craft-papier-mache-round-hat-box/80142591002> . If you get it online, there’s a flat rate of \$11 postage, so it’s worth getting quite a few at once if you can.
- White toy capsules (50mm). You can buy 100 of these for about \$43 through: <https://www.spotlightstores.com/nz/craft-hobbies/basic-craft-supplies/timber-papier-mache/shamrock-craft-papier-mache-round-hat-box/80142591002> . The downside of these balls is that they are not very environmentally friendly, and a couple of people in the study said they found them difficult to open. The plastic also means they can’t be decorated.
- Tiny paper cranes – 1.5 inches is the right size. These are really too small and fiddly to do yourself, though you could if you wanted to. You can buy lots of them fairly cheaply though





- about \$40 for 100 of them including postage from overseas.

https://www.etsy.com/au/shop/MakePaperCraft?ref=simple-shop-header-name&listing_id=219112142§ion_id=30889059 (you might find them cheaper elsewhere)

- Textas – we got a faber castell connector pack of 48 for \$12 from K-Mart.
- Coloured quotes for inside balls – you can print these yourself on a high-quality colour printer, or you can have them printed at a printer for about 69c per sheet.
- Double sided inserts – you can print these yourself if you have a high-quality colour printer. It is best to use 170GSM paper. If you go to a printer, this will cost you about \$2 per sheet.
- Instructions for inside of lid – you can print these yourself, or have them done at Officeworks for about 10c per page.

This version will cost you less than \$10 per resource if you print the PDFs yourself on a high-quality office printer. If you have them printed at a commercial printer, such as Officeworks it will cost around \$13 per resource.

Option 2:

Option 2 is the same as Option 1 except using square boxes instead of the round box and balls. This works out cheaper, but the boxes come as flatpacks that you have to fold yourself. They don't come with instructions but are relatively easy to figure out and may well be fun to do with a group.

- Square box available 15 x 15 x 4.5cm from SJ Wedding Stationary online. You can buy 10 for \$15 + \$8 delivery or cheaper for more – see

https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/783963232/10x-kraft-cardboard-box-base-lid-brown?ga_order=most_relevant&ga_search_type=all&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_search_query=10x+Kraft+Cardboard+Box+Base+Lid+Brown+Gift+Cake+Food+Container+Tray+Many+Sizes&ref=sr_gallery-1-1&organic_search_click=1



- Small boxes 5.5 x 5.5 x 2.5cm from SJ Wedding Stationary online. You can buy 10 for \$6 or 50 for \$18 or cheaper for more (delivery no more if you buy the larger boxes above) – see https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/748755763/50x-kraft-cardboard-box-brown-white?click_key=fba5135d3b4a9e234921ad342b948c2c6c1e2297%3A748755763&click_sku=m322f3e96&ref=shop_home_feat_1&variation1=1239366599

This version will cost you an average of about \$3 per resource for the boxes if you print the PDFs yourself on a high-quality office printer. If you have them printed at a printer, it will cost around \$6 per resource.



CONSTRUCTING THE HOPE BOX AS AN ACTIVITY

As noted above, the Hope Boxes could be constructed in a group or individual setting with people with lived experience, for example to give to other people. The Hope Box can be adapted to how you would like to structure the activity and for working with individuals or in groups.

Individual symbols of hope

The concept of hope is individual to each person. There is opportunity to explore what hope means with the people you are working with and what symbols or images come to mind. Depending on what they say, you could get creative and adapt the activity and box to reflect these symbols of hope instead of or as well as using cranes. Examples are:

- You could use origami to make cranes or other symbols of hope - have a look online at Youtube for examples of shapes that can be made and if there are instructions for these.
- You could cut out paper in the shape of the symbol of hope identified e.g. doves.
- For people who connect with nature as part of their sense of hope, you could collect pieces of nature e.g. leaves, bark, stones, and use these as symbols of hope.
- Make a diagram of the symbol e.g. a diagram of a rainbow out of coloured paper, where the person can attach the strategies for hope to each colour of the rainbow. The diagram can then act as a daily reminder of how people can draw upon hope.
- You could purchase small charms, shapes or depending on how much time you want to invest, could seek out small figures of the symbols of hope.
- If using this activity in groups, you could include a range of symbols of hope that reflect what hope means to each participant in the group. This could also be a good discussion point for each participant to share their reason for identifying their symbol of hope.
- If the Hope Box is to be given to someone else, the person making it could write a small note explaining the symbols of hope they have chosen.

You have an opportunity to get as creative as you would like, and to really personalise this activity to the person or group of people. Alternatively, you can just use paper cranes as the symbols of hope, and discuss what they mean, and the concept of hope, as you construct the resource together.

Constructing the resource

You and the people you're working with will need to cut out the printed materials – the introduction to stick on the inside of the lid, the insert with the story, and the slips with strategies for hope.

Participants who took part in our study emphasised the enjoyment they got from opening up the plastic balls to reveal each hope strategy and symbol of hope. Depending on funding, you could use the plastic balls (version 1) or you can construct the little cardboard boxes (version 2) and put the paper slips and symbols of hope in those. Folding up the boxes can be an interesting activity, though we suggest that you figure out how to do it yourself first, as the flat-packs don't come with instructions. If budgets are really tight, you could construct origami boxes using paper or even use envelopes.

You will have seven little packages that you can then mark with days of the week so that a different package can be opened each day if people want to do it that way. Place the seven little packages into the larger box (which you may also need to construct) along with some textas or other craft materials, and put the insert with the story on top. Stick the background and instructions page to the inside of the lid. The Hope Boxes are then ready to go!



GUIDELINES FOR USE

Whether you construct the Hope Boxes yourself or do it as an activity with other people, you can introduce the boxes to people individually or in a group.

First, encourage people to read, or go through with them, the explanation of the research findings found on the underside of the lid of the larger box, the story of the crane as a symbol of hope. Explain that each ball/box/package is similar to a fortune cookie with each containing a quote from the research about hope. Let people know they have the box to keep so can feel free to personalise the box by decorating it if they would like. You can then ask the person how they would like to use the box – they could use it in interactions with you to explore together, or they could take the box with them and use in their own time. They can open one package per day/ session with you, or they can open them at once – it's up to them.

If using the box together with people directly you can ask them to read the strategy and explore if and how this strategy relates to them. If the person uses the box at home by themselves, when you see them next, ask them to reflect on their thoughts when you next see them. Possible questions to prompt discussion are included below.

Encourage the person to make the box their own. Invite them to use it to hold or capture any thoughts or other strategies they find helpful in gaining hope, and to include any things in the box that they would like.

It's worth noting that while most study participants loved the Hope Box, three people said that they found the content "too basic" or "very generalised". However, if used as a springboard for discussion, the peer worker can bring out further nuances and specifics around people's experience of igniting and maintaining hope.

Possible discussion questions:

These are some suggestions for questions you might ask to generate discussion and help the person reflect on the resource.

Prior to giving the resource:

- What does hope mean to you?
- What brings you hope?
- What are symbols of hope for you?

Afterward:

- What stands out for you about the Hope Box?
- How do the messages from Hope Box align with your own lived experience?
- Are there messages you are taking from this resource that you would want to keep visible your own Hope?
- Have you thought about personalising the box to visualise your HOPE messages?
- What sources of hope do you find around you?
- What sources of hope do you find within you?
- What do you do when you notice your sense of hope waning?
- What messages or learning are you taking from the Hope Box?
- Do you plan to do anything different after using the Hope Box? What?



RELECTION FOR PEER WORKERS

As we outlined in Manual 1, it is important that, prior to introducing a STELLER resource to someone else, you have introduced it to and used it yourself. Use the reflection questions below to become more familiar with each resource.

<p>1. What surprised you about the research presented in the Hope Box?</p>	
<p>2. How does this information inform and /or impact your own recovery processes?</p>	
<p>3. After using the Hope Box, what might you consider differently about your own recovery?</p>	
<p>4. List the points you would make when introducing this STELLER resource to others? (Be sure to share your own experiences of using this resource)</p>	



ARE YOU READY? CHECKLIST

I've read and understood Manual 1 – Introduction to STELLER.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel confident to explain lived-experience research and the background to the resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've read the article summary in this manual.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've produced the resource in accordance with the instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've used the resource myself and reflected on the questions for peer workers in this manual.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've read the guidelines for use in this manual and feel confident of how to introduce the resource.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what reflection questions I want to ask to start discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a plan for following up with the person/checking in with them afterward about the resource.	<input type="checkbox"/>