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Fostering hope in alternative education students through goal setting

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Fostering Hope in Alternative Education Students Through Goal Setting

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JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Many students in alternative education programs have significant academic and behavioral difficulties that cannot be reasonably accommodated in the general education setting. These students have typically experienced a considerable amount of failure throughout their lives. The impact of experiencing failure can make it difficult for students to feel positive about their potential future success and lead them on a trajectory for failure. On the contrary, research supports that people with high levels of hope are more likely to experience multiple positive life outcomes. The following study evaluates the effectiveness of a hope intervention on increasing positive outcomes in alternative education students. Specifically, a group of five students ages 16 to 18 participated in a researcher designed hope intervention. Pre and post data were analyzed in a case study design to investigate changes in hope, externalizing behavior, academic participation, and goal setting following the implementation of the hope intervention. At the conclusion of the hope intervention, positive outcomes were observed on a case-by-case basis.

I. Statement of the Problem

Alternative education programs are for students with academic difficulties, behavioral concerns, and other individual needs that cannot be accommodated in regular education. These placements consist largely of students who have been expelled or suspended long term from regular education, but they also include students who have violated school board policy or have recently returned from juvenile detention centers. The characteristics of students placed in alternative education are typically students who are falling significantly behind academically, have disruptive behavior problems, or have been involved with substances, weapons, or stealing (Jay, 2009).

Although alternative education placements offer highly structured education settings with small student to teacher ratios to account for intensive instruction and behavioral supervision, successful outcomes are still lower for these students compared to regular education students (Tobin, & Sprague, 1999). In the 2008-2009 school year, teachers reported at least some improvement academically in 73% of students served in alternative education placements, but this does not mean that all of those students were performing on grade level. While this is an encouraging percentage, a remaining 27% of students are not improving academically, or getting worse. Also, in the 2008-2009 school year, 7.27% of alternative education placement students were expelled from their placement. At the same time, 5.83% of students dropped out of school compared to 1.76% regular education students (“Virginia Department of Education, 2010; Jay, 2009). These students are at a high risk for school failure, dropping out, and being incarcerated. (Jay, 2009; Lehr & Lange, 2010). The impact of experiencing failure can make it difficult for students to feel positive about their potential future success (Leone & Drakeford).

School psychologists can contribute to helping students in alternative education placements see themselves as successful in the future.

II. Literature Review

Hope Theory

Snyder et. al. (1991) out of the University of Kansas sought to develop a theory to define hope beyond a generic definition of wishful thinking. In their opinions, hope was more than wishful thinking, but a product of more intended thought and cognitive processes surrounding goal pursuit. They believed in goal-directed thinking as an adaptive process, and they thought there should be more emphasis placed on the processes that motivate goal pursuit.

Snyder et. al. (1991) looked at the in depth processes that make up goal-directed thinking leading to hope and found two distinct, interrelated, and equal components that were labeled pathways thinking and agency thinking. *Pathways thinking* involves an individual's ability to produce multiple strategies to achieve a goal. This includes the ability to plan and choose the most efficient strategy, as well as evaluate when a chosen strategy is not working and a new strategy is necessary to reach a goal. *Agency thinking* encompasses an individual's motivation to actively engage in goal pursuit. Agency is related to success with past goal endeavors. Individuals that have had success with reaching goals in the past will likely have more motivation to engage in present and future goal pursuit, while those who have been unsuccessful with past goal pursuit will likely struggle to cultivate motivation in present and future goal pursuit (Snyder et. al., 1991).

In looking at the emotions surrounding hope in hope theory, emotions are the end product of goal pursuit. Negative emotions are the result of failures in goal pursuit, while positive emotions are the result of successes in goal attainment, including the reaching of

sub goals to an ultimate end goal. Hope is the result of perceptions of success, and these perceptions are achieved in successful goal pursuit. Hope theory not only defines the construct of hope as a positive emotion surrounding success for the future, but also the cognitive thinking processes on how high levels of hope are attained (Snyder, 2002a).

Hope is also conceptualized in a hierarchy containing three different levels: global hope, domain-specific hope, and goal-specific hope. The top of the hierarchy is global hope, also known as trait hope by Snyder et. al. (1991). Global or trait hope comprises an individual's general capacity for successful goal achievement. Individuals who are high in global hope believe that they have the motivation to engage in goal pursuit as well as the ability to develop strategies to reach their goals (Snyder, 1995). The next level in the hope hierarchy is domain-specific hope. Domain-specific hope identifies that although one might have high overall global hope, there are certain life domains where one might not have the same level of hope. Life domains that have been identified as having varying levels of hope include academics, work, leisure time, family, and relationships, which separates both social and romantic relationships (Lopez, Snyder, & Pedrotti, 2003). The final level in the hope hierarchy is goal-specific hope. This level recognizes that levels of hope can differ depending on the goal. Some individuals might have goals that they feel strongly in their ability to achieve, while other goals might be too challenging or out of reach for the person that their hope in reaching that specific goal is low (Snyder, Feldman, Shorey, & Rand, 2002).

An underlying assumption in hope theory is that levels of hope influence goal attainment and vice versa, goal attainment influences subsequent hope levels. This meaning that individuals with higher hope are more likely to attain their goals, and when

individuals attain their goals, this results in higher levels of hope. Feldman, Rand, and Kahle-Wroblewski (2009) questioned this assumption because they believed that hope for specific goals rather than overall trait hope should have a greater impact on goal attainment. To further examine this assumption, Feldman et. al. (2009) collected data on 162 undergraduate college students at the start of their spring semester and then again at the end of the semester. They had to choose seven goals for the semester, rate their importance, complete a goal specific scale of hope for each goal, and then complete an overall hope scale. When looking at multiple regression analyses of the pre and post data, they found a positive and significant relationship between goal specific hope and trait hope supporting the assumption of hope theory that trait hope influences goal attainment. They also found that overall, the results of goal attainment influences individuals' overall hope levels when looking at whether students succeeded or failed at meeting their semester goals. In this particular study, they found a slightly stronger relationship specifically with agency thinking in relation to goal attainment, but that was attributed to the nature of the shorter term study, where students may not have encountered as many obstacles to require reliance on pathways thinking.

Comparisons to Similar Theories

There are other theories that share some similarities with Hope Theory, including theories of self-efficacy, optimism, self-esteem, and problem solving. In comparison to Hope theory, similar theories have different emphases. Many theories place different emphases on outcome versus efficacy expectancies (Snyder et. al., 1991), and also on perceptions of 'can complete a task' versus 'will complete a task' (Peterson, Gerhardt, & Rode, 2006). Hope theory reflects a relative general trait that is a stable cognitive set

rather than being solely dependent on outcome expectancies. Hope theory also places an equal emphasis on outcome and efficacy expectancies, as seen by the reciprocal relationship between agency and pathways thinking (Snyder et. al., 1991). Hope theory explains the emergence of emotions based on successes or failures in goal pursuit (Snyder, 2002a). Finally, hope theory places an emphasis on the perception that one *will* complete a goal, not just their perceived ability that they *can* complete a goal (Snyder, 2002a).

Bandura (1977) related self-efficacy to be a central component in behavior. This places emphasis on efficacy expectations that one has the ability to engage in a specific task or behavior. In Bandura's theory (1977), efficacy expectations are the first and last components to determine a behavior; first it determines what behavioral situation the individual will be in, and at the end it determines what actual behavior will be performed and at what effort level. Bandura (1977) does not discount the importance of outcome expectancies, but he places more of an emphasis on the efficacy in determining behavior and efforts expended on the behavior, whereas hope theory places equal weight on both pathways and agency (Snyder et. al., 1991). In the theory of self-efficacy, there is also a belief in the perception of ability that a task or goal *can* be completed, while hope theory recognizes the importance of the perception of *can*, it moves a step further to the perception that one *will* attain a goal (Snyder, 2002a). Bandura's theory was also developed as being more situation specific in nature and for more extreme fearful situations; while Maddux, Sherer, and Rogers (1982) found that self-efficacy could be more trait like. Maddux et. al. (1982) also found that self-efficacy was not independent of outcome expectancy, especially in more general circumstances not involving an aversive

situation like Bandura's (1977) explanation. Given the research on self-efficacy, it shares similarities with hope theory, but there are different emphases placed on expectancies, perceived ability versus actually following through with a behavior, and explaining the emergence of emotions (Snyder, 2002a).

Where self-efficacy places emphasis on efficacy expectations, optimism places emphasis on outcome expectations. More specifically, Carver and Scheier (1985) define optimism as having positive expectations for the future. They believed that optimism was the most important component to goal pursuit, which does not explain the person's abilities of achieving that goal like emphasized in self-efficacy theory. They also believed optimism to be a more dispositional trait rather than situation dependent, and that having high optimism would lead to diligence in completing a desired goal. Similar to hope theory, Carver and Scheier (1985) describe how positive and negative feelings emerge from their theory. They explained their theory of emergence of feelings with self-regulation. When one is performing in a way that they would expect, feelings remain neutral, but when there is a discrepancy between their expectations and their performance, then either positive or negative feelings emerge. When one is performing below their expectation then they experience negative feelings, and when one is performing above their expectation then they experience positive feelings. The main difference between optimism and hope theory lies with the emphasis on outcome expectancies, because they do not place weight on the pathways thinking that one uses to reach a desired outcome (Snyder et. al., 1991; Snyder, 2002a).

Other theories of optimism, like Seligman's theory (as cited in Snyder, 2002a) emphasize attributions that individuals make about themselves. Seligman explains the

importance of individuals distancing themselves from negative outcomes so that they attribute failures to external reasons and not internal reasons. This is different than hope theory where the focus is on positive outcomes, but when negative outcomes do arise, individuals high in hope will learn from the experience to prevent similar problems from happening in the future (Snyder, 2002a).

Theories of self-esteem are similar to hope theory because of the feelings that are elicited from actions. According to Hewitt (as cited in Snyder, Feldman, Taylor, Schroeder, & Adams, 2000a) although goal pursuit is not specifically emphasized in self-esteem theories, people make judgments about themselves based on past performances, which occurs after goal pursuit. Hope theory places more importance on the cognitive processes in goal directed thinking that lead to feelings elicited by self-esteem, meaning that hope would impact self-esteem but the relationship is not necessarily reciprocal. Self-esteem theories do not emphasize the other foundations of hope theory that specifically define the cognitive processes leading to emotions (Snyder, 2002a).

Problem solving theories are similar to hope theory in highlighting pathways to get to a desired end. According to D’Zurilla, (as cited in Snyder, 2002a) emphasis in problem solving theories is on outcome expectancies or pathways, and less on efficacy expectancies or agency. That is the main difference between hope theory and problem solving theories. Hope theory explicitly places an equal weight on the mutual relationship concerning pathways and agency thinking (Snyder, 2002a).

Magaletta and Oliver (1999) looked at the relationship amongst hope, self-efficacy, and optimism, on general well-being to determine if the three were indeed separate constructs. They gave measures of hope, self-efficacy, optimism and general

well-being to 204 college students to determine the relationship amongst the constructs. They found that while the constructs did have some shared variance in different ways, they were deemed four separate factors by factor analysis. There was a significant relationship between the agency portion of the hope scale and the self-efficacy scale, but the two were still considered to be separate factors as determined by factor analysis.

Development of Hope

There are different events throughout development that influence the development of hope in children. This begins in infancy as the child learns to link early sensations with the anticipation that their caregiver will meet their needs. These temporal sequences help the child to predict future outcomes. Learning that the world is both stable and predictable is fundamental in the development of goal-directed thinking that includes both pathways and agency thinking. In the beginning of toddlerhood, the development of secure attachments also impacts hope development. Children who have secure attachments with their caregivers are more likely to experience causal certainty that their needs will be met as well as learn to develop a sense of autonomy. When children are encouraged to explore their world they are faced with challenges and barriers to overcome, and those that have formed secure attachments are more likely to have the support they need to overcome their challenges. They learn that they can influence their own environment and find ways to overcome barriers, all of which effects the initial development of a toddler's self-identity. Unfortunately, children who grow up in unstable or abusive households do not develop a sense of causal outcomes, personal control, or secure attachments; which interferes with their ability to develop routes to access their

goals and find the motivation that they personally have control of their goal pursuit (Snyder et. al., 2002).

Why Promote Hope in Students?

Following the development of hope theory research, hope was identified as an important factor for school psychologists to consider. Overall, individuals who have high levels of hope are more likely to have higher self-esteem and self-worth, greater perceived capabilities, higher confidence, positive thoughts about themselves, more creativity, greater academic achievement, proficient social skills, see themselves as being successful in the future, set multiple goals, use appropriate problem solving, be resilient to setbacks, focus on continual personal growth, and have higher life satisfaction and life purpose. Individuals who have low levels of hope are prone to high levels of anxiety, have more depressive symptoms, are impulsive in decision making and problem solving, engage in self-doubt, have trouble with interpersonal relationships, and have lower self-worth and self-esteem (Snyder, 2002a; Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, & Feldman, 2003).

With increasing research surrounding the support for hope theory and positive psychology, hope has been identified as a psychological strength that can serve as a protective factor during aversive circumstances (Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2006). Snyder et. al. (2000) examined the preventative and enhancement strategies of hope. Hope theory fits into the framework of prevention efforts because it emphasizes the individual's ability to do something now to improve their future. Individuals high in hope are capable of managing problems in the future because they realize that problems arise and they have successfully handled obstacles in their past which they have learned from and can apply to their future obstacles. Individuals high in hope value knowledge that they can

apply to their current goal pursuits to prevent future problems. Snyder et. al. (2000) believed that hope guides individuals towards optimal functioning in various life domains making hope an enhancement strategy.

Gilman, Dooley, and Florell (2006) looked closer at differences between average hope and high hope groups. There were a total of 341 participants from sixth through twelfth grades with a mean age of 14.58 (SD = 2.13). Students completed self-report measures and were grouped into three groups based on the results of a hope measure. From the results, 79 students made up the low hope group, 120 were in the average hope group, and 136 were placed in the high hope group. Compared to the average hope group, the high hope group had significantly higher reports of personal adjustment, life satisfaction, GPA, and significantly lower reports of emotional distress. Similarly, Marques, Lopez, Fontaine, Coimbra, and Mitchell (2015) wanted to find out if it was necessary to cultivate high hope in students by looking at the differences between average hope and high hope students. They had a sample of 682 middle school students complete measures of hope, school engagement, academic achievement, life satisfaction, self-worth, and positive mental health. They found that on every measure, the high hope group had significantly higher reports than the average hope and low hope group. Results from both studies provide support that high hope can be a component of optimal functioning and for that reason should be continually cultivated in school settings (Gilman et. al., 2006; Marques et. al., 2015).

Influence of Hope on Academics and Behavior

Ciarrochi, Heaven, and Davies (2007) found increases in positive affect, grades, and decreases in problem behaviors as a result of having high hope. They were looking at

different variables of positive thinking including hope, and how they individually impact grades and emotional well-being. Participants included over 600 high school students. Data were collected via questionnaires on two occasions, with a year lapsing in between data collection. Measures were given at time one to assess hope, self-esteem, attributional styles, affective states, and ability levels including both verbal and numerical. At time two, measures were given to reassess hope, self-esteem, and affective states; in addition, teachers rated students on emotional and behavioral adjustments, and grades were collected at the end of the school year. When controlling for confounding variables, including ability level, hope was the best predictor of grades. High hope was also related to increases in positive affect including happiness and enthusiasm. Teacher reports indicated that students who had higher levels of hope had lower levels of problem behaviors in the classroom.

As already mentioned, Gilman, et. al. (2006) examined the relationship of hope and different educational and psychological factors. A total of 341 middle and high school students completed a hope scale, a life satisfaction scale, a measure of extracurricular activities, a measure of emotional and behavior adjustment, and reported their GPA. In comparison to low hope students, both high and average hope students had significantly higher reports of extracurricular activities, GPA, personal adjustment, and life satisfaction. They also had significantly lower levels of school maladjustment and total psychological distress. Students in the high and average levels of hope groups also had overall lower scores on the maladaptive scales and higher scores on the adaptive scales. In comparison to students with average levels of hope, students with high hope had significantly higher reports of personal adjustment and GPA amongst other variables.

Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, Pulvers, Adams III, and Wiklund (2002c) sought to find if hope levels in first year college students were related to higher GPAs, higher graduation rates, and lower dropout rates six years later. Participants included 213 college freshmen with a mean age of 18.17 ($SD = 0.44$). Six years later, when comparing for ability level by considering ACT scores, high hope students had a significantly higher GPA than low hope students. They also found that students in the low hope group were significantly more likely to have been placed on academic dismissal due to poor grades while the high hope group was significantly more likely to have graduated before post data collection at six years. The average graduation rate for the high hope group was comparable to the average graduation rate for the university, which could have implications for low hope students at the university overall being the ones to not graduate.

Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, and Rehm (1997) looked specifically at college athletes and how hope impacts their academic and athletic performance. One of their hypothesis was that athletes would have higher hope than non-athletes, because cognitively they are more predisposed to have goal-directed thinking. When looking at 86 college athletes compared to 84 non-athlete college students, they found that the group of athletes had higher hope than non-athletes supporting their hypothesis. Amongst the 86 college athletes, they found that higher hope students had significantly higher GPAs than lower hope students.

It seems that with sufficient time, hope has a significant impact on academic performance. Ciarrochi et. al. (2007) found that hope levels served as a predictor for grades one year later. Snyder et. al. (2002c) found that not only did hope serve as a

predictor of higher college GPA throughout undergraduate, but it also predicted school dropout, with students having higher levels of hope being more likely to graduate with their undergraduate degree. Curry et. al. (1997) found higher GPAs amongst high hope college athletes compared to low hope college athletes. Also, Gilman et. al. (2006) found that there was a significant and positive relationship between GPA and hope. There were significant differences amongst all groups; average hope students had significantly higher GPAs than low hope students, and high hope students had significantly higher GPAs than average hope students (Gilman et. al., 2006). Overall, research supports that higher hope levels lead to overall higher academic performance.

There are few studies that have examined the relationship between hope and problem behaviors. From the studies discussed, Ciarrochi et. al. (2007) found a negative relationship between teacher reports of problem behaviors and students' self-reports of hope levels. Gilman et. al. (2006) also found a negative relationship between levels of hope and reports of personal and school maladjustment. These studies suggest that higher levels of hope could influence adjustment with lower reports of problem behaviors.

How to Cultivate Hope in Students?

Based on the foundations of hope theory, hope can be cultivated in individuals by helping them develop skills in goal setting, pathways thinking, and agency thinking; all of which will be incorporated in the development of the intervention for this study. There are ways that students can learn to set goals in ways that allows them more opportunities to approach successes in life, which in turn leads to increased positive emotions (Snyder et. al., 2002b). In goal setting, it is important for students to have several goals that they can commit to in a variety of life domains so that if they experience an obstacle that they

cannot overcome then they have another area to focus their goal pursuit (Snyder et. al., 2003; Snyder et. al., 2002b).

Students should also set goals that are personally meaningful to them. Helping students recognize their personal abilities, values, strengths, and interests so that they can set realistic goals of personal importance facilitates students on their goal pursuit (Snyder et. al., 2003). The hope intervention developed for the purpose of this study initially focused on developing personally meaningful goals. This included use of the VIA Institute on Character, VIA Character Strengths Survey (“The VIA Survey,” n.d.). With the results of the survey, students were able to identify their character strengths to assist their goal development and pursuit. Another way to help students set meaningful goals is to have them reflect on recent experiences and identify enjoyable times that could be addressed in developing goals so that they create goals that are meaningful (Snyder et. al., 2002b). To help students learn to plan in their goal pursuit, students should also be encouraged to prioritize from their list of goals and rank the most important ones. It is also important for students to have a clear end to each of their goals making them more specific so that they know when they have reached their desired goals or have reached predetermined sub goals leading to feelings of success. It is important to develop sub goals, especially for goals that are distal, because the sub goals can make them more proximal in time and that is critical for goal accomplishment. Encouraging the selection of approach goals that are positive in nature to either achieve or sustain an outcome versus avoidance goals that are focused on negative outcomes by avoiding an outcome can also help students lead to more feelings of success (Snyder, 2002a, Snyder et. al., 2002b; Snyder et. al., 2003). Students can also benefit from learning to set goals with

other people or help others with their goals. When students feel that they are helping others in their goal pursuits, this can elicit more positive emotions in addition to feelings of success (Snyder et. al., 2003).

Teaching students to develop pathways thinking focuses on establishing multiple and realistic plans to reach goals. Overall, helping students break larger, abstract goals into smaller sub goals so they can view their goals in a reasonable sequence facilitates pathways thinking. Allowing them to think of multiple possibilities for sub goals and then choose the best one can also encourage their planning abilities (Snyder et. al., 2002b). Then students can be assisted in developing plans to each of their sub goals, as well as alternative plans to turn to if one does not work. It is important to ask questions throughout reflecting on the plans to help students assess the feasibility of their plans (Snyder et. al., 2002b; Snyder et. al., 2003).

In developing agency thinking in students, the importance of self-selected and personally meaningful goals reemerges. Motivation in goal pursuit is much more likely when the desired outcome is of personal importance to the individual and appealing to their personal standards versus external standards (Snyder et. al., 2003). Motivation can also depend on the challenge that the specific goal requires. Students should be encouraged to select goals that are considered stretch goals, meaning not too easy but also not too hard depending on their ability level and feasibility of the environment (Snyder et. al., 2002b). For goals that appear easier to reach, challenge can be brought to the situation by introducing some uncertainty to the goal pursuit that allows for bettering or learning a skill (Snyder, 2002a). Throughout goal pursuit, agency can be developed through different strategies including self-monitoring self-talk and challenging negative

thoughts (Snyder et. al., 2002b; Snyder et. al., 2003). Motivation can also be fostered by having students develop personal hope narratives about their own journey; sharing stories with them of similar students overcoming hardships; and encouraging team activities related to goal pursuits (Snyder et. al., 2003).

Marques, Lopez, and Pais-Ribeiro (2011) found increases in hope, life satisfaction, and self-worth from implementing a hope intervention that mirrored the two factors of hope theory, pathways thinking and agency thinking. There were a total of 62 participants, with 31 in the control group and 31 in the intervention group. Groups were formed based on matched comparisons. Data were collected using self-report measures that assessed participants' hope among other factors. The researchers developed and implemented a hope intervention, "Building Hope for the Future," that met once a week for five weeks. The group sessions involved learning the mechanics behind hope theory and how it relates to desired outcomes. This included learning to recognize and set goals, developing pathways thinking by clarifying goals to be clear with markers that help in strategy development, developing agency thinking by identifying motivational thoughts towards goal pursuit and enthusiasm, and identifying possible barriers to successful goal pursuit. Parents and teachers were given a manual and intervention session to learn about hope theory and how to help encourage their children and students along the goal setting process to instill hope. Data were collected pre and post intervention. Significant increases were found for hope, life satisfaction, and self-worth for the intervention group after completion of the intervention.

In addition to components of the "Building Hope for the Future" program developed by Marques et. al. (2011), and strategies to develop goal setting techniques,

pathways thinking, and agency thinking promoted by Snyder et. al. (2002b) and Snyder et. al. (2003), the hope intervention developed for the purpose of this study will include implementation of strategies discussed by Flemming (2008) in Success for Teens: Real Teens Talk About Using the Slight Edge. Flemming (2008) created a teen friendly version of the book, The Slight Edge, in which Olsen (2005, 2011) identifies the importance of daily decisions and habits in terms of future success and happiness. Olsen (2011) explains that many people do not make the connection between their daily decisions and their ultimate goal, which is why many people do not reach their desired goals. People will often set unrealistic goals for themselves because they are not willing to take the small steps towards their ultimate goal. The principles discussed by Olsen (2005, 2011) and Flemming (2008) are similar to the research supporting hope theory that goal attainment leads to hope for the future; and goal attainment happens by taking small steps towards sub goals to reach an ultimate goal (Snyder et. al., 1991). For the purpose of this study, Flemming's (2008) and Olsen's (2005, 2011) principles and philosophy were applied to the development of the intervention designed around hope theory.

Why Promote Hope in Alternative Education Students?

Students in alternative education placements have experienced failures in the past that resulted in their current placement. They could benefit from successful experiences to help lay the groundwork for future success. Research supports that best practice for alternative education placements includes fostering resiliency in students and finding protective factors so that students have a higher chance of experiencing positive success in their future (Powell, 2003). High levels of hope have shown to increase abilities in appropriately solving future obstacles (Snyder et. al., 2000); have better educational and

psychological experiences (Gilman et. al., 2006); and can act as a moderator for future aversive life events (Valle et. al., 2006).

Alternative education students are also more likely to have severe behavior problems, drop out of school, and fail academically (Lehr & Lange, 2010). High levels of hope have shown to decrease problem behaviors (Ciarrochi et. al., 2007); have lower levels of dropout rates amongst college students (Snyder et. al., 2002c); and have higher GPAs (Curry et. al., 1997; Snyder et. al., 2002c; Ciarrochi et. al., 2007; Gilman et. al., 2006). Many alternative education placements use behavior management along with their highly structured classrooms. With a goal of alternative education to have students return to regular education or graduate, it is important for students to learn to take responsibility for their behavior so that they can have successful experiences outside of the highly structured environment (Tobin & Sprague, 1999). Utilizing the fundamentals of hope theory and encouraging students to set goals in various life domains (Snyder et. al., 2003; Snyder et. al., 2002b) could help them learn to generalize success outside of their current highly structured environment.

Alternative education placements usually include instruction in life skills and career development to help students learn to have successful experiences not only in school but also in the community (Foley & Pang, 2006). The processes of goal setting including the other fundamentals of hope theory, can be generalized to multiple life domains and prove to be an essential skill in life (Snyder et. al., 2003; Snyder et. al., 2002b). Future orientation is an important component in career development, and future orientations are also fundamental to hope theory (Snyder, 2002a). Robitschek (1996) found success implementing a hope intervention in a career development program with

at-risk adolescents, especially in the adolescents' ability to view themselves as successful in the future. Overall, hope theory has shown positive outcomes for individuals with higher levels of hope across multiple life domains, and students in alternative education placements are at a higher risk for negative outcomes in multiple life domains, which means that they could benefit significantly from hope interventions.

III. Research Questions

From the research discussed, people who have high levels of hope are more likely to have successful outcomes in the future in multiple life domains. Interventions grounded in hope theory have been developed that have been successful in increasing hope in participants. Students in alternative education placements are on a trajectory for failure in varying life domains and could benefit from ways to cultivate hope for their future. Given the research regarding the effects of hope interventions on participants and the outlook for students in alternative education placements, the current study has the following research questions:

1. Does the implementation of a hope intervention raise levels of hope in alternative education students as measured by the Trait Hope Scale?
2. Does the implementation of a hope intervention decrease problem behaviors in alternative education students as measured by the BASC-3?
3. Does the implementation of a hope intervention increase academic participation in alternative education students as measured by teacher questionnaires?
4. Do students set more realistic goals after the completion of a hope intervention as measured by student interviews?

IV. Method

Materials

The current study utilized a case-study design to evaluate the individual effectiveness of a hope intervention for each participant. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for participants both pre and post intervention.

Quantitative Measures

Trait Hope Scale. The Trait Hope Scale (THS) measures the trait characteristic of hope as made up of items measuring the two factors described in hope theory, agency and pathways. The scale was developed for ages 15 and older. The THS is a self-report 12 item, two factor, eight-point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analyses were computed on the eight items that make up the total hope score. Results deemed that two factors described the items on the scale making up the agency and pathways subscales, each consisting of four items. The agency subscale consists of four items such as; “I’ve been pretty successful in life.” The pathways subscale consists of four items such as, “I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.” There are also four distracter items that do not contribute to the total hope score such as, “I feel tired most of the time.” Response options on the eight point Likert scale range from one, “Definitely False,” to eight, “Definitely True” to best describe the person completing the scale. Total hope scores can range from eight, indicating the lowest level of hope, to 64, indicating the highest level of hope.

Development and testing of the THS demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties (Snyder et. al., 1991). After development of the THS, internal consistency reports indicated Chronbach’s alpha levels of .74 to .84. For the individual subscales, the

agency subscale had alpha levels of .71 to .76, and the pathways subscale had alpha levels of .63 to .80. Test-retest reliabilities were also reported for three weeks, eight weeks, and 10 weeks. At three weeks, test retest reliability showed a significant correlation of .85, at eight weeks there was a significant correlation of .73, and at 10 weeks there was a significant correlation of .82. After development of the THS, there was appropriate convergent validity evidence found that showed the THS shared some common variance with measures of similar constructs to a degree that was expected. Appropriate discriminant validity was also found suggesting that the THS was not tapping into unrelated constructs. See Appendix A for the complete Trait Hope Scale.

Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition. The Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition (BASC-3) is a comprehensive assessment measure of students' behaviors and emotions. Response options include a four point Likert type scale indicating Never, Sometimes, Often, and Almost Always true of the student. For the current study, the BASC-3 teacher rating scales for adolescents (BASC-3 TRS-A) will be used, which is for adolescents ages 12 to 21. The BASC-3 TRS-A includes 165 items with five composite scales (Externalizing Problems, Internalizing Problems, School Problems, Adaptive Skills, and Behavioral Symptoms Index) made up of 16 clinical and adaptive scales. Raw scores for the subscales and composite scales are converted into T-scores for standardization purposes; T-scores have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. When looking at clinical scales, scores one standard deviation above the mean are considered at-risk (60-69), and scores two or more standard deviations above the mean are considered clinically significant (70 and above). For the purposes of this study, teachers only completed questions loading on the Externalizing

Problems composite scale, which is made up of the Hyperactivity, Aggression, and Conduct Problems subscales. Questions on the Hyperactivity subscale include items such as, “Does not think before he/she acts.” The Aggression subscale includes items such as, “Physically hurts others.” The Conduct Problems subscale includes items such as, “Does not listen to authority figures.” Teachers completed selected questions for the BASC-3 teacher report form pre and post intervention. Each student had multiple teachers throughout the day; so one teacher was selected per student to complete the BASC-3. The teacher had to know the student well and have the student for an academic class in which they were showing difficulties. See Appendix B for selected questions from the BASC-3.

Reynolds and Kamphaus (2015) report favorable psychometric properties for the BASC-3 TRS-A. Excellent internal consistency reliability was reported with coefficient alpha levels ranging from .93 to .98 across composite scales. Specifically, a coefficient alpha of .97 was found for the Externalizing Problems composite. The test-retest reliability for the Externalizing Problems composite found an r of .80, with a corrected r of .87 when adjusted to consider sampling differences from the norm-sample. Convergent validity on current rating scales of students’ behaviors and emotions, including adolescent teacher reports on both the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA) and the Conners 3 indicated correlations that were sufficient, ranging from moderate to high (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2015).

Qualitative Measures

Teacher Questionnaire. Teachers completed a questionnaire developed by the researcher to determine each student’s level of academic participation pre and post intervention. The questionnaire included both open-ended questions and a five point

Likert type scale response options indicating Never, Rarely, About Half the Time, Most of the Time, and Almost Always true of the student. Each student had multiple teachers throughout the day, so one teacher per student was selected to complete the questionnaire. The teacher had to know the student well and have the student for an academic class in which they were showing difficulties; this was the same teacher that completed the BASC-3. The questionnaire was completed on each student's overall academic participation to analyze themes that emerged. See Appendix C for the teacher questionnaire.

Student Interview. Students met with the researcher individually pre and post intervention to answer open-ended questions regarding their personal goals to analyze themes that emerged. Questions were asked about both proximal and distal goals and how they planned to achieve their goals. See Appendix D for student interview questions.

Session Summaries. Qualitative data was also collected throughout the sessions of the hope intervention. Notes on the details of each session as well as individual students' participation, engagement, and progress was taken. See Appendix E for session summaries.

Participants

A group of five students over the age of 15 were selected to be included in the current study. Students attended a high school alternative education program located in Northern Virginia. The school is located in a culturally diverse area. The cultural makeup of the school includes approximately 46% Hispanic, 30% African American, 13% White, 7% biracial, and the remaining percentage including Asian American, Pacific Islander, and American Indian. The population of the school also includes approximately 53% who

are economically disadvantaged, 25% who are English language learners, and 14% who are receiving Special Education services.

The lead school counselor was informed of the nature of the study and asked to nominate students based on specific criteria. The criteria for nominations from the school counselor included students who were placed in alternative education for both academic and behavioral concerns, had record of good attendance, and were known by the school counselor to have readiness for participating in group counseling. The alternative school is sectioned into three different shifts for students to attend class. The students for the group were selected from a “Grad Point” class, where they all worked on online credit in a computer lab. Students enrolled in this class were present at the alternative school for two shifts. A sixth student participated in the group starting in session five; data was not collected for this student. Descriptive information of each participant’s academic and behavioral history is discussed below. For confidentiality purposes, names of students have been changed.

Student 1: Jamal is an 18 year old, African American, male student. He is a current 11th grade student at the alternative school who is working towards graduating at the end of the school year. His high school transcript reflects yearly GPA’s ranging from 1.00 to 1.83 with a cumulative GPA of 1.57. His transcript also indicates that he is repeating Eleventh grade. Based on his current credits, his anticipated graduation is for June 2018, however he is working on completing extra online credit so that he can graduate early. Jamal has a significant discipline history, which reflects 25 documented discipline referrals since he was in middle school. His discipline incidents included tardiness, leaving class without permission, disrespect, defiance and request refusal,

classroom disruption, leaving school property, cell phone usage, obscene or inappropriate language and gestures, disruptive demonstrations, cutting class, threats towards students, inappropriate behavior, bus violations, dress code violations, and skipping detention.

Dispositions to address his behaviors included warnings, detention, out of school suspensions, in school suspensions, phone calls to parents, letters to parents, extended day evening school, counseling, and alternative placements for middle school and high school. His discipline referrals reflect attendance at two middle schools, including an alternative middle school, and three high schools, including his current alternative high school.

Student 2: Diego is an 18 year old, Hispanic, male student. He is a current 11th grade student at the alternative school. His high school transcript reflects yearly GPA's ranging from 2.40 to 4.00 with a cumulative GPA of 3.00. Based on his current credits, his anticipated graduation is for June 2018. According to his transcript, he attended Ninth and 10th grade in El Salvador, and then repeated 10th grade when he moved to Virginia. Diego is also an English Language Learner (ELL). He is a Level Three ELL student, which means, he is in the Developing stages of English Language Proficiency. Students in this stage have more general language for content areas with some specific academic language. They can speak English in expanded sentences, however errors may impede understanding. Diego only attended school for a few months at his home school in Virginia before beginning at the alternative school. He has two documented discipline referrals for the few months that he attended his home school in Virginia. Both discipline incidents were for sexual harassment and violation of acceptable use policy. Dispositions to address his behavior included out of school suspension, phone calls and letters to

parents, counseling, a principal conference, police referrals, and an alternative school placement. His discipline referrals and transcript reflect attendance at a school in El Salvador for two years of high school, and two high schools in Virginia, including his current alternative high school.

Student 3: Brandon is an 18 year old, African American, male student. He is a current 11th grade student at the alternative school. His high school transcript reflects yearly GPA's ranging from 0.70 to 2.20 with a cumulative GPA of 1.50. His transcript also indicates that he is repeating 11th grade. Based on his current credits, his anticipated graduation is for June 2018. Brandon has a significant discipline history, which reflects 8 documented discipline referrals since he was in middle school. His discipline incidents included a physical altercation, bringing a knife to school, defiance and request refusal, academic violations, marijuana possession, bullying, fighting, and classroom disruption. Dispositions to address his behaviors included detentions, warnings, phone calls and letters to parents, out of school suspension, counseling, administrator conferences, expulsions, and an alternative school placement for high school. His discipline referrals reflect attendance at one middle school, and two high schools, including his current alternative high school. Brandon only attended the first three group sessions. He was involved in a bullying incident in November 2016 where he told a female student to put a bag over her head because she was so ugly. This incident resulted in out of school suspension and referral to evening school at the alternative school. He was no longer allowed on school premises during the school day, so was no longer allowed to attend group. Only pre-data was collected for him.

Student 4: Trinity is a 17 year old, African American, female student. She is a current 12th grade student at the alternative school. Her high school transcript reflects yearly GPA's ranging from 1.40 to 3.20 with a cumulative GPA of 2.29. Her transcript also indicates that she repeated 10th grade. Based on her credits, her anticipated graduation at the start of the group was for June 2017. Trinity has a significant discipline history, which reflects 8 documented discipline referrals during her time in high school and middle school with a neighboring county. Her discipline incidents included marijuana possession, being under the influence of drugs, a sexual offense, disrespect, cutting class, tardiness, and fighting. Dispositions to address her behaviors included detention, out of school suspension, in school suspension, parent notification, and an alternative school placement for high school. Her discipline referrals and transcript reflect attendance at one middle school in a neighboring county, and two high schools, including one in a neighboring county and her current alternative high school.

Student 5: Samuel is a 16 year old, Biracial Hispanic and American Indian, male student. He is a current 10th grade student at the alternative school. His high school transcript reflects yearly GPA's ranging from 0.90 to 3.00 with a cumulative GPA of 1.27. His transcript also indicates that he repeated Ninth grade. Based on his current credits, his anticipated graduation is for June 2019, however he is working on completing extra online credit so that he can graduate one year early. Samuel has a discipline history that reflects 7 documented discipline referrals since he was in middle school. His transcript reflects attendance at a school in a neighboring county for ninth grade, however discipline records at that school were not available. His discipline incidents included tardiness, threats towards students, inappropriate behavior, assignment refusal, obscene

and inappropriate language, and offensive sexual touching of a student. Dispositions to address his behaviors included warnings, detention, parent contact, conference with the principal, out of school suspensions, in school suspension, and expulsion. His discipline referrals and transcript reflect attendance at three middle schools, and four high schools, including one in a neighboring county and his current alternative high school.

Student 6: Victor is a 16 year old, Hispanic, male student. He is a current 10th grade student at the alternative school. His high school transcript reflects yearly GPA's ranging from 3.00 to 3.47 with a cumulative GPA of 3.38. His transcript also indicates that he repeated Ninth grade. Based on his current credits, his anticipated graduation is for June 2019, however he is working on completing extra online credit so that he can graduate one year early. Victor did not start the group until session five, therefore, data was not collected on him, but he will be mentioned throughout the session summaries. Official discipline records were not obtained for Victor.

Procedures

Once students were selected for the hope intervention based on school counselor nominations, parental consent and student assent were obtained for each participant. Before the intervention began, the researcher collected pre-data from the students' selected teachers through the teacher questionnaire and BASC-3. Also, before the intervention began, the researcher met with the students individually to interview them about their goals and have them complete the Trait Hope Scale. To ensure reliable results, the researcher offered to administer the scale orally while the student followed along. The students met as a group for 45 minutes to an hour, once a week, for a total of 12 sessions. The first group took place on October 13, 2016, and the last group took place on January

26, 2017. There were a few gap weeks between sessions, one for Thanksgiving, two for winter break, and one for the week of state testing. Between the first and third session, the researcher met with each student individually as part of the intervention to complete an online survey to determine personal character strengths. Results were handed out and discussed during the third session.

Sessions one, three, five, seven, nine, and 11 consisted of learning new strategies to influence goal pursuit. Session one included an introduction to goal setting with an emphasis on goals as explained by hope theory and discussion of how small daily actions influence future success. Session three included the importance of personally meaningful goals and how outcomes are not dependent on circumstances but on personal choices and reactions. Session five focused on refining the students' personal goals to be more positive and specific. Session seven centered on pathways thinking by learning how to create and alter plans for goal pursuit. Session nine focused on agency thinking through refining the students' attitudes including hopeful talk toward their personal goal pursuit. Finally, session 11 centered on teaching students how to apply what they learned to the future. Session two, four, six, eight, 10, and 12 were designed for reflection from the previous session so new material was not presented. The reflection sessions were entitled "Review, Reflect, and Run with it" and all emphasized a reflection component and ways to apply the previous week's lesson to their lives. The structure of the sessions that involved presenting new material included greeting the students, checking in on their small positive daily actions, introducing the new lesson, an activity related to the lesson, and a wrap up reflection of what the students learned. The structure of the reflection sessions included greeting the students, checking in on their small positive daily actions,

a review of what was covered the previous session, a journal prompt or exercise for reflection on how the lesson related to their goal pursuit, and discussion of what came up during their time of reflection in relation to their personal goal pursuit. Additionally, the first session included introductions, developing rules and expectations for the sessions, and an icebreaker to encourage cohesiveness among the group. Journals that were used throughout the sessions were given to the students to keep at the end of the final session. The final session also included a termination activity. See Appendix F for goals and lesson plans for each session.

Due to attendance concerns, the researcher began collecting post data with students at the end of session 11 and continued through the conclusion of the final session. The researcher met with the students individually to interview them on their goal pursuit following the intervention and to complete the Trait Hope Scale for post-test data. Again, to ensure reliable results, the researcher offered to administer the scale orally while the student followed along. Following the final session, post data was collected from the same teachers that completed the pre data collection through the teacher questionnaire and BASC-3.

Data Analysis

The current study utilized a case-study design to evaluate the individual effectiveness of a hope intervention for each participant. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for each participant both pre and post intervention to measure the four research questions of the study.

Pre and post quantitative data were collected from the Trait Hope Scale in order to measure the first research question: Does the implementation of a hope intervention raise

levels of hope in alternative education students? Each student completed the Trait Hope Scale before the intervention began and after completion of the intervention. Data were examined individually on a case-by-case basis to determine trends in individual hope levels pre and post the implementation of the hope intervention.

Pre and post quantitative data were collected from the Externalizing Problems scale on the BASC-3 to measure the second research question: Does the implementation of a hope intervention decrease problem behaviors in alternative education students? Students' selected teachers completed the Externalizing Problems scale on the BASC-3 before the intervention began and after completion of the intervention. Data were examined individually on a case-by-case basis to determine trends in individual externalizing behaviors pre and post the implementation of the hope intervention.

Pre and post qualitative data were collected from teacher questionnaires to measure the third research question: Does the implementation of a hope intervention increase academic participation in alternative education students? Students' selected teachers completed teacher questionnaires before the intervention began and after completion of the intervention with Likert type scale questions and open ended questions regarding their student's overall academic participation. Data were examined individually on a case-by-case basis to determine trends in themes that were elicited on teacher questionnaires pre and post the implementation of the hope intervention.

Pre and post qualitative data were collected from student interviews to measure the fourth research question: Do students set more realistic goals after the completion of a hope intervention? Students were interviewed before the intervention began and after completion of the intervention with open ended questions regarding their personal goals.

Data were examined individually on a case-by-case basis to determine trends in themes that were elicited during interviews pre and post the implementation of the hope intervention.

In addition to the data analyses described for individual research questions, notes from session summaries were also analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Themes were noted throughout the sessions that provided qualitative data for the research questions of the study and provided a clear picture of the individual students. Themes were analyzed using the cut and sort technique. See Appendix E for full session summaries, highlights as pertaining to research questions were included in the results section.

V. Results

The current study utilized a case-study design to evaluate the individual effectiveness of a hope intervention for each participant. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for each participant both pre and post intervention to measure the four research questions of the study. Data were examined pre and post intervention per individual rather than collectively as a whole group. Students were compared to their own scores on the Trait Hope Scale and BASC-3, as well as qualitatively from teacher questionnaires and student interviews. Notes from session summaries were also analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

Table 1

Overall Pre- and Post- Quantitative Data Per Student

Student	Trait Hope Scale Pre	Trait Hope Scale Post	BASC-3 Pre (T-Score)	BASC-3 Post (T-Score)	Number of Sessions Attended
Student 1: Jamal	48	n/a	59	60	7
Student 2: Diego	54	57	41	41	4
Student 3: Brandon	55	n/a	54	n/a	2
Student 4: Trinity	41	56	51	47	8
Student 5: Samuel	55	55	45	46	11

For the Trait Hope Scale, a higher score indicates a higher level of hope. For the BASC-3, a higher score also signifies a higher level of Externalizing Problems. Both the Trait Hope Scale and BASC-3 Externalizing Problems Scale break down into subscales, which were analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

Student 1

Jamal attended seven out of the 12 sessions, however, for three of the seven sessions, he was only present for part of the group. Although he missed multiple sessions, he was an active participant when he was present. He did not attend the last three sessions, and was not present when post data was collected. Only teacher post data could be obtained for Jamal.

Table 2

Jamal's Pre- and Post- Quantitative Data

Scale/Subscale	Pre-Scores	Post-Scores
Trait Hope Scale: Overall	48	n/a
Trait Hope Scale: Pathways	24	n/a
Trait Hope Scale: Agency	24	n/a
BASC-3: Externalizing Problems (T-Score)	59	60
BASC-3: Hyperactivity (T-Score)	61	61
BASC-3: Aggression (T-Score)	57	59
BASC-3: Conduct Problems (T-Score)	56	58

At the beginning of the group, Jamal had a difficult time looking at his areas of weaknesses to discuss how he would like varying areas in his life to be different. At the time he explained that everything was going well for him. Jamal had a turning point in the group when he realized that he was not being asked to change an area of his life that he felt was going well, but to examine specific areas of his life and see where he could start making choices to directly impact his future success. He showed resistance until he

realized that the researcher was not trying to tell him what he needed to work on, but to support him in what he wanted to do. When sharing with the group, he was inclined to put on a strong front, that he was a perfect friend and that he had everything going as he wanted for himself personally, for his relationships, and for his education and career. Through journaling and as he became more comfortable with the students in the group, he was able to look deeper at areas in his life where he wanted improvement.

As the group went on, Jamal realized that his lack of effort and focus was impacting him in all areas of his life. He still was not willing to make a concrete goal for improving his relationships because he felt that he was doing well in that area. His specific goals for his personal improvement and education were around putting in more effort and focus in what he wants for his life. Overall, he wanted to see more effort in his school work and to focus on saving money so that he could start to work on his modeling portfolio. After discussing with the researcher the different paths he could take to achieve his goals, he decided that he was going to save ten dollars from every paycheck that he got biweekly to go towards his portfolio. He also decided that for his effort in school, he would find one additional action that he could take every day to improve his focus and effort in school. He was worried about having enough time in his schedule to put in too much additional school work because he had an after school job as well. To help with his time, ideas were discussed so that he would have options to choose from every day that could either be done in school, or would only add a few additional minutes to homework. His options to improve his effort and focus everyday included to either do one extra assignment, write an additional sentence to improve writing prompts, do an extra math problem, or ask for help from a teacher. A few weeks after setting his plan for his goals,

he reported that he was making progress in both areas and was starting to see how his daily decisions and actions could impact his life overall.

Jamal had another turning point in group when discussing his mindset and attitude towards the world. After discussing his mindset, he began to see a connection between the way that he views that world and his daily actions. Specifically, he discussed his view of the world as a scary place and it is the way that you approach the world that makes a difference. He was trying to understand why he does not put effort into areas of his life when his attitude towards the world is that you have to be in control if you do not want to be consumed by the “scary world.” After discussing how he has not been as successful in his past as he would have liked, it seemed that his past had not proven that he personally could make a positive difference in his life. It was beneficial for him to see this disconnect between his view of the world and his actions. He said that this was helpful for him to talk through and gave him motivation to take control of his life. He agreed to start working on challenging his thoughts when put into a situation where he would generally not put effort into his life. He had a specific positive thought statement that he wrote down to use as he encountered situations where he would typically not put in his best effort. His statement was, “If I do this now, I will be proud of myself and it will impact my success.” Unfortunately, this was the last group session that Jamal attended, so there was not more follow up.

Based on teacher data, Jamal’s externalizing behaviors and academic participation either stayed the same, or became more of a problem. At the start of the group, Jamal’s academic participation was acceptable. He was coming to class and completing assignments of appropriate quality. At the end of group, his teacher reported a slight

decrease in class attendance and in work quality. His class engagement in instruction and paying attention was less frequent at the start of the group, and stayed the same at the conclusion of the group intervention.

Jamal's teacher also reported a slight increase in externalizing problems on the BASC-3. Specifically, ratings on the aggression and conduct problems slightly increased. Jamal's externalizing behaviors were not of clinical significance at either time; elevated ratings were due to multiple "sometimes" responses to prompts. Although there was not an improvement in his behaviors or academic participation, his teacher did report that he noticed a difference in Jamal's ability to self-advocate for himself and effectively communicate with teachers on his areas of struggle. An improvement was noticed throughout sessions of Jamal's ability to examine his weaknesses as he worked on his goals. One of his goals to put more effort into school involved taking more control of his academics and asking for help from teachers. His teacher saw a difference in his ability to discuss his weaknesses and communication with teachers, which indicates that Jamal was taking his educational goal seriously and working on his steps to improve his effort in class.

At the start of the group, Jamal had a total hope score of 48. He rated his pathways and agency subscales both at 24. He was demonstrating a moderate amount of hope compared to the group scores. He was very passionate about his dreams; however, he had not been as successful in the past with his goal pursuit. He also was not as confident in his abilities to find strategies to get around problems that he may encounter. Before beginning group, Jamal reported having many goals for himself and his future. He said that he thought about setting a goal for each day every day, and that he always

thought about setting a goal for each week. His goals for the school year were to graduate, earn A's and B's, and handle situations in a more mature manner. He did not report concrete steps for how he planned to achieve his goals for the year, he just said that he would stay focused and put his education first. He was able to provide more details for his goals for five years. He said that he wanted to do something that he loves, which he said was modeling. He also wanted to get his college degree. To achieve his goals for five years from now, he was able to give a more specific plan. He said that he would go to a community college for two years, and then transfer to a university. He said that he has family that lives in Colorado, so to keep working towards his modeling career; he would move to Colorado. While living with his family, he could save up money and work on his portfolio to move to California to advance in his career.

At the conclusion of the hope intervention around the time that data was collected, Jamal's records indicated that he was on track to return to his base school for the upcoming school year.

Student 2

Diego attended four of the 12 sessions. He typically missed sessions because he was getting help on his academic work during the scheduled group time, not because he was absent from school. When Diego was present, he did not participate verbally in group discussions. He did participate in reflection and journaling activities when he could write his responses. All of his materials were translated into Spanish documents, and he usually wrote his responses in Spanish as well. For individual data collection, he was able to ask for assistance from an interpreter when he did not understand the questions.

Table 3

Diego's Pre- and Post- Quantitative Data

Scale/Subscale	Pre-Scores	Post-Scores
Trait Hope Scale: Overall	54	57
Trait Hope Scale: Pathways	26	29
Trait Hope Scale: Agency	28	28
BASC-3: Externalizing Problems (T-Score)	41	41
BASC-3: Hyperactivity (T-Score)	40	40
BASC-3: Aggression (T-Score)	42	42
BASC-3: Conduct Problems (T-Score)	42	42

Throughout the group sessions that Diego attended, he did not participate verbally in the group unless a question was asked to him directly. When asked questions directly, he provided short responses consisting of a few words. There was only one session when he was willing to share his goal with the group, and that was when only one other student was present. The only goal that he shared was that he wanted to focus on improving his language. When asked to come up with different plans he could take to achieve that goal, he was not able to come up with possible options. The researcher brainstormed ideas with him including having a full conversation in English that he initiated, working on 10 words in English a day, and asking his English as a Second Language (ESOL) teacher what he could do to help improve his language. He would not say if he was willing to commit to any of those steps, however, it was unclear if he fully understood the discussion due to the language barrier. At the next group that he attended he admitted that he had not been taking steps every day to work on his goal. He agreed during that group

session to write himself a note to remind him to work on his goal. When Diego was present, he always participated in the group activity and journaling. He appeared to be most engaged in session number four when he was working on identifying his character strengths, values, and interests.

Based on teacher data, Diego's externalizing behaviors and academic participation stayed the same from pre to post group intervention. His teacher did not indicate any behavioral concerns or difficulty with academic participation at the start of the group, and there were no new concerns at the conclusion of the group intervention.

There was no need for improvement in the areas of behavior and academic participation measured, however, his teacher did explain areas that Diego could work on to improve his performance in class. Most of his teacher's concerns at the beginning of the hope intervention involved his English acquisition and taking risks with speaking English. At the conclusion of the group, Diego's teacher reported that he became more of a self-advocate. His teacher still had concern for his ability to have conversations with peers in English about current events, however, a difference was noted in his conversations with teachers about his personal wants and needs.

At the start of the group, Diego had a total hope score of 54. He ended the group with a total hope score of 57. He rated his agency subscale at 28 both pre and post group intervention. It should be noted that Diego did not attend the group sessions that specifically addressed agency thinking. On the pathways subscale, he rated himself at 26 pre intervention and 29 post intervention. Overall, he was demonstrating a high amount of hope compared to the group scores, both pre and post intervention. At the beginning of the group, Diego did not report thinking about setting goals for himself every day or for

each week. At the conclusion of the group he reported that he sometimes thought about setting a goal for each day and each week. His goals for the school year changed from getting good grades at the beginning of the group to getting all the credit that he could at the end of the group. His plan to achieve his goal for the school year was to study at the beginning of the group and then at the end of the group, his plan was to come to school every day and do his best. His goal for five years from now was to be in college both pre and post intervention. Overall, his plans for how to achieve his goals were broad and not specific. At the conclusion of the group, Diego reported that he felt that the group helped him to remember everyday what he wants for his life.

At the conclusion of the hope intervention around the time that data was collected, Diego's records indicated that he was on track to return to his base school for the upcoming school year.

Student 3

Brandon attended two out of the three sessions that he was allowed to attend. At some point between the third and fourth session, Brandon had a discipline incident that resulted in him being enrolled in evening school and he was no longer allowed on the school campus during the day. Therefore, only pre data was collected for Brandon. For the two sessions that Brandon attended, he was an active participant.

Table 4

Brandon's Pre- and Post- Quantitative Data

Scale/Subscale	Pre-Scores	Post-Scores
Trait Hope Scale: Overall	55	n/a
Trait Hope Scale: Pathways	29	n/a

Trait Hope Scale: Agency	26	n/a
BASC-3: Externalizing Problems (T-Score)	54	n/a
BASC-3: Hyperactivity (T-Score)	61	n/a
BASC-3: Aggression (T-Score)	49	n/a
BASC-3: Conduct Problems (T-Score)	51	n/a

For the two sessions that Brandon was present for, he was willing to process the lessons by contributing to the group discussion and he was quick to identify some areas in his life where he wanted to see improvement. When discussing his ultimate dreams, it revolved around him becoming wealthy. He would typically mention external things that he wanted for himself, and had a difficult time processing why wealth and other external things were personally meaningful to him other than wanting to be powerful. Brandon could not answer if being powerful and wealthy would make him happy. He also spent time processing how he could take back control of his life by controlling his reactions and not letting his circumstances define him. It seemed hard for him to fully understand at first because he realized that he made many poor decisions when faced with undesirable circumstances, and he was quick to blame his circumstances rather than himself. When discussing ways that he could change his reactions to different circumstances, he was able to explain multiple decisions he could start making to take back control of his life. Unfortunately, this was the last group session that Brandon attended.

Based on pre teacher data, Brandon's externalizing behaviors were not a concern in terms of aggression and conduct problems, however the hyperactivity scale was in the

at-risk range. Brandon exhibited impulsive tendencies and was sometimes moving around too much. At the time, Brandon's academic participation was acceptable. His teacher indicated that most of the time he was coming to class, putting forth effort, and completing assignments of appropriate quality. However, his teacher reported that with additional help on assignments and with better attendance his academic performance would improve. Brandon's teacher endorsed that when he would come to class, he was prepared, engaged in instruction, and appeared attentive.

At the start of the group, Brandon had a total hope score of 55. He rated his agency subscale at 26 and his pathways subscale at 29. Overall, he started the group with a high amount of hope compared to the group scores pre intervention. When describing his goals before the group began, he was able to give specific plans for his long term goals, however, he did not mention short term goals for the school year. He only said that for this school year he wanted to graduate, however, he did not describe how he planned to achieve that goal. He said that his goal for the next five years was to become a mortician, however, he only wanted this goal if he could get the army to pay for his school to become a mortician. His plan was to take the test to get into the army at his alternative school when they offer it, join the army, and then see if the army would pay for his graduate degree to become a mortician. Although it appears his plan was thought out, he explained that the only way this plan would work for him was if the army agreed to pay for his school, otherwise he would not want to stay in the army and may not want to pursue a career as a mortician. Brandon rated himself as having higher levels of hope and was able to explain a plan for his long-term goals, however, his goals may not be a reflection of his ultimate dreams because they are plan dependent. If the plan that he has

set does not get him to his goal, it sounds like his goals would change rather than him finding another plan to achieve his goals.

Student 4

Trinity attended eight out of the 12 sessions, however, for two out of the eight sessions, she was only present for part of the group. At the beginning of the group, Trinity was quieter and not as much of an active participant during full group discussions, however, as the group went on she became a more active participant. She was also resistant to lessons discussed at times, however, she was accepting of feedback and advice from the researcher and group members.

Table 5

Trinity's Pre- and Post- Quantitative Data

Scale/Subscale	Pre-Scores	Post-Scores
Trait Hope Scale: Overall	41	56
Trait Hope Scale: Pathways	20	26
Trait Hope Scale: Agency	21	30
BASC-3: Externalizing Problems (T-Score)	51	47
BASC-3: Hyperactivity (T-Score)	47	47
BASC-3: Aggression (T-Score)	52	47
BASC-3: Conduct Problems (T-Score)	52	47

Trinity's goals evolved over the course of the group. Over the first few weeks, she was working on small steps to help her with controlling her anger. She had broad goals of working on graduating and improving her relationships with her friends. Trinity saw

success with her ability to control her anger within the first few weeks, so she did not make that a concrete goal as the group progressed. She also mentioned in the beginning sessions that one of her goals was to start saving money for college, however, this goal was not discussed much more as the group progressed because she eventually decided to focus her time on her academics to graduate in January. As the group progressed, her two goals that she was working on was academic persistence to be able to graduate in January, and to improve her relationships by not being so quick to cut people out. Her goal for her relationships went back and forth throughout the group sessions. At first, she had a difficult time understanding why it was important for her to have relationships. She had multiple close relationships with friends and family in the past, and they had let her down or got in the way of her success. Trinity seemed to understand how relationships can be important to success, however, due to her past relationships, this area was not as personally meaningful to her and she did not make progress on achieving this goal.

Trinity's turning point throughout the group sessions was following the lesson when she learned how she could take control of her life by controlling her reactions to situations rather than letting her circumstances define her. This was a difficult lesson for Trinity. She felt that some people have an easier life than others. As she explained some of her personal experiences, she had a difficult time understanding the relationship between her reactions to her undesirable circumstances and the outcomes. It was hard for her to take responsibility for her current and past situations. Although she questioned much of the lesson, it was after this session that Trinity started to show that she was working to take control of her life, and not let her success be dependent on her undesirable circumstances. The session that she attended following this lesson was when

she began discussing graduating in January 2017 instead of June 2017. She knew that if she put the work into finishing her extra credit online she would be able to graduate early. As she worked on this goal, she was able to discuss with the group the steps she could take, and when she ran into an obstacle she was able to bring it back to the group to figure out her next steps. Trinity accomplished this goal and graduated in January 2017.

During the last session, Trinity shared with the group that she had also been working on her goal from the beginning to save money for college. She had interviews lined up that week for a part time job. Also in the last session, Trinity looked back at her journal entry from the first group session to see the progress that she made. One of her dreams that she wrote about in the first session was to prove her father wrong. As she read that, she was almost surprised by herself when she realized that she already proved him wrong by showing that she could be successful and graduate early. Trinity worked hard throughout the course of the group and she was able to see a transformation within herself as she started to take control of her life and find success.

Based on teacher data, Trinity's externalizing behaviors and academic participation both made slight improvements over the course of the group intervention. At the start of the group, Trinity's academic participation was acceptable. Most of the time, she was coming to class, contributing to discussions, and completing assignments of appropriate quality. At the conclusion of the group, her teacher indicated others areas of her academic participation that improved from about half of the time to most of the time. Specifically, Trinity was better prepared for class, more attentive in class, and put forth more effort in class at the conclusion of the hope intervention. At the beginning of the group, Trinity's teacher explained that for Trinity to show improvement, she needed

to build up more academic stamina to complete her assignments. At the conclusion of the group, her teacher explained that she saw a difference in Trinity's persistence and use of metacognitive skills for her learning.

Trinity's teacher also reported a slight decrease in externalizing problems on the BASC-3. Specifically, ratings on the aggression and conduct problems slightly decreased. Her teacher endorsed that Trinity no longer disobeys, loses her temper easily, or argues when denied her way. One area that Trinity was working on improving in the first few group sessions was with controlling her anger, and her teacher saw an improvement in this area. At the start of the group, Trinity's externalizing behaviors were not of clinical significance; higher ratings at the time were due to "sometimes" responses to prompts. Trinity's teacher also explained that the hope intervention seemed to help Trinity recognize the relationship between her apathy and academic outcomes. Her teacher felt that her focusing on her academic success also helped her improve areas of her behavior.

At the start of the group, Trinity had a total hope score of 41. She ended the group with a total hope score of 55. She rated her agency subscale at 21 pre intervention and at 30 post intervention. On the pathways subscale, she rated herself at 20 pre intervention and 26 post intervention. Overall, she was demonstrating a lower amount of hope compared to the group scores, pre intervention, and demonstrating much higher levels of hope post intervention. At the beginning of the group, Trinity only reported thinking about setting goals for herself sometimes. At the conclusion of the group she reported that she did not have to think about setting a concrete goal each day because she would just follow her small steps that she already planned out. At the beginning of the group, Trinity reported that her goals for the school year were to earn at least B's in all of her

classes and to be on honor roll every quarter. At the time, she was not anticipating graduating early, she was on track to graduate in June 2017. At the end of the group, her goal for the school year was to graduate early, which she was set to graduate the day after post data was collected. Over the course of the group, Trinity realized that she could take control of her academics and put forth the effort to graduate early so that she could have the second semester to make money to attend college. After the hope intervention, when describing her goals for the next five years, she was able to describe a few specific goals she wanted to achieve. She wanted to have her own apartment, have her driver's license, and have a steady career. She was also able to describe specific steps for how she could achieve her long-term goals. Whereas at the beginning of the group, her goals were broad overall and lacked a specific plan. For example, her goal was to graduate from college, and her plan to do that was to earn her high school diploma. At the conclusion of the group, Trinity reported that she felt that the group helped her to plan and figure out what she wanted to do with her life and what plans she could make to get there. She said that it also helped her increase her motivation to achieve her ultimate goals for her life.

Student 5

Samuel attended 11 out of the 12 sessions. He was an active participant throughout the group sessions and encouraging towards other group members. After the first few sessions, Samuel became hyperactive during the sessions and would be very distracted by everything around him. He still participated in group activities and discussion; however, he may not have been fully attentive during new lessons.

Table 6

Samuel's Pre- and Post- Quantitative Data

Scale/Subscale	Pre-Scores	Post-Scores
Trait Hope Scale: Overall	55	55
Trait Hope Scale: Pathways	30	28
Trait Hope Scale: Agency	25	27
BASC-3: Externalizing Problems (T-Score)	45	46
BASC-3: Hyperactivity (T-Score)	51	55
BASC-3: Aggression (T-Score)	42	42
BASC-3: Conduct Problems (T-Score)	42	42

Samuel's goals evolved over the course of the group. Over the first few weeks, he was working on small steps to help him with his family relationships. He had broad goals of wanting to find happiness and be accepting of others who had different opinions of him. As the group progressed, he felt that he was doing well with avoiding conflicts with his family members, and that no longer was a focus for his goals. The areas he decided to work on most throughout the group were broad goals of wanting to find happiness and be accepting of others who had different opinions than him. He was having a particularly difficult time dealing with people who had different opinions than him. Largely because he had in his mindset that everyone should be kind and courteous to others, so his mindset clashed with people who had strong opinions that came across as harsh to him. To work on this goal, he specified the goal to speak in a non-defensive manner when others shared their political beliefs with him. After setting this goal, he had not had any more problematic scenarios where he needed to work on his goal. Since it was no longer relevant to him, he focused more on his goal of happiness.

Samuel began working on being happier from the start of the group. He had been working on small steps every day to be happier, which mainly involved helping others because that was what made him happy. Towards the middle of the sessions when the group set specific goals, Samuel's goal for happiness was to improve his self-confidence in social situations. His plan for this was to specifically work on challenging negative thoughts and replacing them with a positive thought. He would typically shut down when he had a bad day and this would impact his self-confidence in social situations during after school activities. His new specific thought that he began to say in his head before after school activities was, "How can I make my day better." When he started to address his thoughts he began to see a difference in his self-confidence in social situations quickly. He then broadened his goal to encompass academic classes where he did not feel confident in his skills in the class. He specifically had another positive thought to say to himself to help him feel confident enough to ask for help from the teacher when he did not understand. Broadening his goal to add a new scenario was a beneficial experience for Samuel. It helped him see how he could generalize his new skill of replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts to various situations. When discussing the thought processes for his academic situation, he was able to take more of a lead role in the discussion in brainstorming ideas rather than relying on the researcher to help him come up with a plan. In one of the last sessions when the group was discussing how to respond to failure, Samuel was able to provide an example of how he used his positive self-talk to help him through a situation the week before when he failed a state assessment. By the end of the group, Samuel had a grasp on how to challenge his negative thoughts and use positive self-talk in his daily situations. During the last session when he looked back at

his journal from the first session, he explained being in a much better place at the end of the group because he felt that he had control over his thoughts and his happiness, and he overall felt much happier.

Based on teacher data, Samuel's externalizing behaviors and academic participation either stayed the same, or became more of a problem. At the start of the group, Samuel's academic participation was acceptable across all areas. He was coming to class, completing assignments of appropriate quality, contributing to class discussions, and putting forth adequate effort in class. At the end of group, his teacher reported similar academic participation.

Samuel's teacher reported a slight increase in externalizing problems on the BASC-3. Specifically, ratings on the hyperactivity scale slightly increased. Samuel's hyperactivity was not of clinical significance at either time; higher ratings were due to responses of "sometimes" to prompts. More hyperactive and inattentive behaviors were also noted during group sessions after the first few sessions. His aggression and conduct problems were not a concern at either time. Otherwise, Samuel's teacher reported appropriate behaviors and academic participation both pre and post intervention, so there was not much room for improvement to be seen on the teacher measures. Also, the goals that Samuel decided to work on were more internal in nature, focusing on his own self-confidence, so his teachers may not have seen as much of an impact. Samuel's teacher noted that there was an improvement in his participation in school activities, which was one of his goals. His teacher also noted more helping behaviors from Samuel throughout the progression of the group, which helping others was one of the small steps he was taking to help him feel happier. At the conclusion of the hope intervention, Samuel's

teacher also said that he was asking great questions in class, which again was one of his goal areas.

At the start of the group, Samuel had a total hope score of 55. He also ended the group with a total hope score of 55. He rated his agency subscale at 25 pre intervention and at 27 post intervention. On the pathways subscale, he rated himself at 30 pre intervention and 28 post intervention. Overall, he was demonstrating a higher amount of hope compared to the group scores, pre intervention, and there was not much fluctuation in his scores post intervention. Samuel did show growth in his goal setting from pre to post intervention. At the beginning of the group, Samuel only reported thinking about setting daily goals for himself once or twice a week. He said that once a month he may think about setting a goal for the week. At the conclusion of the group he reported that he sets goals for himself quite often, usually every other day. He also said that he would set a goal for the week at the beginning of each week. At the beginning of the group, Samuel reported that his goals for the school year were to get as many classes done as possible. His plan to achieve that goal was broad, as he said that he planned on staying focused and studying. At the end of the group, his goal for the school year was to get as many good grades as possible. He was able to give a more detailed plan at the end of the group with steps to achieve his goal by participating in class, paying attention, completing assignments, and making sure to complete all requirements. At the start of the hope intervention, Samuel did not report any goals for five years in the future. At the conclusion of the group, he said that his long-term goals were to just be happy and graduate from college. He was also able to give specific steps to achieve this goal. At the

conclusion of the group, Samuel reported that he felt that the group helped him to be more confident in life, to be more positive, and to know how to set goals for himself.

VI. Discussion

Discussion of Findings

The main purpose of the current study was to determine the effectiveness of a hope intervention with students in an alternative education placement. The four research questions for the current study were as follows: Does the implementation of a hope intervention raise levels of hope in alternative education students as measured by the Trait Hope Scale? Does the implementation of a hope intervention decrease problem behaviors in alternative education students as measured by the BASC-3? Does the implementation of a hope intervention increase academic participation in alternative education students as measured by teacher questionnaires? Do students set more realistic goals after the completion of a hope intervention as measured by student interviews? The current study included five students from an alternative education school ranging from 16 to 18 years old. One participant, Brandon, was removed from the group after the third session due to a behavioral incident at school that resulted in him no longer being allowed on school premises during the day. Therefore, only pre data was collected for Brandon. Additionally, inconsistent attendance was significant for Jamal and Diego. Diego was present for post-data collection; however, Jamal was not present after three attempts for post-data collection. For Jamal, only teacher post-data could be collected. A sixth participant joined the group about half way through the program; data was not collected for him. Results from the current study varied on a case-by-case basis.

Research supports increases in hope levels following the implementation of a hope intervention (Marques et. al., 2011), In the current study, increases in levels of hope as reported pre to post by the Trait Hope Scale were found in Trinity and Diego, while

Samuel reported the same level of hope pre to post intervention. Although Samuel reported feeling happier, more confident in his abilities, and knowing how to set goals following the hope intervention, a difference was not reflected in the Trait Hope Scale following the intervention. This may be due to aspects of his personal results not being specifically measured by the scale, or his overall comprehension of items presented on the Trait Hope Scale.

Additionally, research findings support fewer reports of problem behaviors from students with higher levels of hope (Ciarrochi et. al., 2007). For Trinity and Diego who reported increases in hope levels at the conclusion of the hope intervention, decreases in externalizing behaviors were evident in Trinity as reported by her teacher. Diego began the group with no reports of externalizing behaviors, and this remained the same at the conclusion of the hope intervention. Samuel's teacher reported increases in his externalizing behavior, specifically hyperactivity. Jamal's teacher also reported increases in his externalizing behavior, specifically aggression and conduct problems. It should be noted that increases in behavior reports for both Jamal and Samuel were due to additional "sometimes" responses to prompts and were not of clinical significance. This means that the specific areas where increases were found in Jamal's and Samuel's externalizing behaviors were only happening some of the time and that neither Jamal or Samuel had a significant increase to put their behaviors either at-risk or clinically significant for substantial behavior difficulties as indicated on the BASC-3.

Research supports increased success with academics when students have higher levels of hope. For example, higher hope levels have been correlated with lower levels of dropout rates amongst college students (Snyder et. al., 2002c); and higher GPAs (Curry

et. al., 1997; Snyder et. al., 2002c; Ciarrochi et. al., 2007; Gilman et. al., 2006). When examining teacher reports of academic participation of the students in the current study pre to post intervention there were mixed results. From the two students that reported higher levels of hope pre to post intervention, Trinity's teacher reported increases in her academic participation. While Diego's teacher overall reported that he was almost always showing appropriate academic participation both pre and post intervention, his teacher reported a specific difference in his conversational abilities in English. Diego's teacher was specifically concerned with his effort in his English acquisition pre intervention, and this did not seem to be the exact same concern post intervention as she explained an increase in his self-advocacy. Samuel's teacher did not report a change in academic participation pre to post intervention, however, pre intervention; his academic participation was acceptable. Jamal's teacher reported a slight decrease in areas of academic participation pre to post intervention, however his teacher did note an increase in Jamal's self-advocacy.

In past research, people with higher levels of hope were found to set more goals for themselves with multiple strategies to achieve their goals (Snyder, 2002a). During pre intervention data collection, most of the students were able to discuss their goals that they had for themselves for the current school year and for five years in the future. However, most of their goals were broad and lacked a specific plan for how to achieve their goals. At the conclusion of the hope intervention, pre to post student interviews with Trinity and Samuel demonstrated an improvement in describing more specific goals with a realistic plan to achieve their goals. Although Diego's goals were realistic, they were not more specific during the post student interview and he did not provide a detailed plan to

achieve his goals. However, the language barrier may have influenced part of his response, as even with an interpreter to explain the question he still chose to respond with a short response in English.

The current study also supports research findings of hope as an enhancement strategy (Gilman et. al., 2006; Marques et. al., 2015). This was specifically seen in Diego. According to Diego's teacher, he started off with appropriate academic participation and no reports of externalizing behaviors. At the conclusion of the group, he self-reported higher levels of hope, and he also demonstrated positive outcomes not reflected in the data collection tools. His teacher reported greater communication abilities, and he was also on track to return to his base school at the time of post data collection. This supports hope as an enhancement strategy, if students are already showing appropriate progress, promoting hope can show continuous gains in their performance.

Every Step Counts Program and Modifications

The hope intervention designed by the researcher, Every Step Counts, was well received by the participants. Throughout the sessions, the students made comments about how helpful it was to be challenged to think about what they want for their lives and that they have the power within themselves to take control of their lives by focusing on their daily actions. After the first session, multiple students commented that they were surprised by the purpose intended for the group because they thought the researcher was going to give them goals to work on, they did not realize that they were going to be able to work towards their personal goals. That was also the first hurdle of the program, helping the students voice their hopes and dreams for their lives. Students are too often told what to think and do, especially students on a trajectory for failure, like many in

alternative education placements. For students who are repeatedly told what to think and do, when asked to describe their personal dreams for their lives, they are at a loss. That is one reason that the way the program was designed was beneficial to the students. The first few sessions were really dedicated to the students learning about themselves, and being able to voice their own character strengths, values, interests, and overall desires for their future.

The lesson plans for sessions one through eight and 11 through 12 were well perceived by the students and appeared beneficial to their growth in their goal pursuit and application for the future. Sessions nine and 10 were dedicated to agency thinking as related to hope theory, and while the content was beneficial to the group, the activities in the reflection session could be modified for future use. Specifically, the activities that involved visualizing success and creating personal hope narratives were not perceived as helpful to the students for building and sustaining motivation for their goal pursuit. The students present for session 10 did not take the two activities seriously and struggled to relate the activity to their personal goal pursuit. For future use of the program, researching and developing new activities around agency thinking for session 10 may be beneficial.

In addition to the content of the sessions, the group dynamics also seemed to enhance the hope intervention to a certain degree. Snyder et. al. (2003) explained that students can benefit from learning to set goals with other people or help others with their goals. Feelings of success and positive emotions can result from helping others with their goal pursuit. In the current study, as the group progressed, more instances of group cohesiveness were observed. The nature of the sessions allowed for multiple discussions

and sharing of the students' personal goal pursuits. As students shared their own stories, others were willing to comment and provide suggestions to help the student sharing. The students also had each other throughout the week in school to provide reminders for each other about their goals. The group cohesiveness in the current study proved to be a benefit to the Every Step Counts program.

Future Research and Limitations

For future research on hope in alternative education students, it may be beneficial to include teachers in the goal setting process with the students like was done in the study conducted by Marques et. al. (2011). Especially for students who are inconsistent with their attendance to group sessions, it may be beneficial to have reminders throughout the school day about their goals. Attendance was a limitation to the current study. Some participants in the current study missed a number of sessions in a row, which meant they went a varying amount of weeks without reminders to work on their goals. Jamal was absent from multiple group sessions and his teacher did not see improvement in his academic participation or behaviors throughout the progression of the group. Jamal's inconsistent attendance also impacted the researcher's ability to collect individual post data at the completion of the group intervention. The group intervention was designed with review and reflection sessions every other session that would allow participants to get caught up on previous lessons if they were absent. Jamal and Diego, however, missed multiple sessions in a row, so even with the built in review sessions, they could not be fully informed of every lesson.

It would be beneficial to further assess the students' readiness for group counseling when selecting participants for future research. Specifically, students who are

in greater need of individual counseling may not be capable of accessing the benefits of the hope intervention. These students may need more time to heal their past and present circumstances before they are able to move on and work on making positive changes for their future. This was apparent in Brandon, and also may have had an impact on what Jamal was able to learn and apply from the group sessions.

Additionally, for future research, it may be beneficial to examine the relationship between hope levels and self-advocacy of students who exhibit difficulties with academics and behavior. Based on the current study, the participant's teachers noted improvements in both Jamal and Diego in their ability to communicate their needs and self-advocate for themselves over the course of the group. It may be that as the students worked on identifying their character strengths, values, interests, and future desires, they developed a voice for their identity, which involved them taking ownership of their future. This ownership could have given the students the power to take control of their lives, leading to increases in self-advocacy.

Another area for future research includes the success of hope interventions with English Language Learners in the United States of America. Research has been conducted on the success of hope interventions in other countries (Marques et. al., 2011). The current study showed increases of hope and positive outcomes in Diego who is in the developing stages of learning English. Handouts and summaries of new lessons were translated to Spanish for Diego; however, it is unclear how much he comprehended from discussions that were in English. He also only attended a few sessions, but still showed positive outcomes at the conclusion of the intervention. From the positive results of hope interventions in Portugal and the success of Diego's experience in the current study,

additional research would be beneficial for English Language Learners in the United States of America.

Furthermore, a limitation to the current study included the data collection tools that were chosen to evaluate the effectiveness of the hope intervention. While there were changes that were apparent for certain participants with the chosen data collection tools, there were additional meaningful results that emerged as a result of the group that were not measured by the current study and only reflected in the session summaries or review of academic and behavioral records. For example, as self-reported by participants, the hope intervention helped participants increase positive emotions, increase self-confidence, and feel empowered. Additionally, Diego and Jamal were on track by the conclusion of the group to return to their home school for the next school year. Also, another student, Trinity, changed her path throughout the course of the group to graduate a semester early, which she graduated the same week that the group concluded. Overall, there were multiple positive outcomes as a result of the hope intervention; however, these results were not clearly reflected in the data collection tools.

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Appendix A

The Trait Hope Scale

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that

best describes YOU and put that number in the blank provided.

1. = Definitely False
2. = Mostly False
3. = Somewhat False
4. = Slightly False
5. = Slightly True
6. = Somewhat True
7. = Mostly True
8. = Definitely True

- ___ 1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.
- ___ 2. I energetically pursue my goals.
- ___ 3. I feel tired most of the time.
- ___ 4. There are lots of ways around any problem.
- ___ 5. I am easily downed in an argument.
- ___ 6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me.
- ___ 7. I worry about my health.
- ___ 8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.
- ___ 9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.
- ___ 10. I've been pretty successful in life.
- ___ 11. I usually find myself worrying about something.
- ___ 12. I meet the goals that I set for myself.

Note. When administering the scale, it is called The Future Scale. The agency subscale score is derived by summing items 2, 9, 10, and 12; the pathway subscale score is derived by adding items 1, 4, 6, and 8. The total Hope Scale score is derived by summing the four agency and the four pathway items.

Reference:

- Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., & Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways: development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 60(4), 570-585.

Appendix B

Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition (BASC-3)**Externalizing Problems Composite Scale****Hyperactivity** (4, 17, 32, 41, 89, 99, 108, 112, 123, 126, 140)

- 4. Is overly active.
- 17. Speaks out of turn during class.
- 32. Has trouble staying seated.
- 41. Disrupts the schoolwork of other adolescents.
- 89. Has poor self-control.
- 99. Acts without thinking.
- 108. Is in constant motion.
- 112. Cannot wait to take turn.
- 123. Acts out of control.
- 126. Seeks attention while doing schoolwork.
- 140. Disrupts other adolescents' activities.

Aggression (5, 11, 52, 61, 70, 77, 86, 110, 125, 141, 148)

- 5. Argues when denied own way.
- 11. Is overly aggressive.
- 52. Annoys others on purpose.
- 61. Threatens to hurt others.
- 70. Hits other adolescents.
- 77. Defies teachers.
- 86. Bullies others.

110. Loses temper easily.

125. Teases others.

141. Gets back at others.

148. Manipulates others.

Conduct Problems (24, 34, 44, 60, 68, 113, 122, 137, 157, 160)

24. Gets into trouble.

34. Deceives others.

44. Breaks the rules.

60. Uses foul language.

68. Lies.

113. Uses others' things without permissions.

122. Disobeys.

137. Cheats in school.

157. Hurts others on purpose.

160. Sneaks around.

Appendix C

Teacher Questionnaire

Indicate this student's current academic participation in your class.

1 = Never

2 = Sometimes

3 = About Half the Time

4 = Most of the Time

5 = Almost Always

1. Comes to class.
1 2 3 4 5
2. Is prepared for class.
1 2 3 4 5
3. Appears attentive in class.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Is engaged in class instruction.
1 2 3 4 5
5. Contributes to class discussion.
1 2 3 4 5
6. Completes assignments.
1 2 3 4 5
7. Completes assignments of appropriate quality for your class.
1 2 3 4 5
8. Puts forth effort in order to be successful in your class.
1 2 3 4 5

Please answer the following questions:

1. What does this student need to do to improve his/her academic performance in your class?

Appendix D

Student Interview Questions

1. How often do you think about setting a goal for each day?
2. How often do you think about setting a goal for each week?
3. Describe your goal(s) for this school year.
 - a. How will you achieve your goal(s) for this school year?
4. Describe your goal(s) for five years from now.
 - a. How will you achieve your goal(s) for five years from now?

*Numbers 5-6 were only included in the interview post intervention.

5. Did you enjoy this group?
6. How do you feel that the group helped you?

Appendix E

Session Summaries**10/13/2016 Session #1 Summary**

Overall: (Everyone present: Jamal, Diego, Brandon, Trinity, and Samuel) Overall, there was participation; everyone seemed attentive and thoughtful in what they were getting out of group. There was consensus that everyone liked the topic that would be covered in group, and that it was not anything like they thought it would be. Students completed their first journal entry about their hopes and dreams for their future. Everyone seemed to have a hard time speaking about their personal hopes and dreams. All of the students, except for Diego, were asking questions about what the question really meant, it seemed that they did not know (before a lot of processing), what they really wanted for their lives. Students were left with the challenge to make small positive decisions throughout the week.

Jamal: He said that to him hope is wishful thinking. He said that there was not anything negative going on right now for him, and that he has worked on a lot of his weaknesses (educationally). So we talked about things he can do now to go above and beyond to also start working on more long-term goals (modeling)--- working on portfolio, etc.

Something he took away from group today was the ripple effect, how doing positive things increases the likelihood of positive things happening to him. In his journal, he talked about staying positive and focusing on the good things so that he can live the life he wants to live.

Samuel: He talked about how he likes to get to know people and their feelings, but he does not like to talk about his own feelings. He talked about something he would like to change (resenting family, especially mom). He wrote a very deep journal entry about wanting to be happy and love again, and finding someone that cares about people as much as he does.

Diego: He participated in the icebreaker (talking about himself). Otherwise, he did not participate vocally during group, but he appeared to be listening. He completed his journal in Spanish.

Trinity: She talked about how her anger gets the best of her and that is something she wants to work on and can make small positive changes towards. She said that she was happy with what we would be working on throughout group. In her journal, she talked about wanting to prove her dad wrong, wanting to be happy, and wanting specific successful outcomes so that she does not have to rely on others (degree, house, car).

Brandon: Most of his comments were about external things that he wanted for himself (ex. Wanting to make a lot of money, he commented on this many time and wrote about it in his journal). He spent a lot of time processing the concept of how small positive daily decisions can impact his future, he decided that his small positive decision would be to come to school every day. He said that he thought group was going to be about getting into college specifically, so he was happy that it was not going to be about that.

10/20/2016 Session #2 Summary

Overall: (3 present: Jamal, Trinity, and Samuel) All were participating and able to bounce ideas off of each other and help each other out through the journal exercises. The group

ended with talking about the steps they could make right away to work on the three areas they wrote about making positive changes in (myself, friendships, and education/career).

Jamal: He participated a lot in the review from last week, and was able to explain that we talked about hopes and goals, taking small steps, and the ripple effect that when you do positive things it is more likely for more positive things to happen. He said that he saw that and was able to make small positive decisions throughout his days the past week.

One thing he said he did was control his feelings in a heightened situation. He said that he thinks he is a perfect friend and when describing what a friend is in another class he said that he just described qualities that he has/does in friendships— He went into this explanation when asked if it was hard to dig deeper into personal wants, and he said yes.

- Exercise 1: What does success mean to you. 5 things he's good at: giving advice, dancing, athleticism, taking care of himself, and taking pictures. 5 things he loves to do whether or not he is especially good at them: sleep, shop, eat, party, dance. 5 things he wants that are outrageous: live with a wealthy person in Dubai, spend quality time with Rihanna, make an EP (kind of like a single with more songs), model for big designers, and have multiple homes in different countries.
- Little steps in 3 areas: For himself: get more fit to how he wants his body, keep his confidence up, ignore the hate and think more positive. For his friendships: not be so quick to judge and assume, be more sentimental, have more trust. For his education/career: put more effort into all of his work, stay focused and ignore negativity, push himself.
 - Steps he can take today: putting more effort into all the positive things he wants/needs to do, continue to stay focused, and better himself.

- He shared a lot of this with the group.

Samuel: He was willing to participate during group and give advice to others. When reviewing from last week he said that he remembered what we talked about but did not really say much about what we talked about specifically. He said that he was able to take small positive steps; specifically, he avoided conflicts with his mom all week, which was an area he brought up last week. When talking about the ripple effect he said that he held the doors open for people at his base high school for an hour, so he kept doing positive things for others. He talked a lot about caring a lot for others and wanting to help them.

- Exercise 1: What does success mean to you. 5 things he's good at: shooting, singing, being creative, showing his love and affection for others, and being there for people to talk to about problems and give advice. 5 things he loves to do whether or not he is especially good at them: (same as above). 5 things he wants that are outrageous: being a professional singer or marine, play the song Savior by Rise Against on guitar while singing, be an artist that makes money selling pictures/paintings/sculptures, and be a video game designer. 5 things he wants that are super far-fetched: invent many new things.
- Little steps in 3 areas: For himself: remember his phone number, stop being so insecure, and be happier. For his friendships: make sure to thank his friends and family always, try to listen even when he is opposed to what they are saying, and always be kind to everyone. For his education/career: think positive, do all his work, and strive to better himself. Also did for his health: be happier.
 - Steps he can take today: think positive, thank everyone, be kind, and try to be less insecure.

- He shared most of this with the group. A lot was similar to things said the week before.

Trinity: She was willing to participate during group, but not quite as much as the others.

She helped in reviewing what we talked about last week; she remembered the ripple effect and said that doing positive things means that more positive things will happen.

She said that she was able to make small positive actions over the week; her example was with controlling her temper. She said that her sister was yelling at her and blaming her for things and when she tried to walk away she kept following her, but she said that she was able to laugh it off and not respond to her, but this was a hard choice to make.

- Exercise 1: What does success mean to you. 5 things she's good at: giving advice, studying at home, making progress, trying new things, and thinking of conflict resolution strategies when she does stress. 5 things she loves to do whether or not she is especially good at them: cooking, supporting friends, shopping, spending money, making money. 5 things she wants that are outrageous (she said that these things are not outrageous, but they are for now because she will not be able to get them until she is older): Moving into her own apartment (first thing she wants to do), having her own car, starting/having her own family, making a lot more money. 5 things super far-fetched: nothing, she thinks that everything she wants is realistic.
- Little steps in 3 areas: For herself: not to get angry so quick, think about things before she does them, and think about who her actions will effect. For her friendships: lead all her friends in the right direction. For her education/career: stop talking to little boys and focus on getting her diploma, and getting a higher

education. Also did for her health: keep praying and serving God, and following through with counseling. Also did for wealth: get a “well” paid job, gather up money, and save!

- Steps she can take today: stop talking to boys, get diploma, save money.
- She shared most with the group, and a lot was similar to last week.

10/27/2016 Session #3 Summary

Overall: (3 Present: Brandon, Trinity, and Samuel). Overall, all three present participated. They spent a good amount of time on the strengths and values activities. They all said that the strengths from the VIA survey seemed to fit them, and they were able to narrow down their top 5 or 6 values. We spent a lot of time processing the concept of your circumstances don't define you, but your reactions do. They had a hard time relating that to themselves at first, but after processing together as a group, they all seemed to understand it. They were all interested in each other's results and agreed that what everyone's results matched them. They also all contributed to the discussion to help each other understand topics.

Samuel: He said that overall he was able to take some of the steps that he wanted to take last week to lead to success in certain areas. He said he was able to help himself feel happier. His top 5 strengths: appreciation of beauty and excellence, creativity, love of learning, social intelligence, and kindness. His top 5 values: empathy, compassion, spirituality, beauty, and love. Three things that interest him: being a stuntman, the human mind, and inventing stuff. His values and strengths seemed to align well with each other. When talking about his strengths and values, he was able to make connections to how he likes to help people and cares about others feelings and that they are similar to his

strengths and values. He also had a deeper understanding of how your circumstances do not define you, but your reactions. At first he had not heard of it, but he was able to process the concept quickly and help the other 2 understand it by giving examples. When journaling about circumstances stopping him from achieving the life that he wants for himself, he said that the economy, money, and politically correct people are hindering him. He said that a way he could change his reaction would be to stop caring what politically correct people say. He had a hard time coming up with a way to change his reaction to politically correct people, but after talking through it he came up with a response.

Trinity: She said that she was able to take some of the steps that she wanted to take from the week before to lead to success in certain areas. She gave an example of controlling her anger in a specific circumstance, and Brandon gave her credit for that because he witnessed it. Her top 5 strengths: spirituality, humor, perspective, curiosity, and kindness. Her top 5 values: respect, recognition, wealth, independence, wisdom, and power. She talked through her values trying to pinpoint the best ones. She really tried to understand the recognition, and said that she wants recognized for her successes in the future, even from people that she doesn't necessarily care a great deal for because she just wants to be acknowledged. She also talked through success vs. wealth, she thought they went hand in hand, but then we referred back to what we talked about last week on how success is doing the right thing at the right time and is defined differently by people, so she ended up choosing wealth. Her three interests she listed were: school, money, and money again. She shared that she wants to become a stripper as soon as she is able because they make good money and that will help her get to a university. When journaling she said that

holding grudges is a current circumstance keeping her from achieving the life she wants for herself, and a different reaction she can have to holding grudges is to get counseling. She had a hard time understanding that your reactions make up more of your life than your circumstances, she said that some people just have a really easy life compared to others, and shared some of her experiences about being kicked out of her parent's house and how she is now living with her Aunt. She ended up leaving for part of this discussion to get water, but she did not seem to fully grasp this idea.

Brandon: He had not been coming to school much and acknowledged that he had not been making small positive actions because he had not been coming to school. He said he had not been motivated to come to school, but his friend would try to get him to come (Trinity was the one trying to get him to come to school). His top 5 strengths: humor, honesty, curiosity, hope, love. His top 5 values: power, humor, freedom, honesty, and wealth. His 3 things that interest him: money, becoming a god, and being successful. When asked if money and power would make him happy he could not give an answer. He said multiple times throughout the session that he needed to start coming to school and making better choices. He was the one who was really trying to understand what it meant that your circumstances do not define you, your reactions do. He asked for many examples and how it can be seen differently between different people, at the end he seemed to understand the concept better and acknowledged that he could change his reaction in many different circumstances. In his journal he said that not going to school was keeping him from achieving what he wants in life, as well as doing drugs in public and talking to "hoes." He said that a way he could change his reaction would be to take the bus. He agreed to try his best to come to school every day.

11/3/2016 Session #4 Summary

Overall: (2 Present: Samuel and Diego). The first part of the group was reviewing and reflecting on the past week, only Samuel participated in this review because Diego was absent the past 2 weeks. Only Samuel was participating, so there was not much group cohesiveness happening this week. Both spent a good amount of time reflecting and journaling on the areas that they wanted to set goals. But only Samuel shared.

******Brandon will no longer be participating in group because he was withdrawn from the school following a discipline incident.

Samuel: He was the only one verbally participating. He gave an example of a positive action that he took with his brother from the past week. He was able to walk away from what could have been an argument with his brother, and he said that it helped him feel more in control rather than letting the circumstance control him. After journaling about his present circumstances in three areas of his life and how he would like to see changes in those areas, he shared all three with the group. For himself: he felt that many areas of his life were undefined and he wanted to concentrate on self-confidence to help change that. For his relationships: he felt that he was too sensitive to what people thought about him and said about him, he wanted to concentrate on taking criticism and correction from others while not getting emotional about it later (he grouped this into self-confidence). For his education/career: he would get very defensive in situations when others yelled at him or someone else because they had different views than him (he thinks everyone should be kind and courteous), he wanted to concentrate on being more accepting of others opinions and feelings. When asked about what steps he could take daily to help work towards the areas he wanted to concentrate on he could not come up with what he

could do. Some examples were given to him to help get him thinking, but he could not come up with anything else (examples given: focus on strengths, read 10 pages a day of a personal development book to help in the areas of self-confidence, and performing acts of kindness for people who have differing views than him). He was still having a disconnect here between breaking large goals into daily actions.

Diego: He was very quiet throughout group, which was similar to his participation during the first session. When asked specific questions he would respond, but he only gave a volunteer verbal response once about one of his goals. He seemed engaged as he worked on identifying his values, interests, and reviewed strengths that we talked about the week before. He appeared engaged in the group, he was looking, journaling, listening, and would laugh at times, he just was not vocally participating. The only goal he was willing to share with the group was that for his education he wanted to focus on his language. When asked about what small step he could take to work on his language daily he could not come up with anything. Some examples were given to him to help start his thinking including: working on 10 English words a day, having one back and forth conversation fully in English a day that he initiated, and asking his ESOL teacher what he could do. He shook his head to all of them, but did not say if he was willing to commit to any of those steps and could not come up with his own examples.

11/10/2016 Session # 5 Summary

Overall: (4 Present: Samuel, Victor, Trinity, Jamal). This was Victor's first day, he decided he wanted to join the group after Samuel told him about it. The first 20 minutes was just with Samuel and Victor and we briefly talked about what we had been discussing the past 4 sessions and gave Victor some time to relate what we were talking

about to his own experiences. When Trinity and Jamal came in, there was not much time to do a lot of sharing as a group, so the researcher worked with Victor and Samuel for sharing and then went to Trinity and Jamal. It was more evident today than in the past that Trinity and Jamal were close friends, and Victor and Samuel were friends, so the group was kind of split during the session today. We also did not have time to share as a whole group because Trinity and Jamal came late, so that might have contributed to the group appearing more divided as well.

Samuel: He was able to take the goals that he set for himself last week and start to make them into SMART goals. For the confidence goal, he specified that “I could be more confident with how I present myself and talk to people by the end of the month.” He also put a two-month time frame on being able to stop being sensitive (he did not make this into an approach goal, still negative/avoidant). For his last goal, he wanted to be more accepting of how others feel by the end of December, this is more geared towards people who had different views than him. He said that one thing he would start to do today is try to be around new people and have conversations. He seemed distracted this week and continually played with clay at his table. But this week we had to spend a lot of time reviewing for the students that had missed previous weeks, and he is the only one who was present for all sessions, so he did not have to be as involved in the review. But he did contribute some.

Victor: He was able to relate everything that we had talked about in this session to himself. He went ahead and wrote down his strengths, values, and interests. Strengths: loyalty, perspective, kindness, and leadership. Values: loyalty, humor, compassion, respect, faith. Interests: music, sports, books/reading. Then he set goals for himself in the

three areas using the SMART goal framework. Myself: build up more self-esteem within the next 3 months when warming up to people he does not know. Relationships: build a better relationship with his step mom. Education/Career: Graduate high school and go to college. When coming up with things he could do today for his goals, he had a hard time. The researcher gave him an example for his self-esteem: to have a conversation with someone he was not as close to everyday. Then he was able to come up with one for graduating high school this year, and that was to do all of his work for his online classes.

Jamal: This was Jamal's first time at group in 2 weeks. He had no problem picking up where he left off and writing down his strengths/values/interests. He thought that his strengths survey really matched his top strengths, and that his weaknesses were also accurately portrayed by the survey. His top 5 strengths: curiosity, hope, humor, bravery, honesty. Top 5 values: professionalism, morality, honesty, recognition, advancement. Interests: dancing, money, eating. He was very distracted today and talked to Trinity most of the time as he was filling out his worksheets. We did not have enough time to make his goals SMART in the framework. He only got to the goal for himself: to focus more and put more effort into what he does. So this still needed to be made more SMART, but we did not have enough time. He said that this is the main problem in all areas of his life, which was evident during the sessions as he talked with Trinity for most of group. He said that he wanted this to be his goal for all areas.

Trinity: Trinity came in for the main discussion of the topic for the day. She put that for herself she wanted to work on persistence, and when told to make it more specific she said with her academics. She did not do her education/career and wrote nothing for her friendships. She wrote more specific goals for her health though: to pray and read her

scriptures every day and to eat healthier. When talking through her goals though, she was able to describe more specifics. She shared that she wanted to stop letting her relationships with her family impact her academics (this was negatively oriented though, did not make it an approach goal to gain something). She also said that one thing she would do today is to start working on her grad point to earn more course credit, and that was why she came in a little late to group because she wanted to finish something for grad point. At the end of group, she asked about relationships and if relationships impact your future success, everyone helped answer this question for her, explaining why relationships are important. She understood when the researcher explained to her that it is important to have relationships specifically to help support you with your goals, but she seemed worried that it meant her family. The researcher explained that it did not have to be her family members, just people who can support you on your path to success. She seemed relieved by this response because from what she shared in other sessions as well, it did not seem like she has the most supportive family.

11/17/2016 Session #6 Summary

Overall: (4 Present: Victor, Diego, Trinity, and Jamal came late). Everyone worked hard to complete the worksheets about their goals (SMART goal worksheets). Trinity and Victor shared as they went along and had a similar goal that they wanted to work on. They were sharing more with the researcher than each other, but a few comments were made to each other along the way. This was a different group dynamic at first before Jamal came. Diego was generally quiet and did not communicate much with the group (but this may be more of a language barrier). Victor did not appear to have as much of a relationship with Trinity and Jamal. Victor and Trinity talked some before Jamal came,

but it was more surface level unless the researcher was involved. Jamal even said when he showed up that he had never heard Victor talk before. Jamal and Trinity's conversations were more on a deeper level, like in the past. The dynamic was different without Samuel present, because he seems to have at least some sort of relationship with everyone in the group which has contributed to the group cohesiveness.

Victor: Victor said that he was able to think of small steps every day towards his goals but he admitted that he was not intentionally thinking of this throughout the week, it was more coincidental that he took those steps. He said that to intentionally remember to take small steps towards his goals daily, he needed to make notes to remind himself in his room. Overall, he was able to complete the worksheet with ease. His goals were vague to start, but with assistance he got them to be more specific. He struggled the most with how to measure his progress towards his goals, but with assistance he was able to come up with some ways.

Trinity: Trinity said that she thought about taking small steps towards her goals throughout the week, but she did not provide any specific examples. She followed the worksheet well, and made her goals much more specific than she had them in the past few weeks. Some were still a little broad, but with assistance, she was able to make them more specific. She also had the most trouble with how to measure the progress towards her goals, and she seemed to understand that it was hard to come up with how to measure them because her goals were not as specific as they could be.

Diego: Diego said that he did not think about taking small steps towards his goals. He had a difficult time filling out the worksheet, but again this seemed to be more of a language barrier. The researcher was not as able to help him much through the worksheet

because he wrote his goals in Spanish and could not explain them in English so that the researcher could help him with the other specifics of the worksheet. He asked about what it meant to make his goals measurable, but the researcher could not help him much because his goal was written in Spanish, so we could not talk through his specific goal, but he was given examples. At the end when asked what he needed to do to remember to take his small step every day, Diego had a really hard time thinking of something. The researcher asked if writing himself a note would help and he said yes.

Jamal: Jamal came in with only 15 minutes left of group so he got right to work on his worksheet. There was a club that he was in that was just starting and it was meeting at the same time so he went to that meeting first and then came to group. He only filled out the worksheet for Myself and My Education/Career. He again said this week that he did not have anything in his relationships that he wanted to work on that he felt would help him get to where he wanted to be ultimately. He said that he had been working on his goals and that he got a job at a clothing store so that he could start saving money to work on his portfolio for modeling. He used this as his goal on the worksheet too, so that he could make it even more specific.

12/1/2016 Session #7 Summary

Overall: (2 Present: Jamal and Samuel). Both said that they thought about their goals over the Thanksgiving break but that they were not as successful as they would have wanted to be with following through with their small steps. Both participated during the session and were interested in what the other had to say (made comments about each other's goals, agree with something, or say if their ideas were good). We spent a lot of time talking about different plans for each of their individual goals, and both were very receptive to

the fact that there are multiple ways to get to the same goal, and that even if you pick a wrong strategy or make a wrong decision there is always another route that can be taken. At the end both students verbalized that this was a very helpful session. They were able to see what a thought process should look like when making plans for goal pursuit, and they were able to see the concrete little steps they could take and how that was related to their plan.

Jamal: Jamal already had his specific goals written out from the previous session, so we worked through those to concentrate on a plan he could take that was reasonable. After talking through how he could better save money for his modeling portfolio, he ended with the plan to put aside at least \$10 every paycheck into his savings account. He said that it might be difficult to save for his end goal right now because he recently broke his phone and would have to pay for a new one, but he still planned to get in the habit of setting aside at least \$10 with every paycheck. He said that the biggest obstacle would be spending his money on food because he really does not like home cooked food, but he agreed to still put the money aside as soon as he got the paycheck as if he never had it to begin with. For his second goal to put more effort into his school work he ended up with the plan that every day he would do at least one extra thing to improve his school work. He said that it would help him see that he is still making progress towards his effort because of the one extra thing that he was going to do, and that he would monitor this daily.

Samuel: Samuel was not at group the previous session, so he had not made his goals into SMART goals. He said that he had still been trying to work on his goals, but had not seen success yet. Before that he did not have a specific plan or a way to look at his progress.

His goal for self confidence was really difficult for him to talk through. We talked about where he wanted to start, specifically what situations, and then how he could work on it. After talking through what he wanted, he decided to work on self-correcting his thoughts. Specifically, he felt the least confident when he had a bad day and then would go into his after school activity and just retreat to being quiet and staying to himself. For his plan to work on this, he decided to work on his thought process and say to himself, “how can I make my day better” before going into after school activities, because his usual thought process was his day had already been bad, so now it was just going to get worse. He would then measure this by seeing how many conversations that he had with people. Then we only got to his second goal of being more accepting of others beliefs. We did not have as much time to talk about this goal, but he made a more specific plan of when someone tried to talk about politics with him, he would share his opinion in a non-defensive manner. His biggest concern with this area was that he did not want his friends to think differently of him for his beliefs, so he decided that sharing them in a non-defensive way could help.

12/8/2016 Session #8 Summary

Overall: (3 Present: Trinity, Jamal, Samuel). Jamal left for about 30 minutes for another group meeting and returned for the end. When just Samuel and Trinity were present, both were very involved in each other’s conversations about their goals. They congratulated each other for small successes and asked each other questions about their experiences. When Jamal came back, he also helped Trinity talk through some of her areas. We did not get to the activity/journal planned for the day, the group seemed to benefit more from spending the session just talking about plans for their specific goals.

Samuel: Samuel said that the step that he was making to work on replacing his negative thoughts with a positive thought was helping him gain more confidence socially in after school activities. He said he was able to have more social encounters/conversations than usual when challenging his negative thoughts. He felt that in this area he was ready to start broadening this goal to work on his confidence in academics. He specifically decided to focus on science. He said that with the way the class is taught, he often gets lost, but also the set up of the class makes it awkward to ask for help. He said that he had not been understanding what was happening in that class which made him feel less confident in his abilities to succeed in school. His next step was going to be to replace thoughts of thinking it would be awkward to ask for help to instead be “if I ask for help it will help me understand.” He did not have any opportunities to work on his other goal of stating his opinions in a less defensive manner since the last session. This was specific to his experiences of spending the early morning at his base high school waiting for the bus.

Trinity: Trinity was not in group last week so she had not had a specific step defined that she would be taking for her goals. She said overall for her goal to be more focused on school, she felt she was doing very well with this and may even be able to graduate early in January. She also said that she had not felt very successful with one of her goals, the one to not cut people out of her life so quickly. She was very vocal and passionate about sharing in this area. She said that her mom and others point out that she did not seem to have friends and seemed lonely, but she reported that she prefers to be alone. She was struggling because although she would like to have a couple of close friends, she felt like all of the people around her age that she encountered were really immature and not working on making their lives better. We spent the majority of group talking about this,

and ideas came up to help her with her relationships including: having phone conversations with a friend once a week, joining a church small group, and giving people second chances. She decided that it made the most sense for her to give people second chances. This was a fairly vague/large goal, but from the way she was speaking, it sounded like she cuts people out very frequently after they do one thing that she did not like. Her second goal area was to graduate by January and study psychology in college. This was the first time she really committed to wanting to graduate in January instead of May. We broke this down to what she needed to do to graduate in January, and the only thing she had left was to finish one online class. This online class was a difficult math course, and she had not been very successful with it so far. She also said that she had not been getting the help that she needed from teachers at the school who taught the course. She already spent a bulk of time everyday working on the class, so her step for the week was to ask different teachers for help.

Jamal: Jamal said that in terms of saving money he felt like he had not done a good job, but he also had not gotten a pay check yet to set the money aside, making this hard to measure at the moment. He said that he was able to take his step of doing one thing extra on his school assignments, but he had not really felt a difference yet because it had not been long enough to notice a difference. He said that he was feeling successful that he was able to do the extra thing on his work, he just does not feel like it is making a difference yet with only doing it for a week. He said he was not willing to add another step at this time because he had a lot of things going on and wanted to start seeing a little success first.

12/15/2016 Session #9 Summary

Overall: (3 Present Jamal, Victor, and Samuel). In class before group, all three were sitting next to each other, and a few groups before Jamal mentioned that he had never heard Victor talk, so it looked like the group was starting to become more cohesive even outside of group. Everyone was receptive to the new lesson working on identifying their attitude through their philosophy (the way they see themselves and the world) and also working on positive self-talk.

Jamal: Jamal was very invested in this session. He said that he had been making progress in a lot of his goals. He had been able to save more money than he thought he could by focusing on not eating out all the time. He also made great progress in his effort for his school work. He said that he might be able to transition back to his base school if he kept up his work. His new problem was with generalizing his effort to all areas of his life and not just his academic work. He spent a lot of time processing through his thought process of what would happen in the moment when he decides to not put effort into his daily activities. For his philosophy of how he views the world, he boiled it down to seeing the world as a scary place but it is the way that you approach the world that makes a difference. After journaling he felt overall that he is in control of how he approaches the world and experiences success. For his thoughts about when he does well and succeeds at something, he explained that he usually thinks that he is proud of himself when he accomplishes something and that he is also aware of what he needs to work on. For his thoughts about when he does not do well, specifically when he does not do well with putting effort into things, he would usually think over and over about why he did not put in the effort. He did not understand why he would not put effort into things especially

when he knew he should. He spent a lot of time discussing the disconnect here where his philosophy is about how he is in control, but in this area of his effort, he still falls short and it does not match with his philosophy. We ended with finding a thought he could start to think every day when faced with a task that involves effort: "If I do this now, I will be proud of myself/or it will impact my success." At the end of the session, he said that this was really good for him to work through this and he thought that it would help him in finding motivation to follow through with his goal to put more effort into his life.

Samuel: Samuel was kind of distracted during this session, he was talking on the side with Victor a lot, but he still got through most of the journal activity. When working through his philosophy of how he views the world, he wrote that he sees himself dependent on the way he feels at the moment. He sees the world as having many ups and downs, where some people have the luck of the draw and do not have as many downs. Ultimately, he really views himself as having little control in world. When discussing how his goals went the past week, he said that he had a hard time with changing his thoughts to help him have more confidence in class. It seemed from what he was discussing that generally speaking he is influenced by how he is feeling in the moment instead of his thoughts. He said that he wanted to keep working on his thought process because he saw how this helped him in social situations.

Victor: Victor had an interesting philosophy. He sees the world as messed up with everyone just trying to get ahead of everyone else; but he sees himself as a helper who really wants to understand people and help them. He sees the world as competitive where people don't really care about others, while he sees himself as the exact opposite. He understood that the way he sees the world is kind of black and white thinking and knows

that it is not always the case, but he said that the way he sees himself works well for him in life. He said that his thoughts and his philosophy were related because his thoughts are usually very considerate of others and he considers himself a helper. He had a hard time identifying his own thoughts about himself, because he was overly focused on others.

Victor missed the past few weeks so he did not have specific steps planned to be taking for his goals, but he said he was making progress towards his goal of getting closer with his step-mom.

1/5/2017 Session #10 Summary

Overall: (2 Present: Samuel and Victor, Trinity was there for the first 10 minutes). The group reflected on what was covered before winter break on their attitude/philosophy and how that impacts your life as well as changing negative self-talk into positive self-talk.

The group did a visualization exercise to view themselves as successful in the future and then drew personal hope narratives of what they saw. Victor and Samuel were the only two to participate in the activities and they did not seem to get much out of the visualization or the hope narrative, they both participated, but the reflection of the activities did not lead to an in depth discussion.

Trinity: Trinity was only there to talk about what was discussed in the previous session. She had to leave to meet with a teacher to help her on her last class that she needed to graduate. Reaching out for help was a goal that she had for herself, so she was following through with the goal and met with the teacher for help during the period. Before she left we talked about her attitude/philosophy that she has been telling herself and how it may be distorted in some ways and not helping her succeed. She explained that she felt that she often feels not good enough, especially when it comes to academics. She said that

when something is challenging she often has thoughts of not being good enough, and that can really make her angry. She said that she would start trying to work on her thought process to be “I can do this” when faced with challenges.

Samuel: Samuel said that he had really been focusing on changing his negative self-talk into positive self-talk. He was working on doing that in the classroom to increase his self-confidence to ask for help. He said that he had been successful in that area over the past few weeks, and he felt that he accomplished this goal. He also said that he had been seeing a difference in his self-confidence in terms of his social interactions by working on using positive self-talk. He said that he had felt more comfortable in many situations, and the specific area that he was working on of feeling more confident (during after school activities) had really improved. Samuel had a difficult time with the visualization activity. He could not visualize what his future would look like if he accomplished all of his goals, but he appeared very distracted during the activity. He also said that he was not feeling well and had not slept much the past few days. When we did the hope narrative after, he was able to draw a picture of himself in the future after accomplishing his dreams. He drew a house with a lot of detail, including a yard, pond, and trees surrounding. He said that inside were him, his future wife, at least two kids, a cat, and other important family members. He said that in his picture he felt content because he had people around him that he cared about and he would have a steady job to provide for his family.

Victor: Victor said that he had been working on his goals to improve his relationship with his step-mom, his academics to graduate early, and his self-confidence. He said that he had been having more conversations with his step-mom and that their relationship was becoming more neutral, where in the past he felt that there was not a relationship at all.

He said that he was still on track to graduate early. For his self-confidence, he felt that this improved as well because he had been putting himself out there more often and getting involved in school activities, so he was feeling more comfortable around people. He was able to get a visualization of what he wanted his future to look like if he accomplished all of his goals, and he drew that same thing in his picture. He drew a house with specific people standing outside of the house. He had his future wife, two kids, and four of his important family members in his picture. His visualization was very relationship oriented as well.

1/19/2017 Session #11 Summary

Overall: (2 Present Samuel and Diego). The lesson was about how to face failure and how success can be built on failure. Then we went over tips for goal attainment. Diego did not participate verbally in group, so most conversation was directed towards Samuel who already seemed to have a decent mindset for what to do in the face of failure. Post data was also collected for Diego and Samuel after the session due to inconsistencies in attendance to make sure that data could be collected on their progress.

Samuel: When discussing failure, Samuel felt that he had a good handle on failure and that he felt like it would not impact his goal pursuit. He also mentioned that he had felt better with failure within the past few weeks as he had been learning how to challenge and change his negative thoughts through group. He explained that he typically strives to not have negative thoughts when in the face of failure and that he had gotten better at focusing on the positive rather than the negative. He spoke about a specific example recently when he came to school late last week when he was supposed to take an SOL. This started of the testing on a bad note, he said that he started the test late, fell asleep a

few times during the assessment, and did not get a passing score as a result. He said that from that experience, he learned that he must be on time to everything that he wants to do well in. He asked to retake the test and took it a week later and he passed, he said he knew before even getting the results back that he passed because he felt confident in his performance. When discussing tips for goal attainment, he related the most with “don’t quit on yourself.” He said that he understands now how “steady” wins the race, and as long as he works a little bit everyday towards his goal he will be able to be more successful.

Diego: Diego did not participate in the group verbally, but he did write about failure in his journal. He wrote about a time that he failed a quiz in a class that he needed to pass. He said that from that experience he learned that he wasn’t giving it his all and that made him start to focus more so that he could pass that class. He said that when he is facing failure, he can look at it as needing to put more focus and give it his all in areas that he wants to succeed. And that failure can help him assess areas that are not going well so that he can find other ways to make it work out for him. Overall, Diego seemed to see how he can look at failure as something positive so that he can see where he needs growth and when he may need to change his path.

1/26/2017 Session #12 Summary

Overall: (3 present Trinity, Samuel, and Victor). This was the final review session of everything that we talked about in group. We took time to review journals from the first week and then looked at their position now so that they could see the transformation that they had in themselves during the past few months. This was a powerful experience for Trinity and Samuel (Victor was not in group at first so did not have the first journals).

Trinity and Samuel shared their first journals with the group and how differently they view themselves currently because they had both made a lot of progress in working towards their dreams. Then the group made dream boards to help them with the goal tip from last week “picture your goals vividly.” Post data was collected for Trinity at the end of the session.

Samuel: Samuel discussed how much happier he felt currently versus how he felt in the first session. He said that he has more confidence in himself and feels happier now that he has better control over his thoughts. We discussed how he has generalized his positive thoughts that we had been working on in the two specific goal areas of class participation and self-esteem in after school activities. He said that he felt confident in being able to generalize his positive thought process to all areas that he will face in the future where he feels less confident. He brought up again how he was already able to do that when faced with failing his SOL a few weeks ago. On Samuel’s dream board, he drew a detailed peace sign. He explained to the group that to him it symbolizes that his dreams are for peace in his thoughts and overall happiness.

Victor: Although Victor did not have a journal to look back on, he looked at his initial goals from one of his first sessions. They were about self confidence in social situations and improving his relationship with his step mom. He explained that he had definitely improved with his self-confidence and self-esteem in social situations because he had really focused on just being more involved. He also made a great friendship with Samuel which had helped him in this area as well. As for the relationship with his step mom, he said that it has been hard because they did not get along so well in the past, however, he said that he had been more willing to have conversations with her recently. He also said

that they had both been doing extra things around the house to help each other out, which he felt was a result of him focusing on small steps of building that relationship. His dream board was a similar picture that he drew for his personal hope narrative. It was a house with all of the people that he cares about around it. He shared with the group that his dreams are to be happy and be surrounded by all of the people that he loves.

Trinity: Trinity showed so much transformation from her first group session. She had already achieved her one dream that she spoke about during the first session, proving her father wrong. She said that he had always questioned her choices and that now her being able to put in the hard work to graduate a semester early proved him wrong. This was a powerful experience for her as she realized she accomplished that, it kind of took her back for a few seconds and she said, "I did that, I did that already." She also explained that she was getting closer to her other dreams of happiness, not having to rely on anyone, and to have her degree. She said that she was in the process of applying to colleges now that she was graduating high school that week, she had a job interview for that afternoon to help her save money for college, and she was overall feeling happier. We briefly talked about her goals for relationships, which had been an area that she was hesitant about working on during the group because she had a hard time seeing the benefit of working on relationships in her life. She tried to understand the importance, but talked about how she has had so many people bring her down and get in the way of her success, so she did not want to focus on that currently because she felt that it would get in her way. On her dream board, she wrote the following statements, "You're successful, you're worthy, you're God fearing, you're a winner!" She said that these words would

give her the motivation to work on her dreams, because she was believing the statements about herself much more, and other people were able to see this in her recently as well.

Appendix F

**EVERY STEP COUNTS
Program Lesson Plans****Overall Group Goals**

1. Establish clear goals.
2. Plan multiple routes to attain goals.
3. Create and sustain internal motivation to continue goal pursuit.
4. Understand the connection between daily decisions and successful goal attainment.
5. Reevaluate obstacles as challenges to conquer instead of roadblocks to discontinue goal pursuit.

Group Dynamic Therapeutic Goals

1. Group Cohesiveness
2. Universality
3. Imparting Information
4. Interpersonal Learning
5. Existential Factors
6. Instillation of Hope

Materials Needed for Group

1. Success for Teens: Real Teens Talk About Using the Slight Edge (Activity Book)
2. Handouts for journaling
3. Yarn
4. Access to the Character Strengths Survey through the VIA Institute on Character
5. Dominoes
6. Index Cards
7. Paper
8. Coloring Supplies (crayons, markers, colored pencils)
9. Materials for Dream Board
10. Snacks for sessions

Session 1

Goals

- Understand the Hope Model: the interactions between goals, pathways, and agency.
- Understand how following the hope model leads to change and positive outcomes.
- Understand how daily simple, positive actions compounded over time leads to future success.

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Introduce group leader. Explain the purpose of the group.
- Group Rules: Ask students to suggest rules for the group. Get consensus on rules. Three must be included: confidentiality, right to pass, and be respectful to others.

Ice Breaker

- Team building activity to get everyone to know each other.

Lesson

- Introducing the Hope Model
- Hope Model relations to change and positive outcomes
- “Little Things Matter” (simple actions repeated over time will determine the life you lead)
 - *Knowing what to do isn't the same as doing it*
 - *Ripple effect: small positive things, increases the chance that more positive things will happen to you.*
 - *Make the right choice at the right moment* (have faith to know the right thing to do, and the courage to do it)
 - *What does success mean to you?*

Activities

- Team work, walk to the other side of the room with hands on shoulders of the person in front of you.
 - Everyone has to walk at the same time.
 - Make a plan and stick to it, it gets easier when you get into a routine.
- Journal: What are your biggest hopes and desires for your life?

Summary

- Process activities.
- Discuss small, positive, daily actions students can take to begin working on their hopes and dreams.

Session 2

Goals

- Review: Hope model and the compound interest of daily disciplines
- Reflect: What does success mean to you?
- Run with it: What daily actions can you take that match your definition of success?

Introduction

- Greet students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking to begin working on their hopes and dreams.

Review

- Briefly review topics from the previous session: The hope model and its relations to change and positive outcomes. Little things matter.

Activity

- Journal: Exercise #1 from Success for Teens → what does success mean to you?

Summary

- Discuss journal prompt.
- Discuss what daily actions that can take to match their definition of success.

Session 3

Goals

- Discuss results of character strengths questionnaire.
- Discover personal values and interests.
- Introduce the importance of personally meaningful goals and setting multiple goals in varying life domains.

Introduction

- Greet students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking towards their definition of success.

Lesson

- Introduce why it is important to set goals that are personally meaningful.
- Go over character strengths, values, and interests in relation to goal pursuit. Hand back students' results of character strengths survey.
- "Use the Moment" (you already have everything you need; you can be in control of your future)
 - *Your circumstances aren't you*
 - *You can't control what happens to you, only your reactions*
 - *When you stop blaming, you take back your power*
 - *Someday never comes* (you have everything you need to achieve everything you want, you just have to put it into action)

Activity

- Discovering values (value cards → put in order of importance, pick top 5)
- Write down top five character strengths, top five values, and three interests.

Summary

- Process activities
- What they learned about themselves.
- Discuss small, positive, daily actions that students will take considering their strengths, values, and interests that will help them take control of their lives.

Session 4

Goals

- Review: Character strengths, values, and interests in relation to developing goals.
- Reflect: Think about what goals you would like to set based on character strengths, values, and interests.
- Run with it: Commit to goals in at least three different domains. What daily actions can you take to help you reach your goals?

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking to take back control of their lives.

Review

- Briefly review topics from the previous session: personally meaningful goals, character strengths, and values.

Activity

- Journal: Exercise #3 from Success for Teens (second part → A Look in the Mirror)
 - How do you view your present circumstances?
 - Commit to goals based on responses in different domains: self, relationships, education/career (can do footprint on the world, health, and wealth if they want)

Summary

- Discuss journal prompt and goals that they are committing to.
- Discuss what daily actions they can take to help them reach their goals.

Session 5

Goals

- Reframe goals to be SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Resources, and Time Bound).
- Understand the importance of stretch goals.
- Understand the importance of setting approach vs. avoidance goals.

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Lesson

- Discuss stretch goals: goals that provide a hint of challenge.
- Discuss approach goals (more positive in nature, achieve or sustain an outcome) vs. avoidance goals (more negative in nature, avoiding an outcome).
- Discuss SMART goals.

Activity

- Look back at the goals committed to last session.
 - Are any too hard or too easy? Rewrite them if necessary.
 - Are any negatively oriented? Rewrite to be positive if necessary.
- SMART goals demonstration: Paper ball activity (Throw paper ball to the front of the room, then have something to aim for. It is easier when you have something specific to aim for).

Summary

- Wrap up stretch goals, approach vs. avoidance goals, and SMART goals.
- Process activities.
- Discuss small, positive, daily actions that students can take for their goals.

Session 6

Goals

- Review: SMART goals, stretch goals, approach vs. avoidance goals.
- Reflect: How can you make your goals SMART, stretch, and approach goals.
- Run with it: What daily actions can you take to help you reach your goals?
- Introduce termination (6 more sessions)

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Review

- Briefly review topics from the previous session: stretch goals, approach vs. avoidance goals, and SMART goals.

Activity

- Journal Prompt: SMART goals worksheet for each goal.

Summary

- Discuss journal prompt.
- Discuss what daily actions students can take to help them reach their goals.

Session 7

Goals

- Understand the importance of setting sub goals for abstract goals.
- Develop multiple plans for each student set goal that starts with small steps.
- Understand how plans can be altered when challenges arise.

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Lesson

- Discuss pathways thinking.
 - Explain how breaking down goals into sub goals can facilitate pathways thinking.
 - Discuss the importance of thinking of multiple plans for each goal so that they can be reviewed and the best plan can be chosen.
- “Everything Starts with Small Steps:”
 - *The first step looks harder than it is*
 - *There’s no such thing as a lucky break* (everything takes hard work)
 - *Make the steps as small as you can* (smaller steps seem less scary)
 - *The second step is just as important* (you won’t necessarily see progress right away, don’t give up!)
- Introduce “You’re Always Learning,” so when an obstacle arises, plans can be altered to overcome the challenge.
 - *Take advantage of all opportunities*
 - *You need a team on your side* (learn from a “master” it is the most powerful learning)
 - *Adjust your course continually*

Activity

- Dominoes activity: Demonstrates the importance of small steps.
- Give each student an index card with a statement (italicized statements above) and have them draw a picture, write a word, explain, act out, etc. what the statement means to them.

Summary

- Wrap up pathways thinking.
- Process activity.
- Discuss small, positive, daily actions that students can take for their goals.

Session 8

Goals

- Review: Breaking abstract goals into sub goals, and developing multiple plans for each goal.
- Reflect: Which plan do you think is the most feasible for your goal? If you run into a challenge how will you alter your plan?
- Run with it: What daily action can you take to help you follow your plans for your goals?
- Discuss termination (4 more sessions)

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Review

- Briefly review topics from the previous session: breaking down goals into sub goals and developing multiple plans for each goal.

Activity

- Journal: Exercise #4 from Success for Teens (Everything Starts with Small Steps)
 - You thought of 3 steps you could take in varying domains back in Exercise #1, which step is the most feasible to apply now? Is there a better one you can think of now? (This is picking the best plan)
 - Think about what step you could take next, if the one you achieve the steps you are committing to today.
 - What could you do if your daily actions are not successful?

Summary

- Discuss journal prompt.
- Discuss what daily action they can take to help them follow their plans for their goals.

Session 9

Goals

- Learn to evaluate personal self-talk and challenge negative thinking.
- Develop personal hope narratives.
- Understand the importance of the source of your attitude to develop personal philosophies.

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Lesson

- Discuss agency thinking.
 - Explain negative self-talk and positive self-talk (replace negative with positive)
 - Explain how positive self-talk can increase motivation to stick to goal pursuit.
- Discuss “Attitude is Everything”
 - *Your philosophy is the key* (the way you see yourself and the world)
 - *How you view yourself creates your life* (your philosophy (how you see things) = your attitudes, your attitudes = your actions, your actions = your life)
 - *Change yourself by changing your philosophy*
 - *What you think matters, too* (what you think determines who you are and what happens to you--- example of brain--- some actions and choices are as if they are on autopilot because they have become a habit, in your subconscious, practice repetition of what you want to change so that it will become habitual)

Activity

- Journal Prompt: Exercise #2 from Success for Teens (Attitude is Everything)
 - What’s your Philosophy?
 - If you Want to Change your Life, Change your Philosophy
 - Identify any negative self-talk.
 - Write a positive statement on an index card that can be said instead of the negative statement.

Summary

- Wrap up agency thinking and your attitude is everything points.
- Process activities.
- Look at positive statement index card three times a day.
- Discuss small, positive, daily actions that students are taking for their goals.

Session 10

Goals

- Review: The value of self-talk and understanding how your attitude influences actions.
- Reflect: What is the source of your attitudes?
- Run with it: What daily action can you take to help you develop your attitude to reflect success?
- Discuss termination (2 sessions left).

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Review

- Briefly review topics from the previous session: agency thinking, positive self-talk, and attitude is everything points

Activity

- Visualization activity (Imagine Success)
 - What did you imagine?
 - What got in your way?
 - Did you accomplish your goals?
- Develop personal hope narratives (write a story, draw a picture, etc. of yourself in the future if you accomplish your dreams).

Summary

- Discuss activities.
- Discuss what daily actions that students can take to help them develop their attitudes to reflect success.
- Reminder to take small steps everyday towards their goals, look at positive statement index card, and practice visualizing success.

Session 11

Goals

- Understand how failure can be used to facilitate goal pursuit.
- Discuss tips for goal attainment (Picture it vividly, look at it every day, start with a plan, don't quit on yourself)
- Discuss termination (next sessions is the last one)

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Ask if they were able to take daily actions towards developing their attitude to reflect success.
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Lesson

- Discuss how valuable learning comes from failure (“There’s No Such Thing as Failure”).
 - *Success if Built on Failure*
 - *It’s all in our heads* (being afraid of failure is what keeps people from success)
 - *Failure creates unexpected opportunities* (successful people have the ability to keep going even when they think they have failed)
 - *Another word for learning* (no one is perfect, failure is inevitable, but it is how we learn and grow)
- Discuss tips for goal attainment (“Make Your Dreams Come True”):
 - *Picture it vividly*
 - *Look at it everyday*
 - *Start with a plan*
 - *Don’t quit on yourself*

Activity

- Journal: Exercise #5 There’s No Such Thing as Failure from Success for Teens (The Key to Success is Failure)

Summary

- Wrap up tips for goal attainment and not letting failure stop them from succeeding.
- Process Activities
- Reminder to take small steps everyday towards their goals, look at positive statement index card, and practice visualizing success.

Session 12

Goals

- Review: Tips for goal attainments and not letting failure stop success.
- Reflect: Visualize your dreams.
- Run with it: What daily actions can you take to help you achieve your dreams?
- Termination.

Introduction

- Greet Students
- Snack/treat for last session
- Check in on what daily actions the students have been taking for their goals.

Review

- Briefly review topics from the previous session: tips for goal attainments and how failure can aid success.
- Brief review of all sessions.

Activity

- Look back at journal entry from week one (biggest hopes and desires) and share what successes the students have seen since then.
- Create Dream Boards.

Summary

- Process activity.
- Dreams, goals, and plans can change, but you can remain in control with your positive daily actions.
- Give students their folders with all of their take away notes and journal entries.