

# Positive Psychology, Psychotherapy & Cognitive Behavioral Sciences

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## Hope being operationalized: Psychology student's personal understanding of hope

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**Statement of Problem:** Within the teachings of positive psychology constructs, academics are often faced with the dilemma of theory versus practice. Surely students should grasp the theoretical foundation of constructs, but surely they also need to identify and relate to concepts in order to be fully engaged within the experiential learning curve. Researchers have reported many benefits of teaching positive psychology with emphasis on practical value – allowing for interventions to flow from the understanding.

**Methodology:** A qualitative research design was utilized. As a part of an introductory module on positive psychology, 29 first year students at the University of the Free State, South Africa, voluntarily agreed to discuss their understanding of hope on both a theoretical and a practical level. Semi-structured interviews and two focus groups were conducted. Students were also asked to present a personal artifact that represents hope for them. Data were analyzed through narrative and discourse analysis, which yielded the six themes across the cases.

**Findings:** The participants of the study reported the research project to have had personal value of significance. Furthermore themes indicated hope as mediator and moderator for current stressors, hope as facilitator for future mindedness, hope as theoretical construct to be shared with others, hope as meaning making tool for past failures, hope as an undefinable movable concept and hope as personal deliberator.

**Conclusion & Significance:** Given the relevance of the teaching methods of positive psychology theories and constructs and the need for students to develop hope, this study's results aids in the better understanding of 1) teaching practices that are effective and also valuable on a personal level and 2) the way students conceptualize hope for themselves

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## Integration of the Buddhist concept of mindfulness (BCM) into counseling: Experiences of counselors

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Mindfulness has become an exponentially increasing concept worldwide as a means of self-actualization and psychotherapy with special attention on mindfulness-based interventions. Although the integration of the concept of mindfulness has been successful to a certain degree, it does not reflect the complexity of mindfulness as in Buddhism. Therefore, this study aimed at exploring the essence of lived experiences of counselors who integrate the Buddhist Concept of Mindfulness (BCM) into counseling within the Sri Lankan context. The study followed phenomenological approach in qualitative research framework. The sample included fifteen (15) Buddhist counselors, who integrate BCM into counseling. Purposive and snowball methods were used as means of sampling. Data was collected through open-ended face-to-face interviews followed by verbatim transcription of data and thematic analysis. Three main themes have been extracted. 'The complexity of phenomenon', was described in terms of the theories which the BCM is based on and the ultimate goal of the intervention. The 'art of intervention' described the way the counselors integrated BCM in their counseling activities and socio-cultural aspects in integration. The 'effectiveness in application' explored the lived experiences of counselors when they employ BCM methods and its impact on clients. Findings suggested the cognitive change for Right Vision was a prerequisite for Right Mindfulness through realizing the Three Characteristics of Existence: *trilaksana*. Path to the ultimate cessation from all sufferings: *nibbāna* is generated through being mindful in the process of detaching from worldly things. Therefore, it can be stated that BCM provides the individual the holistic approach in which all problems in life will be solved and therefore, its process is rather extensive. Thus, integration of BCM into counseling showed to be more effective with lifelong results. Potential implications and directions for further studies on mindfulness were addressed.

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