

JOURNEY TOWARD

hope

Discussion Group Leader's Guide



A GUIDED
EXPERIENCE

Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

Instructions

Instructions to the Leader

We are so grateful for your willingness to lead a group through the *Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience*. We hope this group discussion guide will help you in the process. If at all possible, we recommend you to have a co-leader so you can support each other and share the load of caring for the group. We encourage you to ask for help if you are needing extra support at any point.

These groups are not meant to be therapy groups; but rather a place for people living with mental illness to join together and encourage each other on their journeys. Topics covered in the book could be difficult for some individuals to talk about. If you are ever worried about someone being a threat to themselves or others, please call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (1-800-273-TALK) or 9-1-1.

We are praying for you and your group as you take courageous steps to seek hope in your life.

We would love to hear how this guide worked for you and your group. Please email Kay@KayWarren.com to offer feedback.

If you are looking for additional mental health related support, please visit the following resources:

- Dial 2-1-1 to find local mental health resources available in your area.
- Find a Christian counselor through the Christian Care Network at aacc.net/resources/find-a-counselor.
- Focus on the Family at focusonthefamily.com.

**Note: Due to reprints of Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience, the page numbers listed in this leader guide may not reflect the page numbers in your copy. The section and session titles are provided to help you follow should your page numbers not match. This leader guide is meant to be used in conjunction with Edition 1.2 of Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience. For the most up-to-date version of this guide, please visit KayWarren.com/JourneyTowardHopeDiscussion.*

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Additional Group Structure Ideas

Group Timelines

One Year Option

- Every other week go through one session provided in this guide. On the off weeks have a testimony and time of open share (Ex. Feelings check, high's/low's, opportunities for individuals to share what's on their mind, and prayer).
- Every week going through one session provided in this guide. Repeat the guide twice per year. This could be an opportunity for group members who have completed the guide to lead a new group.

School Year Calendar Option

- Every week go through one session provided in this guide. Take breaks during school vacation times.

Group Structure

A 90 minute group session is recommended to be structured as follows:

- Start the group with a 20-30 minute time of connection. The connection time consists of opening prayer, reading the "Group Guidelines," a "Feelings Check," and weekly "High's/Low's."
- After the connection time, take 60 minutes to go through the remaining sections.
- The ideal group size is between 8-10 people.

Celebration Weeks

We encourage you to have celebration times with your group*. This allows your group to celebrate all the work they have done. People are able to take a break, connect with each other and have fun outside of structured time. Suggested times would be the week after the following lessons:

- Session 8: Your Story & Prayer of Salvation
- Session 14: Communion with God and with Others and A Time for Communion
- Session 20: Just Breathe & My Hope Network
- Session 25: Pass It On

**Note: Please be aware of people in your group who struggle with eating disorders. It would be helpful if there are other activities in addition to eating together. This doesn't mean you can't have food in your groups; however, we encourage you to be aware and thoughtful of their healing.*

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Group Guidelines

Group Guidelines

We encourage you to read these guidelines at the beginning of each of your meeting times.

Clear Purpose: This group is for people who are living with mental illness to journey together toward hope.

Group Attendance: We encourage you to attend every session. The more sessions you attend the more you will gain from this journey. Participation with others enhances the experience as you share with, learn from and encourage each other.

Sharing is Core to this Group: We want to hear your thoughts and feelings. In order to allow time and space for everyone to share, we ask that you limit your sharing to 3-5 minutes.

We Listen to Each Other: Therefore, we do not engage in "cross talk." Cross talk is when two individuals engage in conversation excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.

Offer Support: We are here to support one another, not "fix" one another. Feel free to offer encouragement to fellow group members if someone has shared something that resonated with you.

Confidentiality: Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.

Safe Environment: Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered group.

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Feelings Word List

ALONE

avoidant, lonely, abandoned, deserted, isolated, cut off, detached, disconnected, unwanted

AMAZED

stunned, surprised, shocked, jolted, enlightened

ANGRY

annoyed, controlled, manipulated, furious, grouchy, irritated, provoked, frustrated, hateful, cold, icy, bitter, cynical

ANXIOUS

afraid, uneasy, nauseated, nervous, restless, preoccupied, worried, scared, tense, fearful, terrified, insecure, indecisive, hyper-vigilant, cautious

ASHAMED

guilty, mortified, humiliated, embarrassed, exposed, stupid

BETRAYED

deceived, fooled, duped, tricked, misled, skeptical

CONFIDENT

positive, secure, self-assured, assertive

CONFUSED

baffled, perplexed, mystified, bewildered, misunderstood, disoriented

DESPISED

ridiculed, dumb, belittled, mocked, scorned, shamed, hated, detested

DISAPPOINTED

let down, disheartened, disillusioned, distrustful

HAPPY

cheerful, delighted, elated, encouraged, glad, gratified, joyful, lighthearted, overjoyed, pleased, relieved, satisfied, thrilled, secure, optimistic

HIGH ENERGY

energetic, enthusiastic, excited, playful, rejuvenated, talkative, pumped, motivated, driven, determined, obsessed, jittery

INVISIBLE

forgotten, overlooked, unimportant, disregarded, lost

LOVING

affectionate, cozy, passionate, romantic, sexy, warm, tender, responsive, thankful, appreciative, refreshed, pleased, comforted, reassured

LOW ENERGY

beaten down, exhausted, tired, weak, listless, depressed, detached, withdrawn, indifferent, apathetic, lazy, bored

OVERWHELMED

apprehensive, boxed in, burdened, confused, distressed, guarded, hard-pressed, paralyzed, panicky, tense, weighted down, edgy

PEACEFUL

relieved, at ease, calm, comforted, cool, relaxed, composed, protected

SAD

unhappy, crushed, dejected, depressed, desperate, hopeless, grieved, heavy, despairing, weepy

TRAUMATIZED

shocked, disturbed, injured, damaged, unloved, unlovable, hated

Discussion Group Sessions

Journey Toward Hope Discussion Group Leader's Guide

Welcome

Session 1: Welcome

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 3

- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs on pages 3-4.
- Ask the group if any part of the letter resonated with them and give them time to share with each other.
- Read the verse on page 5.
- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs on pages 6-7.
- Ask each member of the group to pick a negative statement of the Hope Circle that they currently believe or have believed about themselves. Ask if someone would like to share.
- Ask the group what they hope to get out of the Journey Toward Hope group.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

Session 2: Oh, How He Loves You

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 13

- Have someone in the group read aloud the quote from Max Lucado on page 13. Allow the group to share what they think about this quote.
- Ask for volunteers to read the remaining paragraphs on page 13.
- As prompted on page 13, take 10-15 minutes to individually read through the verses on pages 14-15. Circle any words or phrases that are most inspiring and help you cultivate self-acceptance. Write about what stands out to you in the spaces provided below each verse. When the group is ready, ask people to discuss their thoughts.
- Ask someone to read aloud the quote on page 16.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What do you think or feel when you hear that God loves you?
2. Are there experiences from your life that are impacting your relationship with God – either positively or negatively? Ask if anyone would like to share.
3. Is there a verse or a truth that was shared today that can help you take your next step in relying on God's love for you? Ask if anyone would like to share.

Challenge: Write down the verse or truth that you chose in question 3 and place it somewhere you will see it every day. Allow it to remind you of God's love for you.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

Session 3: Your Comforter

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 17

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on page 17.
- Read the Story of Hope from Greg on page 18.
- Read the verse on page 20.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for the group to write down their thoughts as directed on page 20. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. "God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." (Romans 5:5 GW). Which role of the Holy Spirit do you feel the deepest need for: Teacher, Guide, Comforter, or Motivator?
2. Did anything from Greg's story resonate with you? Share with the group what thoughts came to mind.
3. Is there a time where you experienced the Holy Spirit as your Comforter? Ask if anyone would like to share their experience.

Challenge: This week, whenever you find yourself feeling worried or anxious, ask the Holy Spirit to be your Comforter.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

Session 4: Releasing Shame

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 21

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on page 21 and page 23.
- Read the Story of Hope from Amanda on page 22 and the Story of Hope from Mark on page 24.
- Take 10-15 minutes to allow the group to write about a time when they have felt guilt and a time they have felt shame. Use the space provided on page 25. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down.
- Read the quote on page 27.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. After reading the definition of shame from Brené Brown, what area of your life do you experience or have you experienced feeling unworthy or flawed?
2. Reread Amanda's story on page 22. How does it feel to know that God can handle our anger? What would it look like for you to express your anger to Him?
3. Reread Mark's story on page 24. Share a time when you have felt like Mark.

Challenge: Read the verse and follow the instructions on page 26.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

**Note to leader for next session: In Session 5 there is a creative prompt. You may want to provide crayons, colored pencil, markers or any other creative supplies.*

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Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

Session 5: God's Truths and Promises

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 28

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on page 28.
- As prompted on page 28, take 10-15 minutes to individually read through the verses on pages 29-32. As you read, circle the words or phrases that encourage you and attract your mind to thoughts that anticipate God's best for your life. Which part of each verse gives you hope? Ask if anyone would like to share the verse that was the most meaningful to them.
- Read the Story of Hope from Rita on page 33.
- Take 10-15 minutes and follow the prompt on page 34. Ask if anyone would like to share their response.

*Optional: Provide crayons, colored pencil, markers or any other creative supplies.

Challenge: Every day this week read Lamentations 3:21-24 (found on page 32). Remind yourself that the Lord's unfailing love and mercy continues.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

**Note to leader for next session: In Session 6 there will be an activity to create a "HOPE" box. Either ask each group member to bring a shoe box and extra craft supplies or provide a box and supplies for each person. Additionally, ask group members to bring any photos, quotes, or Scriptures that are meaningful to them.*

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Hope Says...**YOU ARE LOVED**

Session 6: Love All Around

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 36

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on pages 36-37.
- Follow the instructions on page 37 for creating a "HOPE" box or board. Allow group members 20-30 minutes to work on their project. Ask if anyone in the group would like to share some things they put in their box.
- Together, read aloud the Prayer for Love and Acceptance on page 39.

Challenge: Continue to add to your "HOPE" box or board this week.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A PURPOSE**

Session 7: Discovering Your Purpose & Purpose Produces Passion

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 45

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 45-47.
- Ask a group member to read the poem on page 48. Take 10-15 minutes to follow the prompt on page 49. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt like you didn't matter? What caused you to feel that way?
2. Do you feel you are made *on purpose for* a purpose? Share if this concept is easy or difficult for you to accept and why.
3. Do you feel like your purpose is tied to your actions or your productivity level? Share reasons why you might feel this way.

Challenge: This week do something tangible (write a Post-It, draw a dot on your arm, put a sticker on your phone) to remind yourself that you are God's son/daughter who He loves because of who you are not because of what you do. In moments when you feel like you don't matter remember you were made to love God and to be loved by Him.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A PURPOSE**

Session 8: Your Story & Prayer of Salvation

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 47

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on page 47.
- Allow 15-20 minutes for group members to follow the prompt on page 50. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote down.
- Together read the Prayer of Salvation on page 52.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. Recount a time when God used a hurt in your life to help someone else.
2. What is a past and a current hurt you hope God will use in the future to help other people?
3. Read the verse on page 53. Share with the group something you are having a difficult time accepting as part of God's overall plan. Take time to pray for each other.

Challenge: Pray for God to give you an opportunity to encourage someone who is going through a difficult time. If you feel comfortable, share about a hurt in your life and how you are finding purpose in the pain.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

Session 9: Radical Friendship

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 55

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 57-59 and 62.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for group members to follow the prompt on page 62. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Read the Story of Hope from Josh on page 60 and the Story of Hope from Brooklyn on page 63. Ask the group if anything from these stories resonated with them and if they would like to share.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What is it like to think about God calling you friend? How does that affect how you talk to Him, spend time with Him, etc.
2. What has your experience of church been? What do you long for church to be like?
3. How would you describe friendships in your life? What is something you hope for in friendships?

Challenge: What is one thing you can do this week to move toward developing a deeper friendship with someone?

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

Session 10: Never Alone

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 64

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 64-66.
- Play the song "Never Alone" by Meredith Andrews.
- Read the lyrics from the Saddleback Worship song, "Our Hope" on page 67.
- Ask the group to share what they experienced while listening to "Never Alone" and hearing the lyrics of "Our Hope" read to them.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What music or artist do you enjoy the most?
2. When do you feel most alone and what do you tend to do with those feelings?
3. Is there a song that has deeply impacted you or touched your heart? If so, share about the experience.

Challenge: Create a worship playlist that will point you toward hope.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

Session 11: Intentional Connection

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 68

- Read the Story of Hope from Landon on Page 68. Ask the group to share what it has been like for them to be in this group.
- Although people are already in a group read the verses and paragraphs on page 69. Discuss the experience of what it was like to join the group.
- Read the quote from Rick Warren on the bottom of page 70. Take 10-15 minutes for group members to respond to the prompt on page 69. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. Have there been times that you have seen how something someone else in the group shared encouraged you?
2. When you read Rick's quote on the bottom of page 70 how do you feel? Does that bring excitement, fear, worry, etc.
3. Who do you talk to about your pain and what you have experienced?

Challenge: Pray for an opportunity to encourage someone else to join a support group or Celebrate Recovery.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

Session 12: Boundaries are Biblical & Learning to Say “No”

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 71

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on page 71-72.
- Take 10-15 minutes for group members to respond to the prompt on page 72. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Read the Story of Hope from Lina on page 74.
- Read Proverbs 13:18 on page 75.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. Who in your life comes to mind when you read about boundaries? Is there a relationship in your life where you want to (or feel like you need to) put boundaries in place?
2. When you think of saying “no”, what emotions do you experience?
3. Do you identify with the Story of Hope on page 74? Are there people you are afraid to lose if you say “no”? Are there people in your life that you feel would respect your boundaries?

Challenge: Look for an opportunity to say “no” to begin setting up a boundary that is helpful for you.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

Session 13: Your Best “Yes” & Safe People

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 76

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on page 76.
- Last session we talked about saying “no” to things we don’t want to give our time and ourselves to. Ask: What are some things or people you desire to say “yes” to? What does it cost you to say yes to them?
- Ask: What are some opportunities and people you think could be your best “yes”?
- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on page 77.
- Ask: Have you experienced any people in your life who you first thought were safe and turned out to be unsafe?
- Ask: Who are people who draw you closer to God and who He wants you to be?
- Ask: What are some ways you can inspire people and build them up with kind words and thoughtful actions?
- Ask for a volunteer to read the Prayer for Wisdom and Guidance on page 78.

Challenge: Spend some time alone with God and ask Him to show you your best “yes”.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

**Note to leader for next session: In Session 14 you will be taking communion. See page 82 for needed supplies.*

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Hope Says...**YOU BELONG**

Session 14: Connecting with God and with Others & A Time of Communion

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 79

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on page 79-80.
- Ask: Do you feel you can talk to God anytime, anywhere?
- Ask: How does it feel to know you can bring your brokenness to God?
- Take 5-10 minutes to allow the group to write a response in the space at the bottom of page 80. Encourage the group to think about anything they are holding back from God. Remind them of God's love, acceptance, forgiveness and grace.
- Play the song "Carried to the Table" by Leeland or read the lyrics on page 81.
- Follow the instruction on page 82 for leading your group in communion.
- Pray the Prayer of Community on page 83.

Challenge: Write about your communion experience on page 84. Thank God for the time you had with Him.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

Session 15: Move Toward Hope

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 87

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on pages 87-88.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for group members to follow the prompt on page 88. Ask if anyone would like to share something they wrote.
- Read the quote from Jamie Tworkowski on page 89.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel when you hear the statement, "You did not choose to have a mental illness, but you do have the ability to make choices that will move you toward hope"?
2. What choices do you feel are the hardest to make as you move toward hope? What choices do you want to make but making them feels overwhelming?
3. Did anything from Jamie's words on page 89 resonate with you? Share with the group what thoughts came to mind.

Challenge: Think of one choice you can make this week that can lead you toward hope.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

Session 16: Nurturing Your Mind

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 90

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on page 90.
- Take 10-15 minutes to allow group members to write on the bottom of page 90 some things they were told in the past that they believe but in reality may not be true. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Read the quote from Kay Warren on page 91. Ask: What do you think can help move people from the first outlook Kay talks about to the second outlook?
- Take 10-15 minutes to allow group members write down a prayer on page 91 expressing to God a difficult area in their life and asking God to help them trust Him no matter what. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What thoughts are robbing you of joy?
2. In what areas are you tempted to walk away from God? What would it look like to commit to not walking away from Him?

Challenge: Memorize Romans 8:39 as found on page 90.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU HAVE A CHOICE**

Session 17: Catch It, Challenge It, Change It & Transformative Power

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 92

- In the last session we talked about recognizing untrue negative thoughts that impact your life. Using pages 92-94 have each group member take 15-20 minutes to investigate their thoughts and practice challenging them so they can create healthy change. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Read the Story of Hope from Lauren on page 95.
- Read the verses on pages 96-97.
- Allow 5-10 minutes for each group member to individually follow the prompt on page 96.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What are the easier destructive thoughts or behaviors for you to catch, challenge and change? What are the hardest?
2. Did anything from Lauren's story resonate with you?
3. What are practical things you can do to catch, challenge and change your thoughts?

Challenge: Practice catching, challenging, and changing your negative thoughts this week.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Session 18: Self-Care

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 98

- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on page 98-100.
- As a group practice having a quiet time with God. Complete steps 1-6 together. Choose any Psalm you would like. If you need suggestions try Psalm 23, 42, 91, or 103.
- Read the Prayer for Refreshment and Restoration on page 101.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What do you find is the biggest challenge in taking intentional time to care for yourself?
2. Do you currently have a daily quiet time with God? What do you find is most difficult about practicing this habit every day?
3. As you completed steps 1-6 was there anything that surprised or impacted you?

Challenge: This week practice a daily quiet time. Report back to your group the next week on how it went. What was challenging? Did you find anything surprising? What did you enjoy?

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Session 19: Personal Replenishment

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

**Note to leader: Ask if anyone would like to share about their daily quiet time challenge from the previous session.*

Begin on page 102

- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs on page 102.
- Take 5-10 minutes to individually fill out the checklist on page 103. Ask if anyone would like to share some of things that replenish them.
- Read the Story of Hope from Niam on page 104.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. When you feel worn down, tired or overwhelmed what do you used to cope? What things would you like to replace with something that is more restorative and nourishing to your soul?
2. Did anything from Niam's story resonate with you?
3. What proactive decisions can you make now that will help you cope in a healthy way in the future? Take 10-15 minutes to write down your ideas on page 105. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

Challenge: This week be aware of things that nourish your soul and add to your list. When you feel stressed and overwhelmed practice using one of the techniques from your list.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Session 20: Just Breathe & My Hope Network

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 106

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on pages 106-107.
- Play the song "Great Are You Lord" by All Sons and Daughters. Have each group member practice the breathing exercise on page 107 as they listen to the song.
- Read the Story of Hope from Lindsey on page 108.
- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs on page 110.
- Take 10-15 minutes and have group members follow the prompt on page 111.
- Read the quote from Ann Voskamp on page 112.

Session 20 is continued on the next page...

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Session 20: Just Breathe & My Hope Network continued

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What could help you remember to breathe during stressful situations?
2. Are there other breathing exercises or other deescalating tools you have found useful? Share these with your group. Use the space on page 107 to write down any new ideas you hear from other group members.
3. Is there anything from Lindsey's story on page 108 that resonates with you?
4. How does it feel to think about asking for support? In the past has that been easy or difficult?
5. Without mentioning names, what types of people did you list on your Hope Hotline and why?

**Note to leader: Some people in your group may have trouble listing supportive people for their Hope Hotline. Living with mental illness can sometimes result in lost relationships. They may have been deeply hurt in the past and may have a hard time knowing who to trust. We encourage you to meet with them one on one to work together to think through some options of people who could be valuable on their Hope Hotline.*

Challenge: Have a conversation with the people on your Hope Hotline. Share with them their impact on your life and ask if they would be open to you connecting with them at times when you are needing extra support.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Session 21: Understanding Grief, The Grief Process, & Four Things to Help You Get Unstuck

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 113

- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs on page 113.
- Ask: "What are some of the losses you have faced? Use the list on page 113 to help you." Have group members to write their losses next to the list on page 113.
- Ask for volunteers to read the verses and paragraphs on pages 114-115 and read the Story of Hope from Nancy on page 116.
- Take 15-20 minutes and allow group members to write on page 117 about times when they have experienced the different phases of the grief process. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What was most comforting to you in the sorrow stage of grief?
2. Have you ever asked God, "Why did this happen?" Describe that time.
3. Have you found any peace in the midst of a loss? Describe that time.
4. Describe any treasure in darkness you've experienced through your loss.
5. How do you hope that God uses your pain to help others?

Challenge: This week go through Four Things to Help You Get Unstuck on pages 119-120.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Session 22: The Gift of Forgiveness

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 122

- Read the instructions at the top of page 122.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for group members to respond to the prompt. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Ask for volunteers to read the paragraph at the bottom of page 122, the quote by Rick Warren on page 123 and the paragraphs on page 124.
- Allow 10-15 minutes for group members to respond to the prompt on the bottom of page 124. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Ask for volunteers to read page 126.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What is challenging about allowing God to “settle the score”?
2. Have you experienced unforgiveness affecting your life; if so, in what way?
3. Which of the quotes in this session stood out to you and why?

Challenge: This week practice repeating to yourself, “I forgive myself” or “I forgive you” whenever you feel guilt, shame, disappointment, anger, etc. towards yourself and/or others.

Prayer: Read the Prayer of Forgiveness on page 127.

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Session 23: God Has Written Your Life Story & How Can I Give Back?

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 131

- Ask for volunteers to read the verse and paragraphs on pages 131-132.
- Take 10-15 minutes to follow the prompt on page 132. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Go around in a circle and focus on individual at a time. Ask each group member to share what they admire about the individual you are focusing on and ways they see the person could give back. Repeat for each group member.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. Have there been times you've felt you aren't needed or that you are always a burden and never a blessing? Use the Feelings Word List on page 190-191 to explain how you felt during those times.
2. Read the Story of Hope from Josh on page 133. Have there been times when you've felt so overwhelmed with your mental illness that you felt like you couldn't help other people? If so, what are some small steps you can take at those times to give back to others while honoring what you need as well?
3. Think of some people you come in contact with regularly. What are some ways you could give back to them?

Challenge: Pick one person in your life and do something to brighten their day this week.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Hope Says...**YOU ARE NEEDED**

Session 24: Affirmations According to God & Resilience

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 134

- Read the instructions on page 134. Take 10-15 minutes to allow group members to follow the prompt. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.
- Read the paragraph on page 137 and the Story of Hope from Ashley on page 138.
- Ask: What do you think God could do with your life if you choose to stay alive? How do you dream God will use you? Take 5-10 minutes to allow group members to write down their thoughts on page 139. Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. On page 137 resilience is described as the ability to keep trying. What are some ways you could keep trying when you feel like giving up?
2. What would your life look like if you believed you were needed in this world?

Challenge: Add the dreams of how God could use your life to your “Hope Box” to help remind you that you are needed. Feel free to use creativity.

Prayer: Go around the group and ask for each person to share a prayer request. Pray together as a group to end your time together.

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Session 25: Pass It On

Pray: Have someone pray to open the group.

Read: Read the Group Guidelines.

Feelings check: Turn to pages 190-191. Go around the group and have each person share their name and a word or words from the Feelings Word List that describes how they are currently feeling.

High's/Low's: Go around the group and have each person share a high (a good aspect) and a low (a hard aspect) of their week.

Begin on page 142

- Ask for volunteers to read page 142.
- Read the paragraph on 140. Allow 15-20 minutes for group members to respond to the question "What do you think about hope now?" Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote down or drew.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. How have you changed since the beginning of this Journey Toward Hope? What have you learned, experienced, thought, felt, etc.?
2. What are some ways you can pass on this journey to others?
3. Read the Hope Statements on pages 144-145. Which statement do you feel you have grown the most in? Which statement is still the hardest for you to believe?

Challenge: This week use the 7-Day Journal starting on page 147.

Prayer: Have someone in your group read aloud the Prayer for God's Grace on page 143.

Journey Toward Hope: A Guided Experience **Discussion Group Leader's Guide**
Edition 1.2

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