

Hope Community Services (HOPE) - Philosophy of Care Nurturing Hope and Opportunity

Related policy: Governance and Leadership - Orienting Principles (GLP1)

Introduction

This document articulates the core Philosophy of Care that underpins HOPE's work. Our Philosophy of Care provides us with a framework through which we view and understand our clients and the wider communities we work with. In effect, it is the lens through which we see each other, our actions, behaviours, and attitudes.

HOPE's Philosophy of Care is key to further developing our organisational culture, i.e. the system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs, which governs how we behave as an organisation.

When we recruit, we seek people who are aligned to our organisational culture, and therefore share the same lens through which we see our clients and the wider communities we work with.

The following characteristics make up HOPE's Philosophy of Care.

CORE BELIEFS

HOPE has a rich history of passion and commitment for the wellbeing of the community, and draws on its Christian heritage to inform our identity.

The past Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, articulated it so well when he stated:

"...there are no superfluous people, no 'spare' people in the human world. All are needed for the good of all. Human failure is tragic and terrible because it means that some unique and unrepeatable aspect of God's purpose has been allowed to vanish...the Christian gospel declares that there is nothing more Godlike and precious than a single human person"

2007 "Christianity, Religion and the Public Good"

The core beliefs in HOPE's Philosophy of Care are:

- all people are created equal and worthy of dignity and respect;
- each person is uniquely and inherently valuable; and
- individual communities and society as a whole are enriched by the contributions of people struggling to deal with challenges such as alcohol and other drug misuse, poor mental health and social disadvantage.

PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

In our work, we adopt a person-centred approach in which staff become the resource that clients can draw upon during their journey of recovery (Perkins and Repper, 2003).

The key principles of a person-centred approach are:

- **Valuing people**

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Treating people with dignity and respect by being aware of and supporting personal perspectives, values, beliefs and preferences. Listening to each other and working in partnership to design and deliver services.

- **Autonomy**
Balancing rights, risks, and responsibilities. Reflecting on choices and subsequently respecting the choices made. Supporting a person’s autonomy by sharing decision-making. Maximising independence by building on the person’s strengths, interest, and abilities.
- **Life experience**
Supporting a person’s sense of self by understanding the importance of the person’s past, their present-day experience, and their hopes for the future.
- **Understanding relationships**
Collaborative relationships between staff and clients and their Carers and between staff at different levels of the organisation. Supporting social connectedness through opportunities to engage in meaningful activities with the local community.
- **Responsive environment**
A planned, organisation-wide effort to support individual and organisational learning that is responsive to individual needs.

STRENGTHS-BASED PERSPECTIVE

HOPE is committed to being a leader in the delivery of strengths-based and empowerment services to people with complex needs, in the areas of alcohol and other drug misuse, poor mental health, and social disadvantage.

A strengths-based perspective offers ways of working that focus on strengths, abilities, and potential, rather than problems, deficits, and pathologies (Chapin, 1995; Early & Glen Maye, 2000; Saleebey, 1992d; Weick et al., 1989).

Sometimes in our work, the magnitude or volume of problems troubling a person or family seems overwhelming. It is important to begin the recovery process with a realistic view of the challenges and risks and, at the same time, hold a positive vision for the future.

At HOPE, we look for the inherent strengths of a person or family, and then work with them to build on these strengths to aid in their recovery through taking responsibility for their own journey. A strengths-based approach includes:

- reframing personal perception to find strengths even in the most challenging situations
- not describing individual or family functioning in terms of problems or deficits
- not using language or terminology that stigmatizes or labels people, and which people may use on themselves and accept, eventually identify with, and feel helpless to change
- focusing on what is or has been successful for the person in the past, and which they can build upon to face current challenges with realistic expectations of success
- reducing the power and authority barriers between staff and clients by acknowledging that the client is the expert in regards to what has worked, what does not work, and what might work in their situation

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- staff embracing the role of partner or guide rather than the expert who ‘knows best’ or has all the answers

TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH

Trauma refers to an event, or ongoing events, that psychologically overwhelm an individual. HOPE recognises that the majority of our clients have experienced personal and/or intergenerational trauma, which can profoundly affect their health, thoughts, beliefs, actions, and service needs. Alcohol and other drug misuse, poor mental health, antisocial behaviour or involvement with the justice system, and social disadvantage are understood within the context of trauma history and viewed as adaptations to trauma rather than pathologies.

HOPE adopts a strengths-based trauma-informed approach that understands and responds to the impact of trauma. The service approach emphasizes psychological, emotional, and physical safety, recognises lived experience, and creates opportunities for survivors of trauma to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. This framework empowers individuals to learn about the nature of their trauma and to take responsibility in their own recovery.

Our trauma-informed approach to working with individuals, families, and children includes:

- Listening and responding with respect, which helps to develop a sense of dignity, a sense of being valued as a person, and a sense of self-worth.
- Communicating a framework for shared understanding, which helps to develop a sense of meaning within daily life.
- Building rapport and relationships, which helps to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness with others.
- Establishing structure, routine, and expectations, which helps to develop a sense of order and predictability in the world, as well as a sense of trust in the reliability of others.
- Offering emotional and developmental support, which helps to develop a sense of others caring and self-mastery.
- Sharing power and decision-making, which helps to develop a sense of personal power.
- Respecting personal space and time, which helps to develop a sense of independence.
- Discovering and uncovering potential, which helps to develop a sense of hope and opportunity.
- Providing resources, which helps to develop a sense of gratitude and generosity.

EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

HOPE, as an organisation, is aware of structural inequalities that cause barriers for people seeking access to meaningful service provision. Hence, through reflective practice, we seek to identify inequalities, name our own privilege, and attempt - wherever practicable - to break down those barriers and improve access for all people to engage in their own recovery. We combine participation, partnership, and empowerment, which offer the potential for the client's voice to be heard and acted on.

We see empowerment as a process through which people gain - or regain - control over their own lives. “It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society by acting on issues that they define as important” (Journal of

Extension). In the process of empowerment, we support people to develop the attitudes, skills, and behaviours by which they can expand their influence and power in society.

A RECOVERY PARADIGM

Recognising the level of poor mental health and mental illness experienced by people struggling with substance misuse, HOPE also draws upon the mental health recovery paradigm. Recovery is a process of healing and transformation that enables a person with a mental health problem to live a meaningful life in a community of their choice, while striving to achieve their full potential. HOPE has a goal to see people **flourish**.

Recovery is not a linear process, marked by a person achieving their goals; it is an attitude, a way of approaching the day, and facing challenges. Some of the cornerstone features of the recovery paradigm are hope, willingness, education, self-advocacy, support, and responsible action (Government of Western Australia, Mental Health Commission *Mental Health 2020: Making it personal and everybody's business*).

HOPE recognises the need for holistic psychosocial support because misuse of alcohol and other drugs, poor mental health, problems with the law, and social disadvantage do not happen in isolation. HOPE, through work and relationship building, aims to assist individuals and families to develop their skills and social connections.

The principal purpose of HOPE's support and intervention services is to develop a working alliance between clients and staff, as the clients work toward their hoped-for goals. We acknowledge that each client may define a successful and meaningful life in a different way, and this means we are guided by each client's own interpretation, but - at a fundamental level - it means that the client is:

- safe;
- has accommodation;
- is able to meet all of their basic needs and costs;
- is able to access medical services, as needed;
- holds a positive and productive connection with self, family, friends, and the community;
- is contributing to society meaningfully; and
- frequently experiences positive emotions associated with joy and optimism.

At HOPE we believe that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within them, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play (Seligman, 2002, *Positive Psychology*). Before this can be achieved, basic necessities such as shelter, safety, food, and medical needs must be addressed. Once these basic requirements are met, the goals of our engagement are to support and enable the person to:

- Learn to relate to self and others with awareness, acceptance, and compassion
- Learn to handle feelings and thoughts mindfully and constructively
- Create an empowering narrative about self
- Clarify personal values, goals, and character strengths

- Cultivate resilience and hope and a sense of meaning in life.

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