

# HOPE



in

faith

communities

# Table of contents

## **01**

Acknowledgments and introduction

## **02**

HOPE in ministries and activities

## **03**

Communications

## **04**

Resources for HOPE implementation

## **05**

Request training and technical assistance



# Acknowledgments and introductions



The Rev. Dr. Darrell Armstrong is the Pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church of Trenton, NJ, a thriving community of faith rooted in the African American worship tradition. As a father of two, Rev. Armstrong is committed to strengthening families. His professional and personal experiences illustrate his commitment to cross-sector engagement. He founded the research and training agency, Institute for Clergy Training, and previously served a 3-year term as the director of the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships for the NJ Department of Children & Families. Rev. Armstrong also has served on boards and committees for the Princeton Theological Seminary, Prevent Child Abuse America, Baptist World Alliance, and HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) program at Tufts Medical Center. He has policy training from Stanford University, theological training from Princeton Theological Seminary, and therapeutic and clinical training from the College of New Jersey.

Rabbi Geri Newburge was ordained as a rabbi in May 2003 from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, OH. She is a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). Rabbi Newburge is currently a rabbi at Main Line Reform Temple. Previously, she served as the Associate Rabbi at Temple Emanuel in Cherry Hill from 2003 to 2013. As a rabbi, she is highly-involved with creating connections with congregants, innovating liturgy, social action, youth, and Religious School programming. Rabbi Newburge grew up in South Florida and graduated from the University of Miami with a BA in Religious Studies in 1994. Then, in 1995, she moved to California to pursue a MA in Religion at the Claremont School of Theology, receiving her degree in May 1997. Rabbi Newburge is married to Rabbi Eric Goldberg, Rabbi Educator at Congregation Shir Ami in Newtown, PA, and they are proud parents of their son, Jay.



# Purpose of this toolkit

Why faith communities? Faith communities are in a unique position to promote Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) for children, youth, and families. Lifelong engagement, access to the whole family, programming, consistent contact, and outreach during traumatic times and their aftermath.

At HOPE National Resource Center, we recognize that the values of HOPE often align with various faith communities. Examples of this include: focusing on the good in people, not passing judgment on others, the importance of family and community through fellowship, and that a person's past does not define who they are as a human being. Each of these values represents one or more of the Four Building Blocks of HOPE.

Building blocks of HOPE from a faith perspective

- Relationships - Children are in a community where they have access to adults and other children.
- Environment - Children have a safe place to express themselves.
- Engagement - Children can engage in community events driven by the faith organization.
- Emotional growth - Children have the opportunity to engage in deep discussion about their faith and what that looks like in their day to day lives.

At its core, HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) is about systems and communities promoting access to PCEs for all families. Faith leaders are trusted voices for congregants and the larger community, and the efforts of faith leaders to spread HOPE will reverberate.

The HOPE National Resource Center acknowledges, respects, and celebrates the full spectrum of religious diversity while also recognizing that there are many people who are religiously unaffiliated. This toolkit is not intended to be a comprehensive guide for specific religions, and the HOPE National Resource Center offers a range of resources that support community-based and systems activities that support both religious and religiously unaffiliated children, youth, and families. Instead, this toolkit offers examples of ways that faith leaders can use HOPE to support their services, ministries, and work.

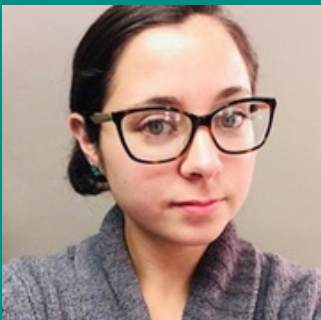
# About HOPE and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

Positive experiences can ease toxic stress and help children and youth grow into more resilient, healthier adults. HOPE identifies ways that our communities and systems of care can better ensure that all children have more positive experiences and that all families have support to nurture and celebrate their strengths.

The Four Building Blocks of HOPE are groupings of key positive childhood experiences (PCEs):

- Relationships within the family and with other children and adults through interpersonal activities.
- Safe, equitable, stable environments for living, playing, and learning at home and in school.
- Social and civic engagement to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Emotional growth through playing and interacting with peers for self-awareness and self-regulation.

The sources of positive experiences and opportunities in these four areas are the foundation for healthy childhood development, and faith communities touch all four building blocks.



Laura Gallant, MSW  
HOPE Research Assistant

[Learn more about HOPE by listening to the HOPEful podcast with Laura Gallant.](#)

# HOPE in ministries and activities <sup>pn</sup>

Faith communities can incorporate HOPE through various ministries and activities. Over the next few pages, you will see tips about how to bring HOPE into a faith community. This toolkit covers: children and youth groups, infant blessings and other rites of passage, education (private childcare and K-12), times of loss or grief, and holiday commemorations. The following video shows Rev. Darrell Armstrong talking about the integration of HOPE in his church's congregational home visiting program.

## CONGREGATIONAL HOME VISITING:

A faith-based practice of home-visiting to connect faith-leaders with early childhood development.

# Overall tips

Here are a few ideas on how to go about including HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) in your faith community.

**Building blocks:** Relationships, environments, social and civic engagement, and emotional growth

- HOPE is intended to support your existing work, activities, and ministries. You do not need to start anything from scratch (but you can).
- Reach out to the HOPE National Resource Center to get additional information and training about the HOPE framework.
- Use the [HOPE Clergy and faith leaders community](#) to connect and share ideas with other faith leaders who are using HOPE.
- You and/or administrative team may choose to participate in one of our HOPE implementation programs - such as: HOPE ambassadors, Train-the-facilitator, HOPE Innovation Network, Family and Community Experts (FACEs) Advisory Council.
- HOPE is designed to be flexible. The four building blocks do not change, but how you present the building blocks and the actual positive childhood experiences should reflect the culture of your faith community.

# Children and youth ministries with HOPE

A factsheet for integrating HOPE into the children and youth ministries and activities in your faith community

## Building blocks: Relationships, social and civic engagement

Many faith communities have ministries that are specifically for children and youth. In fact, many faith-based organizations have staff who are experts in child and youth outreach, e.g. a youth director. This is a list of activities that children and youth can participate in as ministries that promote peer-to-peer and adult-mentoring relationships and/or provide opportunities for them to experience social and civic engagement. These activities also reinforce that all of humanity is valuable and precious.

Here are examples of ways to include HOPE:

- Supporting other faith communities experiencing violence and discrimination such as anti-Semitism through interfaith, gun violence prevention, and social advocacy activities
- Partnering with community-based organizations that have religious affiliation such as a historically Black fraternity or sorority
- Supporting leadership development for youth by including them as members of committees and council and having youth-run activities
- Connect youth to seniors within your faith community to offer services and supports such as helping with a small task that might be difficult for a senior to do
- Setup an activity for the annual King Day of Service and use it as an opportunity to discuss equity



Tip to grow on: Have youth take on executive co

meeting chairperson or social director.

# Infant blessings and other rites of passage

A factsheet for integrating HOPE into the infant blessings and other rites of passages in your faith community

## **Building blocks:** Relationships, emotional growth

Faith leaders and faith communities interact with families as they start each new phase of life. You can include HOPE in different ways depending on the type of life event that is happening. This creates an opportunity for families to start out with an informed understanding of the importance of positive childhood experiences and already thinking about ways to provide those or advocate for them with the services they receive (e.g. doctor's visits, school meetings). All of this helps develop strong relationships and the emotional growth needed to move into this next stage of life. Here are examples of the types of rites of passage that can include HOPE:

- baby blessings and dedications
- baptism and christening
- first communion, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, confirmation
- premarital counseling

Here are examples of ways to include HOPE:

- provide a simple resource about HOPE
- offer a list of ways to get involved with activities and ministries in that will help them get access to all four building blocks
- integrate HOPE into your interactions with the child, youth, and family leading up to the rite of passage
- supplement existing curriculum or counseling sessions with more detailed information about HOPE or connecting some of the items to the four building blocks

# Education - private childcare and K-12

A factsheet for integrating HOPE into private childcare and K-12 education occurring in your faith community

**Building blocks:** Environment, emotional growth, social and civic engagement

There are faith communities that have offer childcare and/or K-12 education to the communities they serve. This is a wonderful opportunity to use HOPE because there is daily contact and interaction with children, youth, and families. This means that faith communities can stimulate emotional growth through peer-to-peer activities, create an environment that promotes family engagement, and offer opportunities for social and civic engagement.

Here are examples of ways to include HOPE:

- Add HOPE to existing models. HOPE can supplement what you are doing today Address bullying for the child experiencing bullying and the child exhibiting the bullying behavior using positive reinforcements Talk to children and families during drop-off and pick-up When facing behavioral challenges, ask children and families about what has worked and not worked for them in the past Invite families to participate as equal partners in decision-making Create a judgment free zone for all children and families
- Engage children in age-appropriate discussions about current events, such as racial unrest, and connect them to your beliefs



Tip to grow on:

Make sure that each child has an adult in the school who knows them, speaks with them frequently, and can help them navigate any issues

# Times of loss or grief

A factsheet for integrating HOPE when ministering to those experiencing loss or grief in your faith community

**Building blocks:** Emotional growth, social and civic engagement

Faith communities are an important part of coping with and healing from loss for many people. Being there for families during this time is, on its own, another way that your faith community aligns with HOPE because it leverages the supportive relationships that you have created in a caring environment, and walks children and families through that emotional growth process. One important way that grief support accomplishes is that it models empathy for children and youth. This happens when people have lost a loved one to death and when people have lost something significant in their life such as a divorce or a layoff. The COVID-19 pandemic caused loss and grief of all forms to increase in dramatic ways. Children and their families are feeling the impacts of this in ways previously not experienced. Additionally, communities who have experienced discriminatory violence, such as an attack on a synagogue. Similarly, members of that community may experience grief even when they were not physically at the location of the attack.

Here are examples of ways to include HOPE:

- Accompanying families to services and checking in on them
- Having children and youth help prepare a meal for the family experiencing loss or grief
- Connect children and youth experiencing loss and grief to a peer "buddy" or offer friendship Engage in trauma

# Holiday commemorations

A factsheet for integrating HOPE into holiday commemorations and traditions in your faith community **Building blocks:** Relationships, social and civic engagement, emotional growth, environment

Holiday commemorations can instill pride in the religious and cultural affiliation, especially for children and youth. These are also times that families typically spend together. In other situations, families may not be able to spend holidays together due to family dynamics and/or work schedules, and commemorating holidays as a broader faith community can help children and families to benefit from the commemoration and tradition even when those circumstances occur.

Here are examples of ways to include HOPE:

- Ask children to actively participate in services by reading from a religious text, leading a prayer, or lighting a candle
- Provide family activities when appropriate
- During festive holidays, host a gift drive for children and youth, and have the children and youth in your faith community coordinate it
- Find ways to remind families and educate children of the religious foundation of the commemoration
- Help children learn about commemorations that people of other faiths observe ([resource example](#))



Tip to grow on: Find ideas for arts and crafts on w

Pinterest, such as [this post](#) for Ramadan

# Communications

Many faith communities use a variety of communications methods to connect with each other. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to faith communities using, different, often tech-related, methods of communication. As a result, many individuals are accessing information in new ways, having gained knowledge and experience throughout the pandemic.

Generally, written, graphic, or video communications give people the opportunity to refer back to useful information at times when it may be useful to them. This speaks to the diverse ways that people learn new information. Often, it is best to use a multifaceted approach to outreach efforts.

The HOPE National Resource Center encourages faith leaders to incorporate HOPE into existing communication channels. In this section, you will find samples and templates that you can use in a variety of communications. These include: text for an email blast, a newsletter or bulletin insert, and social media tools.

## Email blast from faith leader

Subject Line: New framework to support our ministries

Text:

HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) is a new framework that supports a positive approach to how we minister to children and families. Using HOPE will help us remember not to focus on what is “wrong” with each other. Instead, HOPE shifts our focus to the inherent human dignity and value endowed by our Creator. Specifically, HOPE shows us researched approaches to promote the kinds of positive childhood experiences that support children’s growth into healthy, resilient adults.

I hope that you will take a moment to learn more about HOPE and the four building blocks. I also hope that you will engage in the process of working this into our existing activities and ministries or even creating new ones. HOPE can help us to have healthier lives with our families, giving us a greater opportunity to share with others and carry out our purpose in this world!



HEALTHY OUTCOMES  
FROM POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

# Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences

HOPE - Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences - is a new way of seeing and talking about experiences that support children's growth and development into healthy, resilient adults.

Research shows that positive childhood experiences (PCEs) drive healthy development and lessen the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). There are four types of PCEs that support long-term adult health called the "Four Building Blocks of HOPE." It is important for communities and families to give children as much access to PCEs in the "Four Building Blocks of HOPE" as possible.

The Four Building Blocks of HOPE are

1. Relationships within the family and with other children and adults through interpersonal activities.
2. Safe, equitable, and stable environments for living, playing, learning at home and in school
3. Social and civic engagement to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness.
4. Emotional growth through playing and interacting with peers for self-awareness and self-regulation.

# Social media posts

Social media handle: @HOPETuftsMC

You can include HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) into your social media strategy. Here are some sample posts that you can use.

## Facebook



Click to download image file

## Instagram



Click to download image file



## Instagram



Click to download image file

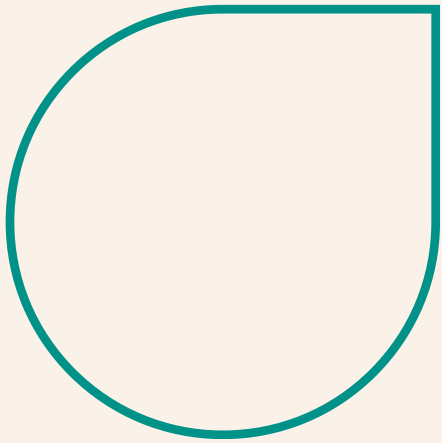


# Resources for HOPE implementation

[HOPE resource library](#) - Here, you will find fact sheets, media appearances, presentations, publications, stories, and more.

- [The Science of the Positive at the Montana Institute](#)
- [FAAITH - Faith Leaders Against Abuse in the Home](#)
- [The Center for the Study of Social Policy](#)





## Request training and technical assistance

The HOPE National Resource Center provides a number of training and technical assistance programs for anyone looking to expand their knowledge of HOPE or tell others about HOPE.

- [Directory](#) of certified HOPE facilitators
- [Training](#) to become a HOPE ambassador or facilitator
- [Online learning course](#)

If none of these options meet your needs, email the HOPE National Resource Center -  
[HOPE@tuftsmedicalcenter.org](mailto:HOPE@tuftsmedicalcenter.org).