



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Focus on STRENGTHS

- What are my strengths/family's strengths
- How do I see them on display during this season?
- How can we lean into our strengths and grow together?

Focus on COMMUNITY

- Who is in my corner supporting me?
- Who can I ask for support?
- What ways would I like to be supported?

Focus on being PRESENT

- What glimpses of goodness can you spot today?
- What ordinary moment can you savor?

EXPLORING HOPE

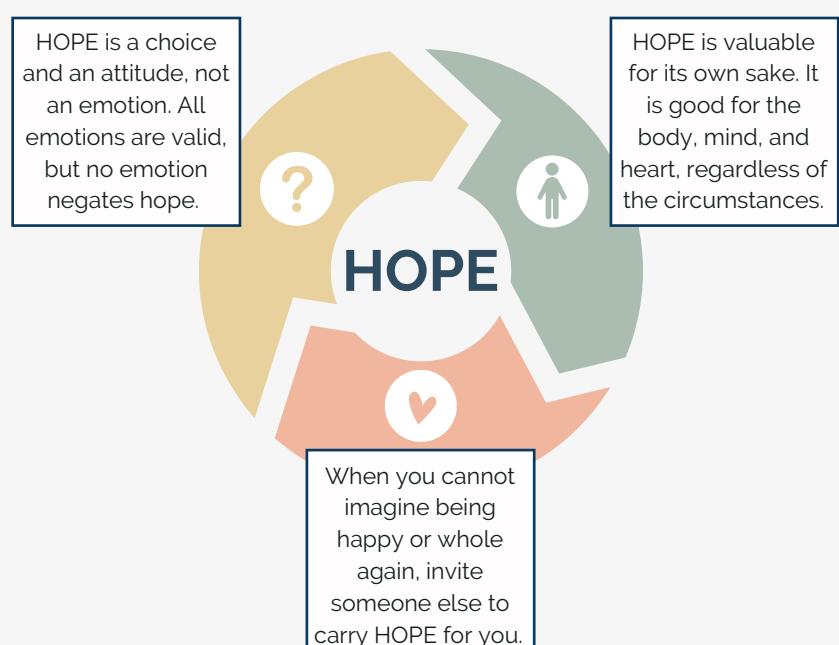
RESOURCES & REFLECTIVE GUIDES

Grief and Suffering are layered and the path through is not linear.

There are times when it is easier to hope, to see the "future good, difficult but possible to attain," as Thomas Aquinas puts it.

There are times when the darkness and heaviness feels so thick that it feels impossible to hope. It is okay if you are in a season where it is hard to have hope right now. Life is hard and what you are carrying is heavy.

Here are some things to consider when HOPE seems hard or impossible:





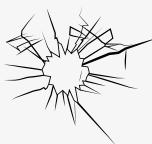
USE THIS EXERCISE

Use this flow chart to reflect and process how to go from a close fist of expectations to an open hand of surrender.

LET IT GO: SURRENDERING HOLIDAY EXPECTATIONS



What are your expectations for the holidays? List everything that comes to mind (no need to even be rational!).



What are the worst things that could happen if those expectations don't happen?



What is your main goal for the holiday season? What is most important to you?



Who can you communicate that goal to and invite on your team?



What expectations do you need to surrender?



What truth do you need to embrace? (Think short phrases you can repeat over and over when you're feeling disappointed.)



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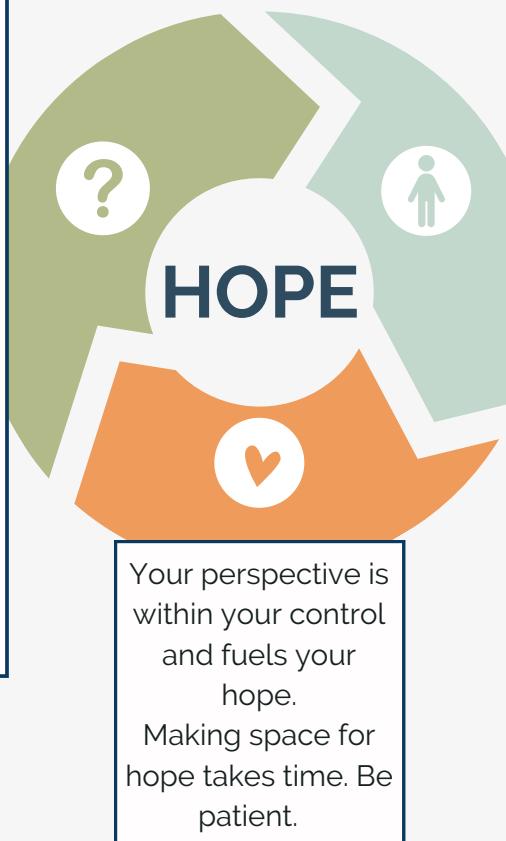
- Work through the visual left to right and carefully think through each question.

Put Off...

What do you feel hopeless about?

In order to put off hopelessness and embrace hope, it is important to think through:

- The past: What do you miss?
- The present: What do you wish could be true today?
- The future: What things you may never have here on earth?



Put On...

What do you feel? How are you grieving?

When you make space to feel the unpleasant emotions, you also make room for new, hopeful emotions.

- Who is a trusted person you can share your grief with?
- The darkness cannot last forever. What do you want to fill it with?
- What do you hope for?

Repeat this exercise daily to invite your emotions to be felt and accepted.



WAYS TO USE THIS ACTIVITY

- Make a copy set for each family member.
- Choose a day of the week to answer a prompt on the back.
- Create your "hope jar" out of a mason jar. Consider decorating it as a family with paints or sharpies to add your own personal touch.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: MAKE A HOPE JAR

Inviting hope can feel scary and vulnerable. But the journey of surrendering fears and embracing hope is a whole family approach, even as you each process differently.

This activity gives space to feel the emotions as independent family members while also hoping as a family unit.

Cut up the below cards and answer the prompts (drawing pictures or writing a response.) Display the answered prompts in your own "hope jar" on display in the home.



WHO IS 1 PERSON YOU CAN GO TO IF YOU NEED TO TALK ABOUT HOW YOU'RE FEELING?

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE A SAFE PERSON TO KNOW ABOUT HOW YOU'RE FEELING?

WHAT IS 1 THING YOU FEEL SCARED ABOUT FOR THE FUTURE?

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT COULD GIVE YOU COMFORT? (EX: MAKING A T-SHIRT BLANKET OF YOUR PARENT'S TO SLEEP WITH AT NIGHT)?

WHAT IS 1 THING YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOURSELF OR YOU ARE GOOD AT?

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO TO ENJOY TODAY?

WHO IS 1 PERSON YOU KNOW HAVING A HARD TIME?

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU COULD DO TO SHOW SOMEONE WHO IS HURTING SOME LOVE?

WORDS OF HOPE

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

Romans 15:13

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Hebrews 11:1

"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Isaiah 40:31

"For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

Romans 8:24-25

"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

Romans 12:12