



Sharing Hope: Co-creating understandings of what gives young people hope

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Youth-Led Summary of the Research

Rangatahi and Hope

Young people do better in life when they feel a sense of hope – when they have a long-term focus and faith in their future and that of the people close to them, the wider community or their environment. Hope motivates and gives us a sense of purpose - it helps us keep going and striving, even when things are tough.

The Collaborative Trust, with generous support from the Oakley Foundation, recently completed some youth-led research exploring the concept of hope, what it means for rangatahi, what builds feelings of hope and what gets in the way of feeling hopeful. We asked young people how we can help young people feel more hopeful.

What did we find out? (Anei nga kete matauranga)

We know is **easier for rangatahi** to feel a sense of hope when they:

- have access to the financial resources and opportunities needed to support their hopes
- are aware of their mental and physical health and understand their hauora / wellbeing needs
- have supportive whānau and friends around them who accept them for who they are
- feel good about themselves
- have access to the practical and emotional supports they need in order to thrive

And it is often more **difficult for rangatahi** to feel a sense of hope when:

- poverty is a big part of their journey
- opportunities are limited
- people judge them and decide things about them and what they are capable of based on their ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, age, faith etc.
- people close to them try to control them
- they face mental and physical health challenges but struggle to access supports to overcome these
- they don't believe in themselves
- they lack influence and feelings of power to be able to change things for the better

Rangatahi told us a lot about how they could **help themselves to feel more hopeful**. They also told us a lot about how young people **could help their friends and others** around them.



What can you do for yourself and other rangatahi to feel more hopeful?

Ma wai i ora ai?

- **Whaia te whakaohoho** - Find ways to experience and express joy – do things that inspire you and others
- **Manaakitanga** - Practice acts of kindness and generosity, and take notice of the kindness you receive from others
- **He kai kei aku ringa** - Be mindful of your skills and strengths and the part these things can play in your future and the future of others
- **Aroha mai, aroha atu** - Practise being the friend to others that you need for yourself – listen, encourage, play and laugh together

Ko wai ou kaiarahi?

- **Spend time with the role models** in your whānau and your community who believe in you, and encourage your friends to spend time with their own role models
- **Make your voice heard** about things that you are passionate about

Some of the rangatahi interviewed in our research were asked to identify a whakatauki, a proverb, that captured hope.

Ka mate kainga tahi, ka ora kainga rua

This tells us that from challenges come the opportunities to make positive change to the world we live in.

If you want to find out more about this research, check out The Collaborative Trust's website, <https://www.collaborative.org.nz/>.



How can you foster hope in rangatahi? Information for people supporting rangatahi

Young people do better in life when they feel a sense of hope – when they have a future focus and faith in their future and that of the people close to them, the wider community or their environment. Hope motivates and gives rangatahi a sense of purpose.

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- feel good about themselves
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And it is much **trickier for rangatahi** to feel a sense of hope when:

- poverty is a big part of their journey
- opportunities are limited
- people judge them and decide things about them and what they are capable of based on their ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, age, faith etc.
- people close to them try to control them
- they face mental and physical health challenges and it's hard to access supports to overcome these
- they don't believe in themselves
- they lack influence and feelings of power to be able to change things for the better

Rangatahi told us a lot about how they could help themselves to feel more hopeful. They also told us a lot about how young people could help their friends and others around them.

What can we do as a community to support rangatahi to feel more hopeful?

Whānau:

- Be supportive – love your kids for who they are, celebrate their success and generally uplift and affirm them
- Check in on young people often, listen to them and spend time with them
- As much as you are able, provide ways to help them towards their goals
- Advocating for young people



Schools:

- Affirm young people in their goals – build their confidence and self-belief and challenge them to pursue their aspirations
- Actively build self-knowledge and awareness in young people, and communicate better with whānau about how they can best support their rangatahi
- Offer consistent support to young people
- Ensure availability of strong individual pastoral care
- Advocate strongly for resourcing to overcome financial hardship

Community (marae, clubs, youth groups, religious organisations):

- Involve young people in decisions that affect them
- Operate in a fair and respectful manner, and make sure rangatahi feel safe
- Be welcoming to all rangatahi - encourage and foster connection
- Ensure that supports are available for young people who are struggling, and that these supports are accessible
- Embrace diversity and take an inclusive approach

Decision makers (local and central government, funding bodies etc.):

- Get more involved with young people - engage and listen to them, make youth-informed decisions
- Invest more strongly in proactive mental health systems
- Make Healthcare more affordable, empathetic and foster autonomy
- Increase disability awareness, and improve opportunities for people with disabilities
- Reduce inequality
- Recognise and embrace diversity
- Support young people towards their hopes and dreams
- Encourage Government to take a long-term focus

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If you want to find out more about this research, check out The Collaborative Trust's website, <https://www.collaborative.org.nz/>. We have a training workshop developed from this research: get in touch via the website to book.



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1. Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world, and too many young people in Aotearoa experience high levels of mental illness and mental distress. Across New Zealand, the Te Hiringa Hauora - Health Promotion Agency (Kvalsvig, 2018) has described the levels of mental distress in young people as “concerning” (p. 5): one in ten young people have thoughts about being better off dead or about hurting themselves, both of which can be a precursor for subsequent suicide attempts or death. The latest findings from the Youth 19 study (Fleming et al., 2020) of over 5,000 New Zealand high school students show that 23% reported significant symptoms of depression. This represents an increase of 10% since 2012, when the proportion of young people with symptoms of depression was 13%. Symptoms are higher among female students, Māori and Pasifika, Asian students, those in lower income communities and those from sexual and gender minority groups. The combination of mental distress, symptoms of depression and loneliness, the highest levels of which are in people age 15-24 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2019), seen in young people in New Zealand can seriously compromise young people’s ability to cope with day-to-day stress. In turn, it is plausible that these factors are some of the drivers of the high suicide rates of young people in Aotearoa.

Past studies of hope have established the associations between having a sense of hope and reductions in suicidal ideation (Chang, 2017), mental distress (Griggs, 2017), substance use (Brooks et al., 2016) improved wellbeing (Ciarrochi et al., 2015) and academic success (Snyder et al., 2002). The benefits of having hope in life can be direct, practical and powerful and may prove a key ingredient in reducing mental distress and supporting young people to live well. A key barrier to exploring the role of hope in promoting the health and wellbeing of young New Zealanders is the paucity of information we have from young people about hope. Through this research, we aimed to explore young people’s understandings of hope and how these can be used to inform and support the healthy development of young people. We sought to provide a voice for young people, too often missing from the youth research literature.

The research sought to answer the following questions:

- What gives young people a sense of hope?
- What are the barriers that make it hard for young people to feel hopeful?
- How can hope be fostered among young people in Aotearoa?

The research was strongly anchored to the Positive Youth Development Aotearoa Framework (Wayne Francis Charitable Trust and Collaborative Trust, 2021) and its core principles:

- 1) A strengths-based approach,
- 2) Respectful relationships
- 3) Building ownership and empowerment.

From the outset, The Hope Project was intended to be a pilot study that would provide a voice for young people, too often missing from the youth research literature. Accordingly, the project utilised a participant or “peer research” methodology (Higgins, Nairn & Sligo 2007), in which people with lived experience of the issues being studied, or in this case belonging to the same population being studied, take part in directing and conducting the research. Peer research aims to move away from the ‘extractive’ model of social research and instead, seeks to empower people to affect positive change



by participating in research and in their own communities (Yang & Dibb, 2020). The methodology is increasingly being used in youth research.

This approach was chosen because it presents many advantages, including empowering young people, and providing access to participant populations who we may well not otherwise reach (because peer researchers can use their own relationships and networks of trust to engage with participants). It also brings the advantage of lived experience, reducing risk of misunderstanding data. It activates young people to invest in their own wellbeing and that of others, and it would offer the training opportunities already outlined (Yang & Dibb, 2020).

The research sought to give voice to young people from diverse backgrounds and populations over-represented in negative mental health statistics including suicide: Māori, Pasifika and young people from the LGBTQI+ spectrum and disability communities. The Hope Project's advisory group (Dame Sue Bagshaw, Dr Janet Spittlehouse, Leoma Tawaroa, Dr Louise Tapper, Steve Langley, Dr Ria Schroder and Sulekha Korg) reached out to key contacts in youth-based organisations working with these groups, informed them of the research, and gave them information regarding the kind of young people being sought as peer researchers on the project (see Appendix 1), as well as identifying suitable young people directly. Given the positive focus of the research, we wanted to avoid a conventional recruitment process of shortlisting and declining some candidates. Instead, by making sure that those recruiting peer researchers were very clear on the skills and characteristics required for the role, those invited to join the team were suitable candidates.

In total, eight peer researchers were recruited to The Hope Project, and of these, five were male, two female and one non-binary, four were rangatahi Māori, one Samoan and three Pakeha, two had disabilities, two were care-experienced, and at least three had accessed mental health supports in the past. The average age for the peer researchers was just over 21 years, and they ranged in age from 18 to 24. Six of the researchers were based in Ōtautahi Christchurch, and two who were studying in Otepoti Dunedin were from Invercargill and Hutt Valley respectively. The lead researcher was an experienced community-based social researcher with a high level of experience in positive youth development research, and prior experience supporting peer researchers.

In order to obtain funding for the research, the research questions were already determined before the peer researchers were recruited. However, the peer researchers largely designed the research methodology themselves, over the course of a two-day hui, with more detailed planning undertaken following the hui by two of the peer researchers working alongside the lead researcher. The research was assessed and approved by the New Zealand Ethics Committee (NZEC21_46). The process of developing the research design and the ethics application took around six weeks, long enough for circumstances of one of the researchers, the only Pasifika researcher, to change and for him to withdraw from the team.

During the hui at the commencement of the project, the peer researchers developed a collective set of values/kaupapa for the project, underpinned by honesty/vulnerability, manaakitanga and responsible research practices. Values included acceptance, kindness, honest, vulnerability, respect / mana-enhancing, manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga, confidentiality, support, sensitivity, authenticity, gentleness and grace, humility, determination, purposefulness and action-orientation.



Time was spent in the hui determining the strengths and interests of each of the rangatahi in relation to the research process. While some rangatahi chose to limit their involvement to data collection, others chose to be involved in the ethics process and research design, or data analysis and presentation. Five rangatahi (two tāne Māori, one wāhine Māori, one non-binary New Zealand European and one male New Zealand European with disabilities) acted as interviewers / facilitators in data collection.

While a high level of energy for the project was developed at the initial hui, the relatively long lead-in time from this to ethics approval led to a loss of momentum and initially, of confidence for some researchers. Some required a high level of support at the start of the data collection journey. Further confounding things, the ongoing Covid-19 situation meant that some planned data collection was significantly delayed, while other plans had to be changed to meet Covid-19 restrictions. With two of the team members located outside Ōtautahi (and also not located in the same location once the university year ended), and no budget in place to enable ongoing hui, opportunities for peer researchers to connect with each other as a whole were limited. For any future projects of this type, it would be good to build regular team meetings into the plan to develop relationships, to develop stronger accountability and build confidence in the peer researcher role. Transport also proved a barrier for some of the peer researchers, and budget or provision around this is also strongly recommended for any similar future project.



2. Method

While the peer researchers explored a range of research techniques in their discussions in developing the present project, they settled on three qualitative research techniques for gathering data:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups within Rangatahi Wānanga
- Creative writing and/or spoken word addressing the research questions via essay/ manu korero and poetry

Participants were largely recruited by the peer researchers themselves,¹ from a combination of their social networks and the groups from which they were themselves recruited as researchers: Project Search (a disability service supporting young people with disabilities in the transition from school to employment/training/tertiary education), 298 Youth Health Centre and its Transformers transgender support group, and contacts through kapa haka networks of one researcher. Young people were given an information sheet explaining the research and this was also fully explained to them by the researcher on first contact and again when obtaining full and informed consent before the interviews proceeded.

In total, 18 young people were interviewed as part of the research, across 16 individual semi-structured interviews and two paired interviews. Interviews were in most cases conducted kānohi ki te kānohi/face-to-face in a mutually suitable location. Wherever possible, interviewers were encouraged to choose locations where supports were readily available should the young person become distressed, and where the young person felt at ease.

The interview questions² are included in Appendix 2.

With participant's consent, interviews were audio-recorded, but a number of participants declined this. In these cases, interviewers took extensive notes during the interview.

One of the peer researchers is legally blind and a non-braille user, and it took some time to develop a system of reading the research questions in the context of an interview. The model which he landed on was to have his phone read the questions out to him through his airpods, while the lead researcher sat in on the interview and took notes, as well as audio-recording the interview with consent. One of his interviews took place over speakerphone, two in person and one paired interview took place via Zoom, with a support person also present with the two participants (with learning disabilities) and the peer researcher and lead researcher together watching / hearing them via a screen.

In addition to the semi-structured interview schedule (refer Appendix 2), participants completed a short demographic form (Appendix 3) which asked their age, gender, ethnicity, whether they

¹ Two participants were recruited for submission of written responses after expressing an interest in participating to the lead researcher.

² One of the interviewers, taking a Kaupapa Māori approach to the data collection, also asked each of her interviewees if they had a whakataukī they wanted to share on the topic of hope: all did, and these are also presented in the research findings.



identified as LGBTQIA+, whether they had a disability and asked them to give a rating regarding the level of challenge they had encountered in their lives. This was paired with their responses.

All participants were offered a sheet with a list of supports available to them should they wish to access these after the interview and received a \$10 shopping voucher as a small koha to thank them for their participation. They could also be connected to supports by the interviewer if needed.

Two rangatahi Māori peer researchers planned from the outset to undertake focus groups at an upcoming rangatahi Māori wānanga that they were to be involved in in leadership roles. This did not proceed in 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions, and was delayed until later in 2022, beyond the timeframe for the present research. However, the findings of the wānanga should be considered alongside the present research when it does proceed.

Three further young people chose to submit a response to the interview questions in writing, but these took the form of essays, rather than poems or other creative approaches to written word.

Data was thematically analysed by the lead researcher, and for the majority of the analysis alongside one the peer researchers in a team approach.

The present report comprises a presentation of the research findings in a traditional research report, written by the lead researcher. However, sitting alongside this are a number of other documents and presentations of the findings prepared by the peer researchers themselves, guided by the present report, and their own first-hand experience of data gathering. The reader is urged to also make full use of these resources.

Where quotes are presented in the report, the decision was made to not provide descriptors of the rangatahi (age, gender, ethnicity), in order to preserve anonymity, given the small sample size and the fact that some of the researchers were also participants.

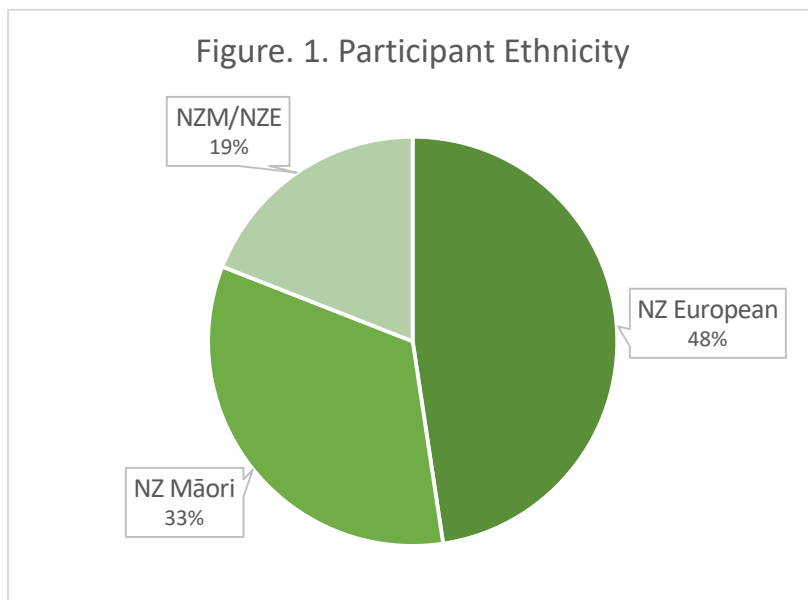


3. The Respondent Group

Twenty-one young people took part in the Hope Project as participants, including three of the peer researchers themselves, who chose to be interviewed by another peer researcher. Likely to have been impacted by the withdrawal of the Pasifika peer researcher, no Pasifika young people were recruited for the research, but the respondent group did align well with the other demographic targets of the project.

Of the 21 participants, 52.4% (n=11) identified as New Zealand Māori, with four of these rangatahi identifying as New Zealand Māori / New Zealand European. 47.6% of participants identified as New Zealand European/European. The present research was designed as a pilot study: the absence of voices of young people identifying as Asian, Pasifika and Middle Eastern/Latin American and African will hopefully be addressed in future research.

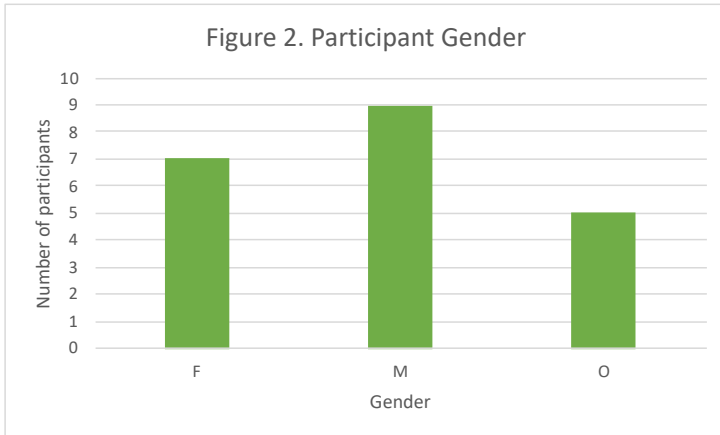
Figure 1. Participant Ethnicity



The research actively sought to engage with rangatahi who identified as LGBTQI+: a third (n=7) of participants identified as part of the rainbow community. Of these, 5 rangatahi identified their gender as other.



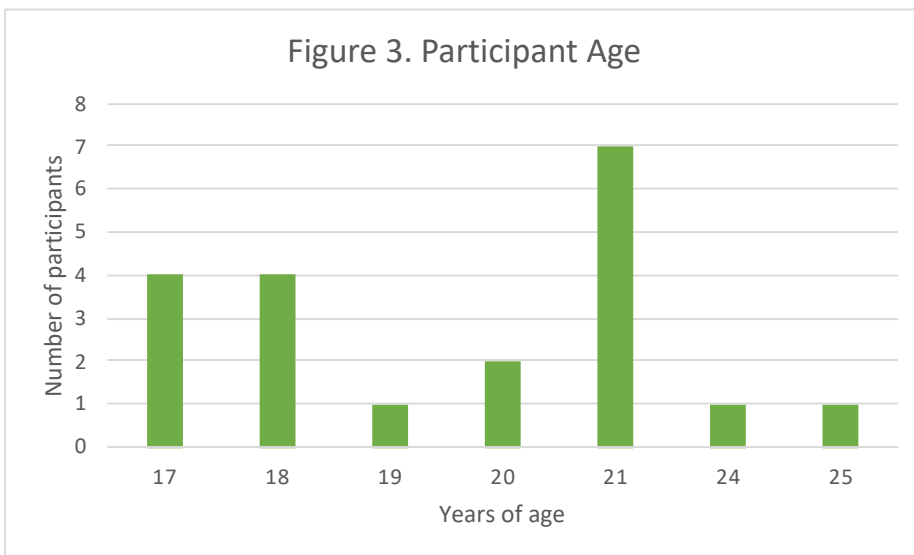
Figure 2. Participant Gender



Gender of participants is presented in Figure 2. One third of participants identified as female (n=7: “F” in graph), 42.9% (n=9) as male (“M”) and as stated, 23.8% (n=5) identified gender as “Other” on the demographic form they completed (“O” in graph).

The average age of young people interviewed was 19 years and 11 months, and ages ranged from 17 to 25 years. Ages of participants are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Participant Age



The demographic form asked participants if they had a disability, but did not further define this: 10 indicated that they did, and one person preferred not to say whether they had a disability. In the course of the interviews, more detail was provided around disability for those with impairments, and this detail is used in the present breakdown. Five of the participants had a significant learning disability/developmental delay, one had a significant physical disability, and four identified having a mental health/psychological trauma disability and/or being neurodiverse (ASD, ADHD).

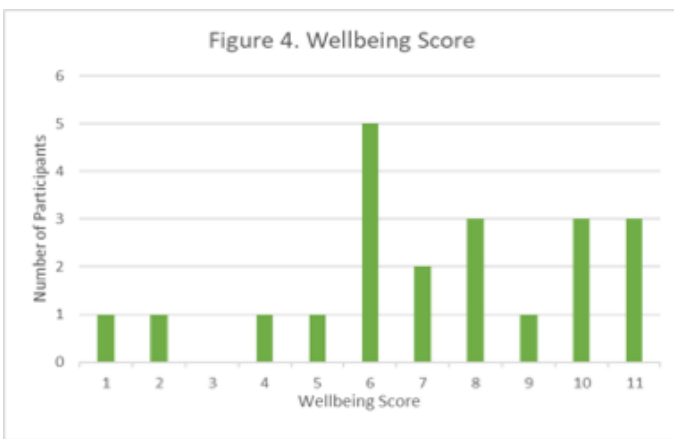


The demographic form presented an 11-point Likert rating scale, as follows:

On the following scale, please mark where your life stacks up in terms of mental, physical and social wellbeing – 1 means that life for you has been as plain sailing as it could be and 11 means you’ve faced a lot of wellbeing challenges for someone your age.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I have mostly experienced positive wellbeing					I have faced some challenges to my wellbeing					I have faced more wellbeing challenges than most people my age

Figure 4. Participant Wellbeing Score



Scores are presented in Figure 4. The average rating on this scale was 7.2, with scores ranging right across the scale from 1 (n=1) to 11 (n=3). All of those rating their wellbeing journey as a 10 or 11, indicating greatest level of challenge, either identified as LGBTQI+ or as having a disability, and in three cases both.



3. Findings

People the rangatahi admire

In developing the interview schedule, the team felt that with hope being a very abstract concept, it might help by thinking to begin with about people rangatahi admire, the reasons behind this, and whether these people are in any way associated with the hopes and aspirations of participants. Asked about a person or people they admire, over half identified members of their whānau, and most commonly their parent(s) (n=4), their tupuna/grandparent(s) (n=4) or siblings (n=3). Three of the participants chose not to talk about individual people but rather, they expressed admiration for personal qualities in the people they look up to. Two participants identified sports personalities as the people they look up to most, while individual participants also identified their mentor, a political activist and a person who had overcome challenges, a celebrity, a particular friend or work associate, and a support professional respectively.

Asked what it was about the people they look up to that they admire, the strongest theme emerging (n=8) was around the kind and caring nature of that person(s) and their dedication to their whānau/family and community, and in the case of Māori, their hapu and iwi.

"They always put others' needs before their own - taking care of everyone around them. This has been a constant in my upbringing and something which they have raised me to value. My dad spends a lot of time taking care of his sickly mother, and the rest of his time is spent working. Mum has always juggled huge familial commitments and lots of work. She is awesome - I know that most mums have to do this anyway but I still think it is pretty cool."

"She led with her heart and her head. I hope to be like that and do right to my whānau and community."

The people admired were very commonly (n=6) identified as very supportive and encouraging of the rangatahi interviewed. They were also commonly identified as inspiring (n=5) and resilient (n=4).

"Despite dealing with traumatic events both managed to complete postgraduate study."

Other reasons that several participants admired about the person they look up to were as follows:

- They have a great work ethic and drive
- They give good advice
- They treat them with respect and dignity and accept them for who they are
- They build them up / always encourage them/empower them
- Leadership qualities

The following reasons for admiring the person they look up to were mentioned by individuals:

- They are close to them and important to them
- They normalise the rangatahi's own sexuality, and they themselves are more than just their sexuality
- They are family-orientated
- They have high emotional intelligence
- They make the rangatahi feel understood
- Honesty



- Financial savviness
- Practical skills
- They are a significant male role model to the young person in the absence of a Dad
- Their community involvement
- Adaptability
- Skills
- They have their own business
- They are committed to a great cause and strive for a better future
- They continue to learn throughout life
- They listen to them
- They are physically very healthy
- Their success
- The person is the rangatahi's namesake
- They have shared experiences
- They make them smile and bring joy when things are tough
- They built their own self awareness
- They share their skills with others

Most commonly when asked if they wanted to be like the person or people they admired, and if so in what way, participants identified personality and character traits as the things they most wanted to emulate:

- to live the same values, morals or acceptance of others that they saw in the person they most admire (n=5)
- to be reciprocal and give back to others (n=4)
- to be community-orientated in the way they lived their own lives (n=3) and
- to be resilient (n=3).

Four of the participants talked about how they didn't want to be the same as the person they admired, but they were inspired by them to live their life the way they want personally.

Other ways that young people less commonly wanted to be like the person they admire included being:

- Confident
- Independent
- Able to advocate for themselves and for others
- Able to proactively care for their own wellbeing
- Courageous
- Kind
- Able to build things for themselves
- Famous at sports
- To make others around them happy
- To be unique and inspiring
- To be as successful as the person they admire is
- To be remembered for sacrifice and contribution to things greater than themselves.



What is Hope?

With the warm-up exercise completed, the interview then moved on to look at the concept of hope and its meaning.

The strongest theme emerging as the meaning of hope was that it is about having a long-term perspective, a future focus and a sense of positivity towards the future: over a third of participants described the meaning of hope in this sort of way.

"Hope is the want for something in the future. It could be something you already have, or something you will never have. You could hope for something for other people."

"I would define hope to be positivity for the future and belief that all the necessary steps can be taken to achieve both short- and long-term goals – whether that be to sustain one's own basic needs or to become an astronaut."

Other strong themes regarding the meaning of hope were as follows:

- It is something that propels a person forward, motivating and exciting the person and fostering self-awareness.

"Everyone hopes for something, and something is what keeps us going. I also believe that hope helps us to act in the interest of what we are hoping for."

"Hope to me is like a spark that is relieving to see when everything else feels pointless. It can be the biggest or smallest amount of a need to keep going. When everything else feels like it's going wrong and I want to give up, it's like the smallest amount of determination to keep going for whatever reason."

- It can be for yourself or for others.
- It helps you overcome challenges and is crucial for resiliency.
- Hope is about having a sense of purpose.

"If there is hope, there will always be opportunity to contribute, learn and share."

The following themes emerged less strongly:

- Hope can be globally focused, and centred on things like the economy, the environment, the way communities operate and function, and the way people treat each other and themselves.

"(Hope is) life not being shit all the time. The world is completely F'ed ... as you all know, so if there's any hope, it's the world actually becoming a better place. Like the economy, stopping the drugs, the prostitution and that shit. Just clean up after themselves like for rubbish. If that can happen, then there is hope for me, and for the whole world."

- Hope is about dreams and fantasies
- Hope is a desire to achieve
- Hope is significant to spirituality, faith and religion

Hope was also defined by individual participants in the following terms:



- Dreams that become a reality
- Meaningful things to look forward to
- Marriage
- Having their own successful business
- A passionate feeling
- Whānau-based - *"The foundations of hope are whānau-based."*
- Directly tied to one's sense of personal agency
- Something that is very personal and not definitive
- Something used to get by
- Greater than ourselves but rooted in love
- Centred around empathy and acceptance
- Being consistent and kind towards others
- Hope is patience - *"The meaning of hope is patience. I think in its purest sense it's having the patience and the faith that things will go right. It's having the patience to wait and while it might not be in the moment, it will happen in the future."*

In talking about the meaning of hope, it did appear that for participants with learning disabilities or developmental delays, the concept of hope tended to be more concrete. These participants were also more likely to see hope as something around which people share similar understandings.

For the majority of participants, they saw hope as something seen and experienced differently by different people.

"I think nobody views hope the same as it is personal and it is a feeling everyone gets in a different way."

"There is too much variation regarding the way in which people live throughout different cultures or levels of privilege for such a broad concept as hope to have a singular meaning. People face challenges and desire things that those in more privileged positions would consider only a basic staple of living."

"It depends on people's experiences. Everyone leads different lives so it can be similar, but not the same."

What do young people commonly hope for?

Participants were asked to think generally about the young people they knew and to think of some of the things these people had in common regarding their hopes. Most strongly, participants identified a common feature of young people engaging in collective-focused thinking about the future of others/community/society/humanity and not just of their own future, with nearly two-fifths of those asked identifying this as a common theme. Young people were seen as commonly centring their hopes on a desire for a better/"fixed" world in terms of big issues such as climate change, overpopulation, global conflict, mental health, modern slavery and consumerism, economic pressures and poverty, some seeing this as especially the case for young people with globally aware role models around them. For some, this hope was seen as intertwined with a feeling and sense that they personally have the ability to influence change.

"How can I help?"



For others, feelings can be overwhelming if they do not feel they have the tools to address the issues around them.

Over a quarter of those rangatahi who participated in the research felt that many young people have hopes relating to their personal passions and interests, and around a quarter thought that young people commonly had hopes relating to career and financial success.

"A lot of my friends hope for success in their degrees or jobs, and for financial stability and a happy life."

Several informants with disabilities thought that other young people like them commonly hoped for good support systems to enable independence.

Other commonalities expressed by one or two participants included the following:

- Hope for good health for their friends and family
- To feel safe
- Sense of stability and peace
- To get praise, to please parents and teachers
- A meaningful and fulfilling life
- Money
- Independence
- Housing

"We all hope to buy a house one day, and we all hope to be successful in whatever we do."

One participant felt that many young people only have short term hopes and see their potential as limited, and that this impacts negatively on their resilience and the effort they put into achievement. They felt that not having long term goals and only focusing on having fun in the moment makes it harder to accept responsibility for their own actions.

Factors impacting on hope

The factor most identified by the rangatahi interviewed as impacting on what hope means to different people was access to finances, and especially poverty versus privilege and the financial and other resources of whānau (n=10).

"Hope will be different for people without much money."

"Levels of privilege will alter what a person will dare to hope for in life. This can start with family poverty which will alter what a child will believe that they can achieve in the long term regarding future career, as opportunity and education is often limited within the confines of cost."

The other factors most identified by participants as impacting on hope were:

- Culture (n=7)



"The presence of Te Reo Māori brings hope to Māori. Having opportunities to celebrate your identity."

"If someone was from a collectivistic culture, they might hope first for other people's wellbeing rather than their own."

"Differences between cultures and faiths will mean that people will hold different values regarding what success is and therefore will hope for different things in life."

- Faith (n=7)
- Mental and emotional wellbeing (n=7)

"Mental health definitely makes an impact on hope. It's hard to hope in blackness. ... Hope was hidden from me when I was depressed. It's refreshing to find hope again when you come out the other end."

- Opportunity (n=6)
- Self-belief, level of motivation and mindset (n=7)
- Background/life experiences (n=6)
- Whānau (n=5)
- The way the world is economically, environmentally and socially (n=4)
- Age and developmental stage (n=4)
- Accessing the right mental health supports when needed (n=4)
- Especially for people with learning or physical disabilities, hope was identified as impacted when other people's hopes for them conflicted with their own, when others are apathetic to their needs and when they feel used or exploited by others (n=3)
- Disability (n=3)

"Neurodivergence/learning disabilities and physical disability/chronic illness places restrictions on long term planning as tasks are rendered more difficult to achieve. For example, studying with a learning disability makes obtaining tertiary education more difficult to achieve."

- Education (n=3)
- The extent of one's peer support systems (n=3)
- Gender/sexuality (n=2)

Less commonly, hope was also identified as impacted by a strong health curriculum in school which can foster self-awareness and introspection, by varying levels of motivation, impacted by family dynamics, personal challenges, level of social isolation/connection, where you live and discrimination/acceptance.

Sources of hope

The interview asked participants what gave them hope personally. As mentioned, some of the participants who had learning disabilities/developmental preferred to answer this question in a concrete manner, sharing their own hopes which centred around their future housing and living situation(n=3), social connections and relationships (n=2), enjoyable and fulltime work, hobbies and interests, saving and travel.



The majority of the young people interviewed were able to describe the things that gave them a sense of hope.

Generosity, reciprocity and kindness, caring and support towards self and others (being kind/helping others/being present/acting in selfless ways/performing or receiving random acts of kindness etc.) were some of the most commonly identified sources of hope for those interviewed.

"I get feelings of hope when I see good in the world. I feel hope when somebody helps a stranger or when society progresses with an issue whether it be cultural or environmental."

"In the community there will be a new generation of people who not only want to care for themselves but others too."

Feeling proud of or being inspired/uplifted by the action or achievement of others close to them including whānau, and especially when this involves overcoming obstacles or enhancing that person's own wellbeing was also a strong theme (n=7). Associated with this, two of the participants talked about how believing in others close to them and in their aspirations is a source of hope, while one person talked about how they felt hope when they saw people being able to access good formal supports that meet their health needs.

Other factors most commonly identified as giving the participants hope were:

- Achieving success personally in study or in work. This was identified by five rangatahi as a source of hope, especially where this made their whānau proud.

"I give myself hope when I get a good grade in school or get great opportunities for my career. These things matter to me because they are a part of my identity, and they help me to strive for success."

- Seeing progress on global challenges facing the environment (eg. climate change, pollution) and society (impacts of colonisation, discrimination etc.) was identified as a source of hope/future hope by four rangatahi.

"I hope that one day being gay will be seen as mundane and ordinary."

"Social change gives me the most hope because it's a sign that even if social change doesn't affect me like Black Lives Matter, then the world is getting closer to accepting social change that does apply to me, like gender representation and disability issues."

- Internal factors such as positive mindset, sense of purpose and/or taking a future focus were identified by four rangatahi as giving them a sense of hope.

For several young people with learning disabilities, sources of their hope were independence, securing stable housing and earning money.

Other less commonly mentioned things that supported feelings of hope for the participants personally included people understanding their disability, advocacy and representation for members of the rainbow community in wider society, feeling valued as rangatahi Māori and able to be themselves and express themselves comfortably, feeling loved, having social connections, and doing the right thing.



Three rangatahi wāhine Māori, were invited during their interview to share a whakataukī (proverb) that resonated for them on the topic of hope. The following were shared:

“A whakataukī that resonates with me, in line of hope, is “ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi”, “when the old net is cast aside, the new net goes fishing.” It connects with the understanding of a new generation taking over from what the generation before have left. It speaks about how a sense of hope for the future can be created by the new generation and also how our elders should believe in us to do so. Hope is all about aspirational thinking, change and development.”

““Maranga Mai Rangatahi Mā” is asking our rangatahi to stand up and contribute to their wellbeing, it gives our generation hope and longing for change and empowerment. With hope, we really can make things happen.”

““Ka mate kainga tahi, ka ora kainga rua” is about future planning and productivity for the future. To me, it pushes us as rangatahi to move forward and to be hopeful about what we can do for rangatahi and our people.”

Four-fifths of the rangatahi who took part in the research felt that the things we hope for in the short term do tend to connect to longer term hopes, and actions in the present often align with hopes for the future.

“When I think about my hopes for the next few weeks, they connect to maintaining a standard of life which will enable me to create an environment which makes obtaining my long-term goals easier.”

“My life experience builds skills and personal traits to better achieve goals down the track.”

“I feel like there is always a hope for something big and positive in the future behind the things that I do.”

Change in hope over time

All but three of the participants were asked if they think hope changes and grows over time. All of those asked saw hope as something changeable.

“It goes up and down depending on the day. It’s like anything else - it’s like learning. It’s not straight line upwards.”

Hope was commonly seen as something that varies over time depending most commonly on:

- Life experiences, and especially significant physical or psychological trauma, but also change in the level of comfort being experienced in life and state of mental health (n=9)



"I grew up with race cars and wanted to be a mechanic. This changed after surgery. You have to relearn everything."

"Depending on the trajectory of your life - hope can grow or diminish over time according to your life experiences, positive or negative."

"I think you can lose hope and gain it. It certainly doesn't just shine bright forever. If something goes badly, I will lose hope, but I think it can be regained."

"Hope changes in relation to comfort. Living with discomforts from mental health issues, a dangerous living environment, financial uncertainty and gender dysphoria with an unsupportive family each result in levels of hope fluctuating depending on life situation and how much each these factors affect daily life."

- Personal growth and self-awareness (n=5)

"Before I came out and knew who I was, I hoped for a very stereotypical life for me, but those weren't my hopes. Now I hope when I grow up, my body matches my mind."

- The environment around you, including support systems and networks (n=7)

"They're always changing as my environment changes. Nothing is ever completely constant."

Hope was seen to ebb and flow depending on lots of different factors, but a number of things were identified by one or two participants as associated with hope growing over time. Hope was seen as more likely to grow when others believe in you or accept you for who you are, when you alter the expectations you have of yourself, when you build an ingrained hopeful mindset, and hope was seen to grow alongside resilience.

One of the participants expressed the view that hope evolves but does not grow unless an outside source motivates it to grow.

"Hope is like a plant. It needs sunlight to grow but won't grow without water. The sunlight is what you can give yourself, but the water to keep hope from diminishing and dwindling over time is the outside influences - society, healthcare, laws."

Another commented that it takes time to regain a sense of hope after losing it. Another indicated that for them, they were more aware of their hopes in times when they were down, and this focus on hope was itself something that helped them move out of depression and into a healthier state of mind.

"If you are feeling down, which leads to feeling more down, which leads to depression, you're going to start hoping more and more and more, so things get better."



What gets in the way of hope?

The things that participants identified as getting in the way of hope for themselves or for other young people they know were, unsurprisingly, closely related to the factors they identified as sources of hope.

Just as access to financial resources was most strongly identified by the participants as a source of hope, a lack of access to adequate financial resources was most commonly identified as a barrier to hope – something that limits hopes and aspirations or means they are not realistic. Over half the participants flagged lack of financial resources as a barrier.

"A lot comes down to money. Education should be free."

"I believe money is the biggest barrier for people achieving their dreams (e.g., getting educated, putting food on the table, buying a house, helping your parents into retirement)."

"The majority of things people in my life hope for could be solved by money. ... If money wasn't an issue, hope would be much more accessible."

Next most commonly, participants identified hope impacted negatively by:

- The expectations, stereotypes and attitudes of others around you (including whānau, school, friends, neighbourhood)
- Bullying, making you feel belittled, and negativity of others important to you, especially when people are being controlling and not seeing your own goals as realistic/not believing in you and your capabilities/taking an authoritative approach in terms of parenting style.

"People say, Oh, you won't be able to do that - stuff like that."

"People always talk about how they want rangatahi to lead the way to help solve issues that affect us directly, but in some cases, some pākeke will not trust us fully with their support and more so tell us the solutions to our own problems."

The following were also significant themes regarding barriers to hope:

- Lack of opportunity
- Mental health issues such as anxiety and depression were identified as a barrier to hope by a quarter of the respondent group.
- Negativity of self/self-doubt

Other barriers to hope identified by several participants included the following:

- Peer pressure and negative influences/poor choices- e.g., binge drinking, drugs and alcohol
- Getting overwhelmed/not being able to handle own emotions
- Whānau conflict/negative relationships within family



- Covid-19 meant that lots of activities really important to two participants with learning disabilities (Special Olympics nationals, overseas tour of arts-based group), and no doubt many other young people, could not go ahead.
- Own limitations (skill, intellect etc.)

"Your best is your best and you can't do more than that."

- Past trauma
- Lack of motivation
- Discrimination, racism and prejudice

Individual participants also identified social media, not knowing where to ask for help, culture (in some cases, e.g., where there are strong gender stereotypes and expectations), responsibilities at home, changes outside your control, feeling unsupported, physical health, and lack of someone to talk to all as things that could get in the way of hope for themselves or for other young people.

Disability (excluding mental health) was only highlighted as getting in the way of hope by three of the participants, one where people make assumptions based on stereotypes and not on the individual's reality, and one where the person does not get access to the right supports to overcome an impairment.

"It might make a difference to hope - it depends on how significant the disability is. Disability is one word to describe many different things that all impact differently. The availability of supports impacts on a person's sense of hope if they have a disability."

Where disability was identified as potentially impacting negatively on hope (n=2), this was in the context of disability occurring as a result of injury or illness during adolescence.

Addressing barriers / obstacles to hope

Participants were asked how they would deal with the things getting in the way of hope if they could/in a perfect world. Most commonly, rangatahi wanted to see:

- good and realistic support systems in place (including counselling) for young people who need this, and a willingness from rangatahi who are struggling to reach out for this support;
- better communication;

"There is so much power in kōrero. It is so important in fostering hope because of how kōrero grows trust and connection with one another. It allows us to overcome our struggles. If humanity doesn't band together, we won't be able to survive."

- stronger whānau support, including whānau making the time to meaningfully connect together and to listen to rangatahi.

Other suggestions offered by several participants were as follows:

- Have good role models available for rangatahi.
- Ensure young people have access to adequate housing and that their basic needs are met.



- For rangatahi Māori, have more opportunities to come together in wānanga and hui and share and learn knowledge together.
- Treat young people with empathy.
- Work towards making the world a better place and overcoming greed.
- Encourage young people to talk to their friends about their hopes and to support each other's mental health.
- Encourage young people to stay motivated and to strive towards their goals.

Personally, individual participants encouraged other young people to be assertive, to set realistic goals that bit by bit take young people towards their goals, to be reciprocal in supportive relationships, to enjoy what they do, to think positively and believe in themselves, to reflect on their own experiences and learn from them, and to be a role model to others who need help.

"In an ideal world, I would learn to talk back to my self-doubt and think positively, but it's very hard when you have anxiety."

At the community level, individuals wanted people to be encouraged to see things from the perspective of others, to see more opportunities for young people to share what is precious to them and more teaching, learning and understanding around the topic of hope, more opportunities to connect with others and have fun and value each other, more involvement in decision making of those who are struggling, a stronger emphasis on prevention of mental health crisis, more public awareness around disabilities so people see what disabled people are really capable of, better technology to overcome impairments, and stronger laws around discrimination against people with disabilities.

"If we feel we are all on the same waka, we can move as one with hope."

How can support young people to feel hopeful?

Young people who were interviewed or submitted a written response for the research were asked what different people, groups, organisations and entities could do to support young people to feel hopeful about their lives, to have dreams that they can follow and feel really good about the future. Findings were as follows:

Peers/Friends

- Over half the participants identified ways that friends could build hope within their peer group, by being reciprocal and supportive of each other, and developing and growing strong social connections – connecting face to face, checking in on each other, listening to the hopes and dreams of each other and sharing one's own, understanding one another.

"Talk to people, tell them what they are good at."

"You don't always have to give advice, sometimes you just need someone to listen. 'I understand it's hard, but I'm here'."

"I want what's best for him and he wants what's best for me."



Whānau

As a key factor influencing a sense of hope, it was unsurprising that young people had a lot to say about how whānau / families could foster feelings of hopefulness in their children / siblings, most commonly suggesting that whānau should:

- Be supportive – act in each other’s best interests and offer unconditional love and comfort.
- Praise young people for the things they do well, tell them what they are good at, celebrate their success and generally uplift and affirm them.
- Check in on young people often, listen to them and spend time with them.

Less commonly, participants suggested that whānau could build hope in young people by:

- Offering practical support to young people to take part in things that relate to their goals – e.g., get up early and take them to sports practice.
- Offering financial support where they can.
- Being careful not to burden young people with too much responsibility.
- Offering support and provide ways to help them towards their goals.
- Advocating for young people.
- Accepting young people for who they are.

Schools

Most strongly, participants saw schools as playing a role to foster hope in young people through the following:

- Affirming young people in their goals – building their confidence and self-belief and challenging them to try harder towards their goals.
- Offering consistent support to young people and ensuring availability of strong individual pastoral care.

Individual participants also suggested that schools could foster hope by catering to individual learning styles, skills disabilities, culture and financial barriers of students, listening to young people, striving harder to actively build self-knowledge and awareness in young people, and communicating better with whānau about how they can best support their rangatahi.

Communities (including faith communities, sports clubs, neighbourhoods):

Community and cultural activities such as sports clubs/teams, faith-based youth groups, kapa haka, disability-accessible dance and music groups and social groups targeted at young people with things in common were pointed to by several participants as things that bring them hope.

"Special Olympics and Star Jam, my young adults' group at church - these are places that are good for me and help me feel hopeful. It feels good being part of these things."

Communities and the groups and collectives within them could do more to build a sense of hope in rangatahi by ensuring that they function in a fair and respectful manner, that they are more welcoming to all rangatahi, that they encourage and foster connection, and that they ensure that supports are



available for young people who are struggling, and that these supports are accessible. Communities should make young people feel safe. Several LGBTQI+ rangatahi expressed a desire to see communities foster hope through acceptance of diversity and a more inclusive approach, including ensuring representation of diversity of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability.

Local and Central Government:

One of the most commonly identified ways that Government could foster feelings of hope in young people was by being more involved with young people, engaging more strongly with them and listening to them, and being more relevant to young people as a result, putting money into solutions young people identify for themselves as a group.

The other most commonly identified way that government could foster hope in young people was through policies that make secure housing more accessible and attainable for young people, although interestingly this point was only raised by participants with disabilities.

Other suggestions relating to Government less frequently expressed included the following:

- Policies should proactively address Covid-19
- Invest more strongly in mental health systems and strengthen the training of those already working in this sector
- Government should invest more strongly in disability awareness, and actively seek to hire people with disabilities
- Government should maintain a society in which basic living requirements are easily attainable
- Government should take minority statistics into account when writing new policies
- Authority figures should be more open about their own past challenges and struggles
- Councils and Government agencies should continue to support young people towards their hopes and dreams through scholarships, grants and special projects
- Government should take a long-term focus
- Healthcare should be more affordable and empathetic
- Government should provide realistic helping hands and strive to avoid creating co-dependence, and instead empower people to pursue their hopes
- Government should itself express hope

"Showing us that no matter your life circumstances, whether you're disabled, gay or poor, that your life is worth living no matter what. Seeing others rise from ashes and lead full lives is very inspiring. I think we need to show others out there that hope is possible, for everyone, but especially minority groups."

Two participants wanted to see Iwi and Government providing more opportunities for rangatahi Māori to come together for wānanga. One wanted to see improved access to diagnoses of learning disabilities.

Rangatahi self-care

A small number of participants identified ways young people could help themselves towards sustaining and building a sense of hope, by surrounding themselves with good role models,



communicating their hopes to others, writing down goals, skills and strengths and taking things step by step.

Others

One young person stated that they wanted a more balanced portrayal of Māori by media and felt that this would foster a sense of hope for rangatahi Māori, while this young person was also keen to see universities work more closely with workplaces to expose tertiary students to real life applications for their learning.



4. Discussion

We know from prior research (Chang, 2017; Griggs, 2017; Brooks et al., 2016; Ciarrochi et al., 2015; Snyder et al., 2002) that a sense of hope is associated with a range of positive outcomes for young people. However, the research literature in Aotearoa New Zealand presents limited insights into what hope even means for young people, what makes young people feel hopeful and what gets in the way of such feelings, and how we can foster hope. The present study set out to address these questions, but from a positive youth development framework and with strong leadership from young people themselves. It was not difficult to find young people who were keen to be involved in the project as peer researchers, and the topic of hope was one that was engaging and appealing to them.

Feedback from peer researchers indicated that their involvement in the project had impacted them personally, in some cases profoundly, and in different ways. One peer researcher commented during the writing phase of the report that they had not realised how healing and how important hope is in dealing with tough stuff, and that involvement in the research had made them more aware that hope had always been an element present in their journey. Involvement in the research brought this to the forefront in their lives and they now see hope expressed more and more in both themselves and in the people around them, and this was really helping in their own mental health. Being part of the research had helped another young person understand other people and what they think about hope.

A number of the peer researchers identified personal growth arising from their involvement in the project, gaining confidence and skills from the experience that they expect to carry forwards.

“During the first interview, as it was happening, I thought wow, I didn’t realise I was good at this sort of thing.”

For some, this was strongly connected to the future study aspirations, affirming the career direction they were pursuing, while for others it has *“opened doors”*. The diversity of the peer researcher team meant that they each gained confidence working alongside people different to themselves.

“It’s weird to think how far we’ve come.”

In this research, designed as a pilot project that could be replicated by other researchers or extended in the future, the participant group comprised rangatahi Māori and New Zealand European aged from late teens to young adulthood, and with strong representation from LGBTQI+ and young people with disabilities. The researchers are very keen to see the research conducted with Pasifika and Asian young people, and with younger teens in the near future to explore any differences which emerge with these groups. The present findings are limited in the perspectives which they present, especially missing the voices of Asian, Pasifika and Middle Eastern, African and Latino young people, and indeed young people whose lives are characterised by privilege.

What is hope?

Oxford Languages defines hope as “a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen” (noun) or “to want something to happen or be the case” (verb). When we asked young people



what they thought hope means, many of the participants explored the concept at far beyond a surface level. Drawing together the most common themes in their responses, from the perspective of rangatahi in our pilot study, hope is about having a positive long-term perspective/future focus, whether about self, others close to them, the wider community/society/environment, or a combination of some or all of these. This motivates and even excites a person and propels them forward, giving them a sense of purpose and helping them to keep going and striving, even (and perhaps especially) when they encounter challenges. From what young people shared in the present research, hope is a significant part of resiliency.

Our findings suggested that the hopes of young people commonly relate to the future of the world around them, and a desire for a better/“fixed” world in terms of big issues:

- Climate change
- Global conflict
- Economic pressures and poverty
- Discrimination and the treatment of diversity in society
- Community mental health
- Overpopulation
- Modern slavery and consumerism

These kinds of hopes appear intertwined with feelings of agency: a sense that individual young people have the ability to influence change.

In terms of personal hopes, rangatahi with disabilities felt that among their peers it was common to hope for good support systems to enable independence. For young people in general, personal hopes were identified as commonly relating to young people’s personal passions and interests, career, fulfilling and enjoyable lives, and financial success.

For the majority of participants, they saw hope as something seen and experienced differently by different people, and changing over time, strongly impacted by whānau financial circumstances and level of poverty or privilege and varying with cultural and whānau background, faith/spirituality, mental and physical wellbeing, opportunity and life experiences, self-belief, motivation and mindset, gender and sexuality, developmental stage and support networks.

What gives young people a sense of hope?

Recognising that many factors impact on feelings of hope, the participants in the present research identified a range of sources of hope, with generosity, kindness, support and caring towards self and others and reciprocity the most commonly identified source of hope, along with feeling proud of or being inspired/uplifted by the action or achievement of others close to them, especially when this involves overcoming obstacles or enhancing that person’s own wellbeing. It was interesting to note that the two strongest themes regarding the things that give young people hope both related to the actions and successes of those around them. Where hope was seen to spring from their own successes, it was often in the context of making their whānau, teachers or others important to them proud.



Reflecting the finding that many of young people's hopes relate to the world around them – to global challenges facing the environment (eg. climate change, pollution) and society (impacts of colonisation, discrimination etc.) - it was unsurprising that seeing progress on these issues was identified as a source of hope/future hope.

What are the barriers that make it hard for young people to feel hopeful?

The findings of the present research identified a close relationship between sources of hope and the things that get in the way of it. Just as access to financial resources was the most identified enabler of hope, a lack of access to adequate financial resources was most commonly identified as a barrier or limiter to hope: it's hard to dream of a future career which requires years of tertiary study, or achievement playing an expensive musical instrument and takes years of costly lessons to master if your whānau struggles to put kai on the table. Lack of opportunity goes hand in hand with financial barriers, but this barrier extends beyond that, for example with some hopes less realistic for young people in rural areas rather than cities, and opportunities diminished for young people with dysfunctional/unsupportive whānau. For the young people in our research, some had missed out on opportunities as a result of Covid-19 (e.g., Special Olympics, overseas performance tours) and this impacted negatively on their hopes.

Expectations, stereotypes, attitudes, and bullying behaviours of others around young people in their immediate circle of whānau, peers, teachers and the like really get in the way of hope, undermining such feelings where hopes relate to personal aspirations. This barrier was identified by a range of young people, but was especially identified by young people with disabilities, or with people close to them having a disability. Hope can be undermined whenever someone makes a young person feel belittled, when people are being controlling and not perceiving goals as realistic or believing in the young person and their capabilities. In relation to global issues, similar barriers can exist, where young people have a sense of agency to make positive change in the world but others, especially adults, do not trust them or support them in their pursuits, and think they know better.

Discrimination, prejudice, and restrictive expectations on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexuality or faith also emerged as significant barriers to hope.

Many of the barriers/derailers of hope that were identified in the present research are internal: mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, self-doubt, and feelings of being overwhelmed, lack of motivation and the parameters of one's own abilities and capacities. Some or all of these barriers may well be the result of past trauma.

How can hope be fostered among young people in Aotearoa?

From what young people told us in the present research, hope will flourish wherever and whenever young people feel and are appropriately supported, listened to, and affirmed in their goals and dreams for themselves and for others, and are treated with empathy. Where young people have needs to overcome impairments or to deal with mental health struggles, crises and/or trauma, these should be addressed through access to appropriate and timely support. For a young person with a significant learning or physical disability, this could mean having access to support workers when needed who believe in the young person and their personal aspirations and are there to walk beside them in their quest towards their dreams. For young people suffering anxiety, depression, mental health crisis or



gender dysphoria, this could be about access to quality counselling when needed, or youth-centred and empowering health services, delivered without judgement. Young people can help themselves to feel hopeful by reaching out for support when they need it and communicating their hopes and their struggles to people around them who they trust.

Whānau support plays a big part: hope flourishes when whānau make and take time to meaningfully connect together and to listen to rangatahi. Mentors and role models (teachers, sports coaches, and other significant adults in the lives of young people) can also be huge supports towards feelings of hope. So too does peer support. For rangatahi Māori, having opportunities to come together in wānanga and hui and share and learn knowledge together builds a sense of hope. Groups that bring together young people with common strengths and challenges can do the same: groups for LGBTQI+ young people, young people with disabilities, for young people passionate about the environment, and cultural and faith-based youth groups. And of course, hope flourishes when young people are connected/surrounded by good friends who believe in and see the best in each other, and affirm each others' hopes and dreams.

We live in a world increasingly characterised by financial inequality, and where some young people struggle just to have their basic needs met. Any actions at government level to reduce poverty and ensure that everyone has access to adequate food, housing and the basic needs of life are addressed emerged from the present research as hope-affirming.

While we all like to think that things are getting better, the world is still a place where discrimination, negative stereotypes and biases remain. Continuing to build understanding, inclusion and acceptance around diversity will, from what young people in the present research told us, foster hope, and especially where representation of diversity of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability is actively built. All young people deserve a voice in decision making that impacts on them. Meaningful and purposeful engagement with young people by decision makers in local and central government is key to building feelings of hope, especially for diverse young people and those striving to overcome disadvantage. Public education and awareness-building regarding disability and diversity awareness also emerged from the present research as a measure which can and will build hope.

In thinking about how hope can be fostered in young people in Aotearoa, most findings that emerged related to factors external to young people, but a range of suggestions also emerged in terms of things young people could do themselves to build their own sense of hope. Young people were encouraged to talk to their friends about their hopes, treat themselves and each other with kindness and empathy, support each other's mental wellness, to try to set realistic goals and a plan towards these, breaking them down into small, achievable steps, and to try and practice positive thinking. While none of the participants identified the concept, much of what they talked about was part of mindfulness and the Five Ways to Wellbeing (Cooper, Field, Goswami, Jenkins & Sahakian, 2008) and especially connecting with others, helping others, having fun, and enjoying the little things.



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6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Peer Researcher Recruitment Information



The Hope Project: What's it all about?

Ko te aroha ki runga, ko te aroha ki raro
Kei a tātou te kākano o te aroha.

Ka whakatō, ka tipu, ka puāwai

Ka puta ki te ao mārama - Hui ē! Tāiki ē!

Recent research has found that having a sense of hope is positively associated with improved mental wellbeing, academic success, and is a key ingredient which supports young people to live well. But guess what? We don't have much information about what hope is all about for young New Zealanders. This makes it tricky to apply research to the real world to try and improve the wellbeing of young people.

The Hope Project is all about taking a different approach to research around hope: its **strengths-based**, and **youth-centred**.

We want to answer the questions:

What gives young people hope? And **How can hope be fostered?**

We want the research findings to inform future policies regarding young people and be applied in training for those who work with young people, to HOPEfully make a difference!

The Collaborative Trust (www.collaborative.org.nz) want to do this by working with young people to co-create qualitative research methods and then put these to practice in a pilot study that is guided by the principles of Participatory Action Research and Positive Youth Development. Young people will be the researchers for the project, but they won't be doing this alone. The youth researchers (the "Participant Researchers") will get lots of support to help them do this safely, as easily as possible and in a way that helps everyone learn and grow from the experience. Plus, they will be paid for their mahi!

Starting in June 2021, we are seeking 5-10 young people (16-25 years old) from different backgrounds in Christchurch to be our Participant Researchers - they will be involved in all stages of the research process from design to the sharing of our findings. We are especially keen that this team include a diverse range of young people including rangatahi Māori, Pasifika, LGBTQI+ young people, refugee young people and young people with disabilities. Once they have developed their methodology, they will pilot this with other young people throughout their own networks, completing this early next year. The pilot will be evaluated with a view to conducting a larger study later in 2022. There may be an opportunity for the Participant Researchers involved with the pilot to go on to contribute to the larger study. The experience will provide a great taste of real-life social research, and a chance to have the voices of young people in Aotearoa heard.

Do you know a young person who might be interested? Please kōrero with them about this opportunity and then contact Sarah Wylie (Hope Project Lead) to find out more!

021-288-4334

hopeproject@collaborative.org.nz



Job Description

Participant Researcher (paid, part-time contractor)

The Collaborative Trust is a youth focussed, community based research and training organisation looking for young people to work with us as Participant Researchers to develop and undertake “The Hope Project: What Gives Young People Hope?”

What are Participant Researchers? For this project Participant Researchers are young people aged 16-25 years who will plan, implement and evaluate the “The Hope Project” with assistance from the Collaborative Trust Research Team.

Who will Participant Researchers work with? Other Hope Project Participant researchers and team members (contractors and volunteers), Hope Project participants, the Research and Evaluation Manager and Director of the Collaborative Trust

What the job involves:

- Building relationships with other members of the Hope Project team.
- Planning, designing, collecting and analysing data, and sharing the findings of the Hope Project.
- Working with networks of young people to engage them as participants in the Hope Project.
- Valuing, respecting and upholding the wellbeing of all involved.

What kind of young people are we looking for?:

Someone who:

- Has strong and active connections with at least one of the following key groups of rangatahi: Māori, Pasifika, youth with disabilities, rainbow youth.
- Is interested and motivated to be involved in establishing a research project that will encourage and enable rangatahi to talk about hope.
- Can think outside of the square to think about youth-friendly methods of data collection.
- Has some interest in research and desirable, but not essential, has some previous experience (could be as a research participant, a user of research or undertaken some research at school or in study).

Someone who has some of the following qualities:

- Strong communication skills
- Strong organisational skills
- Flexible in approach to tasks
- Team player yet able to work independently and from home
- Ability to communicate well with young people and adults
- Able to embrace and work with diversity
- Enthusiastic, energised, and enjoys meeting other people

Who are the Collaborative Trust?

We are a group of researchers and educators who work together to achieve the vision of encouraging healthy, mana enhancing development of rangatahi in Aotearoa. Our core focus is on Positive Youth Development (PYD), an approach that is strengths based, holistic and looks towards supporting rangatahi and the communities they live in. This includes all rangatahi while also allowing more targeted approaches with young people experiencing mental distress. We want all young people to be able to make a valuable contribution to their communities.



Our values:

- to maintain youth participation at all levels of the organisation;
- to work in partnership with Māori and honour the principles of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi;
- to be a bicultural organisation that is inclusive of all cultures, ethnicities and identities;
- to honour, as a Pacific nation, the contribution of Pasifika people and the 'Pacific Way';
- to promote holistic views of healthy development which include wellbeing in the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social, family, school and community areas of life;
- to work by collaboration, sharing and strengthening.

Our emphasis on collaboration in generating positive outcomes and healthy mana enhancing development for rangatahi, fills a unique role in the youth sector in Canterbury and nationally.

For more information about The Collaborative Trust go to www.collaborative.org.nz.



Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

It would be good right at the start if I find out a bit about you.

Who is a person or some people that you look up to?

What is it about that person / those people that you admire?

Why do you think you admire them so much? Why are their achievements so important to you?

Do you hope to be like them one day? In what way?

Thanks for that.

One of the things this research is all about is trying to understand what we mean by the concept of HOPE

What do you personally think the meaning of hope is? How could you define Hope?

Do you think other people share this same understanding of what hope is, or does hope mean different things to different people? What do you think?

What kinds of things could impact on what HOPE means for different people?

-Explore differences which may relate to:

- Age
- Family
- Culture
- Faith
- Wealth / Poverty
- Disability
- Sexuality
- Education and opportunity
- Mental health
- Political / environmental interests
- Stage of development and growth towards adulthood

And anything else you would like to explore! – Good to tailor prompts to the particular young person

What gives you feelings of HOPE and why do you think these things matter to you?

When you think about your hopes for the next few weeks, do these connect in any way to your hopes about things far away in the future?

Do your hopes change over time? Tell me about that.

Do you think hope grows over time?

Thinking generally about other young people you know, what are some things they have in common around their hopes?

What gets in the way of hopes and dreams?

- For you?
- For other young people you know?



- For your friends?
- For members of your family?

How would you deal with that (in an ideal world)?

How do you think the things that get in the way of hopes of young people could be overcome?

What kinds of things would make a difference in supporting young people to feel hopeful about their lives, to have dreams that they can follow, and feel really good about their future?

-What could friends do?

-What could family / whānau do?

-What could school do?

-What about the wider community?

What about governing bodies like councils, and agencies like Oranga Tamariki or Police do?

What about MPs and the people who make the big decisions?

Thank them for taking part, and check in on them, that they feel okay. Offer list of supports if they need it.



Appendix 3: Demographic Sheet

**Participants in Hope Project Research
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET**

This information is confidential but helps us know the range of young people we heard from in the research.

Please complete the following about you:

1. Age: _____

2. Gender (tick): Male Female Other

3. Ethnicity: What ethnicity or ethnicities do you identify as (tick all that apply)?

New Zealand Māori New Zealand European Pasifika
Asian European
Other (specify) _____ . Middle East/Latin American/African

4. Do you identify as LBGTQI+?

Yes No Prefer not to say

5. Do you have a disability?

Yes No Prefer not to say

6. On the following scale, please mark where your life stacks up in terms of mental, physical and social wellbeing – 1 means that life for you has been as plain sailing as it could be and 11 means you've faced a lot of wellbeing challenges for someone your age

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I have mostly experienced positive wellbeing					I have faced some challenges to my wellbeing					I have faced more wellbeing challenges than most people my age



Appendix 4: Information Sheet: Rangatahi

The Hope Project

INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

What's this project about?

Recent research has found that having a sense of hope is positively associated with improved mental wellbeing, academic success, and is a key ingredient which supports young people to live well. However, we don't have much information about what hope is for young people in Aotearoa, what brings them hope (or gets in the way of it) and how hope can be supported to grow. We (The Collaborative Trust) are conducting research into what gives people hope, and how we can better nurture a sense of hope in young people.

If I choose to take part, what will I be doing?

There are different ways to take part in this research. You can choose one of the following:

- A short interview of 20-40 minutes with just you and a peer researcher of around a similar age to yourself, where you'll be asked a series of open-ended-questions about hope and what it means to you.
- A focus group with a few other young people and an interviewer leading the discussion, where you'll be able to share ideas (if you want to) and discuss what hope is and how it affects your lives.
- Some other way of expressing your ideas around hope, either in a written or spoken format, like creative writing, kōrero, or poetry.

How do I become involved?

Read this Information Sheet or get someone to explain it to you, and let the person who gave it to you (one of our peer researchers) know that you might be keen to take part. They will explain the research to you and answer any questions you have about the research too. If you are keen, they will then sort out a time and place to interview or work with you that suits you, or let you know when and where the focus group is being held (depending on what you've chosen to participate in).

- ***If you've chosen to take part in an interview:***
The peer researcher will make a time to meet with you (or in some cases phone you), at a place that works for both of you. When you meet up or connect by phone, the researcher will get your full written informed consent before then asking you some questions (for phone interviews this will be via email).
- ***If you've chosen to be part of a focus group (a group discussion):***
At the start of the focus group the researcher will check in with you and go over the information again and obtain consent by getting you to fill in a consent form (which they will give you) before beginning the focus group.
- ***If you've chosen a different option:***
If you are keen to be part of the research but prefer to express your thoughts about what hope is and how we can foster it in young people, you can do this through creative expression – an essay, a poem (spoken or written), or visual art. Just let the peer researcher know and tell them what kind of medium works best for you to convey your ideas through. The researcher will go over the information with you again and you'll be asked to sign a consent form. Then the researcher will give you the research questions and arrange collecting your response once you have completed it.

Can I change my mind and pull out from the project?

You can pull out of the research at any time without explanation, and there will be no negative impact at all. You can skip questions or stop the interview / leave the focus group. If after you have completed an interview, you decide you'd like to withdraw your information, you can contact the researcher any time



within the next fortnight and they will remove your data from the study, no questions asked. This is much trickier for focus group data but you can still get in contact with the researcher with any concerns.

How will information be collected, and how will it be used?

In the interview or focus group, the researcher will make notes and (with your consent) audio record the conversation. All the information gathered in either situation will be kept in a secure online database that is managed by the researchers. Only they will have access to it for analysis purposes. Nobody else will have access to the data, and it cannot be requested by a third party or shared with people outside the researchers. The researcher will write a report on what is said in the focus groups or interviews. This report will be a summary of what has been said, with quotes taken from the recording if they are important. Your name will not be used in this report and there will be no way of anyone identifying you at any point after the interview/focus group has been completed. Themes that come through in the research may also be shared in some creative ways – through waiata, music, drama, visual art, etc. all made by young people. The content of anything like that would be anonymous. If this is something that you would like to be part of, let the researcher know.

Will people know what I have said?

The interview / focus group is confidential. You will not be identified in any reports, and any information that could identify you will not be included. If you take part in the interview or an alternative method of data collection, whatever you write or say will remain between you and the researcher, unless you choose to share it with others. If you take part in a focus group, the things you say will be heard by other members in the group. While we will remind everyone to respect each other's confidentiality, we cannot guarantee that they will do this. If you choose to express yourself via poetry, music or other creative piece, and we want to share that as part of the project, we will get in contact with you and talk about this – you would have control over whether it is shared or not, and whether you would want to be credited as the writer / creator or remain anonymous.

Do I have to do this?

No, you don't have to take part in the research. It is completely your choice whether you do, or not. We really hope you choose to take part because we value your ideas, but if you choose not to take part, please know that this will not make any difference to the involvement that you have with any support services.

Will I be paid to do this?

You will receive a small koha for helping with the research, but you will not be paid for your time.

Who are the Researchers?

Otautahi / Christchurch:

Mahlon Saumalu
Nakoda Tamaira-Cooper
Ricky Reeves
Eliot Forrest
Peggy Tombs
Max Nicholls

Ōtepoti / Dunedin

Hurihia ki te Awatea Tawaroa
Jaxson Tautala-Hanita

Sarah Wylie (Collaborative Trust for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development) is the lead researcher. If you want to know more about the Collaborative Trust and what we do check out our website: www.collaborative.org.nz. If you have any questions about the project you can contact: Sarah Wylie 021 288 4334

This research has been assessed and approved by the New Zealand Ethics Committee (NZEC21_46). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Manager of NZEC, Dr Keely Blanch, on manager@nzethics.com.



Appendix 5: Information Sheet: Parents and Caregivers

The Hope Project

INFORMATION SHEET FOR WHĀNAU / PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

What's this project about?

Recent research has found that having a sense of hope is positively associated with improved mental wellbeing, academic success, and is a key ingredient which supports young people to live well. However, we don't have much information about what hope is for young people in Aotearoa, what brings them hope (or gets in the way of it) and how hope can be supported to grow. The Collaborative Trust are conducting research into what gives people hope, and how we can better nurture a sense of hope in young people.

If your young person chooses to participate, what will it involve?

Depending on what they feel most comfortable participating in, participants might be taking part in:

- A short interview of 20-40 minutes with just them and a peer researcher of around a similar age, where they'll be asked a series of open-ended-questions about hope and what it means to them.
- A focus group with a few other young people and an interviewer leading the discussion, where they'll be able to share ideas (if they want to) and discuss what hope is and how it affects their lives.
- Some other way of expressing their ideas around hope, either in a written or spoken format, like creative writing, kōrero, or poetry.

Can participants withdraw from the study?

Participants can pull out of the research at any time without explanation, and there will be no negative impact at all. They can stop the interview at any time or skip questions. If after they have completed an interview they decide they'd like to withdraw their information, they can contact the researcher any time within the next fortnight and they will remove their data from the study, no questions asked.

How will information be collected, and how will it be used?

In the interview or focus group, the researcher will make notes and (with their consent) audio record the conversation. All the information and recordings gathered in either situation will be kept in a secure online database that is managed by the researchers. Only they will have access to it for analysis purposes. Nobody else will have access to the data, and it cannot be requested by a third party or shared with people outside the researchers. The researcher will write a report on what is said in the focus groups or interviews. This report will be a summary of what has been said, with quotes taken from the recording if they are important. Participants' names will not be used in this report and there will be no way of anyone identifying them at any point after the interview/focus group has been completed. Themes that come through in the research may also be shared in some creative ways – through waiata, music, drama, visual art, etc. all made by young people. The content of anything like that will be anonymous.

Is parental consent required?

No. However we encourage young people to discuss their decision to participate in the research with their whānau. Participants may or may not wish to discuss what they talked about during the interviews/focus groups with you, and we ask that you respect their decision and their privacy.

Will people know what participants have said?

The interview is confidential. Participants will not be identified in any reports, and any information that could identify them will not be included. If they take part in the interview or an alternative method



of data collection, whatever they write or say will remain between them and the researcher, unless they choose to share it with you or with others. If they take part in a focus group, the things they say will be heard by other members in the group. While we will remind everyone to respect each other's confidentiality, we cannot guarantee that they will do this. If young people choose to participate in the research through a creative work such as a poem, waiata / song or visual art, and we want to include this as part of our sharing of the research findings, we would contact them and find out if they are happy for this to happen, and whether they would like to be credited for the work or remain anonymous. Nothing would be shared without their consent.

Are participants obliged to complete this research?

No, they don't have to take part in the research. It is completely their choice whether they participate. We really hope they choose to take part because we value what they have to say, but if they choose not to take part, please know that this will not make any difference to the involvement that they have with any support services.

Will they be paid to do this?

Participants will receive a small koha for helping with the research, but the research is voluntary and they will not be paid for their time.

Who are the peer researchers?

Otautahi / Christchurch:

Mahlon Saumalu
Nakoda Tamaira-Cooper
Ricky Reeves
Eliot Forrest
Peggy Tombs
Max Nicholls

Ōtepoti / Dunedin

Hurihia ki te Awatea Tawaroa
Jaxson Tautala-Hanita

Sarah Wylie (Collaborative Trust for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development) is the lead researcher. If you want to know more about the Collaborative Trust and what we do check out our website: www.collaborative.org.nz.

If you have any questions about the project you can contact: Sarah Wylie 021 288 4334

This research has been assessed and approved by the New Zealand Ethics Committee (NSEC21_46). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Manager of NSEC, Dr Keely Blanch, on manager@nzethics.com.



Appendix 6: Consent Form



**Hope Project Research
Consent to take part in an interview or focus group**

To indicate your agreement with each statement below, please tick each box.

- I have read the information pamphlet about this research and understand what this project is about and what it involves.
- I agree to take part in an interview or group discussion about the topic of hope.
- I understand that my involvement in this research is voluntary. I don't have to be interviewed or be part of a focus group if I don't want to. I know can change my mind about taking part in the research and stop the interview / leave the focus group at any time. Within two weeks, I can contact the researchers and ask that my information not be used at my choice, and nobody will be upset with me.
- I consent to the interview or group discussion being audio-recorded and transcribed (written up) so the researcher does not miss anything I say.
- I understand that if it is a group discussion, others in the group will hear what I have to say. I will respect the confidentiality of others in the focus group, and will not repeat any of the information shared in the group.
- I understand that while group members will be reminded to respect each other's confidentiality, the researcher cannot ensure that everyone does this.
- I understand that my data will be anonymised before it is included in any published research or documentation – nobody reading or hearing about the research will know I took part.

Please write your name and sign here

Name _____

Signed _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the evaluation findings, please write your e-mail address below.

Please return this form to the person who provided you with this consent form.