Hope has been described by numerous philosophers, theologians, educators, and scientists over the years.Researchers and clinicians who apply hope theory can continue to study the value of nurturing hope by utilizing rigorous methodology including control groups and random assignment of participants to conditionsSome conceptions of hope view the construct as an enotion that allows individuals to sustain belief during challenging timestruct as popular literature has generally portrayed this affective view of hope, most research has been conducted about models of hope that are more cognitive in nature.Both internal and test–retest reliabilities were found to be adequate, and support for convergent validity was supported by positive relations between hope and higher self–perceptions of athletic ability, physical appearance, social acceptance and scholastic competence, and lower levels of depression.Stotland and Gottschalk each described hope as expectancies about reaching goals, with Stotland emphasizing the importance and probability of achieving goals, and Gottschalk describing a positive force that propels individuals to work through difficult circumstances.Research has indicated that hope provides unique variance beyond optimism and self–efficacy in the prediction of well–being, thus providing additional support for its distinctiveness from these constructs.For example, in adults coping with spinal cord injuries, arthritis, blindness and fibromyalgia, higher hope was associated with more adaptive coping, and among women with breast cancer, hope and emotional expression predicted perceived health and a sense of vigor.Pathways thinking allows individuals to find routes around obstacles to goals, which naturally occur as people often encounter challenges in their goal pursuit.Erickson and colleagues devised a scale to operationalize Stotland's view of hope, and this scale included a list of goals to which individuals would rate the degree of their importance to them.Hope scores among these populations were positively related to other similar constructs such as optimism, positive affect, self–esteem, and expectancy for attaining goals.Among youth, hope has been shown to be associated with various positive constructs such as social acceptance and overall beliefs about their abilities to accomplish goals, as well as lower depression in children.Higher–hope adolescent burn survivors were found to engage in fewer behaviors that undermined recovery, and responded to caregivers more positively.Applications of Hope Theory With research indicating that hope is a useful construct related to many positive outcomes, psychologists have recently attempted to develop programs and interventions that might enhance this construct among youth and adults.Similarly, college–aged adults who participated in an 8–week group about hope reported decreased levels of depression and anxiety and increased levels of hope.For example, Averill and colleagues described hope as an emotion that was guided by cognitions and influenced by environmental conditions.Similarly, Staats viewed hope as an expectancy which interacts with wishes to weigh the possibility and affect connected to the achievement of goals.Agency refers to the motivation that propels individuals to initiate and sustain movement towards their goals.While optimism, as conceptualized by Seligman, describes the positive attributions that individuals make about life events, hope is more focused on reaching specific goal– related outcomes through the use of agency and pathways thoughts.In the development and validation of the Adult Hope Scale the authors found that the scale demonstrated good internal and test–retest reliability across six samples of undergraduate college students and two samples of adults receiving psychological treatment.In one study, older adults with depression who received group therapy

about goal-setting and hope demonstrated decreased anxiety, depression, and hopelessness, and increased levels of state hope in comparison to a group of adults who received a reminiscence therapy group.Future Directions Various definitions of hope provided by researchers have led to differing measures and theoretical propositions.Many avenues for continued investigation of hope exist, as well as opportunities for the development and appropriate evaluation of prevention and intervention efforts for enhancing hope among youth and adults.Since the late 1900s social scientists have attempted to describe, measure, and study hope in various ways, and this construct has been conceptualized as expectations or felings about goals and the future.Snyder and colleagues note that pathways and agency thinking are positively related, additive, and reciprocal, but neither component alone defines hope.Stotland, for example, believed that it was more useful to ask individuals questions about their perceived capability of success, rather than utilizing self-report measures about their levels of hope.Research Findings about Hope Efforts to study the role of hope in the lives of youth and adults have provided support for its utility as a construct that relates to well-being and several positive outcomes.Work in this area is not definitive, however, as hope measurement has yet to be understood with methods beyond self-report, or with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.Similar to previous theories, this conceptualization of hope is primarily cognitive in nature, though the theory evolved to include emotions as well.Snyder and colleagues described hope as a motivational state based on goals, pathways, and agency goal- directed thinking.Snyder proposes that goals are the targets of mental action and that in order to necessitate hope goals need to be sufficiently important to individuals.Agency and pathway are not synonymous, either, as some people show the ability to find pathways towards goals but not sustain the mental energy, or vice versa.For example, they note that self-efficacy relates to an individual's perceived capacity to carry out actions related to goals, which is similar to agency thoughts.Later, Staats and colleagues developed a measure of hope which assessed both the cognitive and affective sides of hope, particularly focused on specific events and outcomes.Snyder and colleagues developed several measures to assess hope in youth and adults in various contexts, including the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale, the Children's Hope Scale, and the Adult State Hope Scale.In original studies a 4-point Likert scale was used, but more recent studies have utilized an 8-point scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true.Across four samples of college students, the State Hope Scale demonstrated good internal and test-retest reliability estimates, and hope scores were related to daily self-esteem and positive affect scores.Other tools for hope measurement that have shown promising results from preliminary validation procedures include the domain-specific hope scale, the goal- specific hope scale, and the young children's hope scale.In addition to goals, hope involves pathways thinking.

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