

Hope Affirming helping conversations: some options

Pop-ups of hope?

- an initiative,
- a refusal to give up,
- trust where fear could rule,
- a sudden fear,
- hopelessness

A history of hope

- When do you think this hope (that ...) first came into your life?
- Can you tell me something about the experiences that may have created a foundation for this hope (that ...)?
- How has this hope come into your life?
- When did you first come into contact with this hope?
- I think you might have experienced things that may have brought you to the idea: 'maybe it is a real possibility for me to ...' What do you think? What are some of the experiences that may have confirmed to you that ... might also be a possibility for you?
- And what are some of experiences in the course of your life that might have confirmed this hope? Or strengthened it? What have you experienced or done (or attempted or read or seen or heard about) to give this hope some vitamins? Which might have confirmed that this hope might be a justified one?

A social/relational history of hope

- Can I ask you something? ... This hope we are talking about: If you think of one person who might have contributed to this hope, who would this be?
- What person or figure may – in one way or the other – have contributed to your ability to nurture this hope?
- Who in your life might have confirmed the validity of this hope – perhaps just because of their way of doing things?

Ask about concrete situations

This section contains question about the concrete circumstances of hope-generating or hope-affirming experiences and context.

- When?
- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Who did what?
- Where?
- ...

Questions about (re-)discoveries, insights, perspectives

- At that point, was there anything about yourself that came into sharper focus?
- What did you become aware of? What skill or quality you have did come sharper into focus?
- What possibilities for your life did you possibly sense at that point?
- What did you sense that X appreciated about you? How was that for you?
- Is it possible that this evoked a new perspective for you?
- Was this the first time you got the feeling that ... or did this confirm something were you already aware of, somewhere deep down?
- So it confirmed something you were already aware of. Could you say something about that? What earlier experiences had you had that ...?
- What other stories can you tell me that fit in with this?

A spark of hope

- Can I ask you something about that spark of hope that you experienced?
- Do you remember where you were? And what happened?
- When it was still there ... What if I had asked you at that point: What possibilities are you seeing right now? What would your answer have been?
- At that moment when that spark of hope was in your life: What did you recognise about yourself that you could no longer see later on? What did you know at that point in time (which may have eluded you later)?

Skills in reclaiming hope

- How did you succeed to reclaim that hope? To re-possess it? Could you tell me something about that?
- What has been important to make it possible for you to reacquire that hope?

The other side of despair

- You said that you could no longer continue on. Would it be okay with you if I asked some questions about your sense of what you had been continuing on with up to this point? Or perhaps about what it was that you had been depending on to see you through up to now?;
- You said that you have given up. Could I ask some questions about what it is you are giving up on? Or perhaps about what it is that you are getting separated from, or losing touch with, that had been important to you?;
- You said that you can't see a future for yourself any more? Would it be okay for me to ask you about what possibilities you had seen for your future? And how, at least to a point, this has been sustaining of your life up to this time? Or perhaps about what it was that had made it possible for you, until recently, to keep this future in sight?

- Can you say something about your experience of that despair?
- What are some of the effects that this despair is having on your lives?
- What does this despair suggest to you?
- Does this despair impact on your relationship?
- Could you tell me something about what might be happening in your life (at your job, in your relationships, in the world ...) which has given rise to this despair?

- What does this hope enable you to think?
- What has this hope brought you that is important to you?
- What has this hope contributed to the life of ... ?