

The Institute for the Study of Hope, Dignity & Wellbeing

An International Collaboration for
Radical & Sustainable Resilience

2025





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Institute for the Study of Hope, Dignity & Wellbeing will address the rising tide of trauma, burnout, and emotional suffering globally.

Rooted in over 20 years of work by Life's Door, the Institute will build scalable, evidence-based models to foster resilience, dignity and hope in populations facing serious illness, crisis, or caregiving stress.

The October 7, 2023, tragedy in Israel underscores the urgency. Life's Door, led by Professor Ben Corn, has begun piloting and studying interventions with social services and healthcare providers to support recovery. These interventions are designed for global application. In order to create sustainable, large-scale impact, an academic institute is essential — one that trains future leaders, anchors rigorous research, and builds an ecosystem of collaboration.

The partnership between the distinguished Hebrew University Faculty of Medicine in Jerusalem and Life's Door, will unite leaders in healthcare, social sciences, technology, and the arts to embed hope and dignity into the core of caregiving systems.



THE PROBLEM REVEALED

BRACELETS

Make sure to feature your bestsellers or signature products prominently. Keep it simple and to the point by using a short title and brief description.

Why This Matters- In Israel and Around the Globe

Global health and welfare systems have been challenged for decades. Since October 7, 2023, the State of Israel has endured widespread trauma, with over 1,200 civilians killed, 280 kidnapped, and many displaced. The entire region has experienced massive death and destruction.

This dire tragedy has unveiled broad-based public health concerns that became exacerbated during the war and in times of trauma. Accordingly, increased depression, loneliness, and caregiver burnout have been documented. Conventional health systems, worldwide, remain ill-equipped to respond to the psychological toll.



THE VISION

The Institute will serve as a hub for interdisciplinary research and thoughtful leadership, dedicated to advancing investigations into the biology, psychology, and sociology of hope.

It will train a new generation of professionals and caregivers, develop and test scalable, evidence-based interventions, and serve as a global model for healthcare grounded in dignity, hope, and well-being.

A study from Harvard documented that clinicians worry about taking away hope.



Odejide et al JCO, 2016



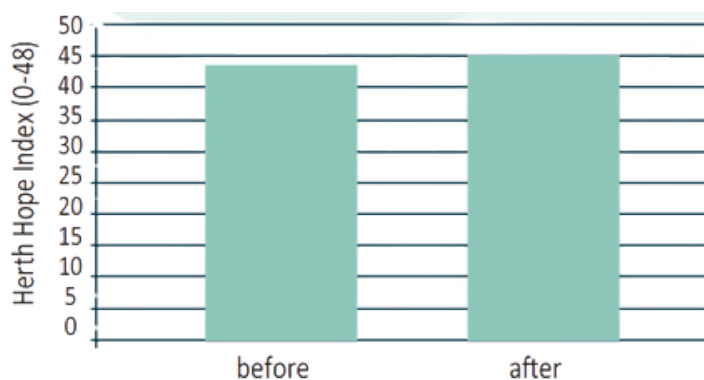
MISSION AND GOALS

To enhance wellbeing, restore dignity, and promote hope through research, education, training and practical innovation.

Goals

- Train emerging leaders in medicine, public health, and social sciences.
- Evaluate and optimize care models.
- Address caregiver burnout with validated tools.
- Develop scalable, culturally-sensitive resources for those facing illness and trauma.
- Use technology to improve the delivery and “reach” of hope-enhancing interventions.
- Build a strong evidence-base through both applied and theoretical inquiry.
- Create professional standards rooted in hope-based science that promote dignity and wellbeing.

Smith et al revealed: Authentic conversation need not reduce hope.



Herth Hope Index Average Patient Scores Before and After Intervention – Results show that patients with advanced cancer maintained their sense of hope despite receiving honest information about their prognosis.

Smith et al: Oncology, 2010



A PLAN FOR FUTURE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

To ensure continuity, the Institute will launch a fellowship program for postgraduates in healthcare and related fields. Fellows will be mentored by senior scholars. They will collaborate with statisticians, clinical researchers, and program developers, conducting research and contributing to academic and practical education initiatives.

Fellows will be positioned to lead globally, with expertise in applying hope science to real-world challenges.

Progression of "hope-enhancement" tools

Schematic representation of the three waves of hope enhancement. The first wave includes definition and measurement; the second wave is characterized by therapeutic interventions; the third wave subsumes adaptation, implementation and dissemination.



Wave #1
Operationalization of hope
Measures of hope
Internal locus of hope

Wave #2
Therapeutic Intervention
• Individualized vs Group
• Low-dose vs. High-dose

Wave #3
External loci of hope
Add related virtues
• Gratitude
• Belonging
• Values
Smartphone app
On-line platform
Sustainability
Scalability

Corn et al, Psycho-Oncology, 2024

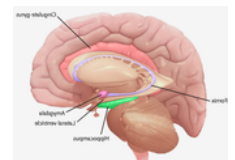


SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION: 5-YEAR PLAN

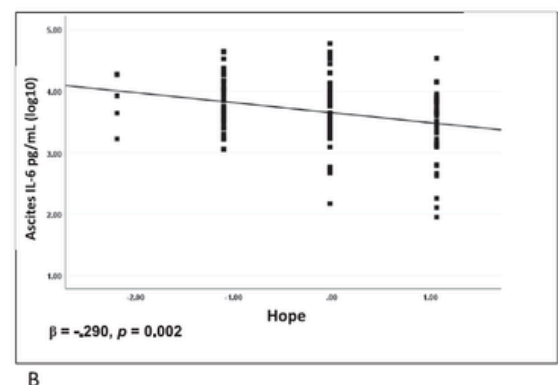
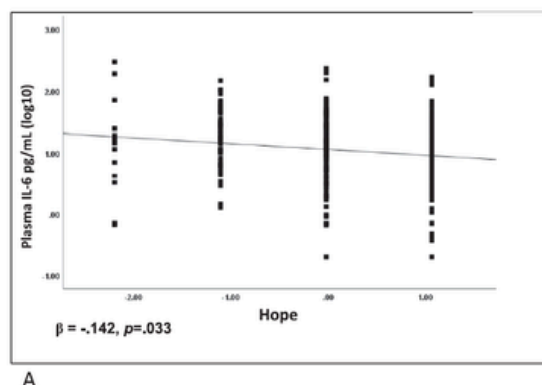
Hope as a Foundation for Wellbeing

Over the next five years, the Institute will explore hope's biological, psychological, and cognitive mechanisms. It will develop digital and face-to-face interventions that strengthen hope, and measure outcomes—correlating hope with resilience, empathy, health, and longevity.

The Institute's core proposition: Hope is not just a feeling—it is a learnable, measurable "skill" which is essential to health and wellbeing.



Impact of hope on stress-related biomarkers



A) Hope and plasma IL-6 pg/mL in ovarian cancer patients. B) Hope and ascites IL-6 pg/mL in ovarian cancer patients. Hope and hopeless items are z-scored.

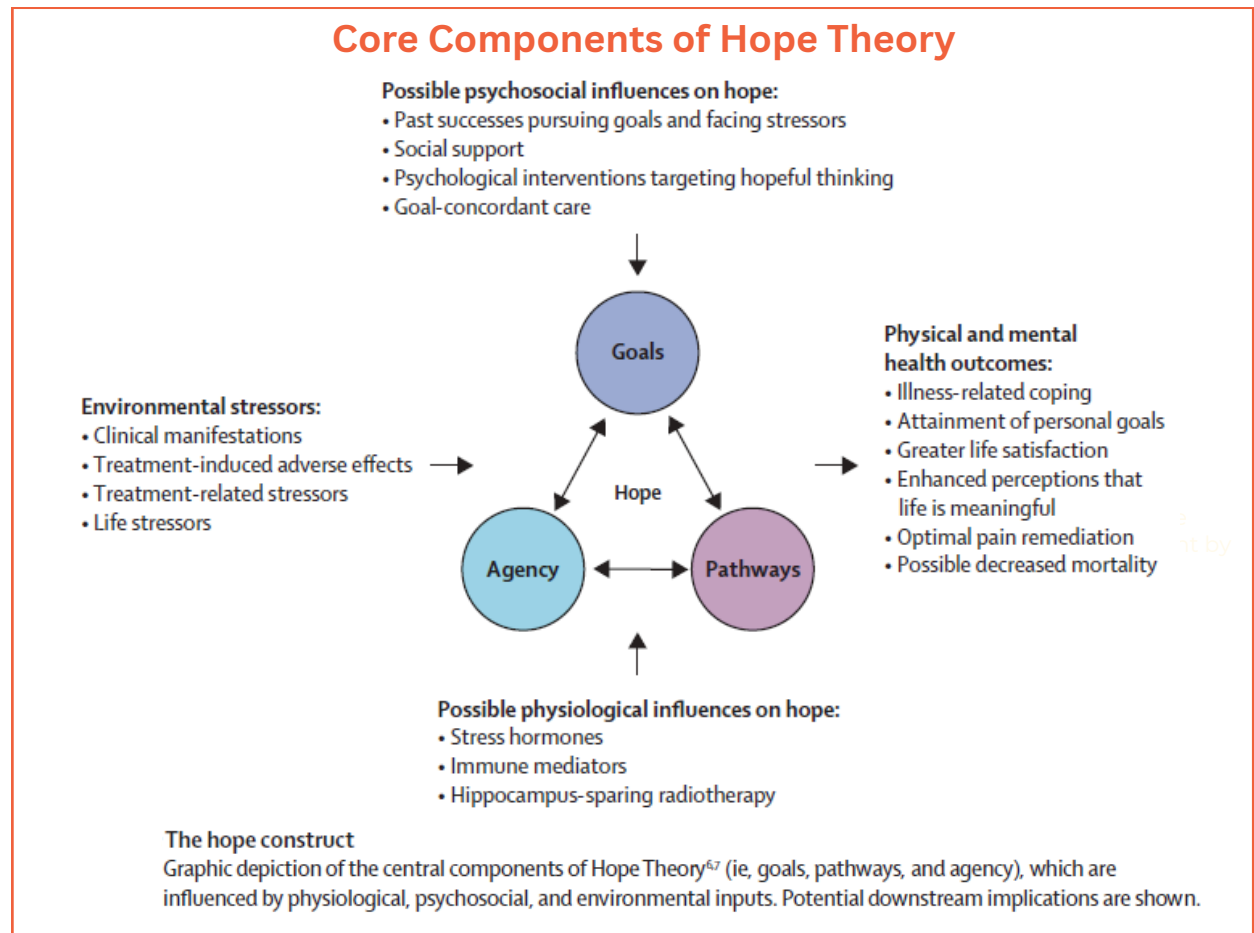
Lutgendorf et al. Brain Behavior and Immunity, 2024



BASIC SCIENCE: DEFINING THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF HOPE

The institute will use validated tools to study hope across diverse populations, including patients, caregivers, incarcerated individuals, and underserved communities. By employing fMRI, biometrics, and digital platforms, we aim to track and amplify hope in real-time.

Our research will explore the phenomenon of “hope contagion”—the social transmission of hopeful behavior—and identify the brain circuits involved in hope through neuro-imaging during hope-inducing exercises, biomarker analysis (such as cortisol and IL-6), and physiologic data collection including heart rate and blood pressure in response to hope-enhancing activities.



Modified from Corn, Feldman & Wexler: Lancet Oncology 2020



APPLIED SCIENCE: MODELS FOR SCALABLE SOCIETAL IMPACT

The institute will build and evaluate technology-driven interventions for:

- Illness, aging and frailty
- End-of-life care
- Socio-economic distress
- Educational and academic challenges
- Caregiver and clinician burnout
- Trauma recovery in individuals and communities
- Grief and loss

Studies will span urban, rural, multicultural, and marginalized settings to maximize generalizability. Results will guide the creation of hope-based clinical standards.



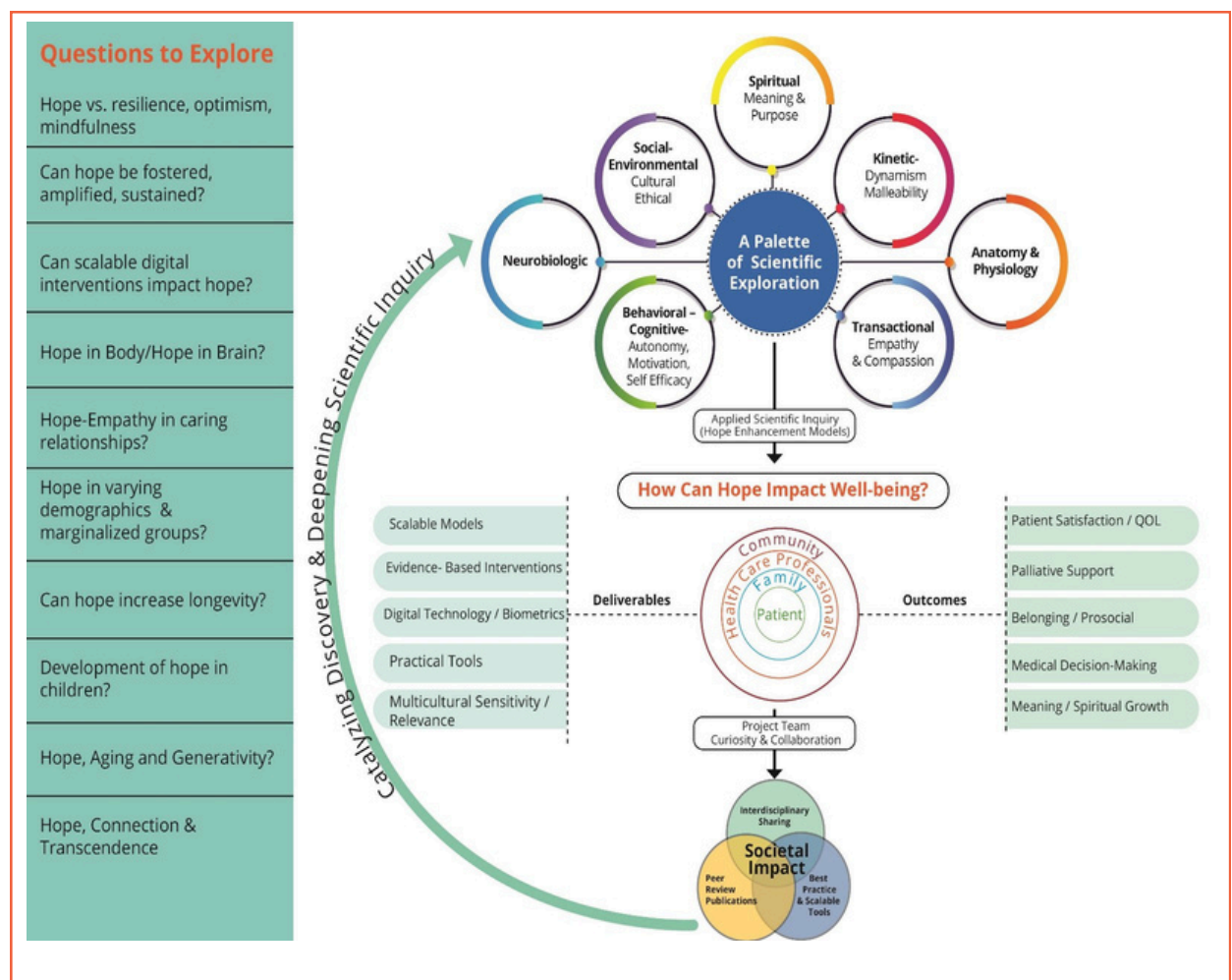
LIFE'S DOOR AND THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Life's Door, a non-profit organization in Israel and the U.S., has spent two decades pioneering hope-based care models that promote well-being within diverse populations. In 2015, Life's Door established The Pamm Gross Kahane Healthcare Research Institute, which collaborates with the National Cancer Institute, Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins, and other institutions. Its work has gained international recognition in leading peer-reviewed publications.

Life's Door has served tens of thousands across Israel and the U.S. with proven, culturally-sensitive interventions in partnership with over 30 health and social service organizations. Technology platforms such as Hopetimize®, have offered expanded reach and scale of evidence-based methodologies.

Professor Ben Corn's leadership has been recognized with multiple awards for humanitarian impact in medicine. Ben will Chair this academic-based Institute and will foster inter-disciplinary and global collaboration, promote best practice and offer a longitudinal model for the future.

By establishing this initiative within the distinguished 100-year-old Hebrew University Faculty of Medicine, the Institute will have deep grounding in academic excellence, interdisciplinary thinking and will foster sustainable impact through the establishment of evidence-based standards for training worldwide.





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