How Teams Navigate the Ebbs and Flows of Hope in Organizational Life

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how teams experience and co-construct hope for one another through storytelling and shared imaginings of possible futures during facilitated, future-focused workshops. I conducted a total of 38 qualitative, semi-structured interviews and performed two observations of facilitated workshops. This study reveals how hope in teams is a shared, complex, and emergent state that motivates team members toward accomplishing future-oriented change through empowered action. Using a *gestalt framework of emotions*, findings suggest hope in teams is greater than the sum of its parts and is rife with tensions and contradictions. In fact, this study suggests that hope in its latent state may first present as jadedness in team members, wherein they are guarded and seek to protect themselves from re-experiencing past pains and failures. This study found teams engage in a five-step hope emergence process during facilitated, future-focused workshops and that teams who emerged from the workshop hope-filled were able to sustain that hope by accomplishing meaningful progress toward ideas they had created in the workshop. This research expands understanding of positive emotions in the workplace and, specifically, the understanding of hope in teams by: (a) elucidating hope in teams using a gestalt emotion framework, (b) uncovering jadedness as a latent state of hope, (c) highlighting how teams experience hope as an ebb-and-flow of organizational life, (d) identifying five steps in a co-construction process of hope emergence, (e) recognizing the need for meaningful progress to be made in order for hope to persist in the team, (f) illuminating the role of disempowerment and the potential darker sides of hope, and (g) surfacing practical implications for co-constructing and sustaining hope for teams, leaders, and facilitators in the workplace.

DEDICATION
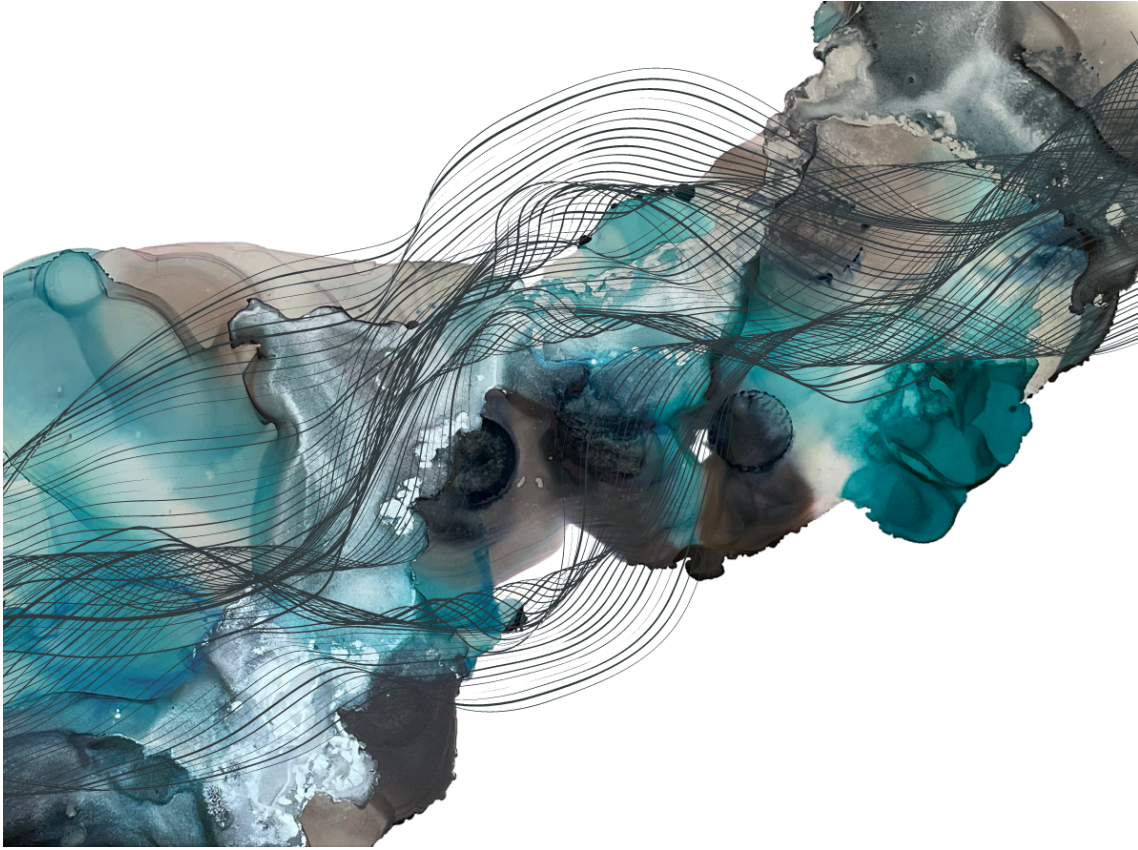
Waves of Jade, artwork inspired by this dissertation, by Cary JS López, ©2023.

This dissertation is dedicated to the teams navigating the waves of organizational life: may hope act as a beacon in the dark, to light your way when you feel lost. And to the facilitators who seek to guide teams: may you find inspiration and joy in the work you do. Hope work is hard work; my wish for you is that it is also meaningful and worthy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all.
—Emily Dickinson, "Hope Is a Thing with Feathers"

Where there is hope, there is life.
—Anne Frank, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.
—Desmond Tutu

Many of us will spend a significant amount of our working lives in organizations,

and our organizational world is increasingly characterized as stressful, messy, uncertain,

and volatile (Bennet & Lemoine, 2014; Cousins, 2018). It is easy to become despondent

and overwhelmed in our daily working lives. As I write this dissertation in the post-

COVID-19 pandemic world, stories abound of "The Great Resignation" and of people

leaving their organizations in search of better, or different, ways of working (Hsu, 2021).

Increasing levels of burnout and stress (Wade & Aspinall, 2021), blurred lines between

life and work (especially for women in the workplace; Bachmann & Faundes, 2021),

"technostress" (stress from working with tech; Tarafdar et al., 2010), and workaholism

(Spagnoli et al., 2020) have become common refrains heard in not only conversations at

work but also in news stories, popular press books, and podcasts.

And yet, hope remains. We can find purpose, satisfaction, and even joy in our

work. Organizational life is not all negative experiences. Organizations "offer people…

self-adventures ranging from mundane projects to enduring strivings, in the unforeseen

and naked terrains of possibility" (Carlsen & Pitsis, 2009, p. 78). Working together with others in harmony toward a shared goal, in which each person is fully utilizing their skills and abilities while relying on the strengths of others in mutual trust and admiration, affords us the opportunity to achieve more than would have been possible alone. While not ignoring the reality of meeting financial needs as a primary driver of why we work, I believe it is ultimately this striving toward "terrains of possibility"—of collaboration and mutual respect, of contributing to one's fullest capacity, and of shared achievement—that keeps us engaged in our work and our organizations. Hope and engaging in hopeful activities may, in fact, be an answer to helping individuals, teams, and organizations find balance in the post-pandemic world of work.

Why Hope?

You might find yourself asking, "why *hope*?" Many other positive workplace experiences have been studied by organizational and communication scholars, including resilience (e.g., Agarwal & Buzzanell, 2015; Buzzanell, 2010; Gittell et al., 2006); meaningfulness (e.g., Cheney et al., 2008), compassion (e.g., Tietsort et al., 2023; Tracy & Huffman, 2017; Way & Tracy, 2012), and the relational impacts of work on positive employee experiences (e.g., Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2011). As a positive construct, hope has been studied extensively in psychology and has been found to be a powerful force for individuals of all ages (e.g., Cheavens & Guter, 2018). However, hope has been understudied in organizational contexts (for exceptions see Lee & Gallagher, 2018; Reichard et al., 2013), especially in group or team-based settings (Barge, 2003; Mouton & Montijo, 2018). Hope can support emotional and psychosocial wellbeing (Ciarrochi et al., 2015; Lopez et al., 2009) and promote positive outcomes, such as improved coping

2

with physical and mental disease and injury (Rand & Cheavens, 2009), increased resilience (Ong et al., 2018), academic success (Pedrotti et al., 2018), and athletic achievement (Curry & Snyder, 2000). In fact, hope has been proposed as "influencing the largest terrain of health and well-being for the greatest number of people" (Kashdan, 2018, p. xvii) and "fundamental to understanding human flourishing" (Callina et al., 2018, p. 9). As shared in the famous quote by Desmond Tutu at the beginning of this chapter, maybe what we all need in times of darkness is a shining light. Studying how hope can bring its light to times of organizational darkness seems timely and relevant.

Enacting Collective Hope in Teams

Some scholars estimate as many as 65% to 95% of knowledge workers (i.e., workers focused on creating, revising, managing, and sharing information-based resources; non-manual and/or non-service-oriented workers, Drucker, 1988) now experience life in organizations primarily through team-based organizing (O'Leary et al., 2011). Teams link the macro with the micro of organizational life; they are often the place at which organizational policies, practices, and norms are enacted, upheld, and contested through the experiences of team members in their everyday interactions. The amount of research on teams—from team processes to antecedents and consequences—is massive (for a review, see Mathieu et al., 2017) and well beyond my scope here to explain. However, areas that are underexplored are those dealing with the complexities inherent in many of the modern-day team experiences: the emergent, dynamic, and temporal factors of team life (Mathieu et al., 2017; Margolis, 2020) and, particularly, positive organizational studies (POS) phenomena (Mouton & Montijo, 2018). POS studies have investigated: the nature of family businesses (Sharma et al., 2014); how

emotionally intelligent team members can positively influence team learning (Ghosh et al., 2012); how leaders can influence positive outcomes in teams, such as virtuousness and commitment (Rego et al., 2013); and how relationships between team members can lead to flourishing (Colbert et al., 2016). Even among POS studies, however, the positive psychology foundation of much of POS is at odds with the relational and socially constructed nature of organizational life (Weick et al., 2005).

We need to understand more about how some of these apparently intrapersonal or individually experienced phenomena may be *co-constructed* through group and social experience. A core component of hope theory, as it was originally articulated by Snyder and his colleagues (1991), is its relational component; however, this relational element of hope has been under-studied, especially in the workplace (Mouton & Montijo, 2018). The current study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how teams enact hope and hope-filled processes, as well as the conditions that allow for hopefulness to arise. My intention for the outcomes of this study is to provide both theoretical and practical approaches for individuals, teams, and organizations to better navigate challenging times.

Preview of Manuscript

The research examined in this dissertation gives a better understanding of hope and how hope-filled activities are enacted by team members in the workplace. It will be structured as follows: Chapter 1: Introduction has laid out an overview of the study, along with key ideas and concepts. Chapter 2: Literature Review will review what we understand about hope, hope theory, and related constructs; explain how becoming a hope-filled person and team is in fact a sensemaking and identity creation process; and introduce *empowerment* as an essential component of constructing team-based hope.

4

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures outlines my multiple methods, or *crystallized phronetic iterative approach,* and analysis processes. Chapter 4: Understanding Team Using a Gestalt Framework of Emotion explores data regarding the nature of hope in teams, finds it to be messy and complex, and brings in new literature around gestalt emotions in organizations to make sense of the findings. Chapter 5: The Emergence of Team-Based Hope Through Social Construction: Different Ways of Being and Doing shares findings that suggest a set of processes that teams engage in to co-construct hope, as well as the role of vulnerability and relational connection in building hope. Chapter 6: Persistence of Hope in Teams: What Comes Next, Matters looks at how teams sustain hope through engaging in meaningful progress towards achieving goals and implementing ideas, while also exploring findings that suggest darker sides of the hope process. Chapter 7: Discussion breaks down the implications of the study, and not only addresses theoretical implications, but also offers ways teams, team leaders, and facilitators can work towards supporting teams in building and sustaining hope and considers future work on the topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

What We Know About Hope as a Group Construct

and Why Hope in Groups Is Important

Hope in the Workplace

Positive organizational scholarship (POS) focuses on phenomena that promote

positive experiences in organizational life and allow people and organizations to thrive

(Cameron et al., 2003). These positive phenomena include social, behavioral, and

emotional resources and experiences that individuals can draw on in their organizational

lives. Many studies to date have explored the intrapersonal, "micro," or psychological

level, such as individual measures of flourishing (e.g., Redelinghuys et al., 2019a,

2019b); or positive attributes and traits of leaders, such as compassionate leadership

(Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). This is unsurprising, as one of the major contributing fields

in POS is positive psychology (Seligman, 1999). And while Luthans in 2002 called for a

focus on positive organizational *behavior*, which sparked studies looking at the macro, or

organizational level, such as compassionate organizations (Kanov et al., 2004), resilient

organizations (Everly, 2011), and even cultures of hope (Sawyer & Clair, 2022), the

preponderance of POS work remains at the intrapersonal, or psychological/micro, level.

Like other positive constructs, hope also originated in the psychology discipline

(Menninger, 1960; Stotland, 1969). Psychologist C. R. Snyder developed what has

become the most cited theory, known as the agency/pathways theory of hope (Snyder et

al., 1991). The agency/pathways theory of hope states, "hope is a positive cognitive-

motivational state characterized by strong agency and pathways thinking that provides

high-hopers with the motivational determination and cognitive tools to successfully pursue their goals" (Callina et al., 2018, p. 14). Put differently, the agency pathways theory of hope combines *motivation*, *willpower*, and *waypower*, such that:

> goal-directed thinking, [is] coupled with agency (or motivation) to begin and continue striving towards a goal (willpower) and the ability to create multiple pathways to reach that goal by identifying potential obstacles and engaging in contingency thinking (waypower)." (Mouton & Montijo, 2018, p. 328)

Snyder developed measurement scales for traits of hope (Snyder et al., 1991), as well as states of hope (Snyder et al., 1996). Snyder and his colleagues believed hope was both an emotional state and a deeper trait that could be developed, allowing an individual to become more hope-filled, and thereby, able to better navigate the trials of life. Snyder and his colleagues primarily studied hope in the health and family arenas, particularly in how some individuals facing adverse health or family situations seem better able to not only cope but also thrive (e.g., Moon & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1993). Snyder hypothesized that hope could be "positively contagious" (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997) and was especially interested in the belief that children inculcated in hope by high-hope adults in their lives would themselves develop agency and pathways thinking (Snyder, Cheavens, et al., 1997). Snyder and his protègé, Shane Lopez, both passed away in recent years after undergoing their own health battles. In many ways, their study of the theory of hope was due to their own lived experiences, and they both credited being high-hope individuals for the quality of life they were able to achieve, even amid great personal hardship (Gallagher, 2018; Kashdan, 2018).

Scholars have suggested that hope may be a foundational element in accomplishing human flourishing in organizations (Callina et al., 2018). Studies on hope in the workplace have found positive relationships between hope and performance (Luthans et al., 2005; Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al., 2008); that hopeful employees outperform their non-hopeful peers by 28% (Reichard et al., 2013); are more likely to be conscientious, motivated, and goal-oriented (Mouton & Montijo, 2018; Snyder et al., 2011); and more likely to find meaning in their work and lives (Feldman & Snyder, 2005). Scholars have also theorized that hope and performance are reciprocal—that the more goals a person sets and achieves the more it boosts their performance. This success, in turn, gives them an emotional and cognitive "lift" to continue setting more goals (Wandeler & Bundick, 2011) through the broadening and building of a repertoire of positive thoughts and actions (Fredrickson, 2004).

While conceptually distinct from many of its other POS brethren, hope has also been found to play a reciprocal relationship with other concepts such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982, 1997), optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985; Seligman, 1991), self-esteem (Hewitt, 1998), problem-solving (D'Zurilla, 1986; Heppner & Hillebrand, 1991), and positive psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2004). See Table 1 on the next page for a review of the similarities and differences between these other constructs and hope.

Table 1

Individual / Biological / Psychological Hope and Related Constructs

Construct	Definition	How Hope is Distinct / Differs from the Construct
Self-efficacy	Bandura, 1977: "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3).	While self-efficacy shares many characteristics of hope theory (such as being goal-directed, future-oriented, cognitive, self-focused, and based upon perceived ability), self-efficacy does not address the *perceived intention* of an individual as being characteristic. Hope theory posits the "...intention to strive for goals, whereas self-efficacy is a belief about one's ability only" (Rand, 2018, p. 54).
Optimism	Two different constructs: Seligman's (1991) attributions-based theory and Scheier & Carver's (1985) outcome expectancy theory. ● Seligman's optimism: "an attributional style that explains positive events in terms of personal, permanent, and pervasive causes and negative events in terms of external, temporary, and situation-specific ones" (Youssef & Luthans, 2007, p. 287, citing Seligman, 1998). ● Scheier & Carver's optimism: a dispositional state (Scheier & Carver, 2001; Carver et al., 2009) and goal-based approach that occurs when an outcome has substantial value, and as a person moves closer to or farther from that goal (i.e., enacts behavior feedback control processes), they will experience feelings of joy and contentment that will feed a person's *expectancy* (or self-confidence) of their ability to achieve the goal. (Carver & Scheier, 2001)	● Seligman's attribution model of optimism (1991) focuses on a person's ability to "distance themselves from [negative] outcomes" (Snyder et al., 2018, p. 30), whereas hope theory allows for recognition of positive and negative emotions. ● While measures of Scheier & Carver's (1985) and Snyder's hope theory (Snyder et al., 1991) have been shown to correlate in the .50 range (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991), studies have shown hope theory and optimism have different factor structures, and hope theory has produced unique variance beyond optimism (Magaletta & Oliver, 1999; Snyder et al., 2018) To summarize, "Optimism is a broad expectancy, with no specific focus on the controllability of desired outcomes. In contrast, hope is a more focused expectancy anchored in an individual's ability and intention to bring goals to fruition" (Rand, 2018, pp. 53-54)
Self-esteem	"Hewitt (1998) concludes that self-esteem reflects emotions flowing from persons' appraisals of their overall effectiveness in the conduct of their lives…and are implicitly built on goal-directed thoughts" (Snyder et al., 2018, p. 32)	While "...self-esteem and hope correlate in the .45 range (Snyder, Harris et al., 1991), there is research support that…hope…influence[s] self-esteem and not vice versa" (Snyder et al., 2018, p. 32).

Table 1 continued

Problem-solving	Heppner & Hillebrand (1991) specifically focus on applied problem-solving (e.g., "real world" problem-solving, as opposed to cognitive processes of solving problems in laboratory settings) or "how people attempt to resolve stressful situations, problems that they have not encountered before, typical daily hassles, and even problems that overwhelm their resources" (Heppner & Heppner, 2013). The most popular measurement tool, the Problem-Solving Inventory (PSI, Heppner, 1988; Heppner & Petersen, 1982) focuses on three factors of problem-solving - problem-solving confidence, approach-avoidance style, and personal control.	While major correlations of between .4 and .5 exist between hope theory and problem-solving (Snyder, Harris et al., 1991) and problem-solving contains elements of both agency (i.e., personal control) and pathways thinking (i.e., approach-avoidance style), the major difference is the various problem-solving theories do not address emotions explicitly, whereas hope theory posits positive emotions arise from goal pursuit and attainment (Snyder, et al., 2018).
Self-determination	Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2002: Self Determination Theory (SDT) posits three basic psychological needs must be met in order to support healthy psychological development: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Meeting these needs creates autonomous motivation, which can then trigger causal action. Self-determination "refers to a dispositional characteristic manifested as acting as the causal agent in one's life" (Wehmeyer, Shogren, et al., 2018, p. 65).	While clearly related, the key differences between hope theory and self-determination theory are how they differentiate goal setting and attainment. Studies have found high correlation and reciprocal relationships between hope and satisfying the need for competence (Wandeler & Bundick, 2011) but have not found similar relationships between hope and the other psychological needs defined in self-determination theory (Wehmeyer & Shogren, 2018).
Positive Psychological Capital (PosPsyCap)	Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007 define PosPsyCap as: "an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success" (p. 3).	Hope is one of the four components of PosPsyCap and is, therefore, incorporated in the construct yet still recognized as being distinct from the other four components of self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience.

Table 1 continued

Goal setting, goal attainment	Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990): A theory of motivation that goes beyond control theory (Miller et al., 1960) and focuses on discrepancy reduction through a series of control-and-feedback loops by including human will and volition. A goal—the object or aim of an action—is defined by its content and intensity. *Content* refers to the object or result being sought, while *intensity* is "the effort needed to set a goal, the position of a goal in an individual's goal hierarchy, and the extent to which a person is committed to goal attainment" (Locke & Latham, 2012, p. 5).	A central tenet of hope theory is "that hope drives successful goal pursuit and attainment (Snyder, 1994)" (Feldman et al., 2009, p. 480). Pathways (as in pathways thinking) are cognitive routes to goals (Snyder, 1994; Feldman et al., 2009). "It is important to note…hope reflects a *perception*, not necessarily a reality. The subjective experience of hope does not require that concrete pathways exist nor that agency thoughts coincide with reality (Snyder et al., 1991). It is theoretically possible for an individual to be high in hope and yet not attain his or her goals" (Feldman et al., 2009, p. 480). Hope is related to achieving goals overall, rather than predicting success at achieving specific goals (Feldman et al., 2009).
Flow	Flow describes a mental state of complete absorption and focus in a task, wherein the person is both challenged and has the adequate skills to meet the challenge (Czikszenthmihalyi, 1997).	Flow and hope are both related to optimal functioning (Czikszenthmihalyi, 1997; Luthans et al., 2004), and studies have found reciprocal relationships between flow and hope (Yotsidi et al., 2018). However, flow differs from hope in several ways. The first is its time orientation. Flow is an intensely focused state in the present, with "being lost in the moment" named a common experience, whereas hope is future-oriented. The second is the task-oriented nature of flow, wherein a person experiencing flow is intensely concentrating on a single task. Hope can be both specific and generalized and can pertain to more than a single task at a time. (Carlsen et al., 2012)

Table 1 continued

Resilience	"...generally refers to a pattern of functioning indicative of *positive adaptation* in the context of significant risk or adversity" (Ong et al., 2018, p. 256, original emphasis). Luthans (2002a) defines resilience as "the developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, and failure or even positive events, progress, and increased responsibility" (p. 702).	Resilience recognizes the need to take both proactive and reactive measures in the face of adversity (Youssef & Luthans, 2007, p. 779) Resilience requires an adverse "trigger" event (or even perceived trigger, in the case of risk). While some models of hope require or recognize a "trigger event", hope can also be more generalized and does not necessarily requires adversity as a foil or test. Resilience implies a bouncing back to a previous state, not an advancement to a next or better state
Hope	"a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder et al., 1991, p. 287)	Why hope is distinct and unique: The hope construct draws its uniqueness from the equal, additive, and iterative contributions of its agency and pathways components (Snyder, 1995a). Although the agency or willpower component of hope is shared with other positive psychological capacities, such as optimism, the pathways or waypower component is distinctive of hope. It "allows for the rekindling of determination and willpower even when faced with blockages, as additional alternative pathways have been proactively determined. The resultant boost in willpower in turn motivates the search for still further alternate pathways in light of the realities of the new situation. This hope process allows blockages or problems to be perceived as challenges and learning opportunities" (Youssef & Luthans, 2007, p. 779).

Hope as a Social Construct

Like many studies of emotion in the workplace that "tend to foreground the experience of the individual" (Town et al., 2020, p. 2), studies of workplace hope to date have mostly focused on hope as a psychological state or trait at the individual level. The positive psychology foundation of much of POS is at odds with the relational and socially

constructed nature of organizational life (e.g., Cooren, 2012; Kuhn et al., 2017; Weick et al., 2005), and the study of hope to date is no different. An element of hope we do not yet know much about is its social, or relational, element. Scholars have theorized that the very essence of hope is relational (Ludema et al., 1997) and constructed through dialogue (Barge, 2003; Carlsen et al., 2012; Merolla et al., 2017). Some scholars go so far as to say hope may even have been originally mis-conceptualized as an individual phenomenon (Burton, 2016). In turning from investigating hope as an individual psychological construct to instead studying hope as a relational or social construct, the level of analysis becomes less about the states or traits of the individual and more about the processes by which people interact to construct hope for one another.

While some work has been done to understand collective positive emotional phenomena, such as collective flow (van Oortmerssen, 2022) and collective efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997; Capiola et al., 2019), these studies have mostly used a model of aggregation, wherein the collective experiencing is the sum of the parts of the individuals in the group. Research in neuroscience (e.g., Barrett, 2017), communication (Dougherty & Drumheller, 2006; Scarduzio & Tracy, 2015), management (Sawyer & Clair, 2022), and sociology (Andersson, 2016; O'Hara, 2014) suggest that hope and other emotions are not only biological and individual but also socially constructed and may be more than merely "a sum of parts." See Table 2 for a mapping of the current landscape of collective hope.

Table 2

Collective or Group Hope

Construct	Definition	Level of study/measurement or other attributes and/or how related to or different from hope
Cultures of hope (Sawyer & Clair, 2022)	A set of assumptions, beliefs, norms, and practices that propagate hopeful thoughts and behaviors in an organization (p. 1). A culture of hope is one in which: (1) organizational members have a shared vision for a hopeful future; (2) organizational members believe they know how to get to their goals via methods and practices they deem appropriate; and (3) the organization embodies a shared sense of motivation toward their goals. When times get tough, hopeful organizations believe they have what it takes to weather the storm.	Grounded theory approach set in an organization facing a "grand challenge" (e.g., recovering victims of human trafficking and exploitation). Describes hope at the macro or organizational culture level.
Multidimensional Model of Hope (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985) and O'Hara's (2014) Multidimensional Model of Hope	Hope is incorporated in two spheres, particularized and generalized, and people can be operating processes simultaneously in one of six dimensions (affective, cognitive, affiliative, behavioral, contextual, and temporal). O'Hara (2014) proposed a third sphere, transformative hope, to capture "how a way of hoping may emerge in times of crisis and lead to new ways of understanding human existence" (Andersson, 2016, p. 12).	The Multidimensional Model(s) of Hope have been applied in sociological studies to understand how citizens and collectives can navigate issues of social concern or "grand challenges" (Amna 2010; Andersson, 2016; Axelrod & Lehman, 1993; Inglis, 2011, Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Ojala, 2007, 2011; Persson et al., 2011). Describes hope broadly at a societal level / across large groups of people.

Many of the studies of hope to date have treated hope as a variable—something that is either there and measurable or not. A social constructivist view would approach hope as a process that is constructed, constrained, and moved by and through communication, as well as something that is best explored contextually rather than only through variable-analytic methods like surveys. Carlsen and colleagues (2012) propose

studying hope using this kind of process-oriented, phenomenological approach to understand how organizational members construct hope together, such that hope is:

> a differentiated and future-oriented quality of experiencing that (1) may be directed towards anticipated *attainment* of specified outcomes and purposes, but can also address an expectation of *opening up* to unknown possibilities and *unarticulated horizons* of expectations and their beyond; (2) is *relationally* constructed and sustained, (3) presupposes and enables *believed-in imaginings* of *narrative form*; (4) may be *inherited* from previous experience as well as emerge from new events and jolts in experience, (5) is *emotionally charged* in its origin and mobilizing effect, and (6) accommodates both *potentially positive outcomes* and *negative elements* of despair, doubt, conflict, and loss. (p. 29, all emphases in original).

Although studies on the relational or social aspects of hope have been limited, scholars have begun to look at how groups may construct and reinforce hope. Psychotherapists, for example, have studied how support groups and other group-based therapy interventions may not only improve the efficacy of the treatment but also that they may do so by allowing the group to co-construct hope together (Cheavens et al., 2006). Sawyer and Clair (2022) used a grounded theory approach that discovered a culture of hope in an organization. Utilizing a narrative approach allowed the researchers to understand how cultures of hope may come to be constructed and contested in organizations (Sawyer & Clair, 2022). Sociologist Andersson (2016) studied how hope helps groups maintain motivation as they take on "grand challenges," such as the climate crisis. Communication scholars have focused on hope's impact on interpersonal

15

relationships, such as utilizing communication strategies to craft "memorable messages of hope" (Merolla et al., 2017) and how hope may help improve romantic relationships through better conflict management (Merolla, 2017; Merolla & Harman, 2018). A recent study discovered that social communication competence—"the ability to talk with others spontaneously, interact competently, initiate conversations, engage others in social interaction, be outgoing and gregarious, encode appropriate messages, and speak fluently" (Umphrey & Sherblom, 2018, p. 23)—predicted a person's agency and pathways thinking. In other words, competent communicators were able to craft opportunities for hope to arise.

Clearly, how we interact with others, and the "hopeful self" we bring to that interaction, can impact another person's own ability to build hope for themselves by activating pathways and agency thinking. And from a macro perspective, the context in which individuals are situated will influence their ability to construct hope. The emerging research discussed here suggests hope may, in fact, be interpersonal and organizational, as well as intrapersonal.

Hope in Teams

While the studies previously mentioned have investigated hope in particular settings—such as group-based therapy, interpersonal relationships, and organizations facing "grand challenges"—there is still much to explore in understanding what processes of co-constructing hope may look like in the ordinary, everyday context of organizational life. One of the ways people are increasingly experiencing work life is through team-based organizing (O'Leary et al., 2011). Teams have been defined as "interdependent collections of individuals who share responsibility for specific

outcomes" (Sundstrom et al., 1990, p. 120). These specific outcomes likely take the form

of shared goals, and in fact, "our most important goals are those we pursue with others"

(Fishbach & Tu, 2016, p. 298). Studying hope in organizational teams seems a logical

place to understand the relational and social construction processes of hope in the

workplace.

However, mere pursuit of shared or common goals is unlikely to in and of itself

build hope, and pursuing goals is only one part of the agency-pathways model of hope.

Team life is complex, messy, and contains a multitude of factors impacting a team's lived

experiences (for a review of the literature on this topic, see Mathieu et al., 2017). Taking

an additive approach to understanding hope in groups or teams (e.g., assuming that the

measuring of a group's levels of hope is accomplished by adding together the state or

trait hope of its individual members), might be insufficient for understanding this

"messiness," as there might be interactions and processes at play that make for a

relationship in which the "whole is larger than the sum of its parts" (Stoverink et al.,

2020; Tracy, 2020). In other words, since many of the positive phenomena have been

found to have reciprocal relationships even at the intrapersonal level (Wandeler &

Bundick, 2011), it is feasible that hope in groups may not only be "positively contagious"

(Torrente et at al., 2013) among group members, but there may also be processes

occurring among and between the group members that we have yet to identify in our

understanding of hope.

Sensemaking, Identity, and Enacting Hopeful Identities

What form might these hope-creating, team-based processes take? Phrased

differently, what communicative processes might help generate hope in teams? Scholars

have suggested that hope is coupled with meaning-making (Charlesworth, 1979) and that

storytelling and narrative are an integral part of the *acts of hoping* (Burton, 2016;

Buckham, 2013; Carlsen et al., 2012; Davis, 2005; Merolla et al., 2017; Socha & Torres,

2015). Burton (2016) studied group-based therapy and concluded that hope was co-

constructed through narrative and storytelling, and Buckham (2013) determined that

narrative may reveal the "visible structural elements…[of the] agency and pathways

components" of hope theory (p. 8). However, another important element of hope theory is

that the "doing" of hope creates a difference in the doer. Because hope is an action rather

than a simple state of being (Buckham, 2013), the act itself moves a person from merely

experiencing a state of hope to, over time, becoming a "high hope" person (Shade, 2001).

In other words, the act of engaging in processes of hope creates an identity of being a

hopeful person. This section explores the relationship between narrative, sensemaking,

and identity creation.

Crafting Aspirational Identities Through Acts of Hoping

Hope focuses attention on the future, or "horizons of hope," as hope is "rooted in

the creation of meaning in ongoing experience by weaving stories of possibilities in new

experience" (Carlsen et al., p. 2012). We draw on stories and story fragments to help us

make sense of our organizational lives (McDermott & Hastings, 2000). This is inherently

a sensemaking process (Weick, 1995), grounded in narrative and storytelling, that

"occurs in an ongoing present in which past experience is projected upon possible

futures" (Hernes & Maitlis, 2010, p. 27). Although sensemaking has typically been

described as a past-oriented activity, scholars have shown that our concept of past,

present, and future are inextricably linked in our stories as we engage in the process of

organizing (e.g., Vough & Caza, 2017). Acts of hoping might be, in fact, a future-oriented collective sensemaking process. And because sensemaking, organizing, and identity construction have been theorized as being inextricably intertwined (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016), as teams engage in acts of hoping through a future-oriented, collective sensemaking process, they may also be constructing identities as individuals and collectives who are hopeful.

Creating Collective Hopeful Identities

Scholars have proposed that identities are a social construct—we cannot build a sense of "who I am" without also understanding "who we are" and "who I am in relation to who we are" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979/2004). However, we don't just co-construct our identities in the present, or here and now, we also construct *aspirational identities*, which represent our possible, longed-for (or, feared) selves. Scholars have theorized a variety of aspirational, imagined, or future-oriented selves, including provisional selves (Ibarra, 1999), possible selves, (Markus & Nurius, 1986), positive identities (Dutton et al., 2010), prototypical identities (Sluss et al., 2012), and even protean selves (Wolf, 2019). These identity types have several factors in common: they are based around conditions that are yet to exist, meaning if someone could "be" a "possible" self, they would already have done so; they each have some aspect of unknown temporal quality, meaning it is in a time that has yet to occur; they contain both a looking-forward orientation and a looking-back orientation or are a blend of past, present, and future; they are social constructions, in that they are influenced by both internal desires and evaluations of others; and they have some aspirational quality to them, meaning they are either seen as the possible "best" self (Markus & Nurius, 1984), a "good/happy/fulfilled" self (Dutton et al., 2010), or a self

that exemplifies all desired qualities espoused by a collective (Sluss et al., 2012). These aspirational identities are not without issues; "aspirational" may become "preferred" and act as constraining or even destructive models of self-comparison whereby we begin to think of "real" and "fake" selves (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005; Tracy & Town, 2020). However, POS scholars propose holding a positive, future-oriented idea of oneself as a necessary condition for outcomes such as positive psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2004) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Framed in a different way, these aspirational selves may represent our "hoped for" selves. And potentially, one way we co-construct these aspirational selves is through *acts of hoping*—the enactment of processes in which groups, together, envision a hoped-for outcome and craft pathways to accomplish that vision.

It is possible that group members not only craft an aspirational vision for the team/group, but as part of that vision, group members also craft a "who we will be" aspirational group identity and a nested aspirational individual identity of "who I will be in that group." This process enacts Ashforth's (2016) "organizational identity cascade": as groups engage in acts of hoping through a future-oriented collective sensemaking process, they are casting identities into the future, not only a "we think → it is" orientation but also a "we think → it will be" orientation. Note that this identification process is likely to even further instantiate the organizational identity elements that are central, distinctive, and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985), as the group will likely craft visions in keeping with organizational values and vision. However, crafting a collective aspirational identity could also act as a destabilizing or bottom-up modification of organizational identity. As groups take action towards a future of goals they co-create,

20

they are also constructing group and individual aspirational identities. This "taking action" component is central to both identity construction and hope theory. Hope without action is a mere wish; identity without enactment is merely aspirational. The next section explores this action element.

The Bridge to Hope: Team Empowerment

Hope is distinct from other positive psychological elements, such as optimism or goal-setting, in that it is created through action. Action is a necessary component of building and executing pathways. Hope is also more than creating a shared goal and implementation plan; it is implementing or enacting that shared idea and goal even when original plans are stymied. Exploring how teams enact ideas and activate pathways is a necessary part of this study. Also important is an understanding of what happens to teams if they are unable to enact a shared vision or goal or are incapable of crafting alternative pathways. The ability or inability to act in an organization is inextricably linked to power and control (Deetz & Mumby, 1990).

Activating Pathways in Groups: Empowerment

The concept of agency is central to psychological hope theory (Snyder, 1994), and the enactment of agentic thinking is what distinguishes hope from optimism or mere wishful thinking (Callina et al., 2018). Per Snyder (1994), both will *and* way are core components of hope. Not only can a person envision a more positive future, but they also craft pathways toward that future and can move forward on one or more of those pathways. Hope is active, not passive; it is "not just wishing the future will be better, but that you can move towards that better future; there is something you have control over" (Lopez, 2013). Without the will *and* the way, a person is left with merely a wishful

21

thought for the future. This element of agency, which is similar to but conceptually and empirically distinct from the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), is about "imaginatively exploring our own power...what we can and cannot do in the world" (McGeer, 2004, p. 104) and how "...hope is not wishful thinking or flights of fancy, but clear-headed engagement with our capacities as they are, geared to bringing those capacities to where we want them to be. Thus hope grounds effective human agency" (Callina et al., 2018, p. 17).

In organizational settings, the capacity for the group to act on pathways they have envisioned is likely embroiled in the ever-present (and largely taken-for-granted or unseen) struggle between power and resistance (Deetz & Mumby, 1990). To take action, the group needs to both understand the potential barriers in their pathways and have the ability to navigate those pathways. Without the ability to do so—without being *empowered* to do so—they have not engaged in active hoping but simply wishful thinking. Wishful thinking, rather than being a positive and life-giving force, can be detrimental and destructive in the individual (Gallagher, 2018). In groups, engaging in narratives of hopeful sensemaking without the possibility of enactment may be a demoralizing, defeating exercise. As Trethewey (1997) argues, empowerment "involves concomitantly one's individual sense of potency as well as one's demonstrated power to influence, *in conjunction with others*, the conditions and contexts of daily existence" (p. 299, emphasis added). This concept of "influencing, in conjunction with others" is a uniquely communicative view of empowerment.

Much of the management literature of empowerment focuses on empowerment in one of two ways: either a structural view or a psychological one (Pradhan & Panda,

2021). At its core, *structural empowerment* "focuses on the transition of authority and responsibility from upper management to employees" (Maynard et al., 2012, p. 1234). Studies on structural empowerment focus on leaders and superiors in an organization and their role in "delegating down" power and authority, either through flattened hierarchies or leadership approaches that strive to share decision-making with subordinates (e.g., Kanter, 1977; Mintzberg, 1983; Yukl, 1989). *Psychological empowerment*, on the other hand, focuses "on the state or set of conditions that allow for employees or teams to believe that they have control over their work" (Maynard et al., 2012, p. 1235). Studies on psychological empowerment see empowerment as an intrinsic trait of employees and draw on much of the literature on self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and goal alignment between the employee and the organization (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Most studies on psychological empowerment use Spreitzer's (1995, 1997) four-dimensional model, which includes meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. While most models and measures of empowerment look at the individual as the level of measure, Kirkman and Rosen (1999) proposed a referent shift (from "I" thinking to "we / the team" thinking) in their four-dimensional model to account for team empowerment.

A communicative approach to empowerment acknowledges not only the structural or psychological aspects of empowerment but also a relational or shared experience of power through a co-creation of mutual influencing (Trethewey, 1999; Zanin & Bisel, 2018). Empowerment, then, or the ability of the group to enact the pathways they have co-created, seems essential to a collective sensemaking process of hoping. In this way, empowerment acts as the bridge between the group's current reality

and the future they are envisioning together. Phrased differently, whereas agency may be "the way" in an individual's model of hope, empowerment as a social process by and through the group seems to be a required component, "the way," for a group to enact hope. A group-based theory of hope, then, may potentially utilize an "empowerment/pathways" model, as opposed to an "agency/pathways" model in Snyder's (1994) individual or psychological theory of hope. However, this possibility has not yet received specific empirical study.

Where Is Hope Co-Constructed? The Case for Facilitated, Future-Focused Workshops as Sites of Hope Emergence

The next question in a study of hope in work teams might be: in what situations and contexts would hope in teams be likely to emerge? Viewing hope as a communicative process among group members suggests the value of studying groups as they communicate together. In addition, because of the future-oriented quality of hope, groups coming together to solve a problem or create something in the future seems to make sense as a place likely for hope to emerge. Studies of hope in psychotherapy and counseling groups (e.g., Cheavens et al., 2006; Couch & Childers, 1987; Marmarosh et al., 2005) have focused on the use of "hope therapy," in which a trained therapist or counselor facilitates and guides groups through a structured process to help them build their own mental models and capacity for hope. Studies of how groups may leverage hope in facing grand challenges (Andersson, 2016) have utilized facilitated workshops as the site of study, as well. In these previous studies, the level of measurement has predominantly focused on the individual. Exceptions include Burton's (2016) investigation of hope communication processes in recovery group therapy. However,

utilizing facilitated, future-focused workshops as sites for studying how groups co-construct hope seems to have a precedence.

Facilitated, future-focused workshops for teams often focus on strategic planning, problem-solving, or product design. Future-focused workshops differ from skills training or development. Training and development workshops typically help individual team members build job-related skills and knowledge (Noe & Kodwani, 2018). Future-focused workshops, in contrast, are outcome focused, meaning the team as a whole is expected to collaborate together on creating something that doesn't exist or fixing a problem that exists today that they desire to be better tomorrow. Workshops may take a variety of forms or frameworks, such as design thinking (a five-step process created by Stanford University's d.school), a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis (see Puyt et al., 2023, for a review), or a host of other approaches. Frameworks can have their own certification process (one can go to Stanford's d.school to become design thinking certified, for example), though not all frameworks require certification (see Liberating Structures at https://www.liberatingstructures.com/ for an example of group facilitation exercises that anyone can learn and utilize). Facilitators of the frameworks can be both embedded within an organization or work as independent consultants. Regardless of the framework used, these types of workshops are, by their very nature, future-focused, and they require the collaboration of the group in order to create the plan, solve the problem, or design the new product. Workshops also create opportunities for relational connection among team members, who sometimes work independently and may not have the opportunity to interact with one another on a frequent basis. Facilitated,

future-focused workshops would seem to be a natural place where teams may have the potential to co-construct hope, as they work together to craft an envisioned future.

Tying It All Together: Problem Statement and Research Questions

We know quite a bit about the importance of hope in people's lives (see Lee & Gallagher, 2018, for a review of hope and wellbeing) and the positive outcomes that can accrue to both individuals and organizations when hopeful people populate those organizations (see Reichard et al., 2013 for a meta-analysis and review of the impact of hope on employee and organizational outcomes). What we do not yet know are the processes by which people in organizations—and specifically teams in organizations—may enact hope and what these collective acts of hoping looks like. Likewise, while we can speculate on how enacting hope may influence organizational identity and identification processes through collective sensemaking, this process has not been studied. Finally, empowerment as a work-team-level construct has been only minimally studied (see Seibert et al., 2011), and little is known about the interaction of empowerment and hope in working teams within organizations. As people increasingly work in teams (O'Leary et al., 2011) and hope has been proposed as fundamental to enabling human flourishing in organizations (Callina et al., 2018), it seems timely and practically wise to explore the potential for a team-based enactment of hope (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

This study seeks to understand hope as a communicatively constructed phenomenon. Based on the literature review and the sensitizing concepts of previous definitions of hope and hope theory (Carlsen et al., 2011; Snyder, 1991), cultures of hope (Sawyer & Clair, 2022), sensemaking (Weick, 1995), identity construction (Ashforth &

Schinoff, 2016), and team empowerment (e.g., Seibert et al., 2011), a loosely-held and tentative definition of *team collective hope* might be:

> hope in teams is a communicatively constructed phenomenon created discursively when team members share stories of past, present, and future for the purpose of collectively narrating and enacting a set of inspirational future-oriented outcomes that have multiple potential pathways for accomplishment.

Through the telling of these stories and crafting of aspirational outcomes and pathways, team members may experience a variety of emotions, both positive and negative, and as the team works together to enact shared visions, they may co-create identities both as hopeful individuals and as a hope-filled team. This study seeks to explore how people might "talk hope into being" through storytelling and shared imaginings of possible futures during facilitated, future-focused workshops. The project is guided by the following research questions:

> RQ1: What does the analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest about how hope is experienced by teams in organizations?

> RQ2: What does an analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest as steps or conditions in the co-constructive processes of hope emergence in teams?

> RQ3: What does the analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest as ways hope persists within the teams?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews and participant

observation to develop an understanding of how team members co-construct hope during

future-focused, facilitated workshops. This section outlines the research context,

recruitment, data collection, participant information, research site background

information, my situatedness as a researcher, and data analysis. All procedures were

evaluated and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Arizona State

University.

How I Came to This Study: Research Context

As an embedded scholarly practitioner, I have some "hunches" that I have formed

from my own lived experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These "hunches" acted as a

starting point—a gentle tug in my gut, a phenomenological and embodied guide that

whispered, "there's something interesting happening here." Rather than ignore these

whispers, I actively engaged them and utilized them in building the research design while

also bolstering the design with guidance from my advisors and knowledge from past

research. In the next section, I will explain the four factors of the research design:

compatibility, suitability, feasibility, and yield (Tracy, 2020).

Compatibility

Compatibility addresses the researcher's positionality, identity, interest, and drive

(Tracy, 2020). As the human instrument, the research project was driven "both *despite* of

and *because of*" who I am (Tracy, 2020, p. 15 emphases in original). One of my

"hunches" was that team members co-construct hope through structured exercises, such

as facilitated workshops, and not by mere happenstance. This hunch was informed by my lived experience of working in organizations and participating in myriad structured and unstructured team interactions. I will never forget the first time I witnessed a master facilitator work with a team. Michelle Hawes, co-founder of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program at the University of Utah, had been brought in to help a group of physicians and researchers navigate a conflict that had escalated to a point in which it was in danger of impacting patient care and research outcomes. The unit's leader had expressed despair at the group's state and was desperate to find ways to help them learn to respect and value one another. As a student in the conflict resolution graduate certificate program, I was able to observe the series of workshops Michelle facilitated.

When we walked into the room for the first workshop, the air was so thick and heavy with tension I could feel it pressing down on my skin like the air before a storm. The battle lines between group members had clearly been drawn: the physicians were sitting on one side of the room, and the researchers were on the other. Someone had re-arranged the chairs so the two groups could stare at each other, with a clear space of no-man's-land between. Michelle calmly walked into that space and, with a voice so quiet we all had to lean in to hear, asked everyone to stand. She then asked a question: "If you are old enough to remember listening to music on an 8-track, walk to the right side of the room." There was some nervous laughter as people shuffled around and moved as she directed. She then asked, "If you've ever felt misunderstood by the generation of people on the other side of the room, raise your hand." Every person raised their hand.

She continued this exercise for a while, alternating between having people move around the room and raising their hands in response to a series of questions. These

questions became increasingly related to the group's conflict and ended with Michelle asking the group to reflect on the experience. One of the researchers responded by saying something along the lines of: "I guess I hadn't realized that we're all just doing our best. I saw the physicians as the bad guys…but there aren't any villains here, just people." The experience seemed to allow the group to see each other in new ways and to humanize "the other." But more than that, I remember hearing members of the team leave that workshop expressing optimism and hope for the future. The group's director later commented that, while there were still bumps in the road, the team's ability to work together had improved dramatically.

That workshop changed the course of my career, and while I didn't know it at the time, it also planted the seed for what would become this research study. I became fascinated with not only better understanding the facilitator's role in workshops but also what team members create for each other as they move through the experience. As someone who has witnessed, participated in, and facilitated many workshops, my interests and knowledge are compatible with conducting research in this area. See the section on self-reflexivity for how I addressed the implications of my positionality and situatedness in this project.

Suitability

Selecting a research site isn't only about compatibility of the project with the researcher's interests and positionality; I also needed to consider the suitability of the project in terms of whether it "...encompasses most, if not all, of the theoretical issues and characteristics of the research topic or problem" (Tracy, 2020, p. 16). In developing this project, I was interested in better understanding how emotional and relational experiences

help people navigate work life, and particularly the emotion of hope, how teams may co-create this experiencing of hope, the potential darker sides of the process of hope, and the role of organizational culture and identity.

It was important to me to understand the emotional and relational experiences of employees working in teams and how these experiences may help them navigate the highs and lows of working life. We spend over a third of our lives at work. I am deeply interested in making that third of our lives as beneficial as possible. Framed another way, as both a scholar and a practitioner, I seek ways to understand and support employee flourishing at work. My own experience has mostly been in working teams, and team-based organizing has become increasingly prevalent (O'Leary et al., 2011). I've experienced teams in which emotions were not welcomed and people felt emotions must be hidden or suppressed, as well as teams where emotions were loud and even overly shared (Waldron, 2012). I wanted to better understand this role of emotions in teams and, particularly, their positive emotional experiences, such as hope.

I also wanted to explore the lesser-known social and relational aspects of hope, how team members may create hope for one another, and what this co-creation process looks like. While scholars acknowledge that social and relational elements of hope exist (e.g., Snyder, 1991), little is known about what those elements are or how they are constructed (Carlsen et al., 2012; Ludema et al., 1997). Additionally, as hope is broadly accepted as a future-oriented and active process, understanding the relational and social elements of hope requires a context in which team members are interacting socially and relationally in a way that orients that collaborative work toward the future. Previous research on hope has utilized facilitated problem-solving workshops for this very reason,

as these workshops orient participants' gaze toward the future while requiring collaboration to do so (Andersson, 2016).

But is there a "darker" side of this hoping process? If so, what pitfalls or dangers may need to be understood or navigated? We know that many positive phenomena can have an inverted U-shaped trajectory, wherein too much of a "good thing" can become "bad" (Pierce & Aquinas, 2013), and previous studies have found hope to be a "double-edged sword" (Sawyer & Claire, 2022). I didn't want to fall prey to a positivity bias (Fineman, 2006), and I wanted to leave space to see where hope may not be an entirely "good" or "positive" experience.

Finally, context matters. It is likely that an organization's culture and identity are influencing anything an employee or team experiences (Maloney et al., 2016). I therefore needed to be aware of the roles organizational culture and organizational identity might play, if any. While I was interested in studying team dynamics of co-construction specifically, I knew I couldn't ignore the organizational context the team(s) would be situated within.

Based on these interests, suitable research participants would, therefore, (a) work in teams in an organization in which team-based organizing is common; these teams (b) would be engaged in structured processes in which hope might emerge but have also had both positive and (c) "dark" or "negative" experiences in these co-creation processes; and this organization (d) would have a strong culture or identity known to its employees that may be influencing these processes.

Feasibility

At this point, the suitability criteria were quite broad; this is where the feasibility of the research site came into play. Feasibility questions whether the researcher can realistically gain access to the research site and recruit participants (Tracy, 2020). In considering the ideal site for this project, I realized that what was then my current employer would be ideal and fit the suitability criteria. It was (a) a large organization in which much of the staff work was conducted via teams; (b) many of these teams consistently engaged in structured problem-solving workshops in which hope might emerge; (c) I was aware of at least a few cases in which people had negative experiences with structured workshops; and (d) not only was there a strong organizational identity and culture, but the organization also had a social imperative that drove what could even be considered a "hopeful" organizational culture (Sawyer & Clair, 2022). Selecting the organization I worked for was also a matter of access and convenience, as I could leverage my personal network in recruiting participants, as discussed in the upcoming data collection section.

Yield

The final factor to consider was yield, which requires determining whether the study would deliver the desired outcome (Tracy, 2020). Not only was the outcome in this instance a dissertation project, but because of my identity as a professional facilitator, I also desired to develop practical guidance for facilitators and team leaders based on the findings of the study. This desire led to a realization, as it occurred to me I had left out a significant group of participants: the facilitators themselves. While I am most interested in what team members are creating for each other in these structured workshops,

facilitators offer a unique perspective because they have witnessed the interactions of many teams, both positive and negative. While it was important to understand the organizational context of the team members, for the facilitator participants, I expanded the pool beyond the organization in which I worked. Expanding the facilitator participant pool outside of the organizational context granted an opportunity to understand whether the phenomena emerging in the study data were unique to the organization the team participants were embedded in or seemed to apply beyond the organizational context. The yield of this qualitative research project enabled me to not only extend theorizing on how teams co-construct collective hope and its darker sides, such as jadedness, but also practical implications for facilitators and team leaders.

<div align="center">**Data Collection**</div>

Participant Sampling and Recruitment

My participants fell into one of two pools: facilitators who conducted workshops for teams and team members of the organization I worked at who self-identified as having a recent (a) positive or (b) negative experience with a workshop that was facilitated. All participants had to be over the age of 18. I did not place any restrictions on either the facilitators or the workshop participants as to the kind of workshop they had experienced, other than that the workshop was future-focused (such as problem-solving, ideating for the future, etc.).

Workshops' structure can take many forms. Some adhere to a process that the facilitator can be trained and certified in, such as design thinking, Lean Six Sigma, Critical Response Process (CRP), or the ProblemSolveX method (which is a pseudonym for a workshop approach I helped design). Others are readily available and open to

anyone who would like to use the resources, such as Liberating Structures, Open Space Technology, or WorldCafe. Some are technologically-enabled, such as templates available on Mural, Miro, or Butter. And yet others have entered the public zeitgeist, such as brainstorming.

This study wasn't intended as an investigation of the efficacy of certain types of workshop structures over others; in addition, I was also interested in the possibility for convergence across different types of facilitative experiences. As such, I didn't limit or predefine the type of workshop structure either the team had participated in or that the facilitators had utilized. However, as detailed below, the sampling approach for the participant population from within my organization led to a number of participants who had experienced the ProblemSolveX method as the workshop structure.

Facilitator Participants

I utilized purposive sampling (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017; Tracy, 2020) for the facilitators, in that I identified participants who either considered themselves to be professional facilitators or who had been certified in facilitation approaches and techniques. To identify participants, I initially reached out to members of my own professional network via email or Slack message. I also posted a call to an organizational Slack channel for ProblemSolveX facilitators; over 200 people in the organization have gone through ProblemSolveX facilitator certification training. See Appendix B for recruitment materials.

In addition, I joined several facilitation communities of practice on LinkedIn to expand my network and identify potential research participants outside of my organization. Through LinkedIn, I identified professional facilitators from the UK, the

Netherlands, Germany, and across the U.S. Utilizing LinkedIn's messaging tool (see Appendix B for recruitment materials), I shared the research purpose, as well as the informed consent agreement and noted that participation consisted of a Zoom interview that typically lasted between 45–90 minutes.

Team Member Participants

I leveraged Hackman and Katz's (2010) "purposive groups" in defining a "team"—"an intact social system, complete with boundaries, interdependence for some shared purpose, and differentiated member roles" (p. 1210). I didn't want to limit participation to only those teams that reported to a single person. By utilizing purposive groups, I was able to expand the call to include members of communities of practice— those working together to solve a common problem but who didn't necessarily report to the same individual.

I used purposive sampling again when considering individual team members but also included criteria for two types of cases: positive deviance sampling (which became more of typical instance sampling, as I discuss below) and negative deviance sampling. Initially, my expectation was that "typical" participants would be indifferent, apathetic, or blasé about their workshop experiences, and potentially even struggle to remember them. There have been many studies done on meeting effectiveness, or the lack thereof, and team member perceptions of meetings as largely being a waste of time (see Allen & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2022, for a review). As hope is widely considered to be a positive or "good" emotion, I anticipated that, in order to study how hope emerges, I would need to seek out positive deviant cases—those that "depart from the norms of a referent group in honorable ways" (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004, p. 829); therefore, in order to observe

36

hope emergence, I would watch for those who had good feelings about their workshop experiences. Because of my interest in understanding the potential "dark side" for teams as they co-construct hope, I was also interested in team members who self-identified as having a negative experience, as a negative experience "deviates" from the typical experience. Of the team members I interviewed, 15 self-identified as having positive experiences, and one identified as having a negative experience.

In recruiting the team members, I first asked facilitators in my organization who I had previously interviewed if they had recently facilitated any workshops and would be willing to share the names of the team leaders. I then reached out to those team leaders via email or Slack message. I did not ask for the names of the team members. Instead, I provided an email script to the team leaders that they could share with their team members on my behalf and included my email address so interested team members could contact me directly. In the email, I indicated that I was looking for participants who felt they had had either a particularly positive or negative experience in the workshop. I also provided a copy of the informed consent agreement and explained the interview would be conducted via Zoom and last between 45–60 minutes. See recruitment materials in Appendix B.

The Organization Site: Background Information

As mentioned in the research design, I selected the organization where I was then employed as the research site for several reasons, including ease of access to the site and potential participants. However, the organization also fit the suitability component of the research design, particularly as this organization had a very strong, future-focused and hope-filled vision and mission that was well socialized and understood by the employee

population. A large educational nonprofit supported by both public and private funding, this organization not only has the same social imperative as other education-oriented organizations (e.g., educating the populace) but also declares that higher education in general has failed in its social purpose and must change in order to have its desired positive impact on future generations. The organization advocates for the role of innovation in making these changes, and through many communication channels (including taglines, marketing materials, awards ceremonies, videos during employee onboarding and at sporting events, and even advertisements on billboards and buses around the city), most employees are aware of the organization's belief in innovation and future-focused vision. As an employee, I had personal experience and knowledge of these dynamics and understood some of the organizational culture and norms that were created because of them. As a large organization with over 18,500 employees, I also knew there were a vast number of different kinds of teams I could reach out to. The final consideration was that I knew teams were engaging in structured, future-focused workshops on a regular basis, as I had helped to create and proliferate a type of structured workshop known as ProblemSolveX. I also was aware of other facilitators on campus using different types of workshop designs, as well.

Overview of Data Collected

In total, I conducted 38 interviews that resulted in 33 hours, 27 minutes, and 36 seconds of audio- and video-recorded data. Interviews ranged from approximately 28 minutes to over an hour and 43 minutes in length ($M = 52$ minutes, $SD = 12:25$). I utilized the Zoom transcription tool, which has been found to be between 70–80% accurate and completed the transcription myself. In completing the transcription, I

engaged in fact-checking, meaning I was listening to the audio version while correcting

the Zoom transcription for errors and noted pauses or "verbal stumbling" ("ums," "ahs,"

etc.) which helped indicate times when the participant was struggling with an emotion or

grappling with a way to put a thought into words (Tracy, 2020). I utilized the Nvivo

Qualitative Software annotation tool to jot down and make analytic memos about

important moments that weren't explicitly in the text, such as tones of voice, the use of

acronyms, abbreviations, or other forms of tacit knowledge. This equated to 1,593 pages

of transcribed data. I also observed 2 workshops which, combined, resulted in an

additional 270 minutes of data and 39 pages of single-spaced, typed fieldnotes

summarizing the workshop activity. All participants were given pseudonyms using an

online randomized name generator, as well as assigned randomized gender pronouns. I

use "he/his/him" and "she/her/hers" to identify individuals, and "they/their/them" to

identify collectives or groups of people. Now that I have provided a broad overview of

the entire data set, below I provide more detail about each source.

Conducting Interviews and Participant Demographics: Facilitators

I conducted semi-structured, qualitative interviews using an interview guide for

facilitators (see Appendix C). The purpose of interviewing facilitators was to understand

their lived experiences with particularly positive or negative workshops, their perceptions

of how team members interacted differently in those experiences, and their recollection

of communicative processes team members engaged in. Before the interviews, all

participants signed an informed consent form or, if European and required by the country,

a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) form. See Appendix E for the facilitator

informed consent form and Appendix F for the GDPR form. All participants consented to having their interview recorded via Zoom.

I completed 22 interviews with facilitators between May 23 and November 7, 2022. The average interview length was 56 minutes, with the shortest duration being 38:29 and the longest being 1:43:09. Nine of the facilitators self-identified as "professional" facilitators, meaning they performed facilitation as consultants, while the remaining 13 identified with facilitation as a skill but not as the core purpose of their role or work within an organization. Of the facilitators, 13 were associated with the organization site, 8 were ProblemSolveX method certified facilitators, and the remaining facilitators either developed their own certification/frameworks or identified as being trained/certified in other methods. Two of the facilitators I interviewed were also somewhat "team member" interviews, in that they shared stories of how participating in a facilitated workshop was what caused their interest in learning more about facilitation and pursuing it as a career. However, I did not count those two interviews as team member interviews.

Conducting Interviews and Participant Demographics: Team Members

I conducted a total of 16 semi-structured, qualitative interviews using an interview guide for team members (see Appendix D). In speaking with individual team members during their interview, my purpose was to understand their lived experiences and their interpretation of the communicative processes they recalled enacting during the workshop, as well as any recalled emotional elements. Obtaining perspectives of multiple team members regarding their recollections and lived experiences provided a multifaceted interpretation of the group workshop experience (Tracy, 2020). Before the

interviews, all participants signed an informed consent form (see Appendix G for the team member consent form).

Fifteen of the 16 interviewees self-identified as having positive experiences in their original workshops, and one identified as having an especially negative experience. During interviews with facilitators, I identified five additional negative cases. Unfortunately, these individuals had left the organization and did not respond to my inquiries and recruitment efforts. I return to this in my dissertation's conclusion as an area of future study.

The interviews took place between September 9, 2022, and January 20, 2023. The average interview length was approximately 48 minutes, with the longest interview being 1:09:37 and the shortest being 28:07. The composition of teams and team members who participated in the interviews included: nine total teams represented, four of which had more than one member participate as an interviewee; six team member participants were leaders of their teams. The teams served a variety of functions. Several of the teams were front-line customer service teams; several were "back of the house" transactional or support teams that don't interact with customers on a regular basis; one team was situated within a research center and performed a variety of research and training activities; and one of the "teams" was a community of practice comprised of people from across the organization who were interested in easing data access.

During the interview, the participants disclosed a wide range of tenure with their team and the organization. Some participants had worked with the team only a few months at the time of the workshop, while the longest-tenured employee had worked with their team for 16 years. Most of the teams utilized the ProblemSolveX method (six of the

nine), and the remaining three teams used either generic brainstorming or a different

facilitated approach. Team size varied from small (~4 team members) to large (25+ team

members).

Arts-Based Interview Question

As a second data point, I utilized an arts-based approach during the team member

interviews. Because emotion is sometimes difficult to put into words (Boje, 2001; Tracy

& Malvini-Redden, 2015), I asked team members to draw and/or find an image in

response to the prompt: "Draw or find an image that represents for you what it felt like to

work with your team during the workshop." One participant used pen and paper to draw

and then held their image up to the camera to let me see; one participant declined

participating in the visual exercise but used verbal metaphors to describe their emotional

experience; the other 14 participants either used drawing tools in Google Slides to create

an image (such as lines, circles, and squares) or searched for images on the internet and

brought those images into Google Slide. Each participant then verbally described what

that image represented for them and what reflecting on that image illuminated (if

anything) about the workshop experience.

Observation

A third source of data were observational fieldnotes. Because this study sought to

understand the lived experiences and processes of groups as they interact with one

another in these facilitated workshops, I observed two teams as they participated in

structured workshops. I observed a three-hour facilitated workshop (n=12) and then

interviewed three members of the team who had participated in that workshop (see earlier

description of team member interviews). During their workshop, this team utilized the

ProblemSolveX method, and as one of the creators of ProblemSolveX, I have both a bias toward it and a recognized power position. People in this workshop knew I was a creator of ProblemSolveX. They also provided verbal consent to my observation. However, to reduce awkwardness about my observation, the team leader and I decided that, although the session itself was held in-person, I would observe via Zoom. They set up a laptop at the back of the room so I could see the room in its entirety and worked with IT support to ensure the audio in the room was rich enough that I could hear. Participants did not consent to recording the Zoom session, so I did not record.

I also observed a second session with a team utilizing a general brainstorming and idea prioritization exercise. This session was 90 minutes and held in person with six team members; I sat at the back of the space and was not in direct line of sight of any of the participants. The team members signed participant consent forms for me to observe the workshop (see Appendix H).

During both observations, I took raw field notes on my laptop (Tracy, 2020). During the observation itself, my attention was focused on capturing interactions among participants and making quick jots to refresh my memory about behaviors or activities I wanted to go back and flesh out. Following each observation, I immediately worked through the fieldnotes to add more depth and detail, including writing about tacit knowledge I have as a facilitator that I had taken for granted during the observation. My observation summaries and reflections resulted in a total of 39 pages of single-spaced, typed fieldnotes.

Fourth, during the course of this dissertation, I participated in and facilitated a number of sessions myself, sometimes as many as two or three a week. While I did not

consider these experiences as a primary data source, I wrote analytic memos detailing my

lived experiences as both a facilitator and a participant and used this data not only to

problematize what I was seeing emerge in the primary sources of data, but also as a way

to self-reflect and better understand my positionality within this research context.

<center>**Data Analysis**</center>

A Crystallized, Phronetic Iterative Approach

For this dissertation project, I used two complementary approaches. The first, a

phronetic iterative approach (Tracy, 2020), calls upon the researcher to use *phronesis* or

"practical wisdom" (Flyvbjerg et al., 2012) and "aims to result in use-inspired, practical

research that not only builds theory, but also provides guidance on social practice and

action" (Tracy, 2020, p. 6). In this iterative approach, the researcher "tacks back and

forth" between emergent data, creative insights, and existing theories and frameworks in

order to progress practical and theoretical knowledge (Miles et al., 2013; Town, 2020;

Tracy, 2020). A phronetic iterative approach worked well for this project, as it seeks

answers to practical and pragmatic questions situated in organizational life.

To further enrich the findings, I also drew on a crystallization approach

(Ellingson, 2009) by bringing together the more "middle-ground"

constructivist/interpretivist methods of interviewing and participant observation with the

more artistic/impressionistic methods of organizational autoethnography (OAE) and arts-

based approaches (Ellingson, 2009). Crystallization as an approach necessitates a

researcher to not only bring together different methods but also honor different

perspectives and voices. It

<center>44</center>

combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a

coherent text (…) building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that

problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and

positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the

indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (Ellingson, 2009, p. 4)

In this project, I weave these two approaches together into a crystallized, phronetic

iterative approach.

Analysis Process

Even as interviews began, I was gathering emergent data as the "human

instrument" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tracy, 2020), and I used it to fine-tune the interview

guides. Analysis deepened as I reviewed the transcripts for accuracy. As I immersed

myself in the data, I paid attention to the sensitizing concepts (Glaser & Strauss, 2017) I

had identified in the study proposal. These included hope theory (e.g., Snyder, 1991),

team empowerment (e.g., Maynard et al., 2012), identity construction processes

(Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016), and sensemaking (Weick, 1995). However, I held only

"loosely" to these sensitizing concepts (Tracy, 2020) so as to not gloss over the fact that

other phenomena (phenomena I had not anticipated) may be at play. In the findings

section, I share how these original sensitizing concepts were not ultimately sufficient to

explain the emerging themes I was witnessing in the data.

Throughout the analysis process, I engaged in analytic memo writing, as a space

and place for me to capture ideas, thoughts, and musings about emergent themes and

findings (Charmaz, 2014; Tracy, 2020). As these musings and themes coalesced, I

regularly checked what was emerging with experts in facilitation, my research

participants, my mentors, and my dissertation advisors. This allowed not only for member reflection but also created additional space for creativity (Tracy, 2020). I engaged in multiple cycles of coding in order to make sense of and organize the data. Before detailing the coding procedures, I will discuss my role as an embedded scholar-practitioner in this research, my self-reflexivity practices, and how these influenced my data collection and analysis.

Self-Reflexivity as Practice

I ascribe to an interpretivist paradigm (Deetz, 2000; Tracy, 2020), meaning I believe knowledge and understanding are local, socially-constructed, and emergent (Anderson & Baym, 2004). As an embedded scholarly-practitioner, I cannot and do not claim objectivity in this study. In selecting facilitated workshops and the organization I work for as the research site, I was both an embedded practitioner and embedded organizational member: I studied both the work I did and the place in which I did that work. My position as an organizational "insider" offered me a unique perspective (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008), as I had contextual knowledge of the organization and its situation, politics, cultures, and structures. Building my own craft as a professional facilitator granted me entry to a world of tacit language and learning (Dzekashu & McCollum, 2014; Gascoigne & Thornton, 2014). I found many instances during the interview process in which my fellow facilitators and I were using "short-hand," including acronyms or obscure references to facilitation tools and techniques, which someone outside of the profession may have struggled to understand.

I acknowledge my positionality as both a benefit, in that I could draw on these sometimes hidden ways of knowing (Rowley, 2014) and an immersive "being there"

(Lewis & Russell, 2011) but also as a detriment, in that it was difficult to draw upon a beginner's mind or engage in deliberate naivete (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018). I collected and interpreted data through the lens of my experience, and being deeply embedded in this work, I ran the risk of inhibiting fresh insights or perspective (Tracy, 2020). Self-reflexivity in the form of analytic memo writing and frequent member reflections were crucial in helping me understand when, like a fish, I could not see the water I was swimming in (Cunliffe, 2004). I leveraged organizational autoethnographic practices, such as referring to previous journal entries and other data I have created, in order to "tell the whole story" (Boyle & Parry, 2007) and bring some of the richness of my contextual knowledge to life.

Member Reflection

I practiced member reflection (Tracy, 2020) whenever feasible by reaching back out to research participants for their thoughts and reflections as findings were emerging and then bringing in responses I captured as key points in analytic memos. Member reflection also included holding space at the end of the interviews to allow for sharing of emergent themes and data and for the participants themselves to reflect on the interview experience and clarify/further explain any key points. Several participants who chose to draw during the interview also used the drawing to help explicate and make sense of their experiences (Tracy & Malvini-Redden, 2015), and in that sense, some member reflection is incorporated into the interview experience itself. I had more than one participant say something like "this was like a therapy session!" after their opportunity to reflect, which reinforced my desire that the interviews themselves could be a generative space for interviewees, rather than an extractive space where only I as the researcher "got

47

something" (Tracy, 2020; Way et al., 2015). I also regularly conversed with my committee members, peers, co-workers, and non-research participant experts in the field of facilitation to wrestle with emerging themes and gain their perspectives.

Coding Procedures

I utilized a multi-stage coding process. Coding is an analytical procedure that allows researchers to take qualitative data sets and apply a shortened word or phrase that captures the essence of the data and/or extracts meaning from the data (Saldaña, 2016). In the first phase of coding, line-by-line open coding (Saldaña, 2016), I interrogated a smaller set of the data (five interviews comprising 3 hours, 49 minutes, and 39 seconds) to answer the question "What is happening here?" (Charmaz, 2014). This focus on the phenomenological aspects of the data (e.g., the gerunds or -ing verbs) is consistent with my search for process within the phenomena. This resulted in 216 initial codes, which were primarily a blend of process codes (those focused on "what is happening"), descriptive codes (codes describing something), and in vivo codes (codes using the participants' own language) (Saldana, 2016). I copied these 216 codes into Mural software, a digital whiteboard tool that allows data to be placed on virtual "sticky notes." Having these virtual sticky notes made it easier for me to see emerging themes and allowed me to start clustering them into "buckets" of similar things. I continued coding three additional interviews (comprising 2 hours, 21 minutes, and 59 seconds) using line-by-line coding to see if new codes or themes emerged. Sixty new codes emerged but no new "buckets" or themes. I began to then organize data hierarchically when conceptually similar items were present (Saldaña, 2106). These initial "buckets" were mostly descriptive and in vivo, meaning they were a blend of the participants' own words and a

48

summary or description of what was happening (Saldaña, 2016). This resulted in a collapsing of the original 296 codes into something more manageable. Figure 1 contains a screenshot of my Mural board, where you can see me wrestling with collapsing some categories into others, and the some early emerging themes/categories:

Figure 1

Screencapture of Coding on Mural Board, 12/7/2022

Note. Demonstrates how I initially started clustering based on conceptual "buckets" or hierarchies and resulted in mostly descriptive and in vivo codes. From *Exploring Dissertation Data*, via Mural.co (https://app.mural.co/t/cary2216/m/cary2216/1666805818543/bcbdfaf9a7da0112f99496f4547cecbe7d6e82 0f?sender=ub32a03c8d4ec54d624380265)

During the second cycle of coding, I synthesized the initial sets of codes and "buckets" into higher levels of abstraction or interpretive concepts (Tracy, 2020). These interpretive concepts are more than mere aggregation of codes; they require the

researcher to interpret and make claims of the data based on the sensitizing concepts and what is emerging. This occurred in the form of analytic memos, organizational autoethnographic writing, and through my own art-making. As an artist, I find I sometimes make sense of phenomena best through a visual art-making process. I share some of this art-making in the Discussion chapter, along with the Dedication. During this process, I was moving back and forth between the data from the team member interviews, and data from the facilitator interviews. I was iterating not only between what the emergent data were telling me and the existing literature but also comparing and contrasting the emergent themes from team members with those from the facilitator data. Throughout this process, I reached back out to participants and experts in the field to gain help in making sense of what I saw emerging. This resulted in the final set of codes, which I then applied to the remaining interview transcripts to see if any new codes emerged. I had originally only performed interviews with nine team members; however, as I was coding the data, I realized I had not yet reached theoretical saturation (Glaser & Straus, 1967). I was still seeing new codes emerge. I expanded my participant pool by interviewing seven additional team members, and I reached theoretical saturation within the team-member data at the thirteenth interview. Researchers have found that qualitative analyses can reach saturation within this range (between 9 to 17 interviews, see Hennink & Kaiser, 2022, for a review). As I engaged in this process, I developed a deeper understanding of how the data addressed the research questions. Outside of using the Mural board for visual assistance, all coding activities occurred in NVivo qualitative software. All participants were given pseudonyms and gender assignments using a randomized name and gender generator. See the codebook in Appendix I.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS RQ1— UNDERSTANDING TEAM HOPE USING A GESTALT

FRAMEWORK OF EMOTION

As mentioned in the methods section, a phronetic iterative analysis approach allowed for tacking back and forth between the original, "loosely-held" sensitizing concepts I had explored in proposing this study, the emerging data, and then back to existing theories and frameworks when the emergent findings were not fully explained by my original sensitizing concepts. Indeed, a phronetic iterative approach challenged me as a researcher to ask myself, "do you need to read more widely and come into the scene with a more complex set of sensitizing concepts and theories?" (Tracy, 2020, p. 152). I entered this study believing I would find groups co-constructing hope for one another, and I did find ample evidence of this "hoping" process. What I did not anticipate finding was that this co-construction and experience of hope was messy, complicated, and didn't always look "positive." The data suggested that hope in teams may be more of a complex emotion than I had originally anticipated or had been previously understood. Instead of recalling a solely positive emotional experience, participants spoke of feeling hopeful *and* pessimistic, anxious *and* optimistic, excited *and* skeptical. In other words, while hope emerged and group members spoke of the workshop experience as a hope-giving one, individual participants were experiencing seemingly contradictory emotions, while simultaneously navigating the emotions their teammates were displaying. Not only that, but group members made sense of, and situated their workshop experience within, a larger frame of their organizational lives. Many of the participants did not describe workshop experiences as the discrete, one-time instances I thought I was asking about;

instead, they spoke of how their participation in those workshops were part of the ebb and flow of their organizational experiences.

My original sensitizing concepts couldn't quite help me make sense of what I was seeing emerge in the data, particularly with response to RQ1: What does the analysis of future-focused facilitated workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest about how hope is experienced by teams in organizations? While I was seeing evidence of my original sensitizing concepts (i.e., sensemaking and storytelling and the interplay of organizational identity and empowerment), they didn't seem to be sufficient to explain the complexity of the phenomena I was witnessing in the data. With the help of advisors, mentors, and thought-partners, I came to a *gestalt framework of emotion*, which helps to elucidate hope as a shared emotional experience that is greater than the sum of its parts and is experienced not only psychologically by individuals but is also constituted through social interaction and discourse (Town et al., 2020). This proposed concept of *gestalt emotions* in the workplace theorizes that emotions aren't just biological or psychological; emotions in organizations are also socially constructed and constituted through the discourse of organizational members. Town and colleagues (2020) theorize that gestalt emotions in organizations are experienced as a series of phases or layers. Gestalt emotions are first experienced in a *latent* form, wherein the emotion may be biologically felt or innate but is not yet salient or fully recognized by organizational actors. In the next phase, *salience* or *emergence*, the emotion becomes "known" or salient in sociomaterial contexts through the interaction of organizational members. This process of hope emergence relies heavily on sensemaking processes (Weick, 1995), as organizational members "make sense of" the emotional experience for themselves and one another.

52

Finally, the emotion *persists* through discourse, as it is embedded in the organizational processes, routines, and structures. This framework, the *gestalt model of organizational emotion,* is grounded in the quantum paradox theories of Hahn and Knight (2020), in which paradox, tensions, and contradictions can be both innate *and* socially constructed.

While Town and colleagues don't name specific emotions as potentially being "gestalt" in their 2020 paper, utilizing the *gestalt framework of emotion* in this study helped illuminate the complex and layered nature of hope in teams. Participants reported their experience of hope as both innate/biological, in that members talked about how it made them feel, and also socially constructed and discursive, in that it is only within the context of the group that the shared vision and pathways for a hopeful future were created and constituted through language. In the following section, I will dive more deeply into team hope using the gestalt framework of emotion, as well as the processes and mechanisms that the data suggest were necessary in creating the conditions for hope to emerge in these teams.

Latent Hope in Teams: What Team Members Bring with Them into a Workshop

Workshops do not happen in a vacuum. On average, during their interviews team participants talked about matters outside of the workshop about 10% more than they talked about the workshop experience itself. Many participants talked about interpersonal dynamics that were pre-existing, such as when team member Munashe described his struggles with a colleague who was constantly late and had missed important work milestones. Others shared stories of past team accomplishments or failures, or the general culture of their team, such as when Aeron shared:

53

I just think that, you know, your team culture is such a big part of it. That yes, [a

workshop] can be a really good…tool, but if you don't have the culture in the first

place, it might not be as effective.

Others talked about larger organizational and even political/global dynamics that

impacted the team and the issues the team was dealing with. These factors included

everything from how the team was navigating remote work schedules following the

COVID-19 pandemic to challenges with staff feeling under-compensated for the amount

of work they do. A repetitive theme arose around how the organizational culture pushed

"innovation" and how teams felt pressured to be seen as innovative in order to align with

the organizational culture. This pressure was felt keenly by Terry, who shared:

I think [innovation] is deeply embedded into the belief system of the

[organization] itself, so, like, our overall mission is [to be] teams of educators

with distributed expertise and advancement pathways. And so, I think we're

wholeheartedly committed to it, because that's really what the mission of the

[organization] is. And that's where I keep going back to…. It's outside of the sort

of team, it's within the larger system, too. So, I think we wholeheartedly embrace

it, because that's what our [leader] buys into, it's what everyone says.

Facilitators were also highly aware of the complexity of the dynamics impacting

each workshop, particularly those facilitators coming into an organization from outside.

A common contributing factor mentioned by facilitators in discussing failed or

unsuccessful workshops was lack of information about the interpersonal, team, and

organizational dynamics surrounding a particular workshop. These included

organizational traumas, in both the distant and recent past, such as when Iovita and

Laverne were unaware that an employee had just been charged with embezzlement, and the remaining team members were reeling from a sense of betrayal. Past research supports that these types of organizational and team traumas are many times lingering but not overtly discussed, particularly in large group settings. Because of this hidden element, facilitators mentioned that it didn't necessarily matter what had happened to cause the trauma and that they may never know the source of the issue; what mattered is that trauma existed within the group and the facilitators were witnesses to it. Imani shared about a group she was facilitating:

> We could barely get them to interact.... we realized that there's just a lot going on. Like there's clearly some, something we missed, some backstory, we're not hitting the mark. Something is happening to this group.

Facilitators also spoke frequently about encountering guardedness, skepticism, and jadedness from participants when entering workshops. This included reticence to participate because of awkwardness, as Robin shared "...because [teams] don't normally get to do these weird things, like play games." Iovita felt that one responsibility a facilitator has is helping people not feel threatened, to "get them out of that space of posturing and space of threat [so that they can engage] in co-creation and ideation." Another facilitator lamented how often they hear team members saying phrases like, "[this won't work because] we've tried this before; this will never be approved; how many times are we going to try and solve this?"

Interestingly, facilitators also shared a belief that groups who come into a session with skepticism, jadedness, or even feelings of being threatened are the groups most ripe

for transformation. Facilitator Diya recalled a particular participant in a workshop she had facilitated,

> [He told me] you can try again and again, where you get tired and you stop trying, but now you've got an environment [the workshop], you've got some new people to listen to some of the old people. [When you've tried again and again] it's easier for people to get hurt and get sad. But in the workshop, maybe things that you you've been tired of saying, and don't think you want to say again, you're willing to give it another try.

In recounting this story, facilitator Diya had first shared that the participant she refers to here was a "doubting Thomas" when the workshop first started. He was quiet, withdrawn, and difficult to engage with. Through the course of the workshop, Diya uncovered that this participant had written multiple reports and had "given up" on trying to make authority figures in his department understand a problem he cared deeply about. When he was able to share this problem aloud and be heard by his team and some of these authority figures during the workshop, he later told Diya he felt not only validated but also hopeful for change to happen. This theme of transformation was captured by facilitator Iovita, when she jokingly quipped that her favorite facilitation experiences are of groups who go from being "threatened to thrilled."

While the above data suggests that teams bring all of the context they exist within into a workshop, the next section explores how this context includes emotional states and expectations for the workshop itself. While there were as many emotions expressed as there were participants, there was a clear difference between the emotions and expectations of the team leaders and the emotions and expectations of the team members.

56

Interestingly, these emotions and expectations seemed to indicate hope was *latent*, meaning there were signs and signals that hope was waiting and ready to emerge.

Emotions and Expectations: Team Leaders

Team leaders recalled feeling an anticipatory nervousness: a desire for their team members to have a positive experience and an equivalent amount of fear that this desire wouldn't be met. Team leader Salama said:

> I already knew they were a good team, right? I wanted to give them this weight off of them and an opportunity to just be like, "Okay, we're going to work as a team. We're going to come up with this and possibly have a solution." So I was really hopeful.

In response to the drawing prompt, Salama created the collage in Figure 2 with images from Google. The image Salama chose to explain her emotions and expectations for the experience she wanted her team to have in the workshop is at the top left: a woman with a smile on her face who is crossing fingers on both of her hands.

Figure 2

Salama's Image Selection in Response to the Prompt, "What Did It Feel Like to Work in the Workshop with Your Team?"
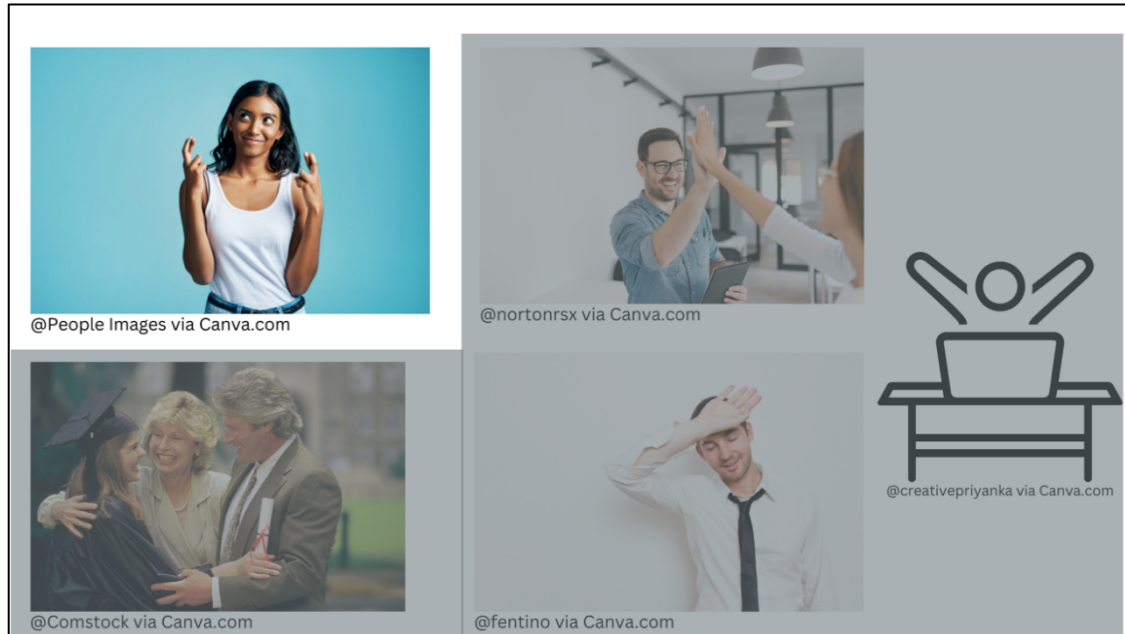
Note. Other parts of the collage are "grayed" out, as they did not apply to the portion of the discussion about Salama's expectations for the workshop but for later parts of the workshop experience. Image top left from *Hoping Beyond All Hope* [Photograph], by PeopleImages from Getty Images, n.d., Canva. (https://www.canva.com/photos/). Image top middle, from *Two colleagues high-five* [Photograph], by nortonrsx from Getty Images Pro, n.d., Canva (https://www.canva.com/photos/). Image far right, from *Eager* [Clipart] by creativepriyanka, n.d., Canva https://www.canva.com/photos/). Image bottom middle, from *Whew! What a relief.* [Photograph], by Fentino from Getty Images Signature, Canva. (https://www.canva.com/photos/). Image bottom left, from *Young graduate with parents* [Photograph], by Comstock from Photo Images, Canva. (https://www.canva.com/photos/).

Team leader Nitya expressed a similar "positive anxiety" for the workshop experience. Nitya's team had recently been formed by bringing two formerly separate teams together. As Nitya described, prior to the session, the team was still operating "kind of like a duplex, you know? Like…we would be on one side and somebody on the other side. We're under one roof, but we're still very much separate…. I just want to bring my team together." In his response to the drawing prompt, Nitya created the collage in Figure 3. The top two images reflected Nitya's simultaneous excitement and anxiety.

In the image on the top left, a woman is smiling and holding her hands close to her heart and chin. Nitya explained this image as "just like, like this excitement, this like nervousness." The second image is of a man with his back to the camera who is facing a path that comes to a y-shaped intersection. The man is holding his hand behind his back and crossing his fingers. Nitya explained this image meant he was "just like praying and hoping that they buy it. They get it. They're excited. They, they're on board. They really want to do this."

Figure 3

Nitya's Image Selection in Response to the Prompt, "What Did It Feel Like to Work with Your Team in the Workshop?
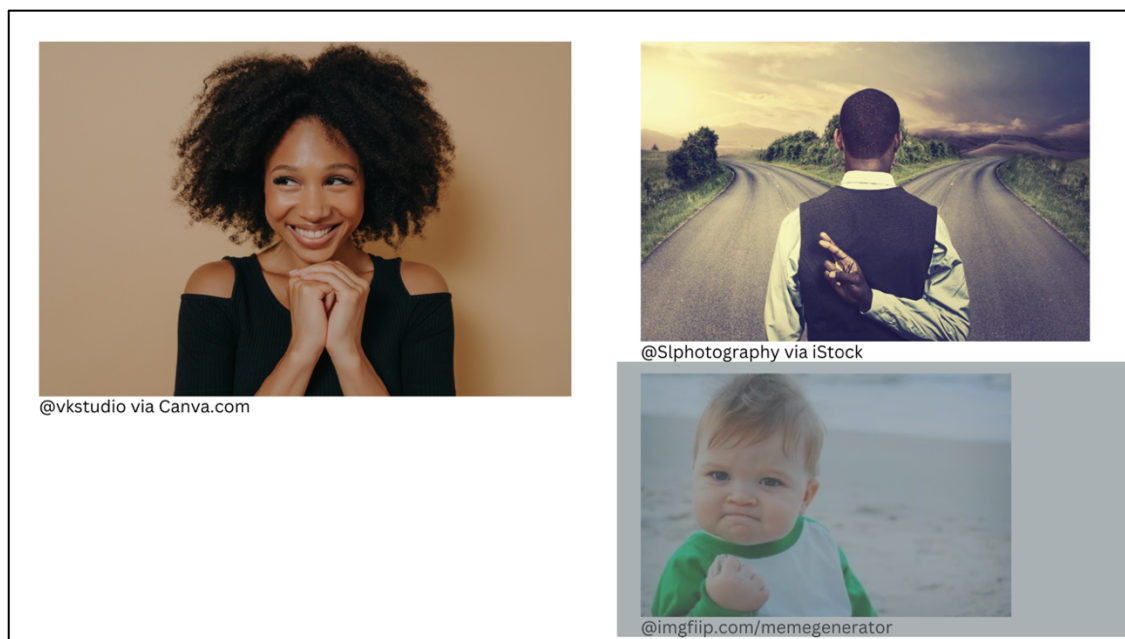
Note. Other parts of the collage are "grayed" out, as they did not apply to the portion of the discussion about Nitya's expectations for the workshop, but for later parts of the workshop experience. Image top left from *Studio shot of happy Afro girl* [Photograph], by vkstudio, n.d., Canva. (https://www.canva.com/photos/). Image top right, from *Businessman in front of two roads fingers crossed* [Photograph], by Slphotography, 3/5/2015, iStockphoto (https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/businessman-in-front-of-two-roads-fingers-crossed-gm465535798-59216666?clarity=false). Image bottom right, from *Fist pump baby meme generator* [Photograph], n.d., by imgflip, (https://imgflip.com/memegenerator/14310949/Fist-pump-baby)

However, for both Nitya and Malama as team leaders, the "anxiety" portion of their expectations came not only from their hopes for the workshop experience itself but also for what the experience created, changed, or started for the team. For both Nitya and Malama, the workshop was part of a larger experience they had planned for their teams for the day. Both of them planned communal lunches and more "fun" activities prior to the workshop itself. And for both, the purpose of the workshop was for the team to come together in order to solve a problem in their work. As Nitya stated:

> I want this to feel meaningful for them. So like it's not...We don't just think about this for two hours, and then we go back to our desk and forget about it, right? Like, how do we continue to live and breathe these thoughts, these values, this experience as we're, you know, handling eleven thousand inquiries from customers?

Based on the data, team leaders experienced tension around both their emotional and action-oriented expectations for workshops. On the one hand, they were positive, anticipatory, and hopeful; on the other hand, they felt anxious and nervous. They were also looking at the workshop through both short-term and long-term lenses. They wanted the workshop itself to be an enjoyable experience for the team, while they also searched for longer-term solutions and actionable outcomes that were meaningful for themselves and their team members. They expressed equal parts enthusiasm and apprehension for the experience and outcomes of the workshop.

Emotions and Expectations: Team Members

Team members expressed a wider range of expectations and emotions as they described how they recalled their feelings prior to the workshop. This included everything from a kind of "relaxed excitement" for being able to spend "a day out of the office" (with equal amounts of anxiety about taking time away from work and having all that work pile up) to a guardedness or skepticism about whether anything would actually be achieved in the workshop. This skepticism or guardedness was, in one case, related to the problem the team would be focusing on in the workshop. This team had identified a number of problems and issues they could work together to solve and then had voted to determine which of those problems they would address during the workshop. Team member Aeron recalled:

> I was like, you know, I do want to be collaborative with my team. But I'm also…
> I don't know. This concept [i.e., the topic of the workshop] is challenging for me
> to dig into, because I don't know how much we can actually do.

The challenge the team had selected was to fix a process that involved another department. Aeron expressed skepticism at the outset, as she wasn't sure how much control or authority her department actually had over fixing the problem without this other department's input. However, Aeron also felt she had to respect the team's wishes, as she stated, "I do want to be collaborative with my team." Aeron recalled experiencing her emotions—a desire to engage, a willingness to do so on behalf of her teammates, and a skeptical or guarded stance—almost simultaneously.

Members of other teams also shared that they witnessed hesitancy to participate, skepticism, or guardedness from their peers in other forms. Examples include when their

61

peers shared fears about participating because, "I don't want [to look] stupid in front of anyone," or even, in one case, a peer who told a team member that she "felt guilty because I'm sure this workshop is all my fault [from the mistake I made a while ago]." Munashe was also impacted by his peers' attitudes and recalled, "I was excited…. I guess I did feel a little disappointment due to maybe other staff not feeling the same way."

There was also variation in emotion and expectations of how team members approached the workshops based on their length of tenure with the team. Newer team members, such as Peyton, Aeron, Kyo, and Pilarni, shared common expressions of excitement for the opportunity to get to know their team members outside of the day-to-day work context. These newer team members also expressed their view of the workshop as an opportunity to more deeply understand what problems or issues the team had faced in the past, as well as solutions the team had either tried before or were in the midst of trying. Kyo, who had been with his team for about six months, had recently participated in a retreat in which a strategic plan for his entire department had been shared. The workshop he described was his team coming together to create their own goals to support this larger strategic plan. Kyo shared:

> I was excited to see, like, how it was gonna draw out, like some of the things…. It was kind of something that we're looking forward to. Prior to this session, we had a retreat where [our division leader] was talking about in general the [division] goals. So at least that was out there, and it fed into this [workshop] anyway. So it's kind of like our ability to now talk specifically about the things that we brought up, both as highlights and also challenges.

In contrast, longer-tenured team members Sigi and Munashe were more focused on actionable outcomes, as shared by Munashe when he said, "I think I just really needed to know what steps I needed to take to move forward."

As shown in the data, team members and team leaders enter into workshops with a variety of expectations and emotions. They also bring with them past traumas, knowledge sets, and relationships and are operating within a complex web of organizational cultural norms and histories while navigating the daily pressures of their lived work experiences. However, even in the midst of individual misgivings or hesitations, all participants shared a willingness to engage and recalled the workshop and what they experienced within the workshop as being a predominantly positive experience. The next section explores this seemingly contradictory, "guarded-yet-willing" attitude and behavior.

Jadedness as Latent Hope

I again turned to literature to try and make sense of this emerging, and contradictory, theme of "willing-but-guarded" behavior and started with a review of known constructs such as pessimism, cynicism, and skepticism. While there are a variety of definitions in the organizational literature, a review by Stanley et al. in 2005 defined cynicism in organizations "as a disbelief of another's stated or implied motives for a decision or action" (p. 436). Cynicism is attributional (Reichers et al., 1997), meaning an individual attributes his or her disbelief toward something external to themselves. This can be the leader, the organization in general, society, and so on. Cynicism in organizations also frequently results from psychological contract breach (Robinson, 1994; Zhao et al., 2007), wherein a person feels that a promise made to them by the

organization, either implicitly or explicitly, has been broken. Skeptics, rather than

attributing fault or blame to a particular party or organization, doubt whether something

can be accomplished (Stanley et al., 2005). Skeptics question the claims or statements of

others, and in the field of accounting, *professional skepticism* is "an attitude that includes

a questioning mind and a critical assessment" (2022, PCAOB AS 1015). For skeptics,

then, it's less about intent or motivation and more about whether something is possible.

Interestingly, however, the locus of control (Rotter, 1966) for both cynicism and

skepticism rests outside of the individual. For both constructs, an individual questions not

their own intention or abilities, but the intent of their leaders or the organization

(cynicism) and the organization's ability to achieve something (skepticism). There is also

an implication that a cynic or skeptic doesn't find the topic personally meaningful. And if

a team member strongly identifies with their team, it would likely be more difficult for

him or her to attribute lack of ability, fault, or blame with the team; it would essentially

be the same as blaming him or herself.

   While team members in this study may have been expressing hesitancy to engage

(e.g., "I didn't know we could dream that big") or guardedness (e.g., "we've tried this

before"), the attribution or locus of control was *inward-facing* toward the team itself

and/or the individuals themselves. Participants weren't questioning their own or each

other's intent in engaging in problem-solving. They also weren't dismissive of their

ability to implement the ideas and changes, so long as it was within their capacity to do

so. There didn't seem to be evidence of prior psychological contract breach, in that

during our interviews, team members didn't talk about broken promises or times they had

been told they could do something and then had that promise revoked. Rather, they were

hesitant because they had attempted and failed at something in the past and yet were still willing to come together and try again. They were disappointed but willing to hope again.

In my secondary cycles of coding and analysis, I began to see how this willing-yet-guarded attitude grounded in previous experiences—something I repeatedly saw in my data—may represent a characteristic that former researchers have called *jadedness*. Carson (2018) proposed a provisional theory of jadedness in which, "repeatedly disappointed ideals may give way to a malaise-ridden indifference over, or writing off of, a new prospect…it will now cease to matter, *precisely because it has mattered so much*" (p. 218, emphasis in original). In examining this concept, I learned that the focus in jadedness is on repetition and mattering: when something is attempted time and again, and matters to the person attempting it, they may become *jaded*, or wearied by subsequent attempts. Probing further, I found that Town et al. (2020) suggest that, in its latent phase, a gestalt emotion "reflects the possibility and potentiality for phenomena to emerge" and that latent phenomena may exist "without being recognized by organizational actors" (p. 5). Latent emotions may even be experienced physiologically by organizational members as nervousness or tension because of possible paradoxes within the latent emotional experience (Town et al., 2020). As is typical with the iterative process of data analysis, I was only able to connect these pieces and be provoked to explore these new areas of research through and because of my close examination of the emergent data.

The relevance of "jadedness" and "gestalt emotion" to this study of hope was also spurred by my own unexpected encounter with jadedness. About a third of the way through collecting data for this dissertation, I was asked to participate in a workshop to

look improve the ProblemSolve X process I had helped to build. There were nine attendees, and five were newer members of the team who hadn't been part of the creation of the process. These new members brought with them fresh ideas and insights and were eager to help improve upon what we had built. During the workshop, I found myself physically reacting to some of their suggestions: I could feel the back of my neck getting hot and my leg was jumping up and down, full of restless energy. I found myself becoming increasingly defensive and saying things like, "yeah, we tried to do that. It just didn't work." This workshop was held over Zoom, and I had been privately chatting with one of my friends, who was another "old timer" and had been part of the creation team. At one point, I posted a message that said, "do they think we're idiots? Or do they just think they're smarter than we are??" My colleague chatted back, "I don't know, but isn't this part of what you're finding in your dissertation research? This kind of defensiveness?" And I remember having to take a deep breath as I realized: I was the jaded team member! That realization allowed me to metaphorically take a step back and analyze my feelings and my behavior. I wasn't against the ideas the new team members were sharing; many of them were great ideas that we had, in fact, tried in the past and failed. Rather, I was guarding myself from feeling disappointment again!

Being able to see my jadedness for what it was—a protection mechanism— allowed me to both recognize and honor those feelings while also creating space to hear the ideas of the newer members without letting my jadedness color my perception. My own experience with jadedness shed light on the embodied and biological way this emotion feels and how it was driving my behavior with my colleagues during the workshop. Even as I was feeling defensive, though, I still desired to be part of the

66

community and help improve the process we had created. Participants in this study similarly discussed their willingness to come together and address problems because they mattered, even in the face of their past disappointments, with equal parts excitement and anxiety. This suggests that, rather than being an entirely negative attitude or behavior, jadedness may instead be an indicator that hope is latent and waiting to emerge. Jadedness as latent hope is characterized by this experience of suffering caused by repeated disappointment and yet still retaining a willingness to hope again. The next findings chapter explores how workshops seem to tap into this latent hope and offer different ways of being and doing that seem to help support the emergence of collective hope and how team members make sense of these experiences.

CHAPTER 5

THE EMERGENCE OF TEAM-BASED HOPE THROUGH SOCIAL

CONSTRUCTION: DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEING AND DOING

With RQ2—What does an analysis of facilitated workshops, and participants'

reflections on them, suggest as steps or conditions in the co-constructive processes of

hope emergence in teams?—I sought to understand the steps or conditions needed for

teams to engage in a co-constructive hoping process. The data do not suggest a

prescriptive or causative model (e.g., "do this, then that, and hope will emerge") but,

rather, communicative processes that teams engaged in during the workshops that

allowed for hope to emerge. The gestalt theory of emotions (Town et al., 2020) call this

phase the *emergence* phase, in which the emotion becomes salient to the collective

through a process of social construction. According to Town et al. (2020), the emotion

becomes *salient* when it is both "*sensible* (reasonably expected) and *sensable* (able to be

sensed)" (pg. 6, emphases in original, citing Tracy & Donovan, 2018 and Weick, 1995).

This emergence process happens primarily through sensemaking, storytelling, and

interaction (Weick, 1995). The next sections will describe the findings related to RQ2

and, specifically, the conditions that were present that seemed to allow for hope to

emerge.

Both facilitators and team members talked about workshop experiences as being

something different from how teams experience their everyday working lives. This

"differencing" ranged from contrasting experiences, such as how a workshop might be

different from a meeting, to more generalized references to everyday task focus and the

pace of everyday work. These themes of differencing that emerged also varied in how

68

they were experienced and explained by the facilitators and the team members. In general, the facilitators had an intentionality and purpose in designing some of the workshop exercises to create an unexpected experience. In interviewing the team members, some of these intentions were explicitly understood, and some were hidden from their view. Because these differences in facilitator and team member experience seemed to be differences that matter, in this chapter, I explicitly highlight and compare/contrast the major themes and examples from both the facilitators and team members.

Stepping onto the "Unstage" and Reducing Performativity

The data pertaining to this area dealt with power dynamics, hierarchy, and the ways in which facilitators, team leaders, and team members interacted during workshops to craft what one facilitator called "the unstage." Table 3 highlights in vivo examples of how facilitators purposefully created conditions for this "unstage" to emerge, while team leaders and team members expressed how the experience of the "unstage" was different or unexpected. Table 3 also highlights how team leader intentions in terms of how they wanted to "show up" in the workshop influenced their perceptions of the experience.

Table 3

Contrasting team leader, team member, and facilitator experiences

[Team Leader] and Team Member Experience Examples	Facilitator Experience Examples
[Team leader] I need to step back	Crafting an un-performance, creating an un-stage
[Team leader] I want to participate	A place to just be you
Okay, this is different	Take the rank off and put it in your pocket
	Powerful sharing space
	Holding the space

Note. Examples here are in vivo, in the participants' own language

Facilitator Imani stated part of what she tries to do for workshop attendees is something she first had to learn to do for herself:

> I used to think I had to put on a show. A performance. And it's, it just got exhausting…and I just really feel like the space that I help to build is truly, I have to make myself okay with it before anyone else does. So, I feel like what I'm doing is, I'm modeling it. So that's my latest thing, is doing, like, an un-performance. Crafting an unstage.

Imani also shared that not only does she believe this concept of "unperforming" is helpful for workshop attendees specifically because it is different from the norm:

> I also feel like it's helping them [the workshop attendees] not perform, right? Because [performing] is all we do. That is all we do! We have a boss that's like, in a meeting with us. We are there with each other; "let me perform," "let me show you," "let me prove all this stuff to you."

70

Imani was an embedded facilitator, meaning her job with the organization wasn't as a facilitator but, within the organization she worked for, she had been frequently asked to facilitate because facilitation is a skillset she possesses. When she spoke about "we" in the quote above, she wasn't only speaking broadly about a societal "we"; she was referring to the culture and context of the organization as a member of the organization and the performative nature of the work she found herself doing. She didn't distance herself from the organizational members she facilitated—this wasn't an "I" and "them" dynamic. She saw herself as one of the organizational members and crafted the "unstage" for her peers and herself.

Other facilitators talked about a need for creating an environment in which participants were equals or could practice acting as if they were equals. Facilitator Robin had previously worked with a branch of the military. He shared that, for workshops in the military, he asked the participants to literally take off their uniform or their rank insignia:

> Anytime that the military folks get to take off that uniform and get to show up as just a person, that helps. [I'll start a session with] "Okay, everyone's in uniform. Great, just take the tops off," right? (We all have, you know, shirts on underneath). "Just take your top off and then, just be you." If that doesn't work, we've had people, our ranks are all Velcro now, so it's just, "take the rank off, put it in your pocket. We'll put it back on at the end of the session." So something that kind of, like, helps level the playing field at the very beginning.

Facilitator Kris expressed the creation of this space as a "powerful sharing space." She also contrasted a facilitated workshop as being different from normal experiences as she reflected on a particular workshop she had recently run:

I think we live in a world where concepts like, you know, cancel culture,

trolling... You know, all these different types of negative environments that don't

allow people to express themselves freely without being bombarded with negative

comments is that common practice nowadays. And so, I think, just by stating that,

we would like to create a safe environment, to be able to be vulnerable with each

other, people's guards went down for each other. To be able to express emotions,

to express different types of feelings and thoughts, maybe secrets about their

personal life and work. So, it becomes a powerful sharing space for each other, to

be able to let out things that they normally may not feel like they are safe or

trusted to share.

Facilitator Hira shared similar feelings and recalled a story of a workshop in which one of

the participants was becoming increasingly agitated. As Hira recalled:

I mean, he wasn't moving towards me to like, punch me or anything, but he was

upset so I just said, "This is a really important issue and that's why we're here to

talk about this, and I know that it's… it's difficult. Are there any other ideas that

people want to share…?" So, I brought it back to more of like an in-the-head type

conversation. And the gentleman sat down and had time to compose themselves

and kind of come back to more logical thinking.…And the discussion

continued…and at the end, they came and shook my hand and thanked me for

holding the space.

From the interview data, facilitators are clearly very aware of creating dynamics

such as "safe spaces for sharing," "taking off the rank," and "creating an unperformance."

I also witnessed this in both sessions I observed. The facilitators set "the ground rules,"

72

which were essentially the desired behaviors of all participants in a session. For the sessions I observed, these included things like "listen to understand, not to judge"; "assume positive intent"; and "go for quantity of ideas, not quality." This setting of ground rules is a fairly standard practice in group facilitation (Broome et al., 2019; Sunwolf & Frey, 2005). Shakespeare (1623/n.d.) famously wrote, "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," and performativity likely can never be fully removed. As social creatures, we "act" or "perform" different versions of our identity depending on the "stage" we find ourselves upon (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). However, the facilitators in this study describe an intentional and purposeful practice in trying to help participants recognize that in the case of the workshop "stage," participants should try and act as if they are equals. While the facilitators I interviewed were consciously aware of the importance of these dynamics, team members and team leaders experienced them differently.

Team leaders were very aware of the impact their presence had, or could have had, on the workshop. Every team leader I interviewed (n=6) had purposefully chosen to bring in a facilitator as opposed to holding the discussion themselves, because they expressed their belief that their team members would behave differently if the team leader were "one of them" in the session. Nitya expressed a desire to allow for a different way for their team to participate,

> I thought about leading it myself, but then I was like, "You know, I really think I want to be a participant." This is really important to my team, and I…I wanted to kind of step back and not be that person driving these conversations, right?

73

And interestingly, this desire wasn't only a recognition of the potentially undue influence a team leader might have; it was also a desire to participate so that the team leader's own ideas would be considered equally, not disproportionately. As Salama put it:

> I…asked if somebody would facilitate, because I realized I wanted to participate. I didn't want to be sitting on the sideline and be like, 'Well, I have this really good idea. I have this thought, but I can't share it because I'm the facilitator."

The team leaders I interviewed were conscious of potential dynamics of power, inequality, and their presence and made decisions to "step back" in order to allow their team members to participate more fully. The team leaders in this study were conscious in stepping onto the "unstage" and attempted to downplay their own power and authority during the workshop. These team leaders wanted to be an embedded member of the team in order to participate fully in the workshop from a position of equality, rather than a position of authority. In contrast, facilitators I interviewed also shared stories of "workshops gone wrong" in which team leaders were unable to step away from their authoritative identities and, thereby, disrupted, co-opted, or otherwise drastically changed the dynamics of the workshop. From the facilitators' recollections and experiences, these disruptive leaders had violated the dynamics of the "unstage."

For the team members, the experience of the "unstage" was less overt. Team members weren't necessarily aware of the dynamics of the "unstage" so much as they were aware of having a different kind of experience and interaction. Team members talked about feeling seen, heard, or validated during the workshop and often contrasted it to "normal" ways of being or interacting with their team and/or leadership. Peyton's workshop experience was a little different, in that rather than a workshop with her team at

74

the time, she participated in a community of practice around data accessibility. The community of practice had members from across the organization, and she was the representative for her area. Peyton describes her experience interacting in the workshop with "the data guy" for the organization:

> And knowing that he is like, you know, "the guy" over data analysis, and he was like, "Let's all work together." So, it was like me being able to see the top be so amenable to, you know, working with someone like me and listening to me.

Peyton's experience of the "unstage" was one in which an expert and leader in the organization interacted with her and others in a non-performative way. She talks about "the guy" over data analysis being accessible and down to earth in a way she hadn't anticipated or encountered before. For Peyton, then, the "unstage" provided an opportunity to showcase her skills and interact with this person in a way that was outside of her normal experience.

Facilitator Robin recounts his first workshop experience as a participant, before he became a facilitator, and describes a similar feeling of validation: "All of a sudden, my ideas were listened to, and they were accepted, and they were considered. And I was like, 'Okay, this is, that's different.' I enjoyed that, personally." Team members may not see "behind-the-stage", so to speak, in terms of understanding the purpose behind the facilitator's setting of certain ground rules. The data suggest the way team members experience the "unstage" is through having their ideas and contributions listened to and validated in ways that are unique in their experience of organizational life. This "sets the stage," so to speak, for how they engage in subsequent steps of the hope emergence process.

Intense Focus, Dedicated Time and Collective Presencing

Facilitators, team leaders, and team members all talked about time in both expected and unexpected ways. Expectedly, many participants talked about never having enough time in general and that the busy-ness of everyday working life sometimes prohibited them from being able to do more workshops or hold other team-based gatherings. Unexpectedly, participants also talked about time in context of the workshop itself and used a variety of metaphors for explaining what time felt like during the workshop: from feeling like the participant was in a "protective time bubble" to referring to the workshop as a time warp. These references to how time was experienced during the workshop were closely tied to discussions of how the time was used and particularly the ability to focus on a single topic during the session without multitasking.

Team leaders were again very aware of the kind of experience they wanted their teams to have. Team leader Noam requested at the beginning of his team's workshop that people turn off devices to promote focus and mitigate multitasking. Noam reflected on his surprise when team members reached out after the workshop to specifically talk about the impact this had:

> At least one of the folks on my team, you know, reached out.… And her comment…because at the beginning of the session, I basically asked everyone to turn off their phone, Slack, to turn off their email. And she reached out and was like, "you know, that was very liberating because of the focus time."

This theme of the rarity of being able to focus intensely on one thing with their team was also highlighted by team leader Nitya when he said it was "...time to like, breathe. That

we can, like, think, and we can talk, and we can do things that isn't just getting the emails and forms out, you know?"

Time was also referenced in regard to the quality and depth of the conversation the workshop enabled. Neta and Kyo, who are members of the same team and experienced the same workshop, both separately remarked on how the workshop afforded them the opportunity to hold in-depth conversations about the workshop topic, which sometimes included people disagreeing with one another or sharing their perspectives. Neta shared:

> On the one hand, we feel comfortable enough with each other to, like, freely share [disagreements].... And I think it was actually nice to hear the "why," you know? Sometimes it's just like "okay, let's do this, and these are our next things." But actually stopping to listen and hear what's behind, you know, people's opinions. It was something that sometimes we just don't have time for. And then it's like, "well, I see where they're coming from.".... And then yeah, you're like, "that makes sense."

Kyo also referenced the importance of taking the time to allow members of the team to come to consensus and that, without taking "that good use of time," the group likely wouldn't have come to a shared understanding. Team leader Salama referred to the quality or depth of discussion when she said, "Maybe it's also something we haven't talked about in a while. Maybe we've been working on autopilot."

Rather than referring to a state of "being present", such as what is referenced in literature on mindfulness (for example, Verhaeghen, 2017), both facilitators and team members discussed *presencing* as more of an intentional process. I use the phrase

collective presencing to refer to this process of how the group used time and intense focus on a singular topic. Facilitator Kris highlighted this use of time as an "escape" and shared, "these types of enclosed facilitation opportunities for people to put aside their phones and be able to just be present in these types of environments is like, it's like an escape at this point." Facilitator Savanna focused on the outcomes or what she believes this intense focus creates when she shared, "it's the focus that energizes…ideas in the moment." Other facilitators noted the speed of time and how workshops seem to offer a "slowing down" of the normal pace of work life for people. Facilitator Maria shared, "I think especially for leaders to just, yeah, come down and slowing down to speed up. If there's one facilitation challenge that I have with organizations or groups, is that they don't see the value in slowing down."

But this intense focus doesn't happen only by setting the ground rules. Similar to the previous step, the ground rule was just the first part—keeping participants focused in the workshop took effort by all parties. Imani shared,

> For me, I'm thinking to myself a lot of times as people are talking, just to breathe and listen and just to be there. Not trying to think about where we're going next and not worrying about that kind of thing. And I think that does translate. If one person does it, it catches, and other people start to do it, you know? And it's hard to do.

Based on the data, by making space for intense focus on a single topic and limiting multitasking, this element of "slowing down to speed up" (Coleman, 2022) created an experience for teams that was noticed by members, leaders, and the facilitators. Focused attention has been extensively researched in mindfulness studies

(e.g., Lutz et al., 2008; van Vugt, 2015), particularly with regard to how meditation practices can bring a person's attention to the present moment in a deliberate way that can lead to many cognitive and emotional benefits (Dane, 2011; Slagter et al., 2007; Shapiro et al., 1998; van Vugt, 2015). Social psychologists have also studied how presence and mindfulness in groups can overcome feelings of relational separateness and may even create opportunity to forge tighter intergroup bonds (Berry & Brown, 2017). However, many of the studies on mindfulness in organizations and groups center on the experience of the individual and what benefits the individual may accrue when they engage in mindfulness practices. What the data in this study suggests appears to be a slightly different form of experiencing "focused attention" or being present in the moment: what participants talked about here is a process of *collective presencing* that they're experiencing together, as they focus intensely on a singular topic.

Sticky Notes: Anonymity and Materializing Abstract Concepts

A surprising finding was the number of times team members specifically referred to sticky notes—not even necessarily the content on those sticky notes but the role that the sticky notes themselves played in their interactions during the workshop(s). Many participants referenced sticky notes as giving them an ability to literally "see" the topic of discussion in a new light and draw new meaning from those observations. Participants also discussed how this ability to "see" helped them change perspective and maybe even look at things from a more systemic or holistic kind of view. Aeron shared:

> We were just kind of like throwing up a whole bunch of ideas on the board. And then they were sorted, and like, okay, *I could see what we really need to work on* [emphasis added]. And you know, 'cause I think, yeah, from day to day, we

79

probably all complain to each other about small little things but don't realize what the big picture is.

While drawing connections and perspective-taking are more cognitive in nature, Aeron also shared an emotional quality of this experience: "It felt kind of cathartic to be able to *see* [emphasis added] those things." Participants also discussed how utilizing the sticky notes allowed for deepening of conversations and consensus building. This could occur in the form of requests for clarification, such as when team member Kyo shared:

Sometimes even, like, someone would ask a question of "what does this sticky, you know, mean?" Like, it would need to be interpreted and therefore summarized.... It was also a good way to spend time talking about it and getting confirmation also from other people that, "yes, this might be a new category" or, "no, this could be the same thing." They explained it.

Team member Neta also discussed this in her interview:

So we placed [the sticky notes] on the matrix and had some good conversations.… Because some of it, you know, we were like, "well, I think [the idea on this sticky note] is high [priority] for me, but it may not be of huge importance to everyone else." And so we had some good conversations, a different perspective.

Participants also referenced the sticky notes' ability to grant them a level of anonymity, which made them feel more confident in sharing certain thoughts they may not have otherwise felt comfortable divulging out loud. As a newer member of the team, Aeron shared, "I went and stuck up my sticky notes, and they were like, 'okay, we're gonna come up with solutions,' and I just walked right up there." Interestingly, sticky

80

noting also offered a form of validation for participants, such as Kyo when he shared, "It helped to see from others, regardless of who it was, just a confirmation that a lot of things…both strengths and weaknesses were being affirmed."

Team leaders had mixed feelings about this anonymity. While reflecting on the fact that team members in his session seemed to feel more comfortable using sticky notes, Nitya expressed a desire to be the kind of team leader who didn't need to rely on tools like sticky notes:

> I wish that people didn't feel that they had to be anonymous to say their true comments, you know? It just…It's almost like, as the director or the manager of them, I want to create a space where they feel comfortable enough to share their own thoughts without having to feel that they need to make them anonymously.

The importance of the sticky notes was honestly a theme in the data I initially wanted to ignore. It seemed trivial to the point of being laughable. However, references to the sticky notes and what they enabled for the workshop participants were so frequent that I had no choice but to pay attention. Sticky notes allowed participants to make "seen," or relevant or pertinent, things that had previously been invisible, unseen, or abstract. The ability to physically move the sticky notes around allowed participants to gain new insight, draw connections between concepts, and ask for clarification. Even more interesting, these affordances of "seeing" abstract concepts and patterns seemed to apply whether the participants were using physical, paper sticky notes or digital sticky notes (such as in a digital whiteboard tool like Mural or Miro). Participants were constituting in language concepts or ideas that were so abstract, they had been previously almost "unknowable" or largely taken for granted. The participants talked about how this

"seeing" of those concepts, and the subsequent ability to ask questions and gain clarification, seemed to move these abstract ideas from out of the heads of the individuals and into a collective space where everyone could then interact with them.

Struggling Connects: Finding Each Other Through Sharing Painful Stories of the Past and Present

Many team members and team leaders recalled their experiences of sharing frustrations, "pain points," or issues regarding the topic of focus for the workshop. In some cases, the emotional toll of these frustrations seemed to be fairly shallow, meaning the "pain" the participant experienced because of the frustration wasn't life-altering or particularly traumatic. However, the participants noted that the act of sharing these frustrations, and hearing others' frustrations in turn, seemed to create a recognition, reassurance, and validation of their own experiences. As team member Pilarni said, "It did kind of feel reassuring that I knew what I was doing, because I wasn't the only one feeling that way [i.e., frustrated] with the process." This sharing of past struggles and pains stayed with team member Terry as one of the "stand out" memories of her recollections of the workshop experience. She shared:

> I just remember people emphasizing that they were learning things that they
> didn't know of the other individuals. So, there was a lot of like, "I didn't know x,
> y, or z. I learned this about so-and-so. I didn't realize we had that in common."

Team member Aeron had quite a bit to say about the impact this sharing of frustrations had for her:

> We pinpointed our frustration points, and I liked that part of the process. Um, I
> mean it felt good to kind of just like, you know, because I think sometimes there

is that, like, toxic positivity thing at work. And it's like, "It's fine. It's not a big deal," you know? And to be like, "no, actually, I am really annoyed and frustrated by this. I would like a solution." Like it, felt like kind of cathartic to be able to see those things.

Additionally, Aeron said:

I think we're frustrated for different reasons, like my frustration is like, "God, when I try to communicate with [another department], they don't understand what I'm saying," you know? That's my frustration. [My team member's] frustration was, "I'm trying to train people, and that process, that's getting in the way," you know?

That's not my frustration with this, but I know why that's a frustration for her now. Um. So, you know, like I, I don't think any of us had this kind of thought that like "Oh, it's not really a problem, and I'll just like brush it away." Um, but kind of getting some clarity on why people were frustrated.

Aeron took it one step further and discussed how, until the workshop, she hadn't even recognized for herself how easy it was to blame someone else for a mistake or to assume the worst of people:

Yeah, I think it's really easy to be dismissive of people, when I…I mean… You know, I know people's names [in the other department], but I've never seen their faces, you know? It's so easy to kind of be dismissive and, like, be frustrated in a really, like, weird sort of way when you don't know what the person, who the person is behind the message. Well, it's easy to, like, objectify them, almost, right?

And interestingly, this connection wasn't limited to interpersonal interactions or recognition of similarities of experiences between individuals; there seemed to be something about the collective sharing of these struggles, as highlighted by Kyo:

> Just putting it out there is helpful for everyone to hear. It's kind of, I think, talk already that a lot of us did in separate conversations. But as it was coming out together, so [talking about these struggles] was actually probably a good exercise to get confirmation from all parties.

And this shared sense of struggling mattered, as shared by team member Shani: "Like everybody on the team was struggling with [the problem they were talking about]. So, it wasn't just that we picked something fluffy or dopey. We picked something we all cared about, that mattered to us." Team member Regan also discussed the connecting quality of sharing these struggles:

> Especially because I think it's, it's something we sort of, like, informally talked about more, like, "Well, we'll address that, you know, at a later date." And so I think it was…I appreciated that we were sort of setting up the conversation to address some of those. And also, I, I think it was a good opportunity to hear from everyone on the team. I feel like that part, and also getting towards like addressing some of those challenges in it, but, like those especially, were like more from camaraderie, like team building, like sort of like, "We can do it, like, look!" You know? So, it was good to hear about, that other people had these, you know, like struggles or barriers kind of thing.

Team member Yuraq also commented on the permission giving and taking that their group had to engage in to feel safe and understand what "levels" of sharing were

84

appropriate for the space. Yuraq's team had come together in a facilitated workshop in which they were drafting the structure and content for a book proposal they were working on collaboratively. Yuraq recalls:

> There were, you know, there was a lot, a lot of permission asking and giving in a way. You know, some of us had…it's stories we want to tell, you know, and we're asking, "Well, would this be appropriate for this? Is this too personal? Is this too dark or too gritty?" Kind of talking through it as a group. And, you know, all felt very empowered in whatever stories that we needed to be telling. And I think that validation amongst ourselves also made it feel like a much more generative space.

When asked to draw or find an image of what it felt like to work with the team in that workshop, Yuraq pulled up an image of crayons blending and melting together (see Figure 4) and provided this explanation:

> To me, it was a very messy but collaborative project. We started out as, you know, these individual colors, very linear and organized. And then it, everything kind of melted together.
>
> And for me there was, I mean, I think this is partly…about remembering, you know, chipping up crayons and putting them on wax paper or whatever and and running an iron over them and just blending everything together...in preschool at like 4 or 5, and just that smell of it. Just, it's so nostalgic, a very clear smell. It's like, "oh, this was fun! This is, you know, just a very comfortable, safe time and space in life." And to me that's kind of really…It epitomizes what this experience was like.

Figure 4

Yuraq's Found Image in Response to the Prompt, "What Did It Feel Like to Work with

Your Team in the Workshop?"
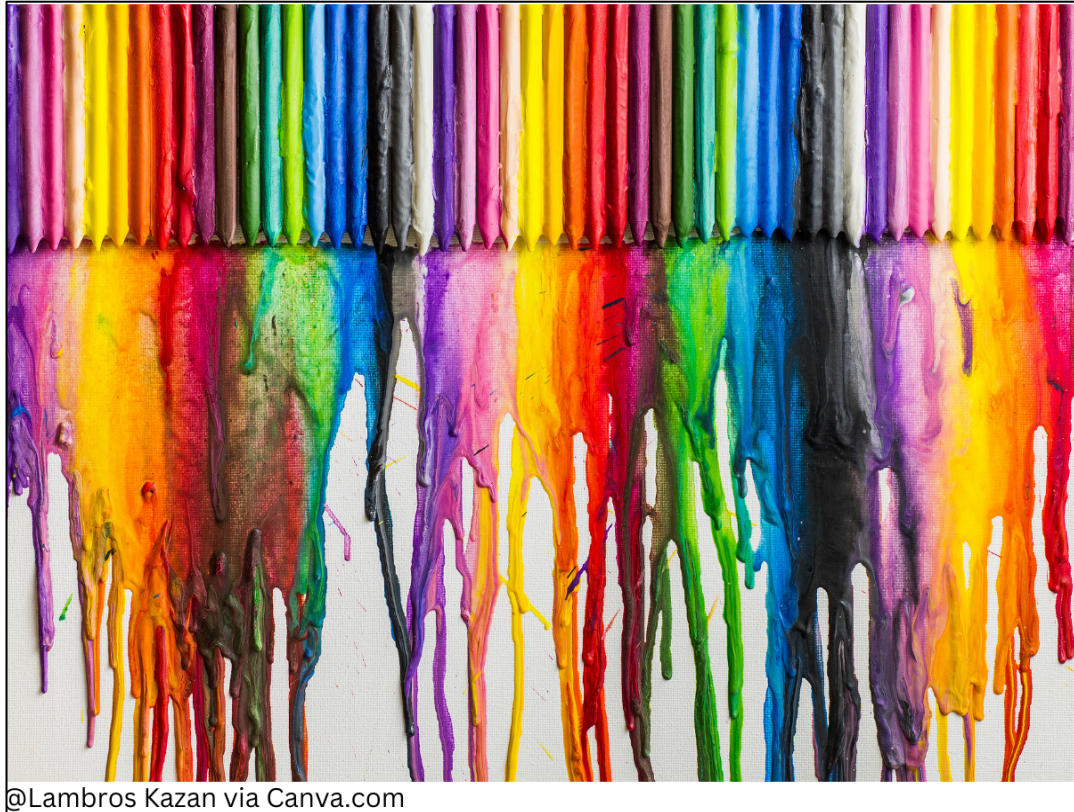
Note. From *Melted Crayons Colorful Abstract Art* [Photograph], by Kazan Lambros, n.d., Canva. (https://www.canva.com/photos/).

Facilitators also described how they witnessed that the sharing past and current struggles and pain seemed to provide points of connection for participants. Facilitator Minke shared, "it became kind of a healing circle for them," while facilitator Hira may have put it the most eloquently when he shared, "I think people need to be heard before they can understand. They need to be understood before they can understand."

I turned to the literature to try and make sense of this concept of shared struggle or shared suffering and how it may or may not relate to hope. In the 2022 version of their

book *Active Hope*, Macy and Johnstone state that "honoring our pain" is an integral part of hope, and specifically:

> dedicating time and attention to honoring…pain opens up space to hear our sorrow, fear, outrage, and other felt responses to what is happening in our world…the term *honoring* implies attentive respect and recognition of value. Our pain…not only alerts us to danger but also reveals our profound caring (p. 38, emphasis in original).

While Macy and Johnstone's (2022) conceptualization of active hope is intended as a guide to help people find hope in the face of social and ecological grand challenges, such as the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, my data suggests that this "honoring" and "witnessing" effect seems to be happening even when the trauma or pain the individual is sharing is relatively shallow. As shared in some of the participants' own words, discussing these pains and challenges may happen informally in small pockets or interpersonal interactions, but the workshop seemed to offer a shared space of honoring these struggles that allowed for a collective validation of each other's experiences in a way that was generative and connecting.

The Paradoxical Role of Brainstorming: Enabling and Constraining the Hope Emergence Process

Surprisingly, the data seem to suggest that brainstorming—the process of working together to create ideas to solve a problem, or visions for the future (Osborn, 1953)—can both enable *and* constrain the hope emergence process. I say "surprising" because ideating, or coming up with ideas to solve problems and create a "better" version of something in the future, would seem to be at the very core of a hope creation process.

Whether at the individual level (e.g., Snyder, 1991) or at the organizational/cultural level (Sawyer & Clair, 2022), a key component of building hope is creating a "desired future"; in a team, ideating or brainstorming would seem to play an important part of that process. However, as Andersson (2016) discovered, a key component to whether people felt motivated to act on ideas to solve grand challenges, such as the climate crisis, was related to task complexity and whether they believed their action would have any impact or not. When Andersson's (2016) participants became aware of just how complex some of the climate challenge issues were, they initially became less hopeful; only once they broke an issue down into sub-parts could they create ideas or pathways and once again become hopeful (Andersson, 2016).

Brainstorming Can Enable Hope Emergence

Similar to Andersson's 2016 findings, participants in this study talked about being hopeful for some ideas but skeptical of others. Facilitators Iovita and Laverne described the hope emergence process as one that looks like a "piling on of possibility" and how their workshop attendees created a forward momentum for one another:

> I felt like they were naturally encouraging each other when ideas would come up. So then there started to be this sense of team; we're on a team, and we have a common goal. And so instead of the idea popping up and someone immediately saying, "well that's not possible because [the] law says blah," …someone would bring an idea up, another person will say, "Oh well, we, you know, we could think about changing the budget for that and doing this." And then someone else would say, "yeah that would totally work." So there was just this piling on of possibility, "yes," "yes, and…," "yes, and…," "yes, and." Seeing that was really exciting

88

because they were driving the outcome more than we were at that time, right?

Like, we handed it off to them and then they, they started to kind of get excited

about what was possible.

This dynamic has been studied in focus groups, in which chaining and cascading effects occur as group members feed off of each other's contributions (Barbour, 2018; Eger & Way, 2020); however, in this instance, there seems to be the relational component in addition to the excitement of generating new ideas. Like facilitators Iovita and Laverne, facilitator Savanna describes this as the "atomic moment" and shares what she feels it seems to do for groups:

"They just said, "let's just see what this would look like. Let's experiment with

what this would look like".... And it was almost like, if you envision like an

atomic "boom!" of, like, all the energy being sucked, like, very fast, vacuum-like,

and then "Boom!" That was exactly that moment. There is a shared sense of

purpose of why we're there. There is that, like, one piece of connection, like, "oh,

we're here to do something…We don't know what it's going to be; we just have

this thing.

And then, by the end of it, there is a shared sense of energy and

connectedness, because of that atomic moment, that shared atomic moment that

happened.

Facilitator Maria offered her thoughts on why this "momentum" occurs when teams start ideating and brainstorming:

And I wonder whether it's the reflection we, the mirroring we get from others. So,

if we see someone contributing, we…we admire their contribution and what

89

they're doing. But also, we receive this in return. So I think...we see our own contribution to a bigger goal.

Team members highlighted both the relational aspects of the brainstorming and also this concept of how it feels as an individual contributor. Team member Kyo shared:

There's a possibility for things to make a, you know, positive impact. So it makes us realize that there is a right...I wouldn't say an ideal state, but at least the state that's what we're trying to get to. And I think it, that it helps also in this context. It also means, like, our contributions are there, but it's still like there's more to come. So I think that helps to identify for me individually like, "Yeah, I have more stuff to give."

Team members also talked about how ideas were shared that they didn't even know were feasible, and having those ideas validated or supported by the team leader opened up a set of possibilities for the team members. As a newer team member, Pilarni recalled:

Um, I don't know if anyone else was aware or if it was just me [as a new member], but I didn't know how much editing or changing we can do with the software that we have. It was nice to hear from [the team leader] that we are able to kind of reach for the stars when it comes to updating the software. And it kind of did bring back that reassurance that we can actually get this fixed and change some things.

Team member Regan alluded to the "teambuilding" aspect of creating ideas to overcome the challenges and also highlighted the affirmation his team received by having a leader in the workshop that could confirm the feasibility of the team's ideas:

90

We had a member of, like, the [college] leadership in this also. And so, when we were coming up with ideas, [this leader] also joined us for this session. So, as we were sort of coming up with ideas, it was, it was really yeah, sort of affirming, also, to hear that some of the things that we were wanting to do were sort of, like, within our scope of influence, and, like we could actually do them and achieve them from, like, an upper leadership perspective. So yeah, I would reiterate kind of the good and the team building and sort of building on the, coming back to, like, the excitement of it. Also, because we were generating, you know, ideas to address some of those challenges.

Regan also reiterated the importance of the relational aspect of this experience, when he later shared, "I don't know, to me…the added value was in sharing the meeting and the work with other people, because then I think we, we come up with better ideas together than we would by ourselves."

The data suggests that when brainstorming creates ideas that are both feasible and highlights the capacity of the individuals in the team to make meaningful contributions, it creates a sense of relational connectedness and excitement for the future. Hope begins to emerge as team members chain and cascade ideas (Barbour, 2018) while also binding those team members together in a shared experience.

Brainstorming Can Constrain Hope Emergence

Despite the findings above about enabling the emergence of hope, there were times when brainstorming seemed to also constrain the emergence of hope for the group. Facilitator Yancy is an embedded organizational member and is currently supporting a large unit going through a significant organizational transformation. This includes

91

formation of new programs, creation of new roles and duties, and changes to reporting

hierarchies and relationships. In his role, Yancy is helping to keep channels of

communication open and facilitating groups as they need help navigating these changes.

Yancy shared his observations of some of these groups:

> If they don't have the confidence or the previous experience [with some of these
>
> changes] and no one else does to solve the problem, pulling them all
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> together…I'm finding is sometimes just creating like a ton of ideation with
>
> nothing that's actionable because you can't actually solve the problem in those
>
> ways.

Yancy was noting that sometimes, the group couldn't seem to come up with "actionable"

ideas capable of solving the group's problems. He goes on to describe how members of

these working groups he'd facilitated sometimes became frustrated and disgruntled.

Rather than feeling a sense of connection or relatedness with their fellow team members,

Yancy shared a story of a particular member of one of these groups who had wanted to be

a working group leader and was angry that his ideas weren't seeming to have a chaining

effect. Yancy speculated, "I wonder that…the need to have your ideas, not just heard, but

accepted in that sort of validation that you were the smartest person in the

room…prevented [the other members] from feeling any kind of connection to [the

person's] ideas." In the case of this group, it seems the relational element may not have

been at play, and people didn't have the requisite knowledge or experience to develop

"actionable" ideas.

This concept of the relative feasibility (or un-feasibility, as it were) of ideas

resonated with team members as well, and team members shared instances of when they

struggled with the ideation process for a number of reasons. The purpose of the workshop Neta attended was to help define the team's goals for 2023 and beyond. Neta's team was relatively new and were still figuring out their ultimate purpose and what they wanted to accomplish. Neta's struggles with brainstorming seemed to occur because the opportunity set for the team was so large. She even had a hard time putting into words the scope of what the team was there to discuss:

> We had a hard time coming up with what…we were struggling, because what…there's so much that we can potentially do! It was almost like there was this unlimited…there were moments of frustration just in terms of what we kind of got caught up in thinking, because…it's just…it was a very wide-open question [we were there to discuss].

Team member Aeron remembered feeling constrained because of a lack of knowing about what was or was not feasible:

> I was like, I have no idea what [the technology system] could do, because I haven't been around long enough to see it evolve. I don't know, kind of, what the possibilities are, you know? How far can we dream? I kind of…I almost stayed away from those ideas.

In contrast, team member Peyton struggled with how constrained she felt during the brainstorming because the focus was only on a singular problem, while the group identified a whole set of other problems they could focus on:

> So, I don't know if anyone was necessarily frustrated. But there were, like, things that came out of that, like, "this is also a problem," you know? So, there was more things that came out of there that identified different gaps and processes, but they

weren't discussed, you know? ….They just kind of get swept aside like, "maybe

someone will think about it later," Sometime, someone will do something else

about this."

Interestingly, Peyton's comment also hinted at feelings of ongoing jadedness with

brainstorming around problems in general; her statement "maybe someone will think

about it later" describes an ongoing struggle she had with what happens with the

outcomes of these kinds of workshops, wherein great ideas are created but nothing comes

of the work.

Convergence of Hope Emergence Across Team Members

My findings suggest a convergence of hope emergence and co-construction across

team members and that team hope is, in fact, a group construct. My sample included

multiple team members from three teams. One of the teams was quite large (with a total

of 16 team members), of which I had three team members in my sample. One team was

quite small (it had four total team members), and I was able to speak with three of those

team members. The final team that I had multiple member representation for was also

small, with five total team members, of which I spoke with two. While team members

used different metaphors, images, or descriptions to describe their workshop experiences,

each of these team members recalled leaving the workshop feeling more hopeful, more

relationally connected with their colleagues, and that the workshop was overall positive.

Interestingly, hope looked somewhat different for each of these three teams,

which suggests that as hope emerges for each team, it is not "one-size-fits-all" but is

unique to each team. The first, let's call it Large Team, was a team that had engaged in

workshop experiences before and included team leader Salama, who was one of the

94

conscientious team leaders aware of the dynamics of power and authority as mentioned earlier in this chapter during the review of findings on the "unstage." The workshop Large Team held was also the one I observed via Zoom. As Large Team shared frustrations and began crafting ideas and moved through the hope emergence process, at one point, team leader Salama indicated that a change the team had previously thought impossible was, in fact, within the realm of possibility. That statement ignited the team's energy. The body language and dynamic of Large Team visibly shifted from one of reticence to enthusiasm, and I remember capturing with exclamation points in my field notes this moment of transformation for the group. Large Team clearly saw an aspirational vision of the future that was meaningful and motivational, and team leader Salama marked out a pathway they could walk down with glowing neon lights.

The second team, let's call it the Newbies Team, was brand new and had only formed a few months before the workshop was held. Two team members were completely new to the organization and had started about six weeks prior to the workshop, and while the remaining team members had been with the organization for some time, they were "new" in the sense that the team was just forming and the purpose and mission of the team were still in discussion. Team members recalled coming into the workshop already on an up-beat and hope-filled note. The formation of the team itself was the result of authority figures in the unit recognizing a need and filling it. In that way, the formation of the new team was the culmination of aspirations that people in the unit had previously held. Interestingly, even though all members of this team were "new" to the team and, therefore, had never experienced past failures or been disappointed on THIS team, they all recalled bringing to the workshop guardedness or varying degrees of

95

past trauma from previous workplaces and teams. More than that, team member Neta shared that past stories of attempted change and failure from other organizational members within the broader unit—stories that had nothing to do with Neta and her own lived experience with the team, or about the team itself—still contributed to a feeling of nervousness about the workshop. This suggests these stories of past failures may create a kind of contagion effect, whereby team members adopt or "take on" feelings of jadedness, anxiety, or nervousness toward potential failure, even when they haven't lived through those experiences in this team. Previous research on emotional contagion would support these team members' experiences (e.g., Barsade, 2002). The findings also suggest a "stickiness" factor to team members' experiences with previous teams. Both Neta and Kyo had come from previous organizations where they had faced repeated disappointment and failure. They both spoke about what it felt like to experience apathy and that they had reached a state of no longer caring whether something succeeded or not in their former organizations. They brought this past experience with them into this team, and discussed how this previous experience may have been amplifying their desire for forward momentum and excitement for change, even as they were wrestling with fears of "what could go wrong."

The final team was one in which a team member I interviewed, Munashe, described struggling with a colleague he perceived as being apathetic and disengaged. Munashe and his team leader, Lacey, both still described their team as a hope-filled team (in fact, team leader Lacey was one of the few interviewees who explicitly found an image showing the words "hope" during the interview). However, this was a team that had not yet made meaningful progress toward any of the ideas they created during the

workshop. Both Munashe's and Lacey's reflections on their workshop experience were positive yet colored by their lack of meaningful progress. Based on the findings, it seems that hope for this team may have been reverting to a latent phase, or becoming dormant.

The findings of convergence across these three teams reinforce the idea of hope as a *collective* or *group-level* phenomenon, in that what emerges is both (a) only possible at the group level, meaning this creation of a vision and pathways to achieve it only became possible once the collective ideas of the group were surfaced and could not have been envisioned by a sole or single member of the group; (b) the resulting emotional and relational connections could not have been experienced as a lone individual without the group; and (c) team hope is complex, more than the sum of its parts, and something that is irreducible to the individual team members (Town et al., 2020; Klein & Kozlowski, 2000).

The next chapter, with findings from RQ3, will address the concept of the continuity of the team's work—what happens *after* the workshop is over—and how it relates to a team's ongoing ability to feel hopeful, as well as what happens when that hope is lost.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS RQ3: PERSISTENCE OF HOPE IN TEAMS—WHAT COMES NEXT,

MATTERS

The final set of findings deals with RQ3—What does the analysis of facilitated workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest as ways hope persists within the team? This aligns with the third phase of the *gestalt framework of emotion* (Town et al., 2020), which details how emotions can "achieve a level of organizational stickiness that persists over time" (p. 10). In the *gestalt framework of emotion*, this "persistence" is enabled through discourse, in that the salient emotional experience is "talked about, named, labeled, and/or collectively shared" and becomes entangled with personal emotions in a way that becomes embedded into "ongoing organizational interaction that persists over time" (Town et al., 2020, p. 10). Because of this embedded nature, the emotion is also entangled with considerations of power (Foucault, 1988; Town et al., 2020). Within the context of this study, the data suggest that hope persistence in teams requires *meaningful progress (*Amabile & Kramer, 2004): team members discussed hope as only remaining salient if tasks or goals identified by the group were accomplished. This task or goal accomplishment was often described as being inextricable from empowerment. The final chapter of findings details these concepts of meaningful progress, empowerment and systemic barriers to accomplishing team goals, including lack of empowerment and time constraints. The final findings also reveal what happened to participants in this study when team members lost hope.

Meaningful Progress

Facilitators, team leaders, and team members all talked about what happens after the workshop as being almost as important, if not more so, than what occurred during the workshop. Specifically, team members and leaders talked about the importance of action—keeping forward momentum toward accomplishing ideas discussed during the workshop—as being crucial to the team's continued ability to see things hopefully.

Meaningful progress is a concept and term Amabile and Kramer coined in their 2011 book, *The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement, and Creativity at Work*. Amabile and Kramer (2011) found that "small wins," or accomplishments that seem minute or unremarkable in the grand scheme of things, can actually spark big emotions, increase perceptions of self- and team-efficacy, and in turn lead to larger accomplishments.

This concept was echoed in the current study's data. Team members and leaders talked about how even small accomplishments (such as the team leader sending a follow-up message that things were moving forward or putting status updates on the implementation of workshop ideas as regular agenda items in weekly team meetings agendas) helped the team maintain a positive remembrance of the workshop experience and seemed to buoy the team's emotions in the sometimes chaotic daily "busyness" of their work lives. As team member Aeron shared:

> But the thing about our team is that when we do something like this [the workshop], things get done, and then it, you know, we might not get everything done that we set up. But I, I have full confidence that something is gonna change.

You know? I've seen that kind of thing happen in the past where we work on a

problem together, and a month later we've implemented a solution.

As Aeron here shares, she has "full confidence" that the team will not only implement

things they came up with, but she also hints at a belief that, based on past experiences of

their success, the team will continue to do so in the future. This confidence, then, is

constructed of both current experiences/expectations of what can be and the team's past

ability to enact change. Aeron has sedimented in her language, through her discourse, that

her team is one that can create and achieve visions of a hopeful future.

Note, also, that these enactments or actions are known by the team members and

have become enmeshed in how the team talks about how they work together. It's not that

a lone team member accomplished a task or idea in a vacuum; team members are aware

of the action taken towards implementing the goals or ideas generated during a workshop

and talk about the team as one that takes action. Pilarni reinforces this idea in her

reflections. Her recollections centered around the immediacy of action being taken and

how it left her with an overall "good" feeling:

> So, it was nice to see when we were putting the dates in and who [the team leader]
>
> was assigning the task to. I think she had already completed everything last week,
>
> like a week after the meeting. It was nice that she was able to get that into her
>
> schedule and kind of make it a priority. Yeah, that was nice to see that she was
>
> going to work on it right away. Um! So that, that also added to the relief, and it
>
> kind of made it feel like the whole process itself was beneficial. Um, like we were
>
> actually doing something in the meeting.

In Pilarni's case, the team leader had taken on the task of completing some of the more immediate action items. However, note that even though Pilarni wasn't part of accomplishing those items herself, the team leader ensured the team was aware of what was happening. The findings in this study suggest, then, that meaningful progress isn't only the individual's ability to accomplish things but also the team's awareness that someone on the team is making progress. Simply being aware that her team leader was doing some of the tasks was enough for Pilarni to feel "relief" and that, together, "we were actually doing something." Knowledge of the forward momentum of the team leader translated to language recognizing the team as "we" are a team capable of making progress.

In contrast, members of teams that did not accomplish anything of note from the workshop reminisced on the lack of outcomes with regret and unfulfillment. Even though their reflections of the overall workshop experience itself were positive, they seemed ambivalent or uncertain about the team's capacity to move forward. Peyton, a member of a campus-wide community of practice that had come together to solve a data access issue, shared:

> Well, eventually everybody gets pulled into their actual jobs, right? And I think maybe that's what happened. But I was kind of sad because I thought it was some really good work, and we really could have done some good for the community. So, the actual brainstorming and getting things out, that worked. We came up with a great idea, but the execution was not there. So, I kind of left [the working group] feeling unfulfilled, and I find myself every now and again, when this same conversation, because it's an issue, it comes up. I find myself repeating the things

that we, you know, bringing that back like, "Hey, we did work in this area!"

Because I'm all about not reinventing the wheel, you know? So, we already did

this work in this area. Maybe we should take a look at this again. We just keep

throwing money at it, because we throw more people to figure it out, so more

payroll, right, to figure this thing out. But we had a really good idea, but we keep

reinventing the wheel.

Peyton, here, attributed the lack of meaningful progress to the fact that members of this community of practice had "actual jobs" and that their involvement in the community of practice was essentially extra-role behavior, or something they took upon themselves but was not in the purview of their daily roles. Peyton also referenced how the discourse around this topic is now one of constantly "reinventing the wheel," or coming back to the same topic over and over with new people and being unable to move forward. In this case, what seems to be persisting here isn't hope; Peyton is not overly hopeful that something will now get done. She is, in her own words, unfulfilled and even sad.

While Peyton referenced "actual jobs" as a barrier to meaningful progress, other team members attributed their lack of meaningful progress to time and the busyness of their everyday work. Team leader Lacey reflected on the workshop outcomes and her potential role in it, when she shared:

How do we manage our time? And because overall in the unit, as I see it, we have

the expectation of email responses [within] forty-eight hours [of receiving a

request]. And one of my staff said, "Well, I really don't have time to deal with

this [making changes based on the ideas from the workshop] because of what is in

front of me. My priority is to get a petition out." ….We all talked about it. We

don't have time for fixing things, and we also want to be consistent. So, it's sort of a lot of things happening at the same time. And what are the priorities? Making sure this petition is approved, I think that is our number one priority at that moment. Everything else is secondary.

We, we sort of just...I don't want to say "It's not a priority," but it's sort of like something else just came up, and we shift to that. So, we're kind of halfway now, so I mean my role should be, I...I will probably remind myself I should have a monthly check out, like…but how do you keep up with your plan, knowing that it would happen, this struggle with time? How do you navigate this?

Team leader Lacey recognized that maybe she "needed to remind myself to have a monthly check out" on the ideas and tasks the team had decided upon during the workshop; simultaneously, she was also struggling with how to help her team members navigate their work priorities to be both extremely customer-service oriented and able to implement things they had discussed during the workshop. Lacey recognized that, as the team leader, it was her role to keep the workshop items top of mind, yet she also recognized that the number one priority was not those items. Interestingly, Lacey still talked about her team as being overall hopeful: "I think, overall, my staff feel hopeful. Um, and thinking this is our plan, and we need to, ah, all work together so we can come back and…and talk about the progress and move on." So even though nothing had come from "the plan" created in the original workshop she refers to, which had occurred six months prior to our discussion, she still felt the team was "overall hopeful" and could still act on "the plan."

Meaningful Progress as a Journey

Paradoxically, even in the face of recognizing the significance of meaningful progress, a number of participants also talked about the importance of viewing hope as a journey rather than focusing solely on goal accomplishment. As team member Regan shared, the hoping process was not effortless or "easy"; it was effort-filled and required hard work. When asked to draw or find an image to share what this experience felt like, Regan provided the image in Figure 5 and shared this explanation:

> I picked this [image] because it's a lot of work. So like, there is effort and time and dedication that goes into having a very meaningful and respectful and collaborative brainstorming session. Sort of like climbing, like climbing a mountain is hard work; like, you have to prepare. You have to bring things like, you know, to get there. It didn't just happen by magic, right? There's a little bit of a yeah, time, effort, preparation that goes into it. But like working with other people to get up to that, that top peak is sort of what it's all about. I'm the kind of person where I like the hard work. I think that it makes it more valuable and meaningful when you get to, like, the peak. If, like, I would never, you know, take a helicopter up to the peak just to see the view, you know, right? Like part of that, that sense of, like, meaning and and fulfillment of doing the hard work comes from, like, that journey up. So that was why I chose this one.

Figure 5

Regan's Found Image in Response to "What Did It Feel Like to Work with Your Team in the Workshop?"

Note. From *Climber Team* [Photograph], by chipstudio, 10/15/2013, iStock by Getty Images. (https://www.istockphoto.com/vector/climber-team-gm185154351-28329286?clarity=false/).

Facilitator Maria echoed Regan's thoughts that enjoyment can come from hard work and that a hard-earned accomplishment likely brings more joy than an easy one. Maria mused:

> I wonder if we would actually enjoy the win [of accomplishing the work the team set out to do] as much if the process wasn't there. Who would play golf if they could just take the ball and walk it to the hole? We forget how valuable and how joyful it can be.

Likewise, facilitator Kris talked about the experience as a journey and shared:

> Because while everyone is focused for the next, next trend—faster, better, more— what we realize is we've instilled a culture that has led to attention deficit

105

disorders. We've gone to a moment where we're not enjoying the moment of the journey that we're on. To quote one of my neighbors, who is a cardiologist, "a lot of people don't understand that when you say you get to the end of your journey or the goal of your journey, you're actually dead! And why do you want to rush to death?!" (laughing). So, it is about the journey. We have to, as a society, keep on reminding each other that it's not about the goal; it's about the journey that you're going on.

This enjoyment of "the journey" seems paradoxical in contrast to the importance team members placed on goal accomplishment and meaningful progress, which suggests that team members likely experience hope very differently. Some may find meaning and joy in the journey itself, while others are more goal-oriented and focused on accomplishing tasks. Interestingly, the data seem to suggest that hope as a collective emotion provides space for both of these experiences to co-exist simultaneously.

When Hope Hurts: Unengaged Team Members, Unfulfilled Ideas and Lack of Meaningful Progress

During the interview, Munashe was a participant who spoke less about how his team interacted during the workshop itself (approximately 11% of their responses) and shared more about his frustrations with his team in general (about 42% of their response). These frustrations particularly centered around one employee on the team who was not engaged, and as Munashe said, "it's just a paycheck [for her]."

Munashe's reflections of the workshop experience itself were still positive, and Munashe had self-identified as having a "positive" workshop experience during the recruitment process. In reflecting on the workshop, Munashe shared:

106

I was just so excited [in the workshop] because I knew exactly where to go…like, that was a very exciting moment when we knew, "Ok, we know exactly what direction we need to go. We're going to have accurate reports."

The reports that Munashe referenced here were an important component of his job that were highly visible and shared with governmental and funding agencies. Munashe depended on members of the team to input data correctly into the system and had experienced a past embarrassment when some of the data was found to be inaccurate. He shared about that experience:

I felt very humiliated. I was disappointed. I felt really bad about it. And I told them, you know, what happened…but I feel like it's repetitively, or you know…I don't know if they don't care. They don't understand when I tell them and then tell them again. It's like "Oh, I didn't know that." Well, I told you about this before, we talked about it.

Munashe had tried and failed to be understood by the people who were negatively impacting his ability to accurately generate these reports. Coming up with a solution for this problem was important to him. At the time of the interview, which was about six months after the workshop, Munashe's team had failed to implement the solutions they had collectively created during the workshop. The lack of meaningful progress was troubling in particular for Munashe, and this is reflected in his recollections of the workshop experience. While he still recalled feeling generally excited and optimistic during the workshop itself, his drawing also shares some of this frustration. In response to the prompt, "how did it feel to experience this workshop with your team?" Munashe hand-drew Figure 6. As he explained: "This looks kind of evil, but it's supposed to be

107

like happy/excited. I think, like, it was definitely exciting. But there was also worry…I just, it's really hard to get buy-in sometimes."

Figure 6

Munashe's Hand-Drawn Response to "What Did It Feel Like to Work with Your Team In the Workshop?"
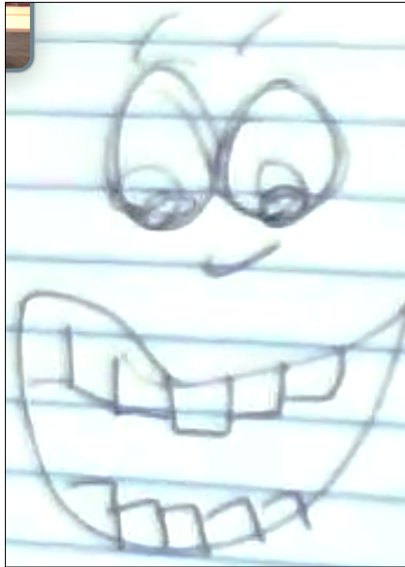
Note. Munashe hand-drew this response and then held it up to the camera while on Zoom so I could take a screen-capture of the image.

Munashe also shared that because of his experiences with this particularly disengaged employee, Munashe felt unable to be his full self at work:

I'm really trying to learn how to separate feelings from work. It's really hard, because I put emotion in everything I do. I'm just an emotional person, I guess. But…I thought we had a good heart-to-heart one day and was super motivated and excited. It turned out to be nothing. I was pretty upset and let [the other employee] know. And you know, [they] apologized, but nothing changes. I think that's been pretty hard in our department's, you know, progress.

While the workshop itself seemed to offer hope for change, Munashe's experience with the team outside of the workshop was in contrast to that hope. Particularly with regard to interacting with this specific team member, Munashe seemed fairly despairing or cynical about meaningful progress or change. However, as shared in the earlier findings, hope did converge across this team, and Munashe and Lacey both still talked about the team itself as being a hopeful one. Hope seems to remain at the collective level in the way the team members talk about the team as a whole, even when team members struggle with interpersonal relationships as individuals.

The Ticking Clock for Making Meaningful Progress

There may also be a "ticking clock" or limited window in effect for making meaningful progress. Team member Neta was ready for action, and even though the workshop had been fairly recent and the team leader had been communicative about which decisions were being made, Neta shared:

It's like holding on at the top of a wave. We have our one-on-ones [meetings] with [our team leader], and I did tell him like, I'm kind of bored. Like, I need something to do, to work on. What can we start on? And I think we're on this weird…it's like we need to get everything ready for next year, like I really feel like it could be our huge debut. And so, I'm just going to start taking things by the horn and just say, "here we go." And there are a couple of things where he's like, "Well, we're not quite ready." And I'm like, "yes, we are." I don't know, if this were to go wrong, we could easily shift and make it work. So, I feel like we're kind of stuck in that a little bit. And I…I get it. Because it's like, we want, you

know, want to be able to offer what we say we can and do it effectively. But we

can…just get it going.

While some of what Neta is speaking of here seems to be tied to empowerment, in that

she's seeking approval from her supervisor to "take things by the horn" and start trying

things, there is also a sense of time pressure. Neta's team was a new team, and as she

mentions in her reference to a "huge debut," she feels a pressure to start moving toward

accomplishing some of the things the team discussed in the workshop. There's a sense of

precarity in the situation, as she references the metaphor of surfing regarding their "huge

debut" losing potential for an impact: "It's like holding on at the top of a wave."

Kyo, who is a member of Neta's team, also alluded to this time pressure in his

interview. He shared:

We felt good talking about and seeing the transparency of the priority list. But I

think also, a lot of the group, you know, we're kind of like motivated to like get

started on them and to see progress on it. Just because it's…it's a long-term

strategy, but it's also affecting day-to-day activities and like, what should we

focus on in the short term? So, we're very highly motivated to see…I think we're

very here and ready to do that [move forward].

It seems as though team members Kyo and Neta shared a similar positive experience in

the workshop and were both existing in a state of suspension: both wanted to move

forward, maybe even felt compelled or pressured to move forward, and were waiting for

their leader's approval to do so.

110

Lack of Meaningful Progress Leads to Apathy

Interestingly, the data suggest that teams who repeatedly navigate hope emergence and lack of meaningful progress may not always devolve into hopelessness; instead, they may cease to care altogether and become apathetic. Kyo reflected on experiences from past teams he had worked on that had struggled to make meaningful progress. While these past teams occurred in a different organization, and even a different industry, he brought those experiences with him into his new work team.

Kyo and I had been discussing some of the emerging findings of this study, and I had mentioned that it seemed navigating these emotions was akin to a wave: that there are highs and lows and that things like workshops seem to create an "uplift." Kyo agreed with me but went on to muse about what happens when a team has too many of these highs without accomplishing anything meaningful. Kyo shared this about his former team:

> I think, anecdotally, from my [previous employer], we were small…So it is, you know, the whims and kind of the challenges that you have to go through is very, very much like an emotional roller coaster. Because sometimes you're doing well; sometimes you're not. Just because you don't have the resources and the manpower that a larger [organization] has. So, I…I think…it was very much up and down…and *then it went to apathy* [emphasis added].
>
> And then, like, when this opportunity came up like, I was, I basically had to say, like, I could stay in apathy and just keep going as a norm, or I could venture out, and, you know, try something new.

And so I think that was my big decision of like, "Do I want to stay in apathy just because it's almost comfortable?" And like, you know. It's very little emotional effort, right? Because you literally kind of checked out. I mean, yeah. I think I just went through therapy right now.

Kyo spoke about the ups and downs of his experience as being a rollercoaster, and at some point, he had to stop caring. He could no longer navigate the turbulence and talked about losing motivation and even a desire to care.

Apathy has been proposed as a multidimensional construct with behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and relational elements (see Dickson & Husain, 2022 for a review) and has been linked to many health issues and disorders, including depression and cognitive decline (Marin, 1990). In the workplace, apathy has been identified as a pre-quitting behavior (Gardner et al., 2018), which was clearly the case here for Kyo.

Other participants also shared how their perceptions of a coworkers' apathy affected them. Munashe shared of his co-worker:

She's very smart, but she's just not motivated. And yeah, it hurts us. It hurts our clientele. It's hard, it's just disheartening, because I really…she is amazing. Like so much potential. But I just don't feel like she lives up to it just because…she doesn't want to. I feel like she's just not very engaged, just quiet, doesn't really take initiative…and I mean, change is hard. It's never easy, but yeah. That's how she feels, it's a paycheck.

Munashe had not only observed his colleague's apathetic behaviors but also acknowledged that it had impacted Munashe and was frustrating and even disappointing. Munashe had shared earlier in the interview, as well, that this employee's inability to

become engaged during the hoping process may have inhibited Munashe's own enjoyment or capacity to be as deeply engaged as he would have liked.

Past research has showed that "caring too much" and communicatively engaging with apathetic individuals can lead to burnout (Miller et al., 1988). The data would indicate, then, that for some participants, a repetitive cycle of hoping-to-disappointment may lead to apathy and an inability to engage emotionally, behaviorally, or cognitively.

When Hope Is Lost: Negative Experiences and Organizational Exit

Team member Shani didn't necessarily have a negative experience with the workshop itself and shared that the ideas the team came up with were inspiring and motivating. However, when the team went to share those ideas with their leader, who had not attended the workshop with the team, the team leader had no interest in hearing the ideas. The team had come together to address potential ideas to lighten their workload by streamlining processes, and during the session, the team had shared frustrations with each other about their workload and compensation. Unbeknownst to the team at the time, one of the team members had used an instant message to notify the team leader. Shani recalled learning about this message string:

> [The team member] had given [the team leader] a heads up that, "hey, by the way, the villagers may have, you know, pitchforks," even though we didn't, "and they have grievances, and they have a problem that they want to address with you.

Following the workshop, the team had scheduled time on the regular team meeting agenda to share the outcomes of the workshop with the team leader. The team leader kept either canceling the meeting or moving the workshop discussion to the last thing on the agenda, which meant the meeting time ran out each week before they could

113

talk about it. This went on for several months, until finally a team member tried to force the topic with the leader. Shani shared how this interaction went:

> The team leader just snapped at us. She refused to discuss anything, like any of the root causes, any of the concerns we had, just anything. She just knew that we thought that we were a combination of overworked and underpaid. She didn't even want to address any of the, you know, non-compensation related solutions we'd come up with. You know? And I, I think we actually came up with some really, really good ones…There were actually legitimate, in my opinion, legitimate solutions that weren't just like, "Hey, bring me up to market [salary]," right? [The supervisor] just lost her stuff on us…after that meeting, that…I just knew my days at [the organization] were numbered.

For Shani, it wasn't just about a lack of empowerment or that the team didn't have the time or authority to implement the solutions they came up with; it was the team leader's unwillingness to even listen to what the team had come up with. The team leader seemed to "know" what the team would talk about from the earlier message about "villagers have their pitchforks" and made assumptions before even listening to what the ideas might entail. Shani's reference to "my days were numbered" were correct, as Shani exited the organization about six months after this incident. Not only that, but Shani shared: "I think three months after me, two other employees left the organization, and I know they felt the same way I did about [the workshop]."

As Shani said in her story, she began to attribute the result to the organization more broadly:

But we weren't even allowed to express our, our, you know, possible solution.

And when we did even get a word in edgewise, it was immediately shut down.

The fact that she…was unwilling to work with us, I think, you know, it

highlights…when leadership fails to buy into it, like they put you through the

process, and then they fail to buy into it. Because what it did was it opened up our

eyes that, "hey, you know what? There are solutions right there. Yeah. And

they're viable. Like they're not, they're not unsuitable." And that they were

unwilling to, you know, even hear us out, I think is just, you know…that's what

sucks about this place.

For Shani, the experience wasn't only about the team leader's poor leadership and the

message their reticence sent; it highlighted something that "sucks about this place," the

organization in general. This experience seems to have triggered a psychological contract

breach (Robinson, 1994; Zhao et al., 2000) for Shani. The organization had a reputation

for innovation and a cultural drive toward accepting innovation and change. However,

when Shani's group tried to engage in change processes, her experience with her team

leader was of a leader not supportive of this cultural imperative. When I asked Shani to

share what the workshop experience felt like, she shared both the emotional experience of

the workshop itself and what it felt like after the workshop (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Shani Shares Her Emotional Experience Both During and After The Workshop Session
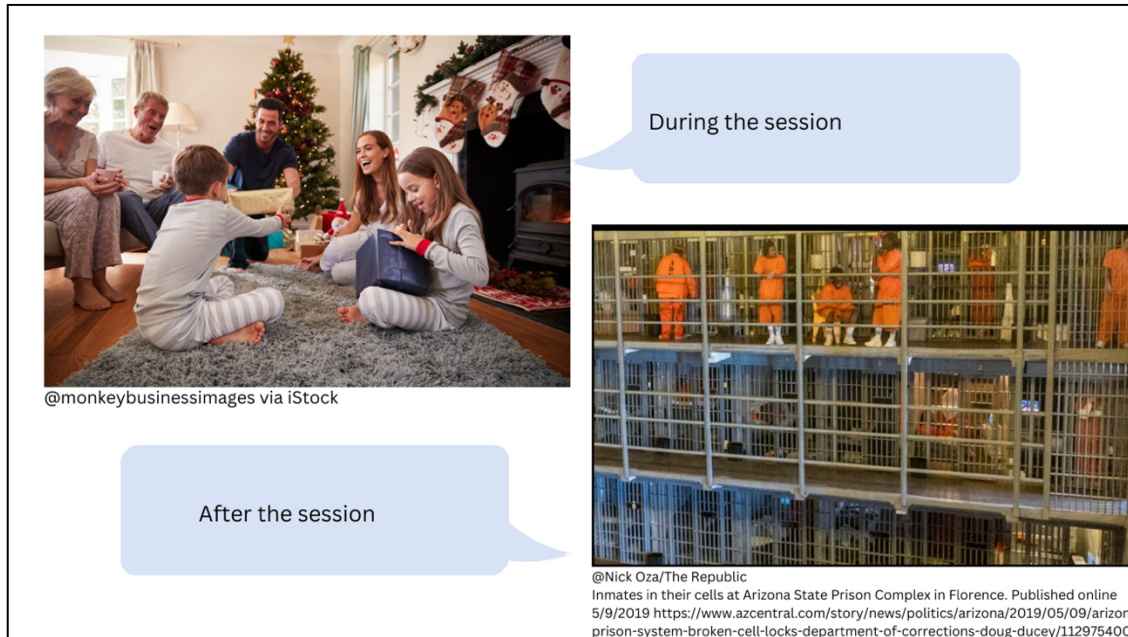
Note. Image top left from *Three Generation Family Wearing Pajamas in Lounge at Home Opening Gifsts on Christmas Day* [Photograph], by monkeybusinessimages, 11/21/2018, iStock by Getty Images. (https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/three-generation-family-wearing-pajamas-in-lounge-at-home-opening-gifts-on-christmas-gm1065444624-284911226?clarity=false/). Image bottom right from *Inmates in their cells at Arizona State Prison Complex in Florence* [Photograph], 5/9/2019, by Nick Oza. The Republic. (https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/arizona/2019/05/09/arizona-prison-system-broken-cell-locks-department-of-corrections-doug-ducey/1129754001/)

Shani described the workshop and post-workshop experience as follows:

So the image that I would pick would be this one here. It's like Christmas morning, you know? The feeling is that you've been given this new gift, you know, [the workshop], which helps you solve this problem that's really weighing heavily on you…and, you know, this was the gift that would address the problem we had. So, we were really excited. I would picture myself as one of the kids with the presents, my teammates will be the other kids, the other people who are also happy. And that's, that's the image I would associate with, you know, the process.

116

Now, if I pick the image that would go with, you know, the outcome…I would pick any generic prison. One, because not only was the solution that we presented deemed illegal, but we were actually put under tighter restrictions afterward. We were made to feel even smaller afterwards. So we were in a worse place than when we had started. Because not only did we not have our solution but the workload was the same, and the pay was still shit. But now we have this warden looking over our shoulders, you know, just trying to quell any insurrections. And to make sure that we knew our place underneath her.

Shani speculated that, while she may have eventually left the organization, the positive experience of the workshop in contrast to the negative experience of what happened afterward likely acted as a catalyst that made her realize it was time to leave. Shani even shared that maybe these kinds of workshop experiences should come with a "warning label":

I think that's the danger of an organization doing something like this. It's a really good [experience], but it opens your employee's eyes. I know the intended power is to come up with solutions…And that's great. And I think [the workshops] do that. But I think that, that's the "watch out" that people who want to actually run [a future-focused workshop] have to look out for, you know? It's actually going to work. And if it works, or when it works, you're gonna have to at least have that discussion. You know?

As mentioned in Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures, during the facilitator interviews I identified five other cases where team members who seemed to have had negative experiences with workshops. While I was unable to interview these other five

individuals, two of these individuals who had the negative experience were personal friends of one of the facilitators. The facilitator, Dax, was able to speak with them and share some of their reflections with me that mirror some of what Shani shared about organizations, and leaders, needing to be aware that sometimes these types of workshops or collaborative sessions can "open people's eyes." These individuals had been part of a cross-divisional working group whose purpose was to support efforts toward diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) for their division. Working group members came from all over the division, which at the had 400+ employees. Facilitator Dax shared that during a series of workshops, what became clear to some members of the working group was that the kinds of radical DEIB changes they desired were not going to be feasible. Dax described that these individuals didn't feel necessarily betrayed by the organization; rather, they had no hope that the kinds of changes they wanted to see were possible at the organization. She shared that both of these individuals recognized their personal passions were around DEIB work, and they both left for roles in organizations where they could focus on that work. In the cases that Dax shared, this "eye opening" wasn't entirely negative; the employees recognized they had a passion that couldn't be fulfilled at their current organization. However, from the organization's standpoint, two employees who could have been agents of change chose to leave the organization. The next chapter, Discussion, will dive deeper into the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to better understand what hope in teams "looks" like and how team members may co-construct hope for one another. To do this, I investigated the experiences of team members and facilitators participating in future-focused workshops, as these workshops seemed to be a place hope is likely to emerge based on my own lived experience and previous research (Andersson, 2016). I initially framed this study with the sensitizing concepts of hope theory (e.g., Snyder, 1991), organizational cultures of hope (Sawyer & Clair, 2022), team empowerment (e.g., Kirkman et al., 2014,), identity construction processes (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016), and sensemaking (Weick, 1995).

However, through the course of the analysis, I realized that I needed additional resources to elucidate the data. At that time, I discovered the usefulness of a gestalt approach to emotion in organizations (Town et al., 2020), and turned to understandings of organizational cynicism (Andersson, 1996; Dean et al., 1998; Stanley et al., 2005) and organizational skepticism (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989; Stanley et al., 2005) to make sense of the emerging concept of jadedness. Building on these past literatures, the findings of this study offer theoretical and practical implications that extend our understanding of hope in teams. This chapter discusses these theoretical and practical implications, as well as the research limitations and future opportunities for research on hope in teams.

The first research question explored what hope "looks" like in teams: *"What does the analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest about how hope is experienced by teams in organizations?"* Three

119

important findings emerged in regard to this question. The first dealt with the complexity of hope, particularly as teams are entering into the workshop. Many team members and team leaders expressed emotions that seemed to be in tension with one another, such as being both excited and anxious, while still expressing and engaging with one another in an overall hope-filled way. The second finding dealt with how team members and leaders situated the workshop experience within the larger frame of their organizational existence. Participants shared their perceptions of the ebbs and flows of their emotional experiences in organizational life and highlighted workshops as an especially "up" moment in that existence. The third finding was that participants often entered into the workshop in a state of *jadedness*, in which they expressed a guardedness from past repeated disappointments yet were still willing to hope again and engage with the workshop experience. This jaded stance differs from cynicism and skepticism in that it is inwardly-focused—participants are not attributing their guardedness outwardly or towards others. Rather, the data suggests that this jadedness instead represents hope in its latent stage.

The second research question sought to better understand the co-construction processes team members may enact during hope emergence. The findings to this question suggest a set of processes team members engage in during workshops that may enable hope emergence. Specifically, the research question asked: "What does an analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest as steps or conditions in the co-constructive processes of hope emergence in teams?" The findings suggest five steps or phases occur in the co-construction process of hope emergence in teams, including (a) reducing performativity through the creation of an

"unstage," (b) collective presencing through intense focus on a single topic and removal of distractions, (c) creating a common understanding by making the invisible visible and scaffolding vulnerability, (d) sharing stories of organizational struggles to act as relational connection points that deepen vulnerability and support relational bonding, and finally, (e) brainstorming as both enabling *and* constraining of hope emergence. A related finding to this research question was that this hoping process is effort-full, and co-constructing hope is not something that occurs by mere happenstance but requires cognitive and emotional effort by the team.

The final research question dealt with how teams may sustain hope: "What does the analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest as ways hope persists within the team?" My findings suggest that what happens after a workshop is important to whether teams can sustain their hopefulness or not. Specifically, meaningful progress toward accomplishing the ideas the team came up with is important not only for whether the team's hope persists but also suggests, according to the findings, that meaningful progress may allow teams to engage in subsequent cycles of hoping at higher levels of efficacy. Findings to this research question also suggest that, when meaningful progress is not made, teams may de-volve back into a state of jadedness or, potentially, "spin out" of the hoping cycle and begin to move more toward organizational cynicism or skepticism. This study suggests both the role of the leader and the empowerment of team members are critical to whether hope persists for the team, and in extreme cases, disempowerment may result in psychological contract breach, loss of hope, and organizational exit.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study extend previous research in seven primary ways. The first three ways contribute to our understanding of hope as an emergent state in teams. Specifically with regard to understanding what hope in teams "looks like," this study (a) utilizes a *framework of gestalt emotion* to empirically illustrate the layered and complex nature of hope in teams, such that hope in teams is more than the sum-of-its-parts and is inherently paradoxical, tension-filled, complex, and may be experienced by team members like a wave as they navigate the ebb and flow between emotional highs and lows. The study also (b) proposes *jadedness* as an emotional, cognitive, and behavioral phenomenon that indicates hope is latent in a team and waiting to emerge. Finally, the findings (c) highlight how jadedness is related to, but conceptually different from, organizational cynicism and skepticism and may also act as a precursor or warning indicator that a team is at risk for those "darker" emotional states.

In addition to understanding the "what" of hope, this study also suggests there are specific process steps groups can engage in when co-constructing hope emergence, or the "how" of hope in teams. Specifically, this study (d) demonstrates a set of five process steps that teams can engage in to co-construct hope emergence, (e) confirms the relational component of hope by showing that hope co-construction is grounded in shared struggles and relational connection, (f) affirms the importance of meaningful progress toward ideas generated in a workshop in order for teams to sustain hope, (g) and empirically illustrates that the loss of hope may be tied to psychological contract breach and team member de-identification with the organization. In what follows, I expand on these seven contributions.

Elucidating Team Hope Using a Gestalt Framework of Emotion in Organizations

My findings utilized Town et al.'s (2020) *gestalt framework of emotion in organizations* to examine hope in teams. The findings of this study suggest a new definition of team hope, in which team hope is a shared, complex, and emergent state that motivates team members toward accomplishing future-oriented change through empowered action. Similar to hope as an individual construct, hope in teams is multidimensional and includes affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relational dimensions. Hope in teams is rife with tensions and contradictions, as team members navigate both "good" (aka, positive) and "bad" (aka, negative) emotional states while creating visions for a preferred future. Team members also alluded to an *ebb and flow,* or wave-like, experience of hope as they moved between stages of latent, emergent, and persistent hope. Teams who were able to make meaningful progress seemed to rise to a higher amplitude of this wave, and team members spoke of their teams and themselves in more sedimented, hopeful terms. However, when meaningful progress could not be made or if too much time had passed since the team had developed their hope-filled, preferred visions of the future, team members either returned to a jaded state or, in some cases, began to attribute failure as being outside of the team's control. Past research in organizational cynicism and skepticism (e.g., Stanley et al., 2005) indicate that this external attribution—a reference to "them" and "they" or "it" or "this place"—is potentially a step toward sliding down into a darker emotional trough, wherein hope no longer seems attainable to the team member.

To illustrate this conceptualization of team hope using a gestalt framework of emotion, I have adapted Town et al.'s (2020) model to incorporate these concepts. See

the original Town et al. (2020) model in Figure 8 (reprinted with permission from the authors) and my adapted model of team hope in Figure 9. The next pages describe in detail team hope as illuminated by utilizing a gestalt framework of emotion.

Figure 8

Original Gestalt Approach to Emotion from Town et al., 2020
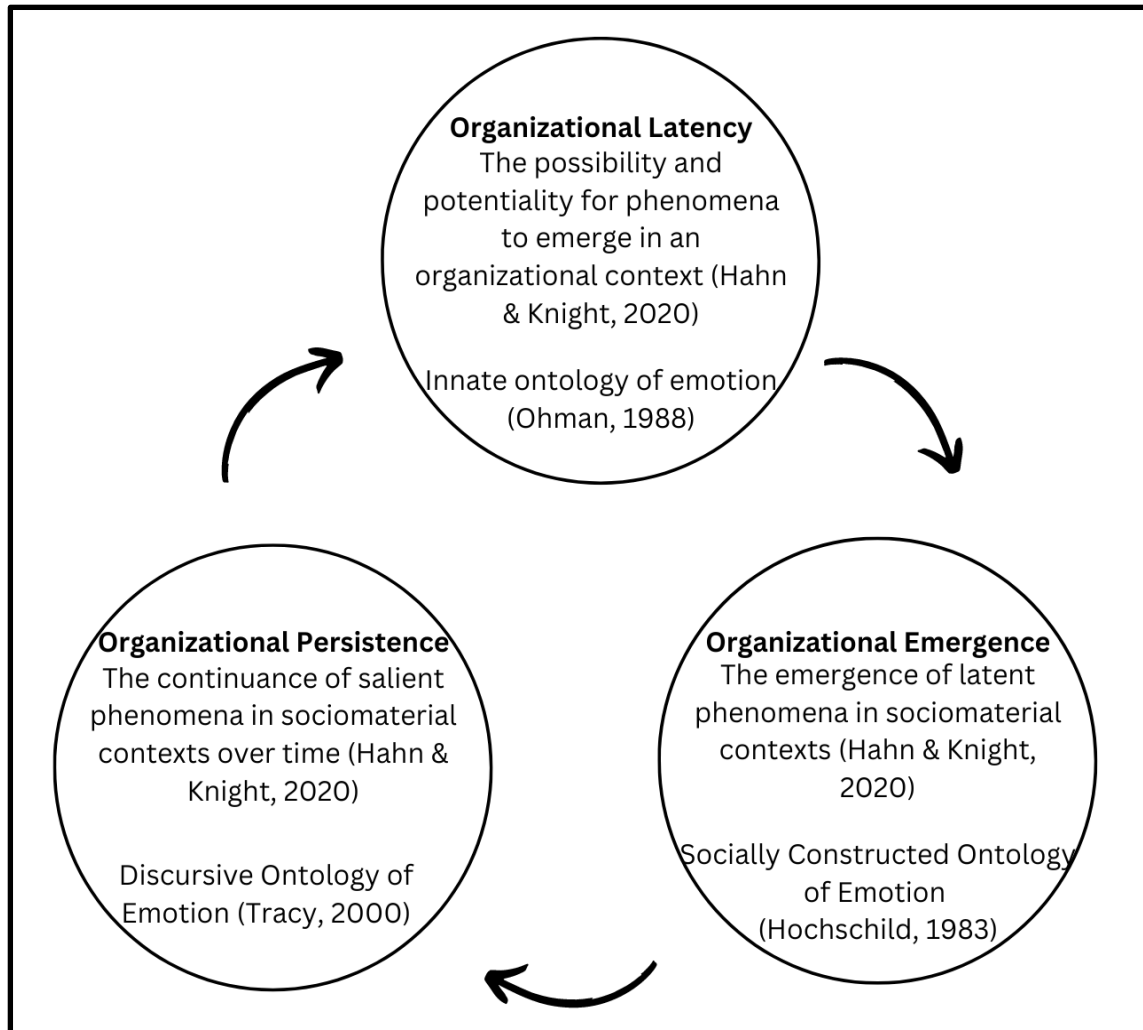
Note. Reprinted with permission from authors.

Figure 9

Team Hope as Elucidated by a Gestalt Framework of Emotion in Organizations, adapted

from Town et al.'s (2020) Gestalt Approach to Emotion
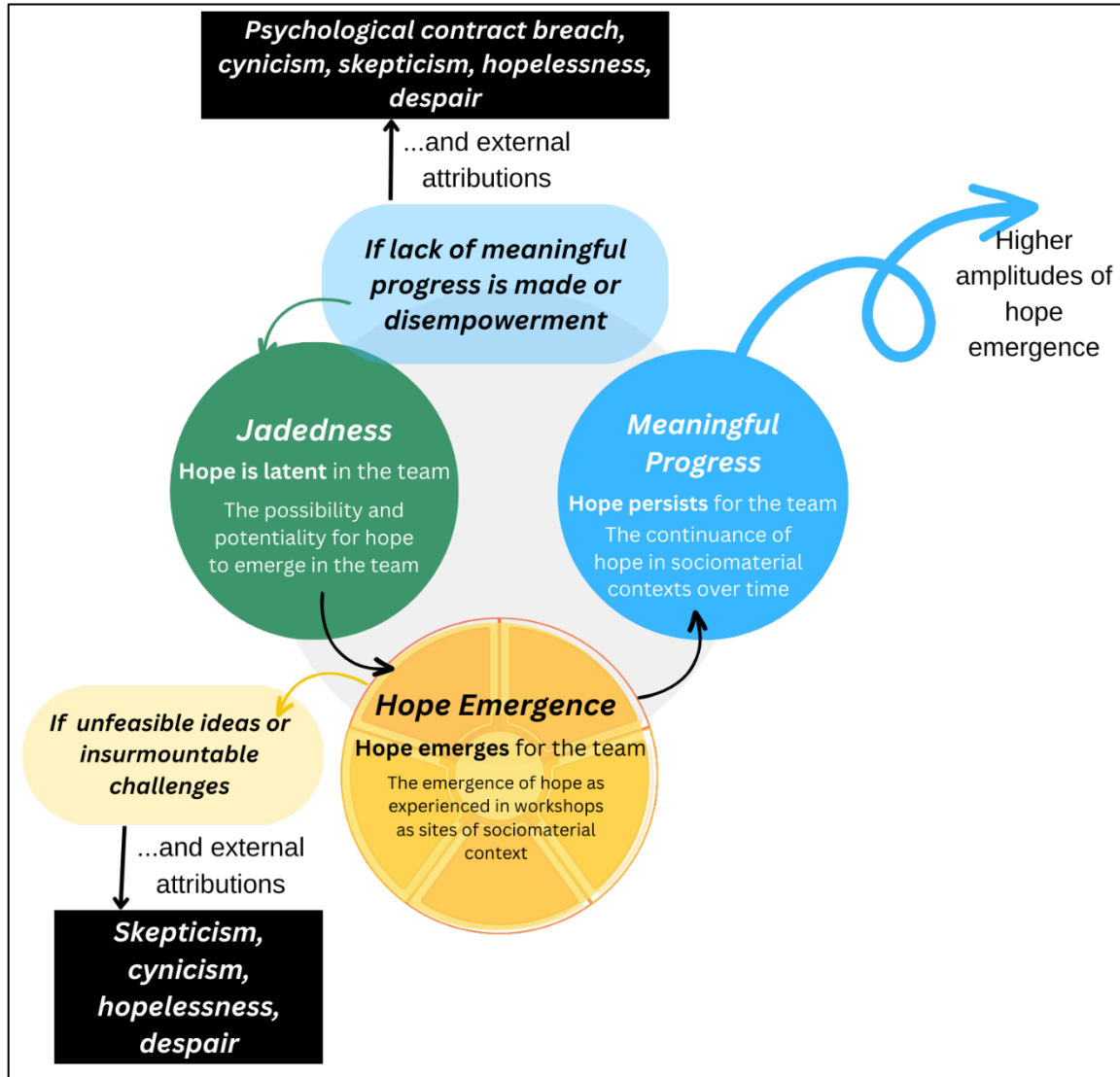
Note. This model modifies the original gestalt emotion model by exploring hope specifically in its latent (jadedness), emergent, and persistent stages, as well as identifies stages where team members and teams may "spin out" of the hope cycle.

The findings from this study suggest that team hope may start with jadedness in

the latent phase. Team members are guarded and reticent to participate at first and

mention past failed attempts at change. This language tends to place the locus of control,

or blame in this case, internally within the team, and common statements include, "*we've* tried that before; *we've* already come up with ideas for this that didn't work." The important thing to note here is that even in the face of this guardedness and reticence, team members were willing to engage with one another to explore possible solutions. In other words, they were waiting to be given a reason to hope again.

Next, teams engage in a co-construction process of hoping, in which hope emerges. This is the second phase of how teams experience hope in an organization, as explicated by the gestalt framework of emotion. I will speak in more detail about the co-construction process of hope emergence in a subsequent section. Hope is not guaranteed to emerge; indeed, findings from the study demonstrated that teams and team members may "spin out" of this hoping process if the ideas they are coming up with seem unfeasible or if team members believe the challenges facing them are insurmountable. As mentioned in the findings section, some team members attribute these barriers as being outside of the team. This shift in focus from "us" to "them" is captured in language and may sound like, "*they* would never let us do this here" or "this idea would never get approved at *this organization*." This turn toward the external may result in skepticism, cynicism, loss of hope, or even despair.

The third phase, persistence, happens for those teams that come out of the hope emergence process with a clear path forward. Hope persists once teams make meaningful—and visible—progress along that path. The findings indicate this progress doesn't have to be monumental or on a large scale; in some cases, simple status updates were sufficient to maintain the team's hope. When this happens, it seems that teams move toward a higher amplitude of hopefulness, and they will likely engage more readily in the

126

co-constructive hoping process the next time they need to come together to solve a challenge or implement a change. However, there is a major risk to teams, team members, and team leaders at this stage: if a team emerges from the hoping cycle and is dis-empowered, meaning an authority figure or leader denies the team the opportunity to move forward, it can cause an almost immediate psychological contract breach or de-identification with the organization that may result in psychological or physical organizational exit. Likewise, if the team does not make meaningful progress, or enough time lapses without the team making meaningful progress, the team begins to slip back into jadedness. They may even devolve into a more sedimented level of jadedness wherein, having hoped yet again and then having those hopes dashed, their desire to guard against future disappointment will become even stronger. And once again, if this disappointment begins to be attributed outside of the team member or the team—say, toward an authority figure such as the unit leader, or even the organization more broadly—and the team begins to talk about themselves as unsupported, ineffective, or prevented from making changes, then it's likely that team will move past jadedness and into the darker emotions of cynicism, hopelessness, and despair.

The Ebb and Flow of Team Hope

My findings indicate that teams and team members navigate through the layers of hope like a wave in motion. Every participant talked about the workshop, i.e., the hope emergence process, as being an emotionally uplifting experience, and even those participants who ultimately had a "negative" experience talked about the workshop itself as still being positive. The negative part of their experience came *after* the workshop, or in some cases, the workshop revealed truths about the organization that changed their

commitment toward the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Using a wave as a metaphor for explaining hope also allows for an exploration of what might cause shifts in the amplitude of that wave. My findings suggest that teams who make meaningful progress toward ideas they crafted together during the hope emergence process seem to navigate toward a higher amplitude of the wave. This doesn't mean they don't still have highs and lows or ups and downs; what seems to happen is they remain at a higher capacity for hope than before. This study did not investigate outcomes of team hope, meaning I didn't measure team performance or productivity; however, because hope at an individual level has been linked to self-efficacy as being mutually supportive (Gallagher et al., 2020), it seems logical that teams who have achieved meaningful progress collectively feel more effective. On the other hand, on the "downside" of the wave, teams that were unable to achieve meaningful progress seemed to exist at less positive emotional states. The findings of this study indicate that teams who have suffered repeated disappointments may receive less of an emotional "uplift." The workshop was still a positive experience but was spoken of with less enthusiasm, and team members spoke more about what was *not* accomplished than what was. Team members questioned the team's ability to accomplish ideas or changes they had collectively created. Hope was not lost, per se, but returned to a latent state.

However, and potentially more dire, my findings suggest that a repetitive cycle of hoping-to-disappointment may result in apathy. In other words, individuals and teams may become becalmed and find themselves in a state where they can no longer care. The waves have stalled, and neither positive nor negative emotions emerge. The popular press has had a lot to say in recent months about "quiet quitting," with everyone from Gallup,

Inc. (Harter, 2022) to writers from *The Wall Street Journal* (Ellis & Yang, 2022) and the

Harvard Business Review (Klotz & Bolino, 2022) chiming in. Quiet quitting is when

employees start "opting out of tasks beyond one's assigned duties and/or become less

psychologically invested in work" (Klotz & Bolino, 2022). While quiet quitting may just

be another term for job apathy (Schmidt et al., 2017), my findings indicate that engaging

in repeated cycles of hoping-and-disappointment may be one cause of apathy that might

result in quiet quitting.

Jadedness

Based on the analysis in this study, jadedness as latent hope isn't the opposite of

hope; rather, it represents an opportunity for hope to materialize. Conceptualizing

jadedness as latent hope also suggests that emotions may not only be symmetrical

(meaning negative emotions feel "bad" and positive emotions feel "good"), nor even that

emotions can be asymmetrical, wherein it can "be good to feel bad and bad to feel good"

(Lindebaum & Jordan, 2014). Rather, this study suggests some emotions may be

inherently tension-filled and contradictory. Teams and team members in this study

wanted to feel hopeful, even as they wrestled with past disappointments. They desired

feasible solutions and forward momentum while, at the same time, found it hard to care

and risk being let down again. This desire for change is also likely influencing, and

influenced by, the perception that the team still has the ability to make change happen.

Unlike skepticism, wherein the individual or group doubts either their own or someone

else's ability to make change happen (Mirvis & Kanter, 1989; Stanley, et al., 2005), a

jaded team member still believes the change to be possible. And in contrast to cynicism

(Stanley et al., 2005), the intention behind the change isn't being questioned by the jaded

team; in fact, the need for change may be deeply meaningful for the team, which is why they fear attempting and failing to make the change happen.

The Darker Side(s) of Hope in Teams

Part of understanding what hope in teams *is* may also be understanding what it *is not*. Jadedness, as a latent phase of hope, indicates that the opportunity for hope to emerge is dormant yet still present. Related negative emotional experiences in the workplace, such as skepticism, cynicism, hopelessness, and despair, seem to represent increasingly "dark" emotions, wherein the opportunity for hope to emerge in the current organizational and team context decreases. As stated in previous literature, the locus of control (Rotter, 1966) in these emotions shifts from internally-focused (e.g., within the team and individual team members) to externally-focused (e.g., not within the team's boundaries). This shift is related to the collective efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997) of the team and their belief in their agency or empowerment to accomplish future-oriented changes. Figure 10 highlights the relationships between these constructs.

Figure 10

Opportunity for Hope Emergence in Negative Emotional States
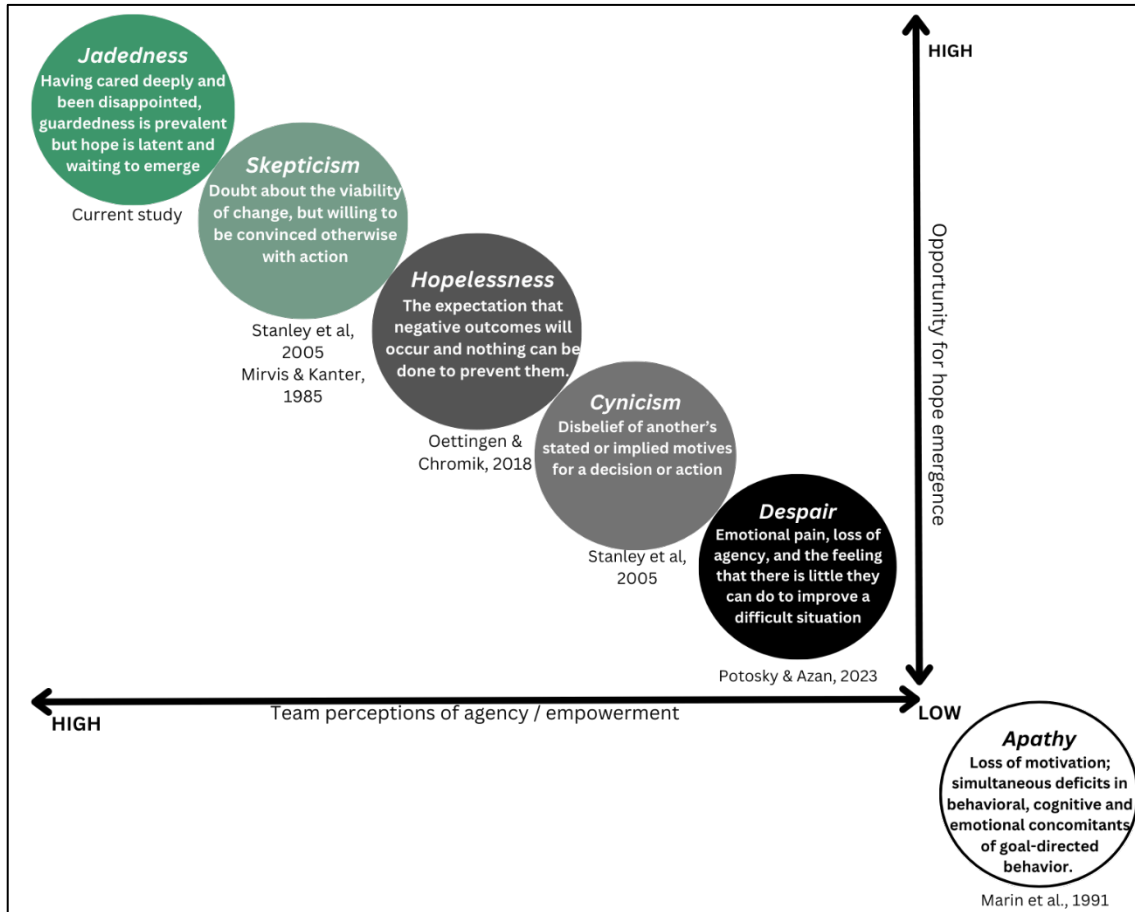
As the findings from this study suggest, as teams and team members begin to "slide" down a negative pathway toward despair, their ability to co-construct hope within their existing team and organizational context may diminish. Teams who are disempowered quickly—because a leader chooses to ignore the team's ideas or countermands a team's progress—may move immediately to the darkest levels of hopelessness and despair. Interestingly, this also implies that even those teams reaching skepticism and cynicism aren't entirely without hope. And finally, findings from this study indicate that when team members repeatedly have their hopes dashed, they may move even beyond the

darkest emotional levels into a state of apathy in which all motivation is lost in the context of their current situation.

Co-Constructing Hope Emergence in Teams

While acknowledging there is some overlap, past research in group facilitative communication techniques has focused on facilitating *relational connection* in groups as being different from facilitating *task communication* in groups (Sunwolf & Frey, 2005). The findings of this study suggest that hope emerges only when both relational connection AND idea generation/task creation occur in the workshop. Team processes bring together both components, as they are "member's interdependent acts that convert inputs to outcomes through cognitive, verbal, and behavioral activities directed toward organizing taskwork to achieve collective goals" (Marks et al., 2001, p. 357). The findings of this study suggest workshops act as a microcosm or living laboratory for team members to enact processes in a way that allows for hope to emerge through five steps. See Figure 11 for a visual model of these steps. The five steps seemed to resonate regardless of the model, framework, or technique used by the facilitator. While there does appear to be some ordering or sequencing of the steps, which I will explore next, these process steps also appear to be mutually-reinforcing and continuous.

Before reviewing the discrete steps, I want to highlight the effortful nature of this hope emergence process. Many participants described the co-construction of hope emergence as fatiguing and shared that they left the workshop feeling tired. Co-constructing hope requires team members to interact with deep concentration and to pay attention and listen to one another to better understand not only each other but also the problem or project they are working on. This makes sense, as one of the key

132

differentiators of hope from optimism is hope's action orientation. It's not merely believing something can be better but crafting pathways to achieve that vision and moving along those pathways. The hope emergence process is where this hard work of creating the vision and identifying and carving out these multiple pathways occurs.

Figure 11

The Co-Construction Process of Hope Emergence in Teams
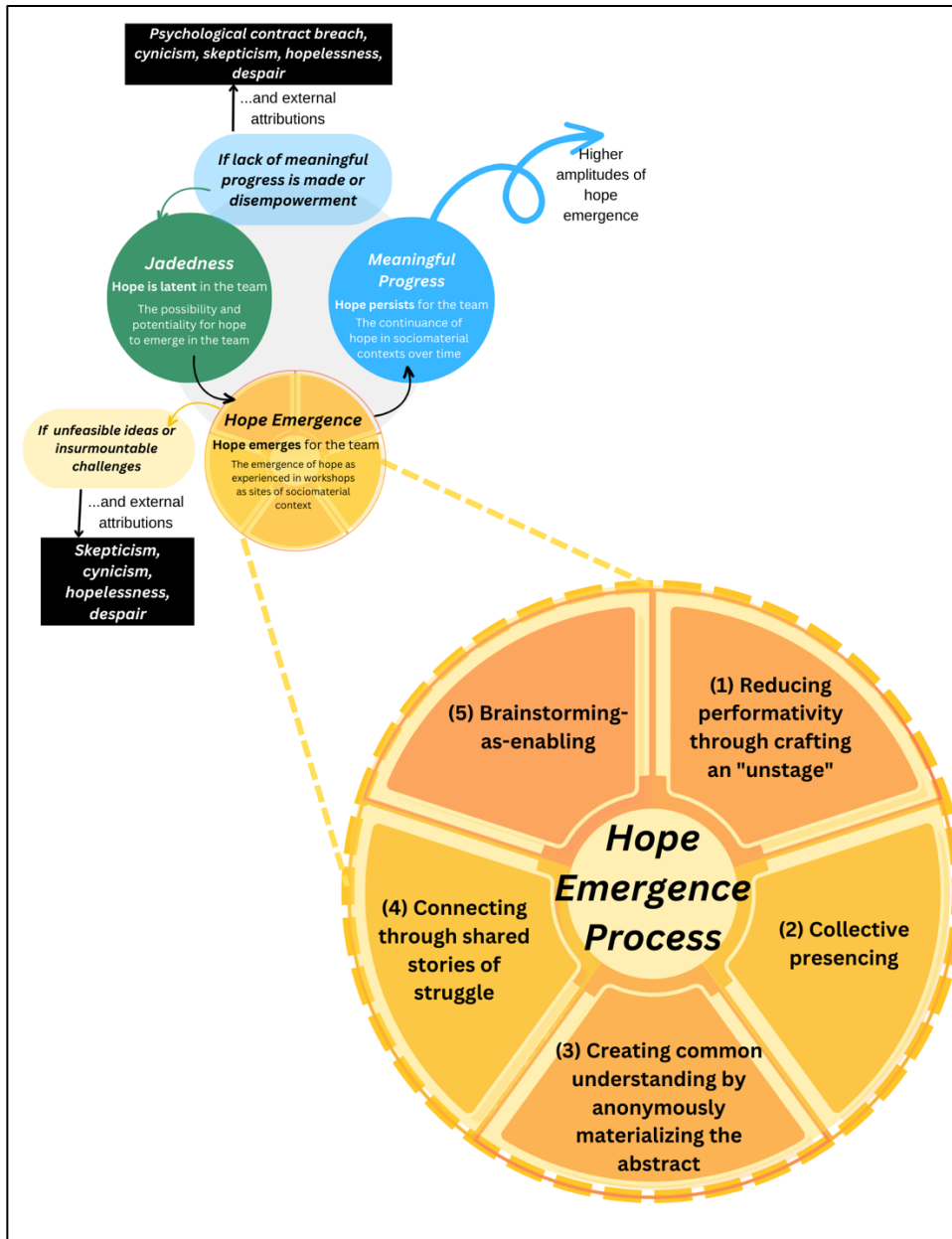
First: Reducing Performativity Through Crafting an "Unstage"

Facilitators intentionally used certain actions and phrases at the beginning of the workshop to "level the playing field". This included setting ground rules, which is a common practice many facilitators use. The findings of this study suggest articulating out loud a set of ground rules similar to the following is the first part of crafting an "unstage": "in this workshop all ideas will be equally evaluated; all comments equally valid; and all people will be treated as equals." In hierarchical settings, such as in the military, for example, verbally articulating these ground rules out loud may not be sufficient and the group may require visual cues (such as asking participants to remove rank insignia). The importance of group formation processes has been studied for many years (e.g., Bormann, 1990; Fisher, 1970; Sunwolf & Frey, 2005; Tuckman, 1965; Wheelan, 1994). However, many of those studies were performed on undergraduate groups in classroom or laboratory settings and explored the formation of brand-new groups. In this study, the "purposive groups" (Hackman & Katz, 2010) were either members of teams who work together daily or members of communities of practice from within the same organization. The groups in this study had to unlearn the ways of interaction they were accustomed to; the unstage in this sense isn't a group formation process but a group re-formation process.

Once the "unstage" is set, the participants can step onto the unstage and enact authenticity in a way that may be difficult in other situations. While fully removing performativity isn't possible—we are always "performing" some aspect or element of our identity—on the unstage, findings of this study suggest that performativity can be *reduced* in the sense that participants can share truths and stories more openly than they

134

might otherwise feel comfortable doing. This reduced performativity happens throughout the workshop as participants enact the behaviors set in the ground rules. In other words, the cognitive aspect of articulating out loud and understanding the ground rule of "taking off the rank" is insufficient; participants must also enact the behaviors of the ground rule. For leaders in particular, this enactment of "taking off the rank" requires an element of critical self-reflexivity and recognition that the power dynamic they are used to needs to shift for this ground rule to be embodied. The enactment of the unstage is reinforced using the sticky notes, as participants write their thoughts anonymously and share them. I'll explore other roles the sticky notes play in a subsequent section, but using sticky notes reinforces and supports the reduction of performativity. Each participant's thoughts are "equal," as they are placed on a three-inch-by-three-inch piece of paper that is the same size as everyone else's three-inch-by-three-inch piece of paper.

Second: Collective Presencing

The findings of this study introduce the concept of *collective presencing*. Like the previous step, collective presencing occurs in two parts: first, with the setting of ground rules and, second, with enactment of behavior associated with those ground rules throughout the workshop. The ground rule to enable collective presencing may sound something along the lines of, "Commit to being present: turn off your phone, turn off notifications, shut down your email, and stay engaged with the group." While seemingly simple, the findings from this study suggest this invitation to focus solely on the workshop experience is quite different from the everyday expectations of many working team members, particularly any team focused on customer service. High customer-service orientation can be a double-edged sword for employees. On the one hand, a high

focus on serving customers can lead to burnout (Maslach, 1998), as employees put the needs of their customers above their own. On the other hand, caring deeply about the customers one serves can provide a buffer against burnout (e.g., Babakus & Yavas, 2012), as employees who feel their work is meaningful derive a sense of purpose and joy from what they do. Regardless of whether the employee finds meaning in a customer-service orientation or not, a consistently fast pace of work and heavy workload can cause stress for employees (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Participants in this study referenced the frenetic pace of their everyday work, and that the ability to focus solely on a single topic during the workshop was abnormal and refreshing. The findings of this study suggest intentionally engaging in these types of workshop spaces may help employees pause and provide an opportunity for relief from this hectic pace.

A *collective* component is also at play. While in the workshop, participants are working together toward solving a problem that impacts each of them differently. This kind of "focused attention" has been studied at the individual level as a positive psychological state (e.g., flow; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) and also in the mindfulness literature (Tang & Posner, 2009), but collective flow (van Oortmersson et al., 2022) and collective mindfulness are still in early stages of research. Even though workshop participants are not engaging in mindfulness via meditation, the findings in this study suggest that as teams enact the ground rule of "staying engaged," they begin to quiet their minds and potentially activate different parts of their brains, which ignites functions such as executive attention and self-regulation (Tang & Posner, 2015). The findings of this study suggest that this being-present-in-the-present-together not only enhances relational connection but also is one of the process steps that allows for hope to emerge.

Third: Creating Common Understanding By Anonymously Materializing the Abstract

The findings of this study suggest that hope emergence requires participants to build a common understanding of challenges, issues, ideas, or topics that had originally seemed "unknowable" or "invisible." Sticky notes support this building of common understanding in two ways: by (a) granting participants a level of anonymity that makes them feel more comfortable in sharing ideas or thoughts and (b) allowing intangible or unseen processes, concerns, or issues to become visible. The end result of both the anonymity function and the "materializing the abstract" function of the sticky notes allows for team members to disclose information they may not have otherwise felt comfortable sharing while simultaneously witnessing other sticky notes filled with similar expressions of vulnerability. Participants in this study shared how this witnessing effect not only helped them feel validated and "seen" as individuals but also helped them feel more connected to their fellow team members. Although past research has investigated these kinds of dialogic moments, in which people connect deeply with and witness the humanity in one another (Baxter, 2004; Baxter & DeGooyer, 2001), the findings in this study seem to suggest that these dialogic moments can happen, or at least be initiated, through writing on a three-inch-by-three-inch piece of paper and sticking it on a wall for all to witness.

The findings of this study also suggest that initiating these dialogic moments by using sticky notes may be a way to "scaffold" vulnerability. Research has shown that vulnerability, trust, and psychological safety are all key components in crafting superior team outcomes, such as improved performance and increased creativity (e.g., Edmondson, 2018). Building trust and creating an environment in which team members

feel safe enough to disclose vulnerable information is typically seen as the hard and largely invisible work of the team leader. The findings of this study suggest that one very tangible way team members feel safe to disclose information is sharing their thoughts during a workshop by using a sticky note. Note that this sticky note disclosure process is not happening in a vacuum. As mentioned in the previous steps, other processes are at play in the moment the sticky notes are being used, and ground rules have already been established around workshop behavior. As team members experience a connection with one another through a dialogic moment and that experience is reinforced by witnessing others in the group having a similar experience, they feel comfortable in sharing their next idea or thought. This process starts a chaining or cascading effect (Barbour, 2018; Eger & Way, 2020), as members of the group listen, validate, and add to each other's thoughts and ideas. The sticky notes, which start as the vehicle that enables the dialogue to begin, then transform into more of a place to capture the group's enthusiasm and to record their conversation. Topics, thoughts, and emotions that were initially intangible and un-speakable, through the use of the material sticky note, become "real" and laden with emotional meaning and connection. This ties into the next step in the hope emergence process, in which team members connect even more deeply with one another through sharing stories of past and present struggles.

Fourth: Connecting Through Shared Stories of Struggle

Hope emerges from a place of struggle. Even the mythic Pandora's box had to first release into the world all of the pain and distress it contained before hope materialized. For this reason, previous studies of collective hope have looked for hope in places of "grand challenges" (e.g., Andersson, 2016; Sawyer & Clair, 2022), in which the

scale of the struggle is so large that the only way to face the challenge may be through hope. However, the findings of this study suggest that even the seemingly small, mundane experiences of everyday life create struggle, and these places of strife offer opportunity for hope to emerge. From streamlining a broken transactional process to ensuring data were entered correctly into a system to recognizing that multiple groups were duplicating their efforts instead of working together, none of the problems, projects, or goals the teams in this study faced were world-ending or life-altering. The problems these teams were dealing with would be easy to dismiss from an outsider's perspective. But for each team, the frustration accumulated by dealing day in and day out with the problem was very real, and not only was the frustration real, it was *shared*. As experienced by these teams, the seemingly negligible nature of the problem itself—the fact that it would be easy to dismiss the problem as being too small to cause "real" pain— ensures that the problem goes unspoken about in larger team meetings, which in turn leaves each team member feeling alone in their struggle. While everyone knows about the problem, the collective group does not address the problem. The problem is left alone and unspoken about to fester and grow in the dark.

However, as discussed in the last section, as soon as the problem is disclosed on a sticky note, it becomes *real*. It becomes material and is recognized and shared by the entire group as being important. Notably, it is also put into a new perspective: after all, if the issue is small enough to fit on a sticky note, maybe it's not so bad. That monster in the dark the group had begun to fear becomes "knowable" and "named", and therefore not as scary. What's more, in making it public, people also realize they are not alone. Many participants spoke about the power of this moment of relational connection as a

139

flash of recognition: "I didn't realize you struggled with it, too." Through sticky note disclosure, the individual team members' experience of the struggle is validated, while at the same time, each individual member understands that others have also been struggling.

Once visible on the sticky note, team members then start sharing more openly and make sense of the issue with one another through storytelling (Weick, 1995), as team members share their perspectives and insights into how the problem has impacted them. The findings of this study indicate that hope emerges when this identification of collective struggling happens *before* the team begins coming up with ideas for how to solve the problem. Because the team has shared their struggles with one another and has been validated in those struggles, it may be that the ideas they come up with are more salient to solving these shared struggles. The problem is now named, shared, and therefore, meaningful. The entire team is now invested in solving the problem, and ideas that come from the team are imbued with that shared meaning. It may also be that through this moment of relational connection, the team has continued to develop psychological safety and trust and are, therefore, more willing to be bold with the ideas they come up with. This propels the team into creating ideas that are *enabling* of hope emergence rather than *constraining*. The next section will talk more about this enablement.

Fifth: Brainstorming-as-Enabling

Findings from this study indicate that when teams engage in idea creation to solve problems, certain types of idea creation may *enable* hope emergence, whilst others will *constrain* hope emergence. A key differentiator between whether ideas were deemed as enabling or constraining was feasibility. This makes logical sense, as wishful thinking is

140

not hope; in fact, "wishful hoping is...fanciful and impractical" (Callina et al., 2016, p. 18). A core component of the hope emergence process is that the team's ideas are perceived as practical and within the team's implementation capacity. Interestingly, though, the findings seem to indicate that hope will emerge even when ideas are "moonshot" (e.g., ideas as grand as putting a man on the moon, Carton, 2018) or that the team could "dream bigger" than they believed possible, so long as the team believes some component of the idea can be implemented.

Previous scholars have investigated groups faced with grand challenges or moonshot ideas, such as how environmental activists and groups of community stakeholders can retain hope in the face of the climate crisis (Andersson, 2016). Andersson (2016) found that a key component in supporting these groups' motivation and hope came in helping them break down the complexity of the problem into smaller parts that they could understand and, more importantly, take action upon. The findings of this study extend Andersson's (2016) findings: while the problems the teams in this study were solving for weren't "grand" or large-scale to the extent of climate change, feasibility and practicality still played an integral part in whether the teams were able to co-construct hope. Teams able to brainstorm ideas that are practical and feasible in addition to those ideas that are "out there" or moonshot are more likely to feel motivated and hopeful, regardless of the scale of the challenge they are facing. If the team's vision of the future is "too high" (i.e., infeasible), hope may be constrained rather than enabled.

An important note to make is that the team hasn't yet moved into action; this evaluation of feasibility is still occurring at the brainstorming phase, in which they are coming up with ideas for addressing the challenge or issue they've been discussing. As

they are creating these ideas, they're also evaluating together whether one or more of the ideas is actionable, based on their collective understanding of past successes and current and future workload and capacity. Hope emergence is simultaneously storied through the past, present, and future: as the team looks toward making a future change, they are reliving past successes and failures while navigating current resource and task realities.

The more vague, unrealistic, wishful, and unattainable the idea, the more likely hope will be constrained. The more specific, feasible, and actionable the idea, the more likely hope will emerge for the team. And as teams make meaningful progress toward achieving one or more of these ideas, hope will persist. The next section dives more deeply into the persistence of hope in teams through meaningful progress.

Transferability (or Not) of the Hope Emergence Process

An interesting implication of the five steps of the hope emergence process is related to the potential for transferability (or not, as the case may be) of this process occurring outside of facilitated, future-focused workshops. I believe these five steps help to shed light on why a "typical" meeting may be "a soul sucking waste of time" (as described in an article in the *Guardian,* Burkeman, 2014). Popular media abounds with articles on why meetings "suck" and how to improve them. Just do a search in Google on "why meetings suck," and you'll see more than 49 million possible search results. A 2022 study by Reclaim.ai of more than 15,000 working professionals found that these participants spent more than half of their week in meetings, and yet, a recent *Wall Street Journal* article also found that people felt 83% of meetings they attend were a waste of time (Clark, 2022). While meeting scientists propose a variety of solutions (e.g., Mroz et al., 2018), such as ensuring meetings have an agenda in place and there are clear

142

expectations for why the meeting is necessary, the findings of this study suggest a deeper issue: unless a meeting can facilitate the five steps of hope emergence, it will not likely allow for co-construction of hope to occur.

Meaningful Progress and Hope Persistence

Understanding hope through the gestalt framework of emotion, the final phase deals with how hope persists or is maintained over time. Once a team makes meaningful progress toward a future it envisioned together, the way members talk about their team, the discourse they use, embeds hope firmly within the team's identity. This means the team members talk about the team as a hopeful one and acknowledge their ability to create and maintain a vision for a better future, as well as their capacity to make that vision become a reality. It is through this discourse that team members constitute hope in their reality. This doesn't mean team members are constantly positive or never experience negative or darker emotions; however, the findings of this study indicate that team members who talk about the team in hope-filled terms can likely re-engage in a hope emergence process and tackle their next challenge from a more positive place than a team that has not been able to make meaningful progress. Action—the literal enactment of the tasks, activities, or work the team identified as helping them move toward an improved vision of the future—is a necessary condition of team hope. Without action, all the team has is a wish.

The findings of this study also indicate there is a ticking time clock for teams in terms of the length of time between when the workshop ends (e.g., when they've created the tasks or actions they would like to take) and when they start acting on those tasks. This time lag seems to be contextual and team-dependent. Some participants mentioned

an anxiousness "to start the work now" immediately following a workshop, while others referenced workshops that had transpired six months or more in the past and still felt hopeful they could take action toward those ideas. The study's findings also indicate that the scale of the "action" the team takes may be relative. Massive steps forward weren't always needed; sometimes, consistent communication and keeping the ideas, reflections, and tasks that were created during the workshop at the forefront of the team's mind was sufficient.

Disempowerment and Loss of Hope

The findings of this study suggest that the most tenuous time for a team's hope may be the liminal space between hope emergence and hope persistence. When meaningful progress is not made, or worse, when an authority figure forcefully disempowers a team and closes the pathways the team has created, it can crush the delicate hope created by the team. Findings from this study indicate that in those cases in which an authority figure disempowers the team, particularly if the ideas the team devised were in keeping with what the team perceived as supporting the organization's culture and mission, team members can not only feel demoralized but also betrayed.

When a leader or authority figure violates what employees perceive to be a "promise" or "contract" between the organization and the employee—for example, that team members can and should innovate and come up with viable solutions to problems in their work, but the leader is not open to hearing these solutions—this betrayal can have severe negative consequences for the individual team members and the team as a whole (e.g., Robinson et al., 1994; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Laulié & Tekleab, 2016). Findings from this study indicate several members of a team who experienced this

144

negative encounter chose to leave the organization within six months. This study suggests that part of the reason psychological contract breach (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2019) may be so painful is that such a breach not only violates expectations in the present but also suggests to an employee that their hopes will never be fulfilled at the current organization. In such an instance, when an employee loses all hope for a future change they would like to see, it makes sense that the employee would likely choose to leave the organization.

Practical Implications

This study offers important practical implications for teams, team leaders, and facilitators seeking to build environments where hope in teams can flourish. These include (a) actively engaging jaded team members rather than treating them as "squeaky wheels," (b) creating a rhythm of workshop experiences to intentionally buoy a team's spirits and create opportunity for relational connectedness, (c) engaging in a leadership "check" before a workshop is held, for leaders to critically reflect on boundary-setting and the extent to which they can empower teams and team members to move ideas forward, (d) breaking down ideas into actionable tasks, and (e) ensuring meaningful progress is made and shared with the rest of the team. In addition, many of the facilitators shared best practices, tips, and words of advice for fellow facilitators. In the final portion of this section, I share a "tips and tricks for facilitators in supporting hope emergence" infographic, which is intended to distill the findings of this study as a gift back to the community of facilitators who so generously shared their time and insight with me during this study.

145

Actively Engaging with Jaded Team Members

The finding that jadedness is hope's latent state was initially anxiety-inducing for me. As I mentioned in previous sections, I had taken several courses in conflict resolution at the University of Utah; what I neglected to mention is the reason I had taken these courses is because I'm naturally very conflict-averse and needed strategies and tools to help navigate conflict-laden situations. When the finding of jadedness-as-latent-hope began to emerge in the data, I didn't realize how much I was repressing the finding until I experienced it for myself in a workshop. The visceral reaction I had—a literal sick-to-my-stomach feeling—made me realize just how powerful this finding was. I recognized that as a facilitator, I had been subconsciously negating or silencing the voices of the jaded team members during workshops. When team members would share stories of past failures or ways in which the team had attempted something in the past, I would quickly gloss over them and move on, usually with a statement like, "well, conditions are constantly changing and maybe things that prevented something from succeeding in the past are no longer a concern." The findings of this study indicate that, rather than avoiding or silencing these jaded team members, facilitators and team leaders should *actively engage them*. It is easy to dismiss these members as being "negative Nancies" or avoid allowing a workshop to "devolve into a bitch session" (all things I have been warned against as a facilitator).

However, structuring the conversation in a way that team members can (a) share their fears and (b) identify reasons something might fail and/or things that might prevent success allows for multiple positive outcomes. First, if there are other team members who have also been harmed by, or struggled with, the situation, hearing someone else share

their struggles creates relational connection. Second, by creating a shared understanding of how and why something hasn't succeeded in the past, the team may be able to create more feasible solutions together moving forward. Both outcomes—relational connection and feasibility of solutions—were identified in this study as being necessary steps for hope to emerge. Creating space for the team members who have critical information about the past to share that information is one way facilitators can help teams co-create hope.

Become a Wave Machine: Intentionally Set a Regular Workshop Rhythm

Have you ever visited a waterpark that has an artificial wave machine? It creates an even, repeatable series of waves. The findings of this study suggest that leaders can help create moments of emotional "uplift" for teams through facilitated, future-focused workshops. But holding a single workshop and expecting it to sustain a team's emotional needs may not be sufficient; this study suggests that teams need regular opportunities to engage in meaningful, collective problem-solving that is outside of the hectic, everyday busy-ness of their work. Participants in this study repeatedly referenced how being in the workshop together allowed them to be present and connect relationally in a way that was important.

While it may feel burdensome to leaders to find sufficient blocks of time on a regular basis for the team to come together, understanding the importance of what that time creates may help justify the burden. Interestingly, several of the workshops in the study were held digitally, and hope still emerged for those teams, which suggests not every workshop needs to be held in person. Also, findings from this study suggest the team's normal meeting structure is unlikely to allow for hope to emerge; unless the team

is engaging in the five-steps of hope emergence, most meetings will be unlikely to create the kind of buoyant emotional uplift that a facilitated, future-focused workshop can create. Similar to creating a wave machine, crafting a regular workshop rhythm for teams through a blend of in-person and digital engagement may help regulate the emotional ups and downs of organizational life and provide teams with an opportunity to routinely engage in hope emergence processes.

Leaders, Check Yourself: Before Teams Enter Workshops, Set Boundaries

Exemplary teams are often lauded for being forward-thinking, engaging in creative problem-solving that eliminates errors or issues in their work, and maximizing their effectiveness and efficiency. The implication of these acknowledgements is that leaders will listen to and approve some of the team's ideas, so long as they are in keeping with the leader's expectations for the team. The findings of this study suggest that team hope is at its most fragile state when a team asks for leader or authority figure approval to implement their idea, particularly if the team feels their idea is meaningful and in alignment with what they believe the organization wants. If at that point, a leader or authority figure doesn't approve the ideas, or worse, doesn't even listen to the team, the team may feel betrayed. And the leader's reasons may not matter, particularly if those reasons are never made transparent to the team. At best, the team may hesitate to engage in problem-solving again; at worst, they may quit (quietly or loudly).

Leaders who desire their team to engage in problem-solving or future-focused ideation should reflect on the types of ideas they would be willing to say "yes" to *before* the team creates ideas. They can then valuably communicate those boundaries to the team as guardrails or constraints that may help circumvent future problems. For example, if as

148

a leader you know the budget for the upcoming year is going to be tight and you're not likely to approve any ideas that require additional funds, state that outright. There's a reason they say, "necessity is the mother of invention," and providing a team with constraints may actually help them be *more* creative (Acar et al., 2019). Setting this boundary has the added benefit of ensuring the ideas the team comes up with are feasible and more likely to be implementable. This is related to the next finding, which deals with ensuring meaningful progress can be made.

Action + Awareness = Meaningful Progress

A key finding from this study is that hope persists in teams who are able to make meaningful progress toward one or more of their ideas. However, that does not mean the team has to take gigantic leaps forward. Meaningful progress can be made incrementally, through smaller steps that are shared with the team. The communication and awareness component is key. If someone on the team is off making huge strides toward one of the ideas but no one else on the team is aware of it, then as far as the rest of the team is concerned, nothing has been done. In other words: *action + awareness = meaningful progress.* Meaningful progress can be as simple as creating an agenda item during regular team meetings to keep each other apprised of any progress toward goals created during a workshop.

Another recommendation would be to end a workshop by asking the team members what meaningful progress will look like for them and having them commit to action by certain dates. As both the findings of this study and previous research in goal setting suggest, a sequencing or roadmapping of ideas and goals can allow a team to "see" farther into a hopeful future. Goal setting and attainment is a positive, self-

reinforcing cycle: as goals are set and achieved, individuals and teams feel more confident and efficacious in setting ever-higher goals (Locke & Latham, 2006). Participants in the current study alluded to a "wave"-like experience of hope, wherein accomplishing collective ideas made it more likely they would approach a subsequent set of challenges with a higher level of hope. This suggests that savvy teams may be able to "break down" ideas that seem too high or aspirational into smaller, more feasible components. Many teams have one or more team members who thrive in list-making, goal-setting, or project planning; asking these team members to help take a larger idea and break it into smaller, more actionable component parts may be another way to keep moving forward toward meaningful progress.

Create a New Team Role: The Activator

A final recommendation is to create a new role on the team: the Activator. Too often, team leaders feel they must take on the burden of helping the team make meaningful progress; many of the team leaders in this study echoed these feelings. Some of this burden is based in authority and power dynamics: if the team is embedded in a bureaucratic or hierarchical organization, then in some cases the team leader may be required to initiate and approve any action that is outside of the team's normal operating procedures. Multiple team leaders in this study both recognized their responsibility in moving things forward and lamented that burden because they frankly didn't have enough time in their busy schedules to focus on launching a problem-solving effort. I was sharing some of the findings from this study with a personal friend, who is a professional project manager for a large organization. She mentioned that one way their organization has tried to address this challenge—that leaders themselves may not have the bandwidth

150

to keep forward momentum on certain tasks, ideas, or initiatives—is through the creation of an Activator role.

The Activator is not a job title; it is a set of responsibilities that an existing team member can take on to help the team make meaningful progress toward goals developed during a workshop. The Activator is a team member who is granted authority by the team and the team leader to keep goals and action items top of mind for the team. This may include having "stand up" or scrum meetings (quick 15-minute daily check-ins in which team members share what they are working on, what they have completed, and what barriers are in the way of them moving forward) dedicated to the goals and tasks from the workshop. The Activator can act as a communication conduit for the rest of the team regarding the status of goals and tasks of the future-focused ideas created during the workshop. It may make sense for a team member whose job duties are most closely aligned with the change effort to take on the role of Activator. For example, if one of the ideas generated during a workshop is to re-arrange workflows in a particular process, the person who is most impacted by that change may be the logical person to take on the Activator role.

Obviously, the team member who takes on the Activator role may need help with making room on their proverbial plate to add these new tasks. This may mean other members of the team will need to remove a few tasks from the Activator. It is this intentional delegation of work and having a focused "point" person for the change effort, that made the concept of the Activator role so appealing to participants from this study. After my project manager friend shared the idea of the Activator role with me, if participants in the study asked about any emerging findings or interesting practical

151

implications I was discovering through the course of the interview, I shared the idea of the Activator role.

Oftentimes, when a team comes up with an idea to make an improvement, part of what stymies the team is their *perception* of how much work it will take to make that improvement. Purposefully working through what it would look like to empower an Activator and shifting around the workload of the team in order to accommodate the time and thinking space needed to make the change effort successful is a tangible and tactical step the team can take. Being realistic about the scale and duration of this shifting of responsibilities, and mapping it out logically, helps to give shape and form to an otherwise amorphous burden. Teams may find what at first seemed overwhelming is imminently doable when broken into component parts and shared across the team. Having an Activator may not only alleviate the burden of the team leader having to keep the change top-of-mind but also clear the path for the team to move forward.

Facilitation Tips and Tricks to Support Hope Emergence During Workshops

Figure 12 is the first of a series of infographics and social media posts I intend to share on LinkedIn with the various facilitator communities of which I am a member. It distills many of the findings from this research and orients it toward a practitioner audience.

Figure 12

Infographic Summarizing Key Findings from Research
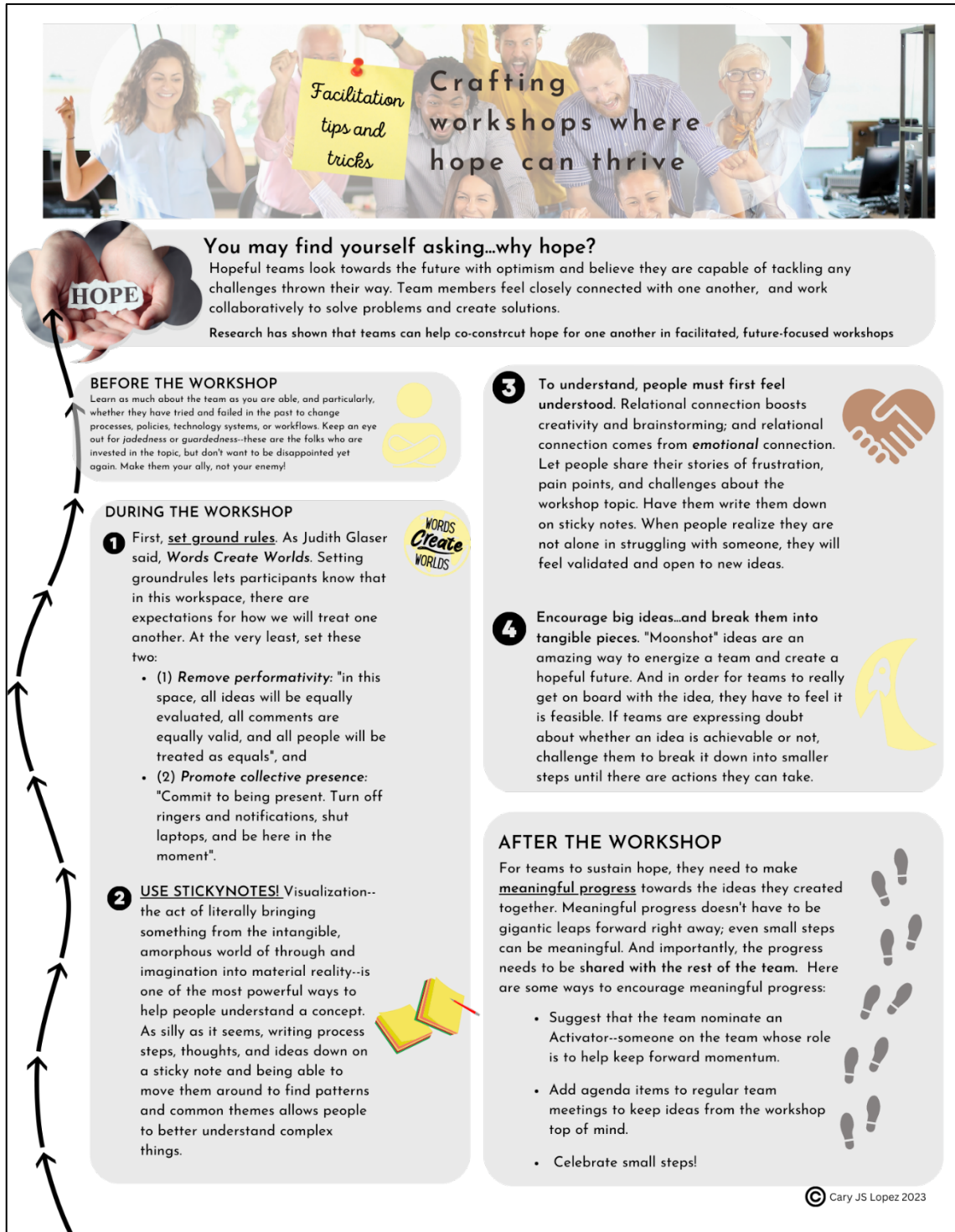
Note. This is the first of a series of infographics I intend to create and share with the facilitator community on LinkedIn.

Limitations

Like all empirical studies, this study has limitations. These include (a) the researcher's positionality and embeddedness in the research context, (b) sampling of team members from within a single organization, (c) limited access to negative cases, (d) non-specificity of workshop structure type, and (e) lack of biodemographic data of participants.

First, qualitative researchers are the human instrument through which data is collected and analyzed. As such, the data we collect and the lens through which we interpret that data is biased and colored by our experiences, perceptions, and reflections. In selecting facilitated workshops and the organization where I worked as the research site, not only was I an embedded *practitioner* but also an embedded *organizational member*: I studied not only the work I did but also the place in which I did that work. To practice self-reflexivity and transparency, I discussed earlier my unique position and suitability for engaging in this research study and acknowledged my biases in doing so. I have taken steps throughout the study to challenge these biases (e.g., self-reflexivity through memo-writing, member reflection practices, and peer reviews and sensemaking with others). There were times throughout the interview process that I recognized I was using practitioner language in speaking with my fellow facilitators, such as acronyms or obscure references. There are likely multiple instances in which I took this knowledge for granted as an insider; had I been an "outsider," I may have asked more probing questions or prompted for clarification, which might have afforded additional or new understanding. My status as an "insider" allowed for unique insight but also may have obscured my inquiry. This insider status would potentially make this study difficult to

replicate, as well, as it is built upon my foundational knowledge of facilitation practices and workshop design.

Second, this study investigated teams from within a single, large organization in order to take into account the context (e.g., culture, structures, policies, history, etc.) of the organization in which a team is situated. While this allowed for a deep understanding of what the organizational context may bring to the team's experience of hope, it does not provide insight into what might be universal experiences for a team regardless of the organizational context in which they are situated. I attempted to balance this "case study" approach by expanding my pool of facilitator interviews beyond the organization. The facilitators who were also consultants worked with a variety of teams in organizations from a variety of industries; their breadth of experience allowed me to explore their perceptions of how teams experience hope through a much broader lens. However, the facilitator experience is obviously different from the embedded team member's experience. Future research could extend the findings from this study into teams in other industries and organizations.

A third limitation of this study was lack of access to participants who endured negative workshop experiences. While I identified a total of six individuals who reportedly had a negative workshop experience, only one of those individuals was willing to speak with me. I was able to collect some data from the facilitator who held the workshop for two of the individuals (as this facilitator was a friend of these individuals), and she provided me with some of their commentary and feedback, which I incorporated in the analysis. Still, this is different from directly interviewing these individuals myself. As the findings of this study indicate, there is the potential for the hope emergence

process, and workshops themselves, to have very negative consequences for the individual, the team, and the organization; future research could more deeply investigate these negative consequences.

A fourth limitation of this study is that I did not specify a workshop type for the purposes of the study. While this was done intentionally in the research design (I was curious as to the different ways that hope emerged in teams regardless of the workshop structure), there might be certain types of workshop structures or activities that lend themselves more toward hope emergence than others. For example, one of the findings of this study is the role of the sticky note and its importance in granting anonymity and materializing abstract concepts. Not all workshop structures use sticky notes. Future research could investigate each of the hope emergence process steps across multiple workshop structures and workshop tools to more deeply understand if the hope emergence process steps generalize across structures or require certain tools to be more fruitful.

Finally, I did not collect any biographical or demographic data of the participants beyond their length of tenure with their team. This study, therefore, cannot make any conclusions as to whether race, age, gender, sexual orientation, education level, or any other type of bio/demo identities may make a difference as to hope in teams. Previous studies of hope at the individual level have found differences in some of these markers (e.g., Bragg et al., 2022; Dargan et al., 2021). Future research could collect this information, along with other information about the team demographics (team purpose, team cohesion, team work or task type, for example) to better understand antecedents or conditions that may make hope more or less likely to emerge and persist in certain teams.

Future Considerations

While there may be many potential areas for future research from the findings of this study, I explore the potential for six suggested areas. First, this study found that jadedness is conceptually distinct from cynicism and skepticism and that jadedness is, in fact, hope hiding in its latent state. Teams who are jaded are ripe for transformation and would benefit from engaging in a hope emergence process; teams that are cynical, or are predominantly populated with cynical team members, may not be able to emerge from a hoping process having built sufficient hope to move forward toward a more positive emotional state. This study utilizes a gestalt framework of emotion to better understand the complexities of team hope and proposes teams may experience hope in a series of layers, such that hope is more than the sum of its parts. This implies it may not be sufficient to "add up" each individual team members' hope state or trait to come up with a team-level measurement of hope, and indeed, team hope may be irreducible to an individual level (Klein & Kozlowksi, 2000). However, understanding where each individual member is along a continuum from despair to hope may better equip team leaders and facilitators in supporting hope emergence in a team. Although measurement scales exist for hope (Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder et al., 1996), cynicism (Brandes et al., 2000; Stanley et al., 2005), and skepticism (Stanley et al., 2005), jadedness is a new concept and does not yet have a scale or measurement assessment defined. One area for future study would be to not only help define this measurement scale for jadedness but possibly also combine these other measurements into a continuum to determine if members of a team are tending toward the "darker" side of this emotional spectrum.

Second, in this study, when employees reached a state of hopelessness or despair, they chose to exit the organization. Future studies may investigate how employees may be brought out of the "darker" emotional states and back into a place where hope can emerge. Kanter and Mirvis (1989) asserted that skeptics can have their minds changed through action or deeds, as opposed to mere words; it might be that cynicism, hopelessness, and despair also hold within them kernels of redemption. Understanding not only where an individual or team lies along a spectrum of hope-to-despair but also what can be done to offer these employees hope would seem to be an important extension of this study.

Third, this study suggests that teams who do not achieve meaningful progress can digress back to states of sedimented jadedness or even "spin out" of the hoping cycle into states of cynicism and despair. Prior research has demonstrated that an inability to set and/or attain goals can lead to poor team performance, lower engagement and organizational commitment, and other negative outcomes (Latham & Locke, 2002). However, this study suggests a deep emotional connection not to the goal itself but to what the goal implies or alludes to: a hopeful vision of a better future. Researchers could investigate what happens to teams who have been repeatedly disappointed by lack of progress toward a meaningful future state and whether these teams can be "redeemed" from this space of disappointment. As this study found indicators that these cycles of hoping and repeated disappointment may lead to apathy, understanding these dynamics may shed light on phenomena like quiet quitting.

Fourth, this study did not include investigations of team outcomes, such as performance, productivity, or engagement. Other positive phenomena, such as resilience

and optimism, have been found to have positive impacts on organizational commitment, work happiness, and satisfaction (Ong et al., 2018; Youssef & Luthans, 2016). Related concepts of self-efficacy and goal attainment (Bandura, 1997; Feldman et al., 2009) have shown in past research to be reinforcing of and amplified by hope, and hopeful individuals in the workplace have positive impact on measures like performance (Rand, 2018). It would make sense that collective perceptions of efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and team performance would likewise be amplified by team hope. Future research could seek to understand outcome measures of teams who make meaningful progress toward their envisioned future and explore to what extent (if any) these outcomes differ from teams who achieve goals that were not created through a hope emergence process but were more job-role or task-focused. Similarly, recent studies have shown that teams who seek feedback from one another and connect with each other relationally may generate more creative ideas (Wang et al., 2021). Understanding how team hope and team creativity interact may prove interesting, especially considering the increasingly complex and "weighty" challenges facing society.

Fifth, another area of potential future study would be understanding how team hope and team resilience may be interconnected. Resilience and hope have long been intertwined in the literature and have been found to be mutually reinforcing (Beck & Socha, 2015; Macy & Johnstone, 2022; Ong et al., 2018). Teams who successfully cycle through iterations of hope emergence and meaningful progress may perform differently from teams who have struggled to achieve meaningful progress. Increasing our understanding of how mechanisms of resilience interplay with jadedness and hope may provide insight into how teams navigate their environment.

159

Finally, this study revealed interesting dynamics related to hope, empowerment, and control in teams. When leaders disempower teams from enacting ideas generated during a workshop, this can result in psychological contract breach, organizational dis-identification, and organizational exit. This study didn't specifically include investigations of power, control, and resistance; however, power, control, and resistance are inextricably intertwined in organizations (Mumby, 2001). What happens to the team members who remain on a team after such a hope-breaking incident occurs? How do those team members navigate the hope-emergence/hope-breaking cycle, and in what ways might they resist, conform, or change during the process? In addition, there are implications for marginalized groups and who may be allowed to hope or not through existing systems and structures or concepts like concertive control (Barker, 1993). Future research could investigate these and other questions regarding hope-breaking, identity, and power using the lenses of resistance and conformity, or critical/cultural studies.

Conclusion

This chapter summarized key theoretical contributions, practical implications and recommendations, and limitations/future directions of researching hope in teams. Theoretical contributions include (a) empirically elucidating hope in teams using a gestalt framework of emotion and may be experienced by team members like a wave as they navigate the ebb and flow between emotional highs and lows; (b) *jadedness* as an emotional, cognitive, and behavioral phenomenon that indicates hope is latent in a team and waiting to emerge; (c) highlighting how jadedness is related to but conceptually different from organizational cynicism and skepticism; (d) the five-step emergent process of co-constructing hope in teams; (e) the relational component of hope, as hope co-

construction is grounded in shared struggles; (f) the importance of meaningful progress toward ideas generated in a workshop in order for teams to sustain hope; and (g) that the loss of hope may be tied to psychological contract breach and team member de-identification with the organization. Taken collectively, these findings illuminate the complexity of how teams experience hope and provide practical insight into how team leaders, facilitators, and team members may work together to co-construct hope through communicative practices.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Sarah Tracy
CLAS-SS: Human Communication, Hugh Downs School of
480/965-5095
Sarah.Tracy@asu.edu

Dear Sarah Tracy:

On 3/21/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Enacting collective hope: team-based enactment of empowered acts of hope through collective sensemaking
Investigator:	Sarah Tracy
IRB ID:	STUDY00015403
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• CLopez Dissertation Protocol - IRB v2.docx (1).pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • Consent Form - Facilitation Observation v2.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Consent Form - Facilitatorsv3.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Consent Form - Team Membersv3.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • GDPR Privacy Notice and Consentv2.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Interview Protocol - Facilitatorsv2.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Interview_Focus Group Protocol - Work Team Members v2.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Recruitment Script - Facilitatorsv2.pdf, Category:

	Recruitment Materials; • Recruitment Script - Team Membersv2.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Scale Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation, (4) Data, documents, or specimens on 3/8/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

REMINDER - Effective January 12, 2022, in-person interactions with human subjects require adherence to all current policies for ASU faculty, staff, students and visitors. Up-to-date information regarding ASU's COVID-19 Management Strategy can be found here. IRB approval is related to the research activity involving human subjects, all other protocols related to COVID-19 management including face coverings, health checks, facility access, etc. are governed by current ASU policy.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Cary Lopez
        Cary Lopez

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Slack message to OPO-Spark-Facilitator Community (200+ trained spark facilitators within the organization):

Are you interested in helping advance the research and understanding of facilitation and teams?

Hello Spark Facilitator community! I am currently completing my dissertation research - and you guessed it, I'm studying facilitators and teams who have participated in a facilitated/structured workshop experience.

I'm looking for two types of folks to interview for my research: (1) facilitators; and (2) members of teams who have recently participated in a workshop that was facilitated. I am more than willing to share an extended abstract of my dissertation proposal if you're interested in reading the literature and theory informing my study.

The interview is between 45-60 minutes and is conducted via Zoom. Names and personal information will be protected (I'll use pseudonyms and other methods to protect your anonymity).

I'm also hoping to observe someone facilitate a workshop (any kind of workshop, doesn't have to be Spark!). I would literally just be a "fly on the wall", recording my observations of how the team interacts during the session.

If you're willing to participate in my research study as an interviewee, or have an upcoming workshop you think I could observe, please contact me at cary.lopez@asu.edu. And thank you in advance to anyone willing to help me out!

Example LinkedIn script to facilitators:

Hi [insert facilitator name] ~

I'm a fellow facilitator, and LOVED your episode on the Workshops Work podcast!

I would love to connect with you. I'm currently doing my dissertation research, and am interested in how work teams may co-create positive emotional experiences for each other (like hope) as they interact in structured/facilitated workshops. I think something amazing happens for the people in the workshop, above and beyond the stated goals of the workshop, and am seeking to better understand what this "something amazing" is.

Would you be willing to participate in my research study, and "geek out" a bit with me? If so, I can send you the GDPR and consent form, as well as the interview guide (so you can see at least the types of questions I would be asking you in our discussion).

Looking forward to connecting!
~ Cary

Example email sent to team leaders to observe an upcoming workshop:

Hi [Team Leader] ~

I'm currently in the dissertation phase of my PhD program, and my project
is centered around facilitation and how teams experience structured workshops.

I am seeking opportunities to observe teams as they go through a
structured workshop, and then interview team members (as they are willing
to be interviewed) for my dissertation.

Would your upcoming Hack-a-thon be an opportunity you would feel
comfortable with allowing me to observe and follow-up with participants to
see if they'd be willing to be interviewed? Participants would need to
sign a research consent form (I've attached it so you can see it), and
whether in-person or on Zoom, I promise I would be very unobtrusive.

Thank you in advance for considering!
~ Cary

Example email sent to team leaders to forward to their team members to invite them to participate:

Hi [Team Leader] -

I'm currently in the dissertation phase of my PhD program, and my project
is centered around facilitation and how teams experience structured workshops.

I am seeking opportunities to interview team members who have recently participated in
a structured workshop, and heard from [INSERT FACILITATOR'S NAME] that your
team participated in a workshop they facilitated on [INSERT DATE].

I have two requests for you: the first is whether you'd be interested in allowing me to
interview you for my research project? I am particularly interested in interviewing folks
who feel they had an especially positive OR negative experience during the workshop. If
you feel strongly either way (positive or negative experience), I would love your insights.
The interview would be conducted via Zoom for 45-60 minutes. Attached is the informed
consent form, if you'd like to see more about what the interview entails.

The second request is whether you'd be willing to forward the request below (**in blue**) to
your team members, to see if any of them are willing to allow me to interview them?

Email to forward to team members:
Hello team ~

I've been contacted by Cary Lopez, who is completing her dissertation research. Her project
is centered around facilitation and how teams experience structured workshops, and she knows we recently held the workshop with [INSERT FACILITATOR'S NAME] on [INSERT DATE].

She's looking for people to interview for a 45-60 minutes on Zoom, and is particularly interested if you feel you had an especially positive or negative experience. None of what you talk about will be shared with me by her. If you'd like to participate, reach out directly to Cary at cary.lopez@asu.edu. This is not mandatory in any way, and I don't need to know if you did or did not participate.

Thank you so much for considering these requests.
~ Cary

APPENDIX C

FACILITATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:
I am interested in studying how groups may co-create hope for and with each other when they walk through structured experiences like facilitated workshops. Hope is more than merely wishing for a better outcome; hope is actively creating a vision for something better, exploring the various ways in which to accomplish that vision, and being able to navigate when those pathways may be blocked. I am interviewing you as a professional facilitator to hear your thoughts on what you've witnessed when teams work together.

1.   Please describe your work as a facilitator.
Probe: If you don't consider yourself a facilitator, how would you describe your work?
Probe: How do you describe what you do to people who don't understand facilitation?
Probe: Can you think of when you first started identifying as a "facilitator"?

2.   Tell me more about where you work - is it an organization, for yourself, etc?

3.   How did you become interested in facilitation?
Probe: What do you enjoy about facilitation?

4.   How long have you been doing facilitation?

Questions 1-4 are rapport-building and "demographic questions" (Tracy, 2019) that warm participants up to the interview by asking them to reflect on non-threatening subjects while simultaneously eliciting recruitment data.

5.   Can you tell me one of your favorite facilitation stories - a story of a time you felt your work was particularly powerful, or impactful?
Probe: What was it about this story that really sticks out in your mind?
Probe: Tell me more - what was your situatedness compared with the workshop participants, what kind of organization was it in, what was the outcome the participants were looking for, etc?
Probe: What was it the group was hoping to accomplish in working with you? What was the outcome or action they were looking for?

Question 5 is an "example question" that gets at a specific instance of past action and concrete details around that experience (Tracy, 2019), and also allows the participant to first think of a positive experience.

6.   Thinking back on that story, what do you think that experience created for the participants - what did *they* experience? Another way of thinking about this might be to ask yourself what your facilitation opened up or allowed for those participants to experience?

7.   Still keeping that story in mind, I'd like to dive a little deeper into the participant experience. Did you feel the group accomplished what they had set out to do - and why or why not?
Probe: If not, did they accomplish something different?
Probe: If nothing was accomplished, how do you feel that impacted the group dynamic?
Probe: If so, can you describe how they expressed their feelings of accomplishment - was it overt/spoken, etc?

Questions 6 and 7 orient the interviewee to the participant perspective, i.e., get them thinking about the experiences they are creating for others.

8.   Still keeping that story in mind, can you describe for me the dynamic of the group you were interacting with before and after the exercises? In other words, what kind of transformation or change did you see occur for the group?
Probe: What were some of the ways you witnessed this transformation - was it facial expressions, interactions, etc?

Question 8 is intended to orient the interviewee to a processual view of the interactions of the group members.

9.   Now I'd like to hear a story of a time you felt a particular facilitation experience did not go well. Tell me that story - what happened?
Prompt: What was the experience like for you as the facilitator?
Prompt: What do you feel the experience was like for the participants?
Prompt: Can you describe it as a process, from beginning to end - what might have first prompted the poor experience, and what was done/witnessed during it, and then what attempts were made to course correct or improve the experience?
Prompt: What was the ultimate outcome for the participants?

10.   This is a word association question. In thinking about these two different groups and two different experiences, what are 5-7 words you would use to describe the group dynamic from the more positive experience, and what are 5-7 words you would use to describe the group dynamic in the less positive experience?

Question 10 is a word association question, which Town (2020) found to not only support interviewees in a more abstract way of thinking, but also elicited a way for interviewees to sensemake and organize their own thinking. The purpose in asking this question is to see what terms organically arise from the interviewees, without prompting or planting too many seeds oriented towards "hope".

11.   (If they used the term "hopeful" or "hope"): I noted you used the word "hope". What does the term hope mean to you?
Prompt: Do you feel "hope" is different for individuals than it is in a group?

Question 11 aims at having the interviewees generate for themselves a definition of hope and hope in groups. It may also prove interesting if interviewees have very different views of hope and/or co-creation of hope.

12.   Staying with this experience, with 1 being not at all and 10 being completely, how much of a role do you feel the participants played in crafting the ultimate outcome of the experience?

13.   Think through both of these stories you shared for a moment, and compare and contrast them a bit. How would you describe what was different in the way the groups worked together in these two experiences, as well as maybe what was the same?
Prompt: What do you feel your role might have been in the difference?

This is a "compare-contrast" question (Tracy, 2019) that asks participants to compare their perceptions of the differences in the group process and dynamic between a positive and negative case.

14.   If you could wave a magic wand and have every time you work with a group be perfect, what would this look like for you?

This is a "posing the ideal" question (Tracy, 2019) should generate a response that positions participants' reality against their desired reality. However, this type of "imagine the perfect state" question is also one facilitators use in workshops, to help prompt people to think beyond their current (perceived and/or real) constraints. This may evoke sensemaking for the participants, as they both recognize the prompt for themselves, but also experience it as the recipient rather than the prompter.

15.   If you were mentoring someone just starting out in facilitation and wanted to help them create the best possible experiences for the groups they work with, walk me through how you might instruct them.

This is a hypothetical question (Tracy, 2019), asking the interviewee to think about best practices around group dynamics and facilitation. It is also "identity confirming", (Tracy, 2019) in that it places the facilitator in the role of mentor/leader/expert.

16.   Let's say for a moment I was going to interview a work team that you had facilitated a session for. What questions would you want me to ask them about their experience with you?

This may be a "potentially threatening" question (Tracy, 2019), as it asks the participant to be vulnerable and think through what they would want to know about themselves. My intention in asking the question is to prompt reflection on things the person may or may not want to improve, but also confirm about their role as a facilitator.

17.   Given your experience with facilitation and working with teams, is there anything else that you feel we should talk about, or anything else you feel I should be considering?
Probe: Anything else you think I should be asking work teams in phase 2 of my interviewing process?

Question 17 is an "identity confirming" (Tracy, 2019) question that aims to end the interview by allowing the participants to provide any further information they deem relevant, and recognizes the interviewee as "an expert" and leaves the interview confirming their identity in that role.

APPENDIX D

TEAM MEMBER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:
I am interested in studying how groups may co-create hope for and with each other when they walk through structured experiences like facilitated workshops. You indicated you felt [PARTICULARLY POSITIVE or PARTICULARLY NEGATIVE] about a recent workshop experience. Hope is more than merely wishing for a better outcome; hope is actively creating a vision for something better, exploring the various ways in which to accomplish that vision, and being able to navigate when those pathways may be blocked. I am interviewing you as someone who has participated in a facilitated workshop with your work team, to better understand your experience.

1.   **Please each describe your role and what you do for work.**
Probe: How long have you been in this role?
Probe: How long have you been with this particular organization?

2.   **Tell me more about your work team - the number of people on the team, how long you've all been working together, that kind of thing.**
Probe: Which of your team members are the newest members of the team? Those with the longest duration on the team? Where do you fit on that spectrum?

Questions 1 and 2 are rapport-building and "demographic questions" (Tracy, 2019) that warm participants up to the interview by asking them to reflect on non-threatening subjects while simultaneously eliciting recruitment data.

3.   **If you could think of one word to describe how your team works together, what would that word be?**
Probe: What was interesting in hearing the similarities and differences?

Question 3 is a word association question. Its purpose is to see how the participants think of their team - whether the word is positively or negatively valenced, or more focused on productivity as opposed to emotional components, what commonalities and differences exist, etc.

4.   **Can you think of a story that illustrates that word - a time your team worked together in such a way that demonstrates how you came to use that word?**
Probe: What was it about this story that really sticks out in your mind?

Question 4 is an "example question" that gets at a specific instance of past action and concrete details around that experience (Tracy, 2019), and is intended to help shed more light on their response to question 3.

You and your team have experienced structured workshops together. What I mean by that is there was a person playing a facilitator role, and you and your team members went through a series of exercises intended to achieve a specific outcome or purpose.

My next series of questions will be asking you to recall your experiences in one of those workshops, and particularly, [one where you felt you felt you had a particularly positive or negative experience, depending on how the person originally identified as having a positive or negative experience during recruitment].

5. **Can you recall the purpose, or origin, for the workshop - the specific problem you were all there to find solutions for, or the process or program you were hoping to fix, etc.?**
Probe: It's ok if you can't recall the exact phrasing. Just in general, what were you all there to do?
Probe: Can you recall if it was something your team had tried to solve in other ways?
Probe: Was this the first time your team had participated together in a structured workshop like this?
Probe: Tell me more about the setting - if I were watching a movie of this workshop, what would I see? If it was in-person, describe the room. Who was sitting where? Was it bright, dark? Did it have whiteboards? Were there sticky notes and markers? If it was digital, did most people have their cameras on or off?

6. **Let's draw together a timeline of what happened. What happened first, what happened next, then what happened, etc? Generally how long was it - how many hours and minutes?**

7. **What was the outcome of the workshop?**
Probe: Did you accomplish what you set out to do?
Probe: If this wasn't the first time the team had tried to work on this issue/challenge/problem/thing, what made this time different?

Now, I'd like to dive in a little more deeply to understand you and your team as you were experiencing this workshop.

8. **Look at the timeline we drew about what happened in that workshop. Think back to the very beginning of the workshop - can you recall how you felt? Maybe even close your eyes and put yourself back in that place - the chair you were sitting in, whatever you had just completed in order to be able to go to the workshop, what meal you'd recently eaten or were eating. Just try and return to that place and time for a moment. As you were getting ready to be with your team for that workshop, what were you feeling and thinking? Feel free to try and capture it in a single word or phrase.**

9.   Now let's look near the end of the timeline. Situate yourself in that time and space. What were you feeling when you walked away from the workshop? How do you think the team as a whole was feeling? Again, try to capture it in a word or phrase.

10.   Do you recall there being any frustrations, conflicts, or controversies you had to work through in the workshop? If so, can you share more about that experience - what happened, who was involved, how it was resolved? And please mark in the timeline when this event took place.

11.   Do you feel like there was a turning point in the workshop - a place where things kind of came together, or the frustration or controversy was resolved? Let's mark that in the timeline. Can you describe what happened in that turning point moment - who was involved, what happened?

12.   This is optional, but studies have shown that sometimes we can put into a picture things that are difficult to put into words, like emotions or perceptions. If you are comfortable doing so, this next prompt is a drawing prompt - and know that your artistic abilities are not being judged in any way! This is just a different way to explain the experience. This is an individual exercise - I'm asking you to each draw a picture in response to this prompt:

Reflect for a moment on the workshop timeline we just created together. <u>What did it _feel like_ to work as a team in that workshop?</u> Draw what it felt like. Alternatively, you can search for images online and put together an image collage.

13.   Please share your drawing and explain it.
Probe: Did drawing the feelings of the experience help you understand something better, or differently?

14.   Reflecting on your drawing and of our conversation so far, in what ways do you feel your team was changed by the experience of that workshop?

15.   (If they used the term "hopeful" or "hope"): I noted you used the word "hope". What does the term hope mean to you?
Prompt: In what ways do you feel your team created hope?

16.   Is there anything else that you feel we should talk about, or anything else you feel I should have asked?

APPENDIX E

FACILITATOR CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Enacting collective hope: team-based enactment of empowered acts of hope through collective sensemaking

I, **Cary López**, am a doctoral student completing my dissertation research under the direction of Dr. Sarah J. Tracy (Primary Investigator, sarah.tracy@asu.edu) in the Hugh Downs Schools of Human Communication at Arizona State University. I am conducting my dissertation research on exploring how teams may co-create hope with and for one another through working together in structured processes like facilitated workshops. I hope to interview between 10-15 professional facilitators.

Study Procedures:

To participate in this study, you must be 18 or older. If you take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview via a recorded Zoom session with the researcher.

- The interview is expected to last from 60 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the discussion and your willingness to share. Please see the interview protocol for the types of questions the researcher intends to ask during the interview.
- The interview can take place via Zoom or in-person. If conducted in-person, the researcher will adhere to all COVID-19 rules and regulations per ASU policy.
- Interviews conducted via Zoom will be recorded with your consent using Zoom; those conducted in-person will be recorded with your consent utilizing either an iPhone recording app or a recording device.
- At the end of the interview, the researcher will ask you to complete a short survey online using Qualtrics, and should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete.
- You have the right not to answer any question, not to engage in any activity, and to stop participation and withdraw from the study at any time.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research study, and you should only take part in it if and only if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to participate. There is no compensation or credit, financial or otherwise, to participants. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

Benefits, Compensation, and Risk:

The risks of this project are minimal. You may choose not to answer any questions that made you uncomfortable, and you might also choose to withdraw from this study at any time.

While there may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study, reflecting on your experiences as facilitator may help generate sensemaking and positive feelings about your chosen line of work.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

To protect your personal identification, consent will be obtained digitally before participating in this study. The researcher will not use your name within the workshop nor in subsequent publications. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but personal identification will not be used. As such, participants will be assigned pseudonyms. The research team is going to use a master list (list of names, contact information, pseudonym) to link participant data. The purpose of this list is for the research team to be able to contact participants for the follow-up survey. Only the researcher team will have access to the digitally password-protected list of pseudonyms and contact information. Deidentified data collected as a part of the current study may be shared with other investigators for future research purposes. The master list will be permanently deleted after the study is completed, or at the end of 8 years, whichever is sooner.

The interview will be recorded via Zoom. To preserve privacy and confidentiality, all digital data will be stored in a password-protected digital file. The data will be destroyed after the study is completed, or at the end of 8 years, whichever is earlier. <u>I am seeking permission to record the interview.</u>If you change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: **Cary Lopez** (cary.lopez@asu.edu) and/or Dr. Sarah J. Tracy (Primary Investigator, sarah.tracy@asu.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let us know if you wish to be part of the study.

Consent to Research Study

☐ I give permission to audio record my interview

☐ I give permission to both audio and video record my interview

☐ I do not give permission to record my interview

I understand that by signing this part <u>I am agreeing to both the recording and the researcher transcribing the recording</u>.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this part <u>I am agreeing to take part in research</u>. I have received a copy of this form to take with me. I also understand that due to the nature of this study, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

_____

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

_____   _____

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study   Date

_____

Participant email, in case researcher needs to follow-up

APPENDIX F

GDPR PRIVACY NOTICE AND CONSENT FORM FOR FACILITATORS

<p style="text-align: center;">**GDPR Privacy Notice and Consent**</p>

Study institution/Data controller: The regents of the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) on behalf of the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at Arizona State University ("ASU"); 950 S Forest Mall, Tempe, AZ 85281 ("HDSHC")

Contact Person: Sarah Jane Tracy, Principal Investigator at HDSHC, email address sarah.tracy@asu.edu; Cary Lopez, Researcher and Doctoral Candidate, email address cary.lopez@asu.edu

Your study data, as defined below, is regulated in the European Economic Area under the EU General Data Protection Regulation (the "GDPR"). ASU acts as the Data Controller with respect to Your Study Data.

Research Study Data
When you participate in ASU's Enacting Collective Hope study (the "Study"), ASU will generate and record data about your participation in the study. In addition, we will collect sensitive personal data, such as philosophical beliefs as they relate to the responses collected from administration of two surveys that ask about hope and empowerment, as well as during interviews. The Study will also collect other personal data, such as your first name, last name, and email address or other contact information, as part of the Study.

Purpose of the Research Study
Your Study Data may be processed or used for the following purposes:
- To invite you to participate in the study;
- To carry out the Study and other purposes for which you indicated your consent in this form;
- To confirm the accuracy of the Study;
- To monitor whether the Study complies with applicable laws as well as best practices developed by the research community;
- To make required reports to the United States (U.S.), domestic, and other foreign regulatory agencies and government officials who have a duty to monitor and oversee research studies like this Study;
- To comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including any requirements to share Your Data with U.S., domestic, or other foreign regulatory agencies and government officials who havea duty to monitor and oversee research studies like this Study; and
- To conduct research studies in the future that are related or unrelated to the subject matter of this Study.

Recipients of Your Study Data
The following individuals and organizations may process Your Study Data in connection with the Study:
- ASU, as the study sponsor;
- The Principal Investigator and Researcher who conduct the Study at the Study Institution, as well as the organizations that support the study team
- The ethics committee or institutional review board that approved the Study; and

- U.S., domestic, and other foreign regulatory agencies and government officials who have a duty to monitor or oversee studies like this one, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Office for Human Research Protections.

Depending on the future research uses of Your Study Data you consent to this form, Your STudy Data may also be disclosed to researchers not affiliated with the study sponsor or the study team.

Study Data to be transferred to other countries outside the EEA
ASU may use and disclose Your Study Data for processing for the purposes stated in this form to entities and individuals located in the United States or in other countries where the laws do not protect your privacy to the same extent as the laws the country in which you are located. HOwever, ASU and the study team will take reasonable steps to protect your privacy in accordance with the applicable data protection laws.

By consenting to ASU's use of Your Study Data in connection with this study and/or future research, you agree that Your Personal Data will be transferred to ASU's location in the United States and to other countries outside of the EEA as necessary to carry out the study and/or future research.

The recipients of Your Study Data identified above: (i) take part in the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework; (ii) have or will enter into a data transfer or other agreement with us that ensures, or will ensure, an adequate protection of Your Study Data; or (iii) must have access to Your Study Data in order for us to conduct the study, such as a regulatory agency as required by laws applicable to the conduct of the study. (According to European Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1250, the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield provides an adequate level of protection for Your Study Data.) If you reside in the European Economic Area during your participation in the study, in the event we disclose Your Study Data to other recipients, we will only do so with your consent.

GDPR Rights Respecting Your Study Data
If you reside in the European Economic Area during your participation in the study, the GDPR gives you certain rights with respect to Your Study Data. You have the right to request access to, rectification, or erasure of, Your Study Data. You also have the right to object to or restrict our processing of Your Study Data. Finally, you have the right to request that we move, copy, or transfer Your Study Data to another organization. In order to make such requests, please contact the Contact Person(s) identified above.

Secure ASU email will be used to collect email addresses, as necessary. The master list will be digitally secured, with only the research team having access to it. Your Study Data and the Master list will be permanently deleted upon completion of the study, or after 8 years, whichever comes first, or when you withdraw consent you provide below in this Consent Form. However, we will retain Your Study Data when necessary to comply with our legal and regulatory requirements.

You may withdraw any consent you provide on this form at any time. If you withdraw your consent, this will not affect the lawfulness or our collecting, use, and sharing of Your Study Data up to the point in time that you withdraw your consent. Even if you

withdraw your consent, we may still use or maintain Your Study Data that identifies you to comply with our legal and regulatory requirements.

You permit ASU to collect and use Your Study Data for the purpose of carrying out the study described in this form.	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐
Members of ASU's study research team may contact you directly to obtain additional information in connection with the study described in this form.	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐
You permit ASU to use Your Study Data for possible future research by ASU's faculty or other ASU-affiliated investigators to learn about team dynamics in structured workshops and collective acts of hoping that is approved by ASU's Institutional Review Board or other appropriate research ethics committee	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐
You permit ASU to share Your Study Data with any third-part academic or not-for-profit institutions or commercial entity for possible future research related to team dynamics in structured workshops and collective acts of hoping that is approved by ASU's Institutional Review Board or other appropriate research ethics committee	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐

So long as Your Study Data remains identifiable, you are free to withdraw the use of Your Study Data kept for future research. If you decide to withdraw Your Study Data from such use, you should notify the Contact Person immediately. If you withdraw your consent to future research, this will not affect the lawfulness or our use and sharing of Your Study Data up to the point in time that you withdraw your consent. Even if you withdraw your consent to future research, we may still use Your Study Data that does not identify you for future research, except that for where we are required by law to maintain your identifiable personal data.

Name of study participant (print):

_____

Signature:

_____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G

TEAM MEMBER CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Enacting collective hope: team-based enactment of empowered acts of hope through collective sensemaking

I, **Cary López**, am a doctoral student completing my dissertation research under the direction of Dr. Sarah J. Tracy (Primary Investigator, sarah.tracy@asu.edu) in the Hugh Downs Schools of Human Communication at Arizona State University. I am conducting my dissertation research on exploring how teams may co-create hope with and for one another through working together in structured processes like facilitated workshops. I hope to interview between 5-10 working teams, so between 25 to 100 people (depending on team size).

Study Procedures:

To participate in this study, you must be 18 or older. If you take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview via a recorded Zoom session with the researcher.

- The group interview is expected to last from 30 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the discussion and your willingness to share.
- The interview can take place either via Zoom, or in-person. If conducted in-person, the researcher will adhere to all COVID-19 rules and regulations per ASU policy.
- Interviews conducted via Zoom will be recorded with your consent using Zoom; those conducted in-person will be recorded with your consent utilizing either an iPhone recording app or a recording device.
- During the interview, you will be asked to draw a picture in response to a prompt. The drawing prompt will be, "What did it *feel like* to work as a team during [a recent workshop you as a team participated in]?" The researcher will then ask you to reflect on the drawing.
  - Please know the drawing exercise is optional, and not a required part of the interview. However, if you do choose to participate in the drawing exercise, the researcher asks that you contribute the drawing as part of the research data.
- If the interview is conducted as a group interview (e.g. you are with multiple of your team members in the interview), I ask that you respect the privacy of your fellow participants, and to keep the process and any discussion during the workshop confidential following the workshop. I request you not disclose any details or discussion from or about a fellow participant's experience in this workshop with anyone outside of the workshop, unless you have a fellow participant's explicit permission to do so.
- You have the right not to answer any question, not to engage in any activity, and to stop participation and withdraw from the study at any time.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research study, and you should only take part in it if and only if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to participate. There is no compensation or credit, financial or otherwise, to participants. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

Benefits, Compensation, and Risk:

The risks of this project are minimal. If this is conducted as a group interview, while the researcher promises confidentiality, and will ask all participants to do the same, I cannot ensure that all participants will maintain confidentiality. You may choose not to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you might also choose to withdraw from this study at any time.

While there may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study, reflecting on your experiences and interactions with team members may allow you a new appreciation or understanding. If this is done as a group interview, listening to your team members' reflections on their experiences, and interacting with one another in this interview exercise, may lead to appreciation and a sense of belonging with your group.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

To protect your personal identification, consent will be obtained digitally before participating in this study. The researcher will not use your name within the workshop nor in subsequent publications. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but personal identification will not be used. As such, participants will be assigned pseudonyms. The research team is going to use a master list (list of names, contact information, pseudonym) to link participant data. The purpose of this list is for the research team to be able to contact participants for the follow-up survey. Only the researcher team will have access to the digitally password-protected list of pseudonyms and contact information. Deidentified data collected as a part of the current study may be shared with other investigators for future research purposes. The master list will be permanently deleted after the study is completed, or at the end of 8 years, whichever is sooner.

Interviews conducted via zoom will be recorded via Zoom. Those conducted in-person will be recorded utilizing either an iPhone recording app or a recording device. To preserve privacy and confidentiality, all digital data will be stored in a password-protected digital file. The data will be destroyed after the study is completed, or at the end of 8 years, whichever is earlier. <u>I am seeking permission to record the interview.</u>If you change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: **Cary Lopez** (cary.lopez@asu.edu) and/or Dr. Sarah J. Tracy (Primary Investigator, sarah.tracy@asu.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let us know if you wish to be part of the study.

Consent to Research Study

☐ I give permission to audio record my interview

☐ I give permission to both audio and video record my interview

☐ I do not give permission to record my interview

I understand that by signing this part <u>I am agreeing to both the recording and the researcher transcribing the recording</u>.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this part <u>I am agreeing to take part in research</u>. I have received a copy of this form to take with me. I also understand that due to the nature of this study, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

_____

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

_____   _____

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study   Date

_____

Participant email, in case researcher needs to follow-up

APPENDIX H

OBSERVATION CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Enacting collective hope: team-based enactment of empowered acts of hope through collective sensemaking

I, **Cary López**, am a doctoral student completing my dissertation research under the direction of Dr. Sarah J. Tracy (Primary Investigator, sarah.tracy@asu.edu) in the Hugh Downs Schools of Human Communication at Arizona State University. I am conducting my dissertation research on exploring how teams may co-create hope with and for one another through working together in structured processes like facilitated workshops. I hope to observe between 3-5 groups as they participate in a structured, facilitated workshop.

Study Procedures:

To participate in this study, you must be 18 or older. If you take part in this study, the researcher will be observing you and other members of the group as you engage with one another in a structured, facilitated workshop.

- The researcher will be taking notes, either using a laptop or using a notebook and pen.
- The researcher may take photographs using an iPhone during the workshop, to record specific moments of the workshop to help prompt recollection. These may include photographs of you, either alone or in conversation/interaction with others in the group, and/or photographs of items you are creating (sticky notes, writing on a whiteboard, etc.).
- If the workshop is conducted in-person, the researcher will adhere to all COVID-19 rules and regulations per ASU policy.
- The researcher may ask at the end of the observed workshop if you are willing to engage in an interview for the research; a new Consent Form will be provided for the interview process. For the observation, the researcher is not intending to ask interview questions but merely act as a non-participant observer.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research study, and you should only take part in it if and only if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to participate. There is no compensation or credit, financial or otherwise, to participants. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

Benefits, Compensation, and Risk:

The risks of this project are minimal.

There are no direct benefits.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

To protect your personal identification, consent will be obtained before participating in this study. The researcher will not use your name within the workshop nor in subsequent publications. Any photographs taken will be used for purposes of prompting the

researcher's memory of certain moments during the workshop; no photographs taken during the session will be published as any part of this study. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but personal identification will not be used. As such, participants will be assigned pseudonyms. The research team is going to use a master list (list of names, contact information, pseudonym) to link participant data. The purpose of this list is for the research team to be able to contact participants for potential follow-up, requests for an interview, or for clarification. Only the research team will have access to the digitally password-protected list of pseudonyms and contact information. Deidentified data collected as a part of the current study may be shared with other investigators for future research purposes. The master list will be permanently deleted after the study is completed, or at the end of 8 years, whichever is sooner.

To preserve privacy and confidentiality, all digital data (including photographs taken) will be stored in a password-protected digital file. The data will be destroyed after the study is completed, or at the end of 8 years, whichever is earlier. <u>I am seeking permission to take photographs and notes during the workshop I am observing</u>. If you change your mind after the workshop starts, just let me know.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: **Cary Lopez** (cary.lopez@asu.edu) and/or Dr. Sarah J. Tracy (Primary Investigator, sarah.tracy@asu.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let us know if you wish to be part of the study.

Consent to Research Study

☐ I give permission for the researcher to observe this workshop and take notes

☐ I give permission for the researcher to take photographs

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this part I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me. I also understand that due to the nature of this study, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

_____
Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

_____   _____
Signature of Person Taking Part in Study   Date

_____
Participant email, in case researcher needs to follow-up

APPENDIX I

CODEBOOK

RQ1: What does the analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest about how hope is experienced by teams in organizations?

Code	Description	Data Exemplars
Hope	Any data that suggests team members are experiencing hope or hopefulness. This may include direct attributions ("I feel hopeful"), and also references to excitement about moving towards a more positive vision of the future, or optimism or feelings of agency in making a change or fixing a problem or having other positive, future-oriented impact.	• "I felt hopeful" • "I felt excited because I knew where we were going and what I had to do"
Complex_Hope	Any data that suggests that hope isn't straightforward. This may include participants using "but" in a sentence when they're describing feeling hopeful - "I was hopeful, but…also nervous (anxious, worried, etc.)"	• "I was definitely excited [about the future vision]. But there was also worry". • "I was hopeful and nervous, all at the same time"
Jadedness	Any data that suggests team members are experiencing *jadedness*, including body language or verbal expressions that look and sound like protectionary or cautious stances, expressions of a desire to be involved but hesitancy to do so, and comments sharing past disappointments as rationale for not wanting to engage too deeply in order to prevent more pain or disappointment.	• "I wasn't sure we'd get anything done" • "We've tried to fix this problem before" • "We can't do that because of so-and-so or such-and-such" • "I was pretty excited, but also kind of disappointed because others didn't feel the same way" • The team first came in guarded, and not really interacting or reluctant to be there.
Apathy	Any data that suggests lack of motivation, passion/emotion (either positive or negative) and lack of engagement, often enduring over periods of time.	• She just wouldn't engage • We had to keep prompting her, "Doesn't this goal sound good, would you want to help with that?" • It's just a paycheck for her.

Code	Description	Data Exemplars
		• Not everyone feels like their job is a calling.

RQ2: What does an analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest as steps or conditions in the co-constructive processes of hope emergence in teams?

Code	Description	Data Exemplars
Coll_Presence	Experiencing collective presence. Any data that suggests participants are reflecting on experiences of being present with each other, or experienced a "pause" in time, or of feeling listened to and "seen". This may be expressed in contrast to how they usually feel they experience the workplace, such as a reference to franticness, an inability to focus on singular projects or tasks like they are able to in the workshop, or lack of ability to connect with their teammates.	• Pauses time • Workshop creates a "time bubble" where people can focus on something other than day-to-day tasks • "We got to step outside of our normal busy schedules" • Listening / paying attention • Feeling seen, appreciated, validated
Strug_Con	Struggling connects. Any data that suggests participants' sharing of their own painful experiences helps them better understand the experiences of others. This also includes how hearing of others' painful experiences helped a participant better understand this other person. Might include words of confirmation / affirmation.	• "I didn't realize [this process] was harming you, too" • "I hadn't heard his story before" • "Oh, you had that experience, too?" • "I hadn't understood what was happening in this process before, and how it impacted her"
Diff_Ways	Different ways of acting and interacting. Any data that suggests that facilitated workshops are unique	• "It's not like a normal meeting, where I'm expecting someone to just talk at me"

	spaces in which special things happen and normal rules do not apply. This may include expressions of people feeling awkward or uncomfortable, or contrasts to how the team normally interacts, operates, or functions. This includes where participants talk about the workshop as a place to "practice" skills, and may include metaphors of other places we "practice" (like working out, building muscles, "Reps" or repetition).	• "We don't get to play little games like this normally" • "I'd never thought about it that way before" • "It felt so awkward, but then I realized we connected in a different way" • "[the workshop] allowed us to engage in a way I don't think we could have done anywhere else"
Rem_Perf	Removing performativity. Any data that suggests participants felt they were able to "be themselves" or not have to perform, or that normal rules of interaction/ways of behaving are relaxed.	• "All we do is feel like we perform. [The workshop] is a place where [participants] can just be themselves"
Rel_Build	Relationship building. Any data that suggests that the experience of the workshop changed, deepened, or built relationships.	• "there's definitely a tighter bond for people that went through the session" • "we went through this similar experience, so I feel more connected to them"
Psy_Un	Psychological unsafety. Any data that suggests that participants feel too vulnerable, uncertain, or unsafe to share information, comments, or ideas.	• "No one was talking at first" • "I never want to look stupid in front of my peers"
Psy_Safe	Psychological safety. Any data that suggests that participants are sharing vulnerable, honest feedback with each other and are not scared of potential consequences	• Participants feeling safe enough to dissent in front of a supervisor • Participants expressing that a leader in the room was listening/hearing them and validating their concerns

	of doing so. This may sound like correcting each other, talking about past mistakes, asking for input/feedback, or sharing an idea they feel is "wild" or "crazy".	• "Even though I was so new, I felt comfortable correcting the process, because it was a key part of my job and I'd just gone through the training"
Scaff_Vuln	Scaffolding vulnerability. Any data that suggests participants expressing feelings of increasing psychological safety or vulnerability, or a movement *from* feeling less safe/unable to share *to* being able	• "People were nodding their heads, so I felt comfortable sharing my next thought"
Sticky	Sticky noting. Any data suggesting that people saw new patterns or understood something better because it was written and displayed on sticky notes.	• We saw (on sticky notes) where we were miscommunicating. • We could move sticky notes around, and ask questions about things that were unclear. • "I could see a pattern [in the sticky notes]."
Brain_En	Brainstorming as enabling hope-making. Any data suggesting the solutions the team is generating during brainstorming is exciting, hope-giving, uplifting, or affirming.	• "We came up with a great solution to make these peoples' lives better" • "It felt amazing to have our ideas become part of the solution" • "It was such an exciting moment for all of us when we knew exactly what direction to go"
Brain_Con	Brainstorming as constraining hope-making. Any data suggesting the solutions the team is generating are restricting hope-making, including causing negative emotions such as skepticism, jadedness, cynicism, despair, or hopelessness.	• "Even though they were all great ideas, I couldn't see us doing any of them" • Team leader feeling tasks couldn't be entrusted to certain staff members, and couldn't get excited about the ideas because of it

| | Effort | Effortful.

Any data that suggests that the hoping process takes active effort, or is fatiguing. This may include statements that the hoping process is NOT easy or effortless. | • "it was a little fatiguing"
• It [positive change] doesn't just happen on its own |

RQ3: What does the analysis of facilitated future-focused workshops, and participants' reflections on them, suggest as ways hope persists within the team?

Code	Description	Data Exemplars
Beyond_Work	Beyond the workshop. Any data that relates to context outside of the workshop that participants talk about as being relevant to the workshop. This may include things like team dynamics or interpersonal relationships, policies or structures, occurrences before or after the workshop, or the team's purpose and work.	• "We just don't communicate that well, in general" • "We're like a big, dysfunctional family" • "Everyone is really good at what they do" • "We're just so busy" • Team leaders talking about challenging team members / leadership challenges • "I've learned I have to separate feelings from work."
Meaningful_Pro	Meaningful progress. Any data that relates to how participants felt they were able to achieve progress on items that had come from the workshop. This may include expression of positive outcomes and positive emotion associated with the achievement or progress. It may also include expressions of the need for participants to see meaningful progress.	• "We actually have that system in place, and it's working really well" • "We're just really motivated to get going, to see it happen"
Lack_Mean_Pro	Lack of meaningful progress.	• "The idea was a great idea, and it would have made a

223

Code	Description	Data Exemplars
	Any data that suggests that the team has been unable to implement or achieve any of the action items or goals they had set out to accomplish during the workshop. This may include expressions of the emotion this lack of progress causes.	big difference for so many people. But we never finished it, and I just felt so unfulfilled. Like what a waste of time".
Time_barrier	Any data that suggests team members feel time is one of their biggest barriers for making meaningful progress or taking action on things they discussed in the workshop.	• "We don't have time to fix things" • "We came up with all these ideas 6 months ago, and haven't been able to do anything about it. People are just too busy."
Empower	Empowerment. Any data that suggests that the person felt they could move forward with the ideas created during the workshop, and that they had the necessary approvals and/or authority to be able to make meaningful progress. This may also include data from the manager's/leader's perspective, where they have given the authority or power for a team to move something forward without them.	• "Management lets us try things and if it doesn't work, we can throw it away." • "I didn't even have to tell the team what to do, they just went and did it and it was great."
Lack_Empower	Lack of empowerment. Any data that suggests that the actions that would be needed to make meaningful progress are outside of the individual's control, and requires someone with more authority or power to either approve the work, or even to enact or do the work.	• "The ideas were mostly things the supervisors would have to take care of"
Leader_ref	Leader refused.	• "She canceled all the follow-up meetings and we

Code	Description	Data Exemplars
	Any data referencing a leader's refusal to be involved, either in the process itself, or in working with the team towards implementing ideas.	were never able to share what we had come up with"
Loss_hope	Loss of hope. Any data that suggests the participant has lost hope. This may be overtly verbally expressed (such as "i felt hopeless"), or indicated less overtly, such as in expressions of believing things will never change.	• "I just knew it [change] was never going to happen here".