

A **hope centered and trauma informed® courtroom** seeks to infuse values, policy, practice, and structure with the **science of hope**, creating an environment where all parties can thrive.



The courtroom as a place of goal setting:

- **Think:** What are the goals that the person in question is trying to pursue? What are the obstacles to hope this person is facing? Is the problem rooted in pathways or willpower? What is the case goal? How are those goals similar and different?
- **Ask:** What is the most important goal for you right now? What do you want to happen in this courtroom today to help you pursue your goals?

The courtroom as a pathway:

- **Think:** Who or what are the pathways to this goal? Does this person have access to those pathways? Which interventions might be best for creating solutions to problems rooted in pathways? What about problems rooted in willpower?
- **Ask:** How can the courtroom act as a pathway to your goal? Are there any barriers or obstacles that you need help overcoming? What other pathways can you identify that will be necessary for you to use to achieve your goal?

The courtroom as a place of discovering and fostering willpower

- **Remember:** Trauma impacts help-seeking behavior as well as a person's sense of safety. Nurturing hope can improve this problem. How might past trauma and current stress contribute to the situation at hand? Does this person have all their basic needs met (ie. food, safety, home, sleep)?
- **Do:** Notice if someone seems disengaged, burnt out, desperate, hostile, or apathetic. Remember that these are signs of low hope. Take a minute to nurture willpower. Praise past successes. Assist this person in identifying personal strengths that can help them accomplish their goals.

The courtroom and collective hope:

- Is everyone in this courtroom collectively helping this person or this family move towards their desired future?
- Is every team member using the language of hope?

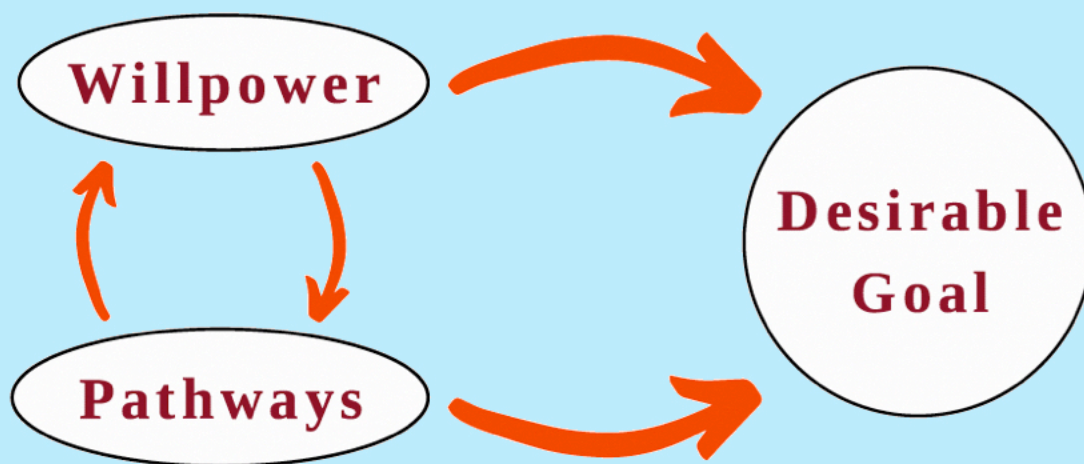
HOPE CENTERED AND TRAUMA INFORMED® DECISION MAKING BENCHCARD

Hope is the belief that the future will be better than today and you have the power to make it so. Hope is based on three main ideas: desirable goals, pathways to goal attainment, and willpower (agency) to pursue those pathways.

Goals are desired outcomes you are trying to accomplish.
Achievement (positive) goals are those we want to attain.
Avoidance (negative) goals are those that we want to prevent.

Pathways are the roadmaps (waypower) individuals have in mind that will allow them to begin the journey toward the future.
A goal without a pathway is only a wish.

Willpower (agency/motivation): is a term used to describe your ability to dedicate mental energy to begin and to sustain the journey toward your goals.
Willpower is the motivational aspect of hope.
We all have limits to the amount of willpower we can exert.



Why Infuse Hope in the Courtroom?

- **Hope** acts as a buffer to adversity and stress.
- Hope is the mindset that drives **resilient** behaviors.
- The courtroom can act as a **pathway** to interventions that can increase hope, as well as a safe place where **goals** can be formed and **willpower** can be fostered.
- **Hope theory** provides the foundation for understanding human behavior and provides the **framework** necessary to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate judicial action and decision making.

Guiding Principles of Hope-Centered Work

- Hope is a cognition, not an emotion
- Imagination is the instrument of Hope
- Hope is not wishful thinking
- Hope begets Hope
- Hope is a social gift
- Hope can be taught

Apathy is Low Hope

After repeated attempts to reach a goal without success, individuals will react with **anger**, **despair**, or **apathy**.

Someone who appears to not care about what occurs in the courtroom or who acts hostile to the judge and others present likely has **low hope**.