

SDSU: HOPE Happens Here!

Students require more than lectures, studying, and coffee to be successful and healthy throughout their time in university. In fact, it is known that the students who have access to safe environments, opportunities for meaningful engagement, emotional growth through introspection, and a variety of relationships with peers are the ones who lead healthier, more fulfilling lives. These are the building blocks of the HOPE framework, which is based on the research of **Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)**. PCEs have shown promise in mitigating the impact of toxic stress on children and families¹. PCEs allow children to form strong relationships and meaningful connections, cultivate positive self-image and self-worth, experience a sense of belonging, and build skills to cope with stress in healthy ways.

Although this framework was developed based on PCEs, HOPE is not limited to children and their families. The building blocks of HOPE are applicable across the lifespan. A healthy HOPE-Informed community must **support the well-being of all individuals, from all backgrounds, cultures, and stages of life**². Research has shown that there is a growing need to expand mental health support as rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns have increased across college campuses. A HOPE-Informed University is a university that will center student wellness and provide support for the future workforce.

By promoting access to positive experiences throughout university life, the HOPE framework offers a potential strategy to counter the negative consequences of ACEs and foster healthier outcomes for children as they mature into adulthood. The HOPE framework has four evidence-based building blocks which include **Relationships**, **Environment**, **Engagement**, and **Emotional Growth**². Below, the Social Policy Institute (SPI) has expanded the HOPE framework's building blocks to be inclusive across the lifespan.



¹ Burstein, D., Yang, C., Johnson, K., Linkenbach, J., & Sege, R. (2021). *Transforming practice with hope (healthy outcomes from positive experiences)*. Maternal and child health journal. <https://positiveexperience.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Transforming-practice-with-HOPE.pdf>

² Sege, R. and Browne, C. Responding to ACEs with HOPE: Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences. *Academic Pediatrics* 2017; 17:S79-S85.

SDSU: HOPE-Informed University

SPI is passionate about bringing the HOPE framework to San Diego State University. We believe that HOPE will be a unifying umbrella for all the initiatives that currently exist on campus. We also believe that HOPE will identify the areas that need to be strengthened. Below you will find the vision, mission, next steps, and timeline for this project.

Vision: To establish SDSU as the first Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) Informed University in the country, where the environment offers equitable access to a range of positive experiences that foster a sense of belonging, mattering, physical and psychological safety, individual growth, and dignity at a comprehensive level. We are committed to collaboratively repairing harm where it occurs and cultivating inner strength and resilience in and with students. We desire to create a campus culture where everyone can show up on campus as their authentic self and have access to opportunities for growth. We imagine HOPE spreading organically within and throughout academic, personal/family, and professional communities on campus for generations to come.

Mission: The mission of integrating the HOPE Framework throughout SDSU's health and wellness infrastructure includes:

- Analyzing the wellness resources offered at SDSU through the research-backed lens of the Four Building Blocks that promote positive experiences and aligning them with the HOPE Framework.
- Centering student voice and engagement in guiding the HOPE framework at SDSU.
- Creating additional HOPE Informed wellness and health offerings at SDSU.
- Developing a "HOPE Checklist Self-Assessment" to connect departments and organizations across campus to ensure they are fostering specific elements of positive experiences.
- Increasing awareness regarding the impact of Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) on lifelong wellbeing.
- Providing equitable access and agency for individuals across the lifespan to seek out PCEs in the SDSU community.
- Using an anti-racist framework, HOPE seeks to maintain diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of engagement.

NEXT STEPS: A detailed project overview can be found in the timeline on page 3. Next steps for this project include:

- HOPE Guide Team to develop a Theory of Change and Asset Map of SDSU;
- HOPE Guide Team to identify an area on campus to pilot the HOPE framework;
- HOPE Student Group to begin working on a Positive Experiences Tool for students;
- HOPE Guide Team to establish a formal relationship with Tufts University HOPE Resource Center;
- HOPE Guide Team to recruit new members for the summer and fall semesters.

If you are interested in joining the HOPE Guide Team or learning more about the HOPE project, email Yvonne Epps at yepps@sdsu.edu or Jakob Schmall at jbschmall@sdsu.edu.

TIMELINE

2023

Inspiration for making SDSU a HOPE-Informed University came from the County of San Diego and the YMCA who are both working to infuse HOPE into their systems and into the community. The Social Policy Institute (SPI) launched engagement efforts to connect with students and staff around the HOPE framework and invited them to attend an October kickoff event where Dr. Sege was the keynote speaker.

2024

SPI recruited for the HOPE Guide Team, which currently consists of community partners (UCSD, YMCA Partners in Prevention, Just in Time for Foster Youth, San Diego Center for Children, Child and Family Well-Being Department, PACES Connection, and the American Academy of Pediatrics CA chapter 3) and SDSU students and faculty. The Guide Team launched in February 2024. Their goals for this year include:

- Developing a Mission, Vision, and Theory of Change.
- Asset Mapping SDSU and begin to identify where the HOPE Building Blocks already align. HOPE is an umbrella. We do not want to duplicate efforts. The asset mapping will help the Guide Team identify what exists, and what is missing/needed.
- Partnering with the HOPE Resource Center (Tufts University) to being the [HOPE-Informed Organizational Certificate](#) process.
- Updating the organizational assessment tool and planning a concrete assessment process.
- Identifying a pilot area on campus to launch the assessment in the fall of 2024.
- Analyzing and sharing data findings and developing an action plan.

As students are crucial to HOPE, they will be active members on the Guide Team and have their own student subcommittee called the Student Alliance. Students receive compensation in the form of gift cards for their participation on the Guide Team. In this group, the students will work on the following:

- Developing a Positive Experiences Tool, which will be for students.
- Launching a student club at SDSU in the Fall of 2024.

2025

At the beginning of this year, the Guide Team will finalize the action plan and begin implementation. Implementation efforts can take years depending on the action plan. During this time, HOPE 101 trainings will be conducted, and HOPE facilitators and champions will be identified. The Guide Team will replicate project efforts within another area of campus. The goal is to continue to expand to all schools, colleges, departments, dorms, student organizations.

2032

The goal is to have San Diego State University certified as a HOPE-Informed University by 2032.