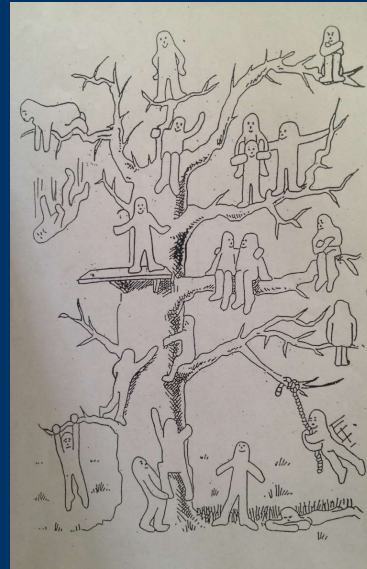


## People in the Tree

Which tree person best indicates how you feel at this moment in life?

Color it in . . . .



1

## Journey of Hope TN



BEST Peer Support Groups

2

## Journey of Hope TN

Carolyn Scott, Executive Director



3

## Putnam County Academic/Social Interventionists

**BEST Group Facilitators**



Mae Fowler, Paula King, Nancy Flatt

4

# The Reality

5

## Tennessee Statistics

According to the 2016 Kids Count Data:

- 37% of the children live in single-parent households
- 6% of children are in the care of grandparents
- 6% of children live with neither parent
- 10% of children have or have had a parent in prison

6

## Grieving in Schools

Classroom teachers report that students who have lost a parent or guardian typically exhibit:

- Difficulty concentrating in class (*observed by 87% of teachers*)
- Withdrawal/disengagement and less class participation (*observed by 82%*)
- Absenteeism (*observed by 72%*)
- 7 in 10 teachers (69%) currently have at least one student in their class(es) who has lost a parent, guardian, sibling, or close friend in the **past year**.

7

According to a Nationwide Survey conducted by New York Life Foundation and the American Federation of Teachers in 2012

## The Response

8

# BEST Groups

**B**e  
**E**ach other's  
**S**upport  
**T**eam

*BEST group: A place where I help others.*

9

## BEST Groups

Putnam County Schools and Heart of the Cumberland partner together to meet the social and emotional needs of students who have experienced loss due to:

- Death
- Divorce
- Incarceration or absence of a parent
- Foster care placement
- Deployment & deportation
- Other family challenges

10

## Our Model in Putnam County

- Facilitated by two adults, including school employees and trained volunteers (1 lead facilitator and 1 co-facilitator)
- Meet for 45-60 minutes, once a week for 11 weeks during non-academic school hours
- Average of 5-6 participants (maximum of 8)
- Respects and follows school policies
- Students referred by teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents/guardians
- Middle school students surveyed

11

## Meets Standards

Tennessee Department of Education standards for:

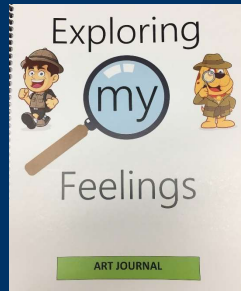
- K-12 Social and Personal Competencies
- K-12 School Counseling Standards

Addresses Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

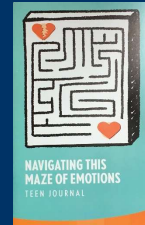
- Supporting Building Strong Brains Tennessee

12

# Journals



**CHILD**  
(2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade)



**TEEN**  
(5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

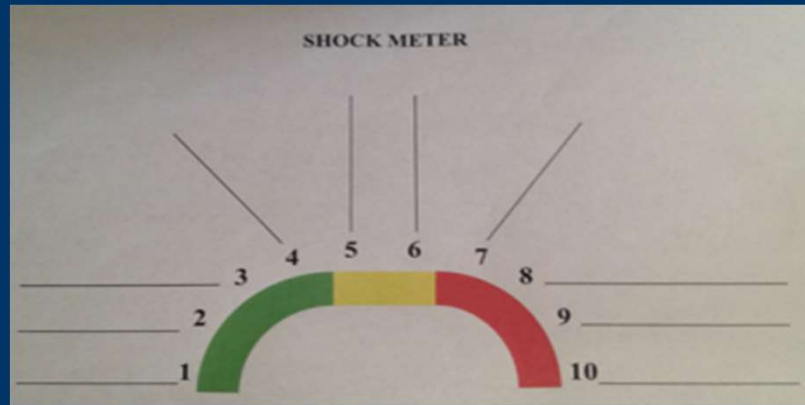
13

# Heart Messages

See page 2 of handout.

14

## Teen Simulation



15

## The Results

16



## For the 2017-18 school year:

- 317 elementary and middle school students participated.
- 75% of participating students had free or reduced lunch status.
- Loss experiences were as follows:
  - Death - 27%
  - Divorce - 51%
  - Addiction/Substance Abuse - 16%
  - Incarceration - 19%
  - Live with grandparent - 22%
  - Foster care placement - 6%
  - Deportation - 1%
  - Adopted - 2%

17

## Hope Scale Pre and Post

		Almost Never	Some of the time	Most of the time	Almost Always	
1	I am able to handle difficult situations.	6	60	57	22	
2	I feel connected to my school.	14	33	48	39	
3	I am happy and hopeful for my future.	3	29	37	63	
4	I am able to express my feelings in healthy ways.	13	39	53	28	
5	I am doing as well as other kids my age.	19	43	35	36	
6	When I have a problem, I can solve it.	8	41	59	24	
7	I like myself.	9	31	32	54	
8	I control my behavior in difficult circumstances.	16	40	61	19	
9	I help and encourage others.	4	25	47	59	
10	I make decisions that are healthy for me.	9	39	62	25	
11	I forgive others.	7	31	49	39	
	Totals	108	411	540	408	Grand Total
	Scoring (x1, x2, x4, x5)	108	822	2160	2040	5130
					Hope Score	3.51
					7315	70.13%
	On a scale of 1 to 5, students increased from a 3.4 to a 3.51.					
	This indicates an increase of 2.13% from the PRE evaluation					

18

## Benefits of BEST Groups

The positive, supportive environment of peer support groups allows students to share their experiences and learn from one another. The following benefits are seen:

- Increased ability to identify and appropriately express feelings
- Increased confidence by utilizing coping skills
- Reduced desire to carry blame, shame or guilt regarding family circumstances
- Reduced anxiety and stress that impacts academic achievement and emotional well-being
- Increased understanding and acceptance of what is beyond students' control

19

## Benefits of BEST Groups

- Builds empathy - the ability to understand and share the feelings of another
- Develops mentorship – an experienced person sharing and helping another

20

## Benefits of BEST Groups

Reduces bullying –

- Make healthy choices
- Show your feelings in healthy ways
- Express emotions in healthy ways
- Listen as others speak
- Not to tease others
- Not to gossip or to tell someone else's story.
- Special art activities boost confidence, help participants build friendships
- Model how to treat others with respect and kindness.

21

## Challenges of BEST Groups

- Adequate meeting time and space
- Available volunteer facilitators during the school day
- Scheduling around academic time
- Identifying students who qualify
- Obtaining parent/guardian consent

22

Here's what the students say....



23

## Contact Information For Purchasing or Presentations

Journey of Hope TN  
Carolyn Scott, Executive Director  
377 Short Street, PO Box 2474  
Cookeville, TN 38502  
bestpeergroups@gmail.com  
1-931-347-4373 (Office)  
1-931-787-9033 (Cell)

24

## For Implementation Questions

Nancy Flatt, Mae Fowler, & Paula King  
Putnam County Schools  
Academic/Social Interventionists  
Phone (931) 520-2226  
Email: flattn@pcsstn.com  
Email: fowlerm@pcsstn.com  
Email: kingp3@pcsstn.com

25

## Journey of Hope TN

BEST Groups



*Thank you for attending!*

26