PURPOSE OF GROUP: to explore the concept of hope

MATERIALS NEEDED: pens/pencils for group members
roll of paper/sheets of paper
art material (optional)

1. Facilitator opens group by asking group members, “What does it mean to be hopeless?”
   *Many group members can probably relate to this feeling. After they have discussed the question from above, you can have them complete the following sentence:
   - I was hopeless when...

   - Now, ask group members, “What does it mean to have hope?”

   - Hope is important because it gives us the strength to keep fighting.
     - When you’re experiencing depression or suicidal thoughts, you need something to motivate you to carry on
     - Hope opens up the possibility that things will get better and that life is worth living
     - With hope, we find meaning and the “fuel” we need to tackle the obstacles we face
     - For those that feel hopelessness, finding hope can bring a sense of relief

1a. You can ask group members to think of a challenge from the past and to share how hope played a role in overcoming that challenge.
2. You can put group members into “mini-groups” (approx. 3-4 people in each) and ask them to go over the following questions:
   - How does hope change your attitude?
   - How does hope change your outlook on life?
   - What did you used to hope for and what do you hope for now?
   - How could we spread hope to others?
   - What are some barriers to hope?
   - Have you ever had “false hope”? Is false hope always a bad thing?
      *You may need to explain the concept of false hope- someone with false hope looks forward to something that is very unlikely to happen
      *Example: Jill’s cat disappeared 2 years ago. She’s given false hope when her parents tell her the cat will come back

3. Group members will now participate in an activity in which they will further explore the concept of hope.
   *Keep the group members in their “mini-groups”
   *Give each mini-group a roll of paper. Tell them to label their paper, “Why We Have Hope…” and to write down as many things they can think of
      -Examples: it gets us to tomorrow, it makes us a better person/parent/spouse, it gives us perspective, it reminds us of the good/positive things in our lives, etc.
      -They can list more personal things if they want
   *You can give them art material to decorate their paper (optional)
   *Allow each mini-group to present when they’re done

4. -Facilitator can conclude group by going over ways to bring more hope into our lives:
   -Think of past low points in your life & remember that you made it through them. If you’ve done it before, you can do it again!
      a. Recall the coping tools you used during these low points
   -Think of the success stories of others (friends, family, people you admire, etc.)
   -Use positive self-talk
      a. Remind yourself of past successes, the people in your life who support you, the positive qualities/strengths you possess, etc.
      b. Use positive affirmations
   -Come up with goals & steps you can take to accomplish them
      a. Make sure they are realistic/reasonable
- Reframe the bad things that happen in your life
  a. Look at them as challenges, don’t look at them as failures on your part
- Continue coming to group!
  a. Therapy gives us hope that things will change (i.e. our mental health, our problems, our future, our feelings, our behaviors, our relationships, etc.)

- You can end group by asking group members to list their hopes for the group member sitting to their left (or right).
  - Example: “My hope for Jeff is that he maintains his sobriety”