

**CENTER OF APPLIED RESEARCH
FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Children Exposed to Domestic Violence:
Examining the Effect of Camp HOPE on Children's Hope, Resilience, and Strength of Character



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The purpose of this report is to present the evaluation results of the impact of 2015 Camp HOPE California on children's hope, and the three central themes of the Camp HOPE intervention model with children exposed to domestic violence; namely, defining hope as believing in themselves, believing in others, and believing they will achieve their dreams (resiliency). 229 Campers (48.7% Males) responded to a pre-camp and post-camp Hope Index (89 campers provided a follow-up assessment). Reliability estimates for the Children's Hope Scale and the Resiliency scale were acceptable.

Camp HOPE counselors completed 229 pre-camp and post-camp assessments of their observation of each child's hope as well as the character strengths of Zest, Grit, Optimism, Self-Control, Gratitude, Curiosity, and Social Intelligence.



Camper Self-Assessment:

Results of the analyses demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in Hope between the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up assessments.

Similarly, statistically significant increases were seen in the resilience scale indicating that Camp HOPE California children improved their belief in self, others, and their ability to achieve their dreams. 79.4% of the participating children (ages 11-17) reported an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) score of 4 or higher with approximately 2/3 reporting verbal and physical abuse, emotional neglect, parental divorce, household substance abuse, and parental incarceration.

Camp Counselor Observation:

Camp counselors reported observing statistically significant increases in the child's character strength defined as:

- **Hope** - Ability to create pathways and dedicate energy toward goals.
- **Zest** - Excitement and energy toward goals.
- **Grit** - Perseverance for goals.
- **Self-Control** - Capacity to control thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when in conflict.
- **Gratitude** - Appreciation for the kindness received by others.
- **Curiosity** - Desire to learn and seek out new information.
- **Social Intelligence** - Awareness of the feelings and motivations of others.

Correlational analysis demonstrated that an increase in children's hope was associated with observed increases in character strength.

The improvements found in hope, resiliency, and the observed character strengths were NOT influenced by ACE scores of participating children.

The results of this evaluation support a compelling argument for the power of Camp HOPE California to improve the lives of and long-term outcomes for children exposed to domestic violence.

Child Exposure to Domestic Violence

It is estimated that between 2 and 10 million children in the U.S. witness domestic violence each year (Summers, 2006). Meta-analytic studies consistently find that children exposed to domestic violence are at a higher risk for emotional, social, and behavioral difficulties both in the short- and long-term (Evans, Davies, & DiLillo, 2008; Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, & Kenny, 2003; Wolfe, Crooks, Lee, McIntyre-Smith, & Jaffe, 2003). Moreover, children exposed to domestic violence experience additional stresses associated with the trauma of repeated separations, child custody battles, and isolation from extended family supports. Children exposed to domestic violence are also at a significantly higher risk for abuse and neglect (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999).

While the research on exposure to domestic violence continues to emerge, existing evidence suggests these children are at risk for increased anxiety and depression, social isolation, increased physical and psychological aggression, and propensity to perpetuate the cycle of domestic violence (Carlson, 1990; Lichter & McClosky, 2004; Litrownik, Newton, & Hunter, 2003). The higher the exposure to childhood trauma, the higher the rates of illness, disease, and criminality in adults (Felitti & Anda, 1998; Reavis, Looman, Franco, & Rojas, 2013). Given the prevalence of children exposed to domestic violence in the U.S. and the negative consequences on their future, an effective system-level intervention is needed to provide children the opportunity to develop positive coping mechanisms that will allow them to thrive in difficult environments. One such intervention with the potential for system level influence is Camp HOPE America (Gwinn, 2015).

Camp HOPE

Camp HOPE California (www.camphopecalifornia.com) is the first statewide camping and mentoring initiative in the United States to focus on children exposed to domestic violence. Camp HOPE began in San Diego in 2003, under the leadership of then-San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn. Camp HOPE San Diego was part of the nationally recognized San Diego Family Justice Center, a collaborative of 25 government and non-government agencies co-locating professionals to focus on serving victims of domestic violence and their children.

Today, Camp HOPE California, as a statewide initiative, operates under the leadership of Alliance for HOPE International (www.allianceforhope.com). Alliance for HOPE International is the umbrella organization for all Family Justice Centers and similar multi-agency models serving victims of domestic violence and their children throughout the United States. Alliance for HOPE International first focused on bringing children to camp from across California and is now seeking to develop Camp HOPE models across the country under the program name of Camp HOPE America. This study focuses only on programming in California in 2015.

The vision for Camp HOPE California is to break the generational cycle of family violence by offering healing and hope to children who have witnessed family violence. Camp HOPE also includes programs for adult survivors but the focus of this report is on the camping and mentoring program for children and teens. The Camp HOPE California vision includes two camping locations – Camp HOPE Kidder Creek and Camp HOPE Lopez Lake. Kidder Creek Camp, operated by Mount Hermon Association, is an adventure camp near Yreka, CA (www.kiddercreek.org). Kidder Creek Camp is led by Director Andy Warken and Associate Director Craig Thompson. Alliance for HOPE International and Kidder Creek partner together to operate Camp HOPE Kidder Creek. Camp HOPE Lopez Lake is operated in partnership with the San Luis Obispo County Parks Department (Mark Sensenbach, DEER Program Director). Camp HOPE California, in both locations, provides a weeklong camping experience for children at no cost to them or their families.

Camp HOPE Program

The Camp HOPE 2015 Program, developed in partnership with Mount Hermon Association's Director of Programs, Lisa Olson, the Kidder Creek Camp team, and Camp HOPE Director Karianne Gwinn, is a values-based, Challenge by Choice program with a focus on praising children for observed and developing character traits through the course of a six-day program. Challenge by Choice refers to challenging children to try new activities and activities with perceived danger or risk while allowing them to opt out of those activities if the challenge creates unmanageable stress or fear. It asks that campers challenge themselves and participate fully in the experience at-hand. Recognizing that an activity or goal may pose a different level and type of challenge for each camper and that authentic personal change comes from within, Challenge by Choice creates an environment where campers are asked to search for opportunities to stretch and grow. The camper is responsible for determining and selecting what kind of participation level presents an optimal learning opportunity.

At Camp HOPE Kidder Creek, all recreational activities were supervised by trained Kidder Creek Camp staff members who also operate weekly summer camps that are not focused on children exposed to family violence. Specialized program activities and other therapeutic components were managed by Alliance for HOPE International. Camp HOPE Lopez Lake and all related activities were operated and supervised by staff members and volunteers of Alliance for HOPE International. Hope, at both campsites and in all program activities, is defined throughout the weeklong camp as three things – believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams.



Using a trauma-informed camper/counselor approach, Camp HOPE 2015 focused on providing affirmation and encouragement including campfire sessions where campers received character trait awards each day from their youth or adult counselors. Everyone cheered for each child receiving an award after the observed character trait was specifically and contextually described to the entire group. Camp HOPE program activities included rafting, high and low ropes challenge courses (age specific), horseback riding, arts and crafts, recreational hiking, field games, skits and camp songs, nightly campfires, journaling, KBAR (kick back and relax) time in the cabins each day with counselors and campers, group discussions each night (Where did you see hope today?), and three family-style meals each day (eating with your own cabin group, and other relationship-oriented times). Each day at Camp HOPE there was a positive statement for the day. These words included: I am a unique masterpiece, I am becoming my best self, We need each other, My future is brighter than my past, and My best self is within reach. By having a positive statement for each day, children began to internalize their own uniqueness, personal progress, need for others, future focus, and perseverance. Children did not have free time at Camp HOPE and children were never without an adult mentor, youth counselor, or adult counselor. All electronics including cell phones, iPads, laptops, and other gaming devices were collected and turned off when children arrived at camp. Electronic items were then returned after the conclusion of the camping week. All key elements described above were consistent for all six weeks of Camp HOPE 2015.

One of the key elements of Camp HOPE 2015 was the use of a de-centralized programming model. This model was not used in 2013 or 2014. In this particular model, each cabin is paired with another cabin of a similar age. Older campers are paired with a cabin of the opposite sex. Younger campers are paired with similarly aged campers of the same sex. The two cabins combined were referred to as a track or circle. Throughout the week, each track/circle participated in the various camp activities together and built relationships within the group.

Camping sessions in 2015 included six separate weeks of camp. Four weeks involved children ages 7-11 and two weeks of camp involved children ages 11-17. Children also have the opportunity to aspire to be youth counselors after beginning their senior year of high school. This year multiple counselors were previous campers who aspired to and became counselors for the first time. Karianne Gwinn served as the Director of Camp HOPE in 2015 during this evaluation study. Children came from five operating and five developing Family Justice Centers in California along with one community-based sexual assault/ domestic violence agency (RiseSLO) in San Luis Obispo County, CA. A majority of the children were receiving some level of trauma-informed care and advocacy services at the time they attended Camp HOPE.

In 2015, Camp HOPE children also included foster children, group home children, and a large group of children not receiving services in an existing Family Justice Center. The participating operating and developing Family Justice Centers included: Shasta One Safe Place (Redding, CA); San Diego Family Justice Center (San Diego, CA); Imperial County Family Justice Center (El Centro, CA); Yolo County Family Justice Center (Woodland, CA); Alameda County Family Justice Center (Oakland, CA); Family Justice Center Sonoma County (Santa Rosa, CA); San Joaquin County Family Justice Center (Stockton, CA); Ventura County Family Justice Center (Ventura, CA); and the Sacramento County Family Justice Center (Sacramento, CA). All the children attending Camp HOPE had been exposed to and/or witnessed family violence prior to coming to Camp HOPE. The children attending included physically and sexually abused children as well.



Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present findings from a quantitative outcome assessment of Camp HOPE conducted by the University of Oklahoma's Center of Applied Research for Nonprofit Organizations. The primary outcome of focus is the impact on children's hope along with a sense of belonging, support and encouragement, and believing they can achieve their dreams. This evaluation is based upon a longitudinal design in which the children provide self-reports on their hope and resiliency. Additionally, Camp HOPE counselors provided a pre-camp and post-camp assessment on their observation of the camper's character strengths (e.g., Zest, Grit, Self-Control, Optimism, Gratitude, Social Intelligence, and Curiosity).

Hope Theory

Hope is a cognitive-based motivational theory in which children learn to create strategies as a means to attain their goals. Snyder's (2002) Hope Theory has two fundamental cognitive processes termed "pathways" and "agency". Pathway thought processes are the mental strategies or road maps toward goal attainment. Higher hope children can identify and articulate strategies to manage potential barriers. Agency refers to the mental energy or willpower capacity the child can direct and sustain toward goal pursuits. Higher hope children can self-regulate their energy toward the pathways even in the presence of barriers. Alternatively, children who have experienced repeated failed attempts at goal pursuits often recognize their deficits in both pathways and agency thoughts. These low hope children will face future goals with negativity and a focus on failure.

The role of hope in a child's capacity to flourish is well-established. Hopeful thinking among children is positively associated with perceived competence and self-worth (Kwon, 2000) as well as lower depression and anxiety (Ong, Edwards, & Bergeman, 2006). Higher hope children are more optimistic about the future, have stronger problem solving skills, and develop more life goals. Hopeful children are less likely to have behavior problems or experience psychological distress. These children also report better interpersonal relationships and higher school achievement success in the areas of attendance, grades, graduation rates, and college going rates (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008). Moreover, hope has been shown to serve as a buffering resilience factor when facing stressful life events among children (cf. Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2006). Finally, hope is positively associated with emotional well-being in a six-year study contributing to positive youth development (Ciarrochi, Parker, Kashdan, Heaven & Barkus, 2015).



Assessment Procedure

Two hundred and thirty-eight surveys were administered to the youth participants of Camp. A pre-camp, post-camp, and follow-up survey design was utilized. Children received the pre-test survey several days prior to camp. Posttest surveys were collected the final morning of camp and follow-up surveys were collected approximately 30 days after camp had ended. Individual Family Justice Centers and other participating agencies were responsible for recruiting, selecting, consenting children and guardians, and data collection. These data were matched and de-identified prior to mailing to the OU research team.

Sample Demographics

Pre-camp surveys were completed by 234 children while 237 post-camp surveys were completed. Ultimately, 229 completed pre and post surveys were matched, resulting in a 96.2% match rate. In addition, 87 completed pre, post, and follow-up surveys were returned representing a 36.6% match rate. Specific demographic characteristics of the children were limited in the survey. However, the average age of the respondent was 10.8 years (SD = 2.57). Two hundred and thirty-four children reported their gender with 48.7% males and 51.3% females.

No demographic information was obtained on the Camp Counselor Assessment. However, these counselors completed 229 pre and post assessments that were matched to the camper self-assessment.

Magnitude of impact was assessed using Cohen's (1992) heuristic for partial eta square on the repeated measures analyses and correlation coefficient. Magnitude describes how meaningful the effect can be described. For the correlation a + or - value of .10 is considered small, + or - .30 is considered moderate, and + or - .50 is considered a large or strong effect. Partial eta square estimates the amount of variance explained in a dependent variable from the independent variable. A value of .02 is considered small, .09 is moderate, and .25 is considered a large effect.

Measurement: Child Hope Index

Children's Hope:

Hope was assessed using the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, et al. 1997) which examines the extent to which children can believe they can establish pathways to their goals as well as develop and maintain the willpower to follow these pathways. Both pathways and willpower are required to establish hope. This measure is comprised of six self-report items with a six-point Likert-Type response format (1 = none of the time; 6 = all of the time). Scores can range from a low of six to a high of 36. Thus, higher scores reflect higher hope. The Children's Hope Scale is a widely used measure with over 200 published scholarly studies. Validity estimates have been established both psychometrically and substantively. Internal consistency reliability analysis indicated a Pre-Hope $\alpha = .77$; Post-Hope $\alpha = .81$; F/U-Hope $\alpha = .89$.

Children's Resilience:

Following the Camp HOPE theme of believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams, the team developed six additional items to assess the child's self-reported resiliency. These individual items were also presented with a six-point Likert-Type response (1 = none of the time; 6 = all of the time). The items and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. The scale score is based upon the sum of the scores for the six items. Internal consistency reliability analysis indicated a Pre-Resiliency $\alpha = .77$; Post-Resiliency $\alpha = .86$; F/U-Resiliency $\alpha = .85$.

Table 1.

Camp HOPE Child Resiliency Self-Report Descriptive Statistics.

| <i>Item:</i> | Pre-Camp (N=234) | | Post-Camp (N=237) | | Follow-Up (N=89) | |
|---|---------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1. I have friends that care about me. | 4.81 | 1.38 | 4.79 | 1.49 | 5.12 | 1.18 |
| 2. I'm part of a group that cares about each other. | 4.65 | 1.34 | 4.74 | 1.38 | 5.02 | 1.26 |
| 3. I like to encourage and support others. | 4.68 | 1.35 | 4.90 | 1.29 | 4.97 | 1.05 |
| 4. Others accept me just the way I am. | 4.31 | 1.45 | 4.67 | 1.42 | 4.99 | 1.19 |
| 5. Even when bad things happen, I stay hopeful. | 4.36 | 1.35 | 4.64 | 1.43 | 4.91 | 1.11 |
| 6. I think I will achieve my dreams. | 4.74 | 1.39 | 5.17 | 1.22 | 5.34 | 0.93 |
| Resiliency Total Scale | 27.53 | 5.65 | 28.93 | 6.27 | 30.30 | 5.09 |

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Scale:

The ACE is a 10-item measure on traumatic experiences during childhood. This 10-item measure is comprised of three Abuse items, two Neglect items, and five Dysfunctional Family items. Scores range from a zero to 10 with higher numbers reflecting the number of adverse childhood events experienced. The ACE was presented to campers over the age of 11 on the fourth day of camp.

Measurement: Counselor Observations

Hope Index:

Counselors were asked to complete the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) for each camper in their respective group. Items were reworded to reflect this approach. For example, the item "I think I am doing pretty well" was reworded to "I think the camper is doing pretty well." The questionnaires included the same six-item children's Hope Scale reworded to fit the observation intent. Internal consistency reliability was adequate for the sample of counselors' observations (pretest $\alpha = .92$; posttest $\alpha = .91$).

Child Character Strength:

Following the positive psychology foundation that character leads to the capacity to live a fulfilling and meaningful life, we included a 20-item assessment of character strengths. Following the Character Counts model, we assessed the child in the area of Zest, Grit, Optimism, Self-Control, Gratitude, Social Intelligence, and Curiosity. Counselors rated each camper in their group at the beginning of camp and the final morning of camp. Table 2 below provides the character strength observed and its definition.

Table 2.

Character Strengths Assessed at Camp HOPE.

| Character Strength: | Definition: |
|----------------------------|---|
| Zest | An approach to life filled with anticipation, excitement, and energy. |
| Grit | Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. |
| Optimism | The expectation that the future holds positive possibilities and likelihood. |
| Self-Control | Capacity to regulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when they conflict with interpersonal goals. |
| Gratitude | Appreciation for the benefits received from others and a desire to reciprocate with positive actions. |
| Curiosity | Search for information for its own sake. Exploring a wide range of information when solving problems. |
| Social Intelligence | Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people. |

Positive Youth Development

In recent years, positive psychology has emerged as the scientific study of the emotions, traits, and relationships that promote the capacity to flourish and serve to buffer the negative effects of difficulties often experienced in life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, this work has identified 24 strengths of character that help young people thrive and are associated with socially desired outcomes such as academic achievement, attendance, athletic achievement, goal attainment, leadership, tolerance, kindness and pro-social behaviors to name a few (Park & Peterson, 2009). These 24 strengths have now been studied in over 190 countries with 2.6 million participants (www.viacharacter.org).

Interventions that target positive character development in youth now has a validated measurement application that can be used to promote well-being especially among those who have experienced stress associated with trauma. The character strengths targeted for this assessment have been consistently shown to serve as a buffer to stress and serve as an important indicator of personal well-being (Park & Peterson, 2009).





FIGURE 1.
Children's Hope Index.

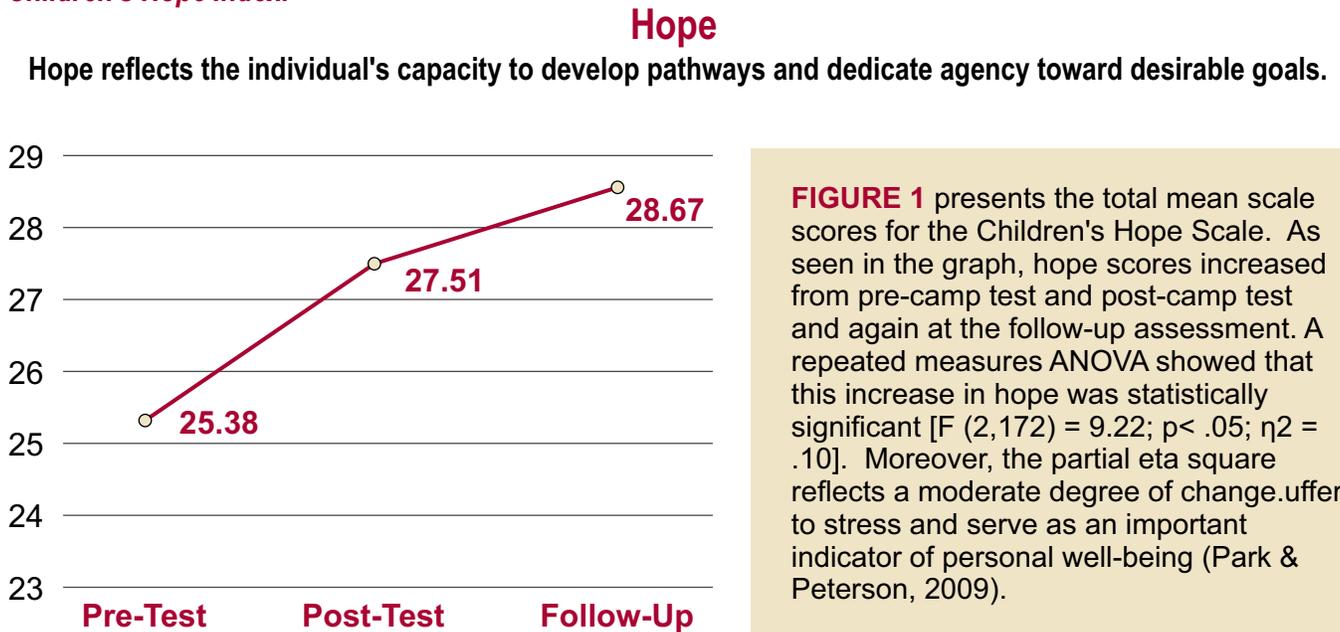


FIGURE 1 presents the total mean scale scores for the Children's Hope Scale. As seen in the graph, hope scores increased from pre-camp test and post-camp test and again at the follow-up assessment. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(2, 172) = 9.22; p < .05; \eta^2 = .10$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of change. Offer to stress and serve as an important indicator of personal well-being (Park & Peterson, 2009).

FIGURE 2.
Children's Resilience Question One.

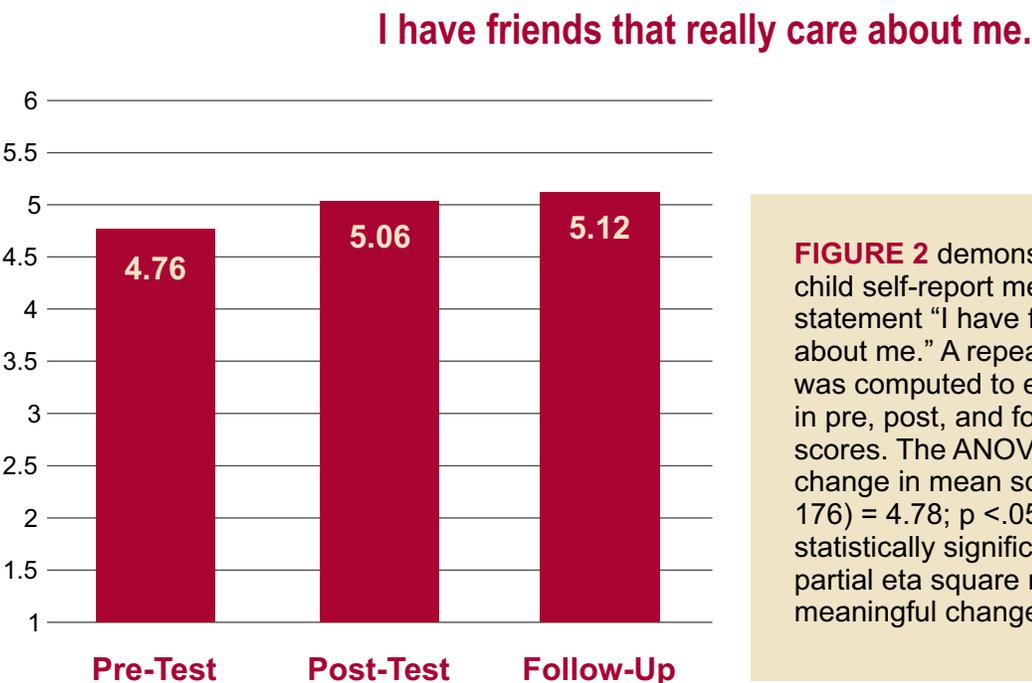


FIGURE 2 demonstrates the change in child self-report mean scores for the statement "I have friends that really care about me." A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre, post, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [$F(2, 176) = 4.78; p < .05; \eta^2 = .07$] were statistically significant. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a small yet meaningful change.

FIGURE 3.
Children's Resilience Question Two.

I'm a part of a group of people that care about each other.

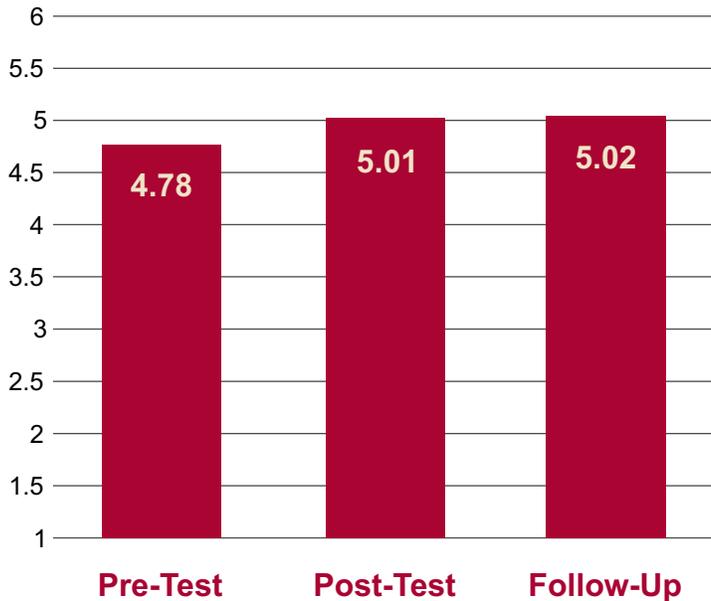


FIGURE 3 demonstrates the change in child self-report mean scores for the statement “I have friends that really care about me.” A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre, post, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [$F(2, 176) = 4.78; p < .05; \eta^2 = .07$] were statistically significant. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a small yet meaningful change.

FIGURE 4.
Children's Resilience Question Three.

I like to encourage and support others.

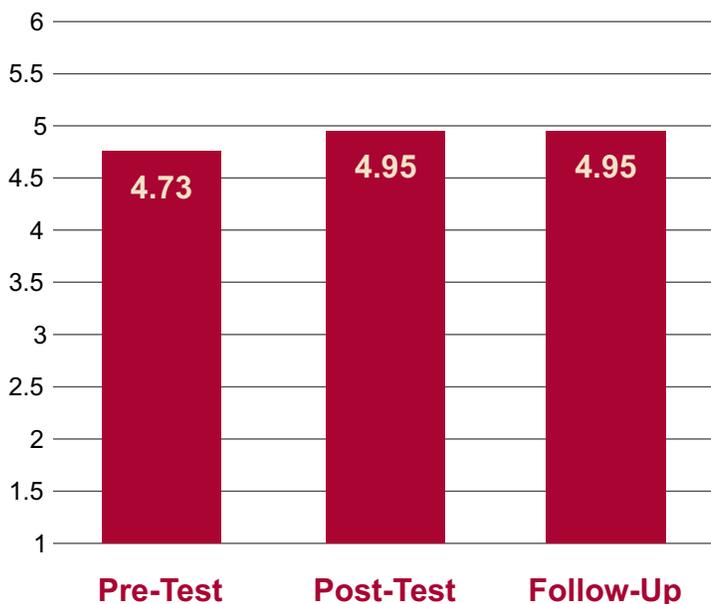


FIGURE 4 demonstrates the change in child self-report mean scores for the statement “I have friends that really care about me.” A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre, post, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [$F(2, 176) = 4.78; p < .05; \eta^2 = .07$] were statistically significant. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a small yet meaningful change.

FIGURE 5.
Children's Resilience Question Four.

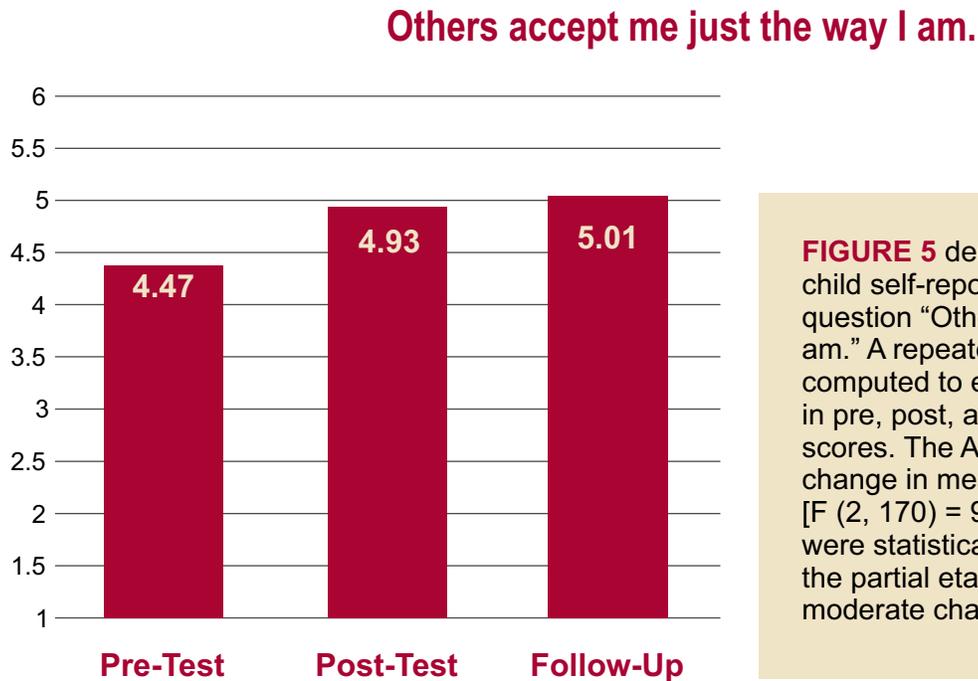


FIGURE 5 demonstrates the change in child self-report mean scores for the question “Others accept me just the way I am.” A repeated measure ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre, post, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [$F(2, 170) = 9.32; p < .05; \eta^2 = .10$] were statistically significant. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate change.

FIGURE 6.
Children's Resilience Question Five.

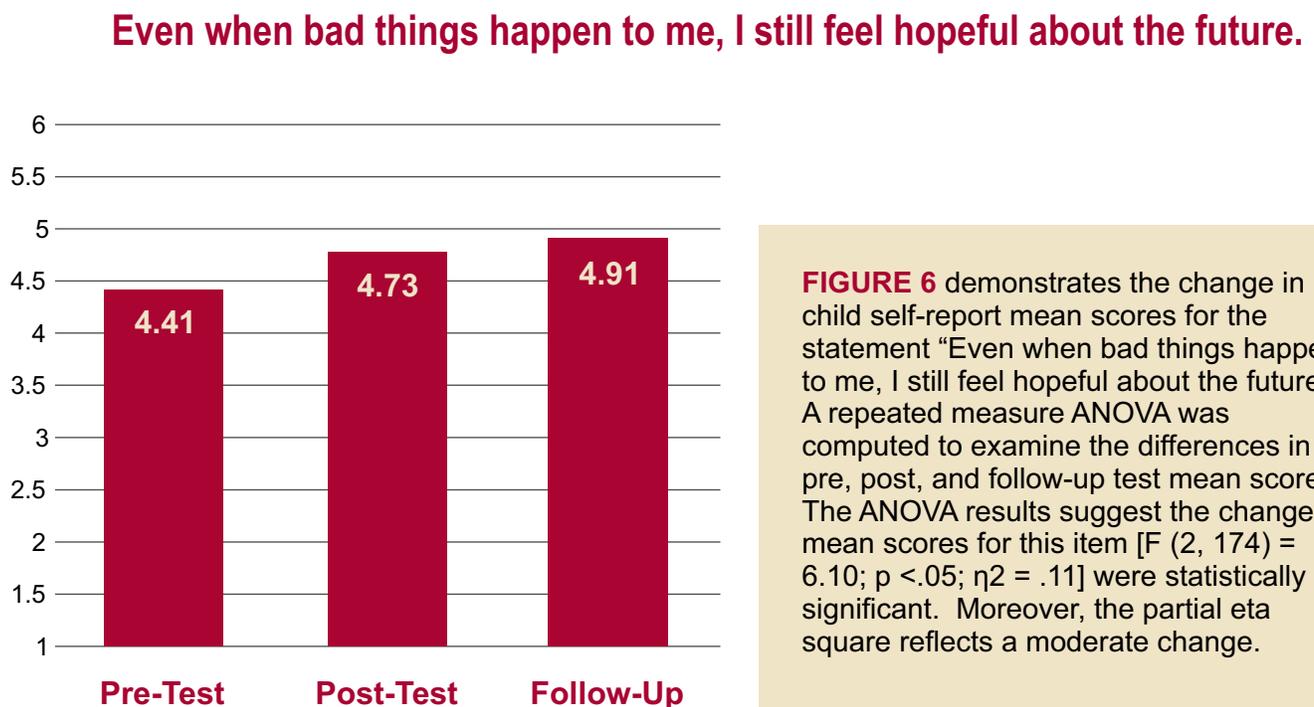


FIGURE 6 demonstrates the change in child self-report mean scores for the statement “Even when bad things happen to me, I still feel hopeful about the future.” A repeated measure ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre, post, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [$F(2, 174) = 6.10; p < .05; \eta^2 = .11$] were statistically significant. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate change.

FIGURE 7.
Children's Resilience Question Six.

I think I will achieve my dreams.

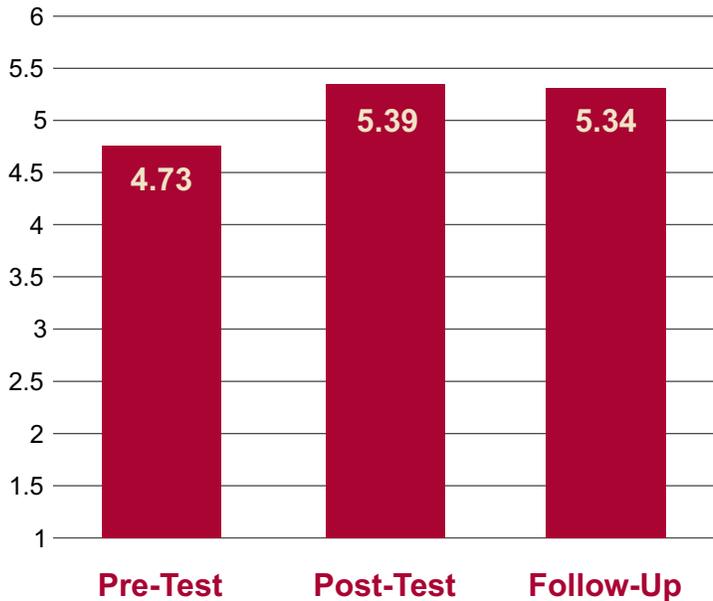


FIGURE 7 demonstrates the change in child self-report mean scores for the statement "I think I will achieve my dreams." A repeated measure ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre, post, and follow-up test mean scores. The ANOVA results suggest the change in mean scores for this item [$F(2, 174) = 13.40; p < .05; \eta^2 = .13$] were statistically significant. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate change.

FIGURE 8.
Children's Resiliency Score

Children's Resiliency Score

Resiliency refers to believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams.

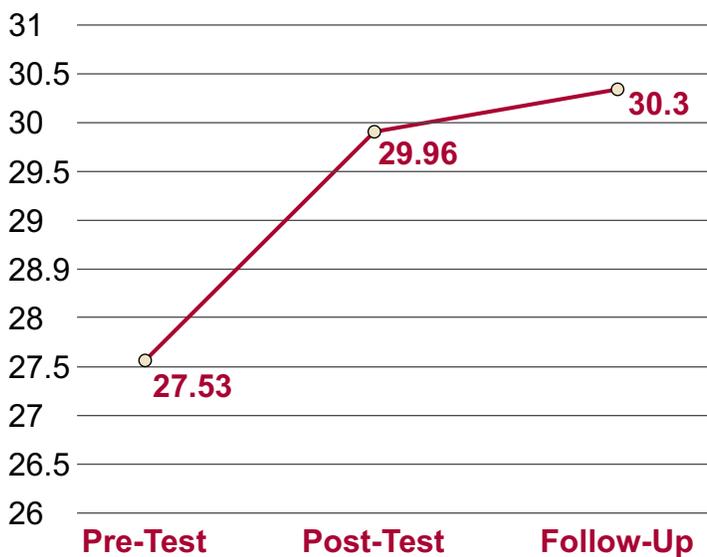


FIGURE 8 presents the total mean scale scores for the Children's Resiliency Scale. As seen in the graph, Resiliency Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test and again slightly at the follow-up assessment. Repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in Resiliency was statistically significant [$F(2, 162) = 14.29; p < .05; \eta^2 = .15$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of change.

Adverse Childhood Experience

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are known to be associated with negative consequences across the lifespan and represent a serious public health concern. Left untreated, those who have experienced child maltreatment are more likely to experience poor mental health, engage in health risk behaviors, and suffer physical diseases related to increased morbidity (Anda, Brown, Felitti, Bremner, Dube, & Giles, 2007; Bellis, Lowey, Leckenby, Hughes & Harrison, 2013; Dube, Anda, Felitti, Croft, Edwards & Giles, 2001; Dube, Anda, Felitti, Chapman, Williamson, & Giles, 2001; Hillis, Anda, Felitti & Marchbanks, 2001; Wilimansion, Thompson, Anda, Dietz & Felitti, 2002) and report more negative parenting experiences (Jaffe, Cranston & Shadlow, 2012; Locke & Newcomb, 2004). Moreover, these adults tend to experience lower educational, employment, and economic successes (Currie & Wisdom, 2010; Lanier, Kohl, Raghavan, & Auslander, 2015). Dramatically higher delinquency rates and criminal conduct levels have also been well-documented in adults with ACE scores greater than zero (Reavis, Looman, Franco, & Rojas, 2013; Gwinn, 2015).

Table 3.
Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

| ACE Score | CDC Study (N=17,337) | Camp HOPE Children (N=64) |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 0 | 36.1% | 0.0% |
| 1 | 26.0% | 4.8% |
| 2 | 15.9% | 4.8% |
| 3 | 9.5% | 11.1% |
| 4+ | 12.5% | 79.4% |

Table 3 provides the percent of participants by the number of traumatic events experienced. In order to contextualize the ACE scores of the participating Camp HOPE children, scores were compared to those reported by the CDC national study (N = 17,337). 79.4% of the participating Camp HOPE children reported having an ACE score of four or higher. The Average ACE score was 5.51 (SD = 2.38). The most frequently occurring score (mode) was 4.0 with a median score of 5.0.

Table 4.
Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experience by Type (N=64).

| ACE | Percent | ACE | Percent | ACE | Percent |
|---------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Abuse: | | Dysfunctional Family: | | Neglect: | |
| Verbal | 67.2 | Domestic Violence | 50.0 | Emotional | 67.2 |
| Physical | 59.4 | Parent Divorce | 78.1 | Physical | 42.9 |
| Sexual | 20.3 | Substance Abuse | 59.4 | | |
| | | Mental Illness | 45.3 | | |
| | | Parent Incarceration | 65.6 | | |

Table 4 above presents the percent of Camp HOPE children reporting an experience with each ACE item. The top ACEs included parental divorce (78.1%), verbal abuse (67.2%), emotional neglect (67.2%), and parent incarceration (65.6%). The existing literature indicates that children exposed to domestic violence are also at a significantly higher risk for child maltreatment (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999). The results of the current ACE assessment support this body of research.

Given the high prevalence of traumatic experiences by the participating campers, it is important to note that all subsequent analyses (Child Hope, Child Resilience, and Camp HOPE Counselor Observations) were not necessarily impacted by ACE. That is, the changes in scores presented on the following pages were similar for ALL participating campers.



FIGURE 9.

Counselor Observation of Camper Hope

Hope reflects the individual's capacity to develop pathways and dedicate agency toward desirable goals.

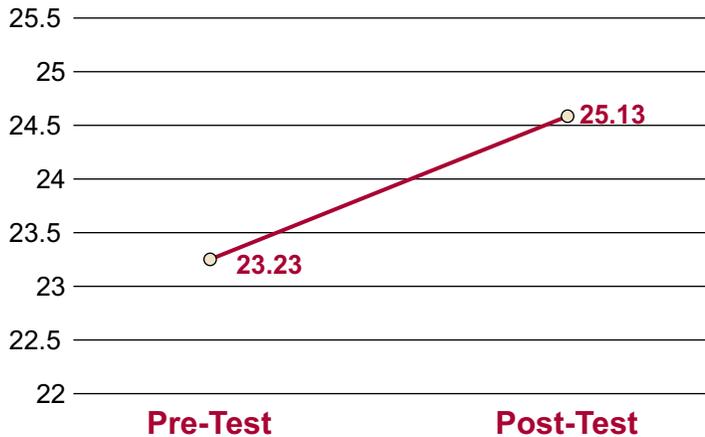


FIGURE 9 presents the mean scores for the child's hope as observed by the Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,219) = 30.95$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .12$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of observed change.

FIGURE 10.

Counselor Observation of Camper Zest

Zest is an approach to life filled with excitement and energy.

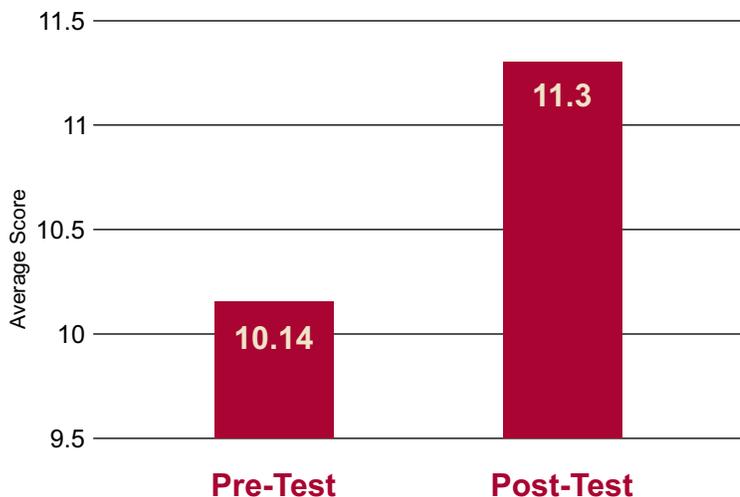


FIGURE 10 presents the mean scores for the child's Zest as observed by their Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,229) = 46.63$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .17$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of observed change.

FIGURE 11.

Counselor Observation of Camper Grit

Grit reflects the perseverance and passion for long-term goals.

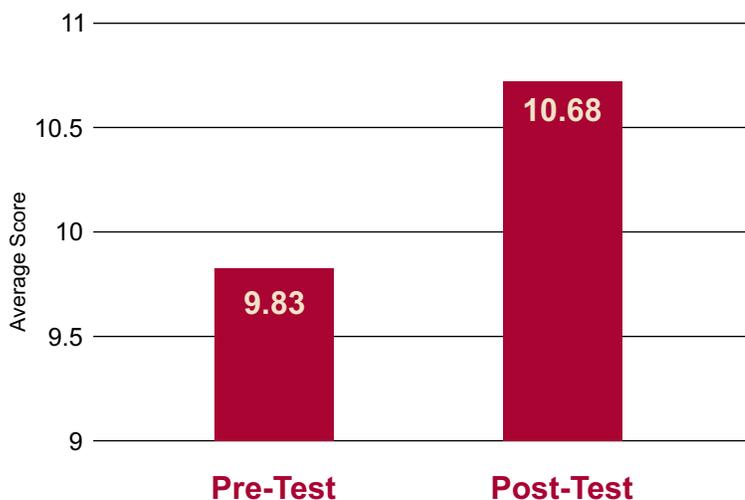


FIGURE 11 presents the mean scores for the child's Grit as observed by the Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,228) = 30.86$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .12$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of observed change.

FIGURE 12.

Counselor Observation of Camper Self-Control

Self-Control refers to the capacity to regulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when they conflict with interpersonal goals.

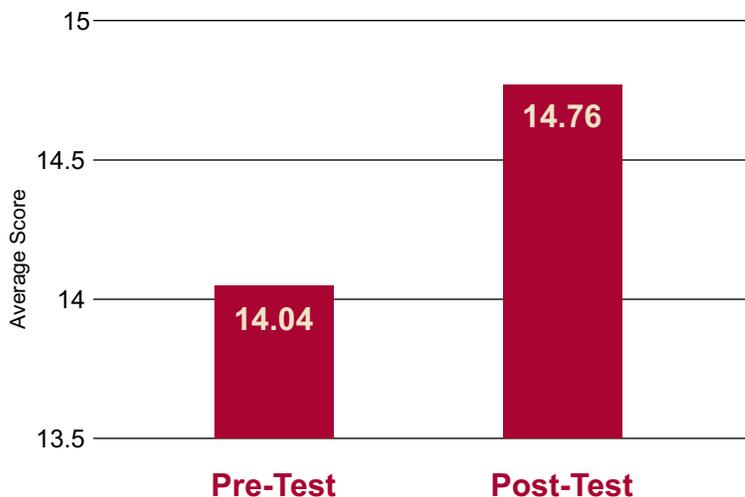


FIGURE 12 presents the mean scores for the child's Self-Control as observed by the Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,225) = 9.50$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .14$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of observed change.

FIGURE 13.

Counselor Observation of Camper Optimism

Optimism is the expectation that the future holds positive possibilities and likelihood.

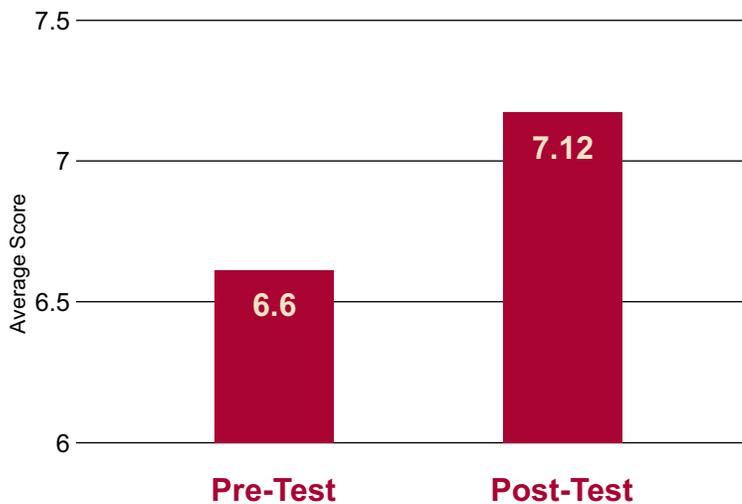


FIGURE 13 presents the mean scores for the child's Optimism as observed by the Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,229) = 20.19$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .08$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a small degree of observed change.

FIGURE 14.

Counselor Observation of Camper Gratitude

Gratitude is the appreciation for the benefits received from others with a desire to reciprocate with positive actions.

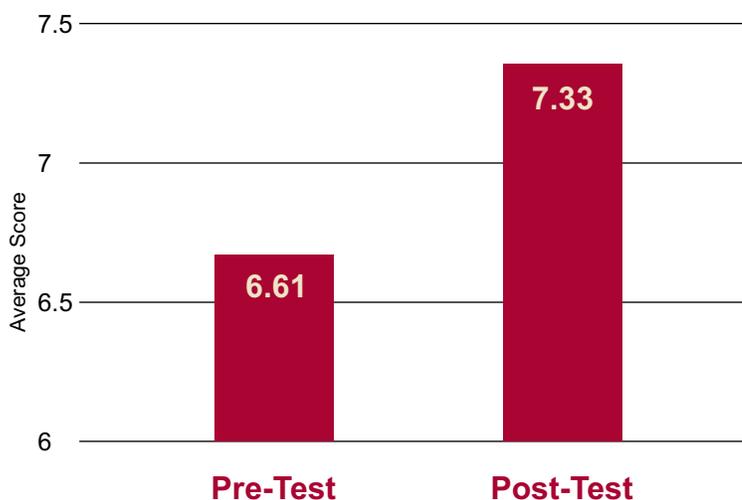


FIGURE 14 presents the mean scores for the child's Gratitude as observed by the Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,230) = 44.36$; $p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .16$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of observed change.

FIGURE 15.

Counselor Observation of Camper Social Intelligence

Social Intelligence refers to the awareness of the motives and feelings of other people.

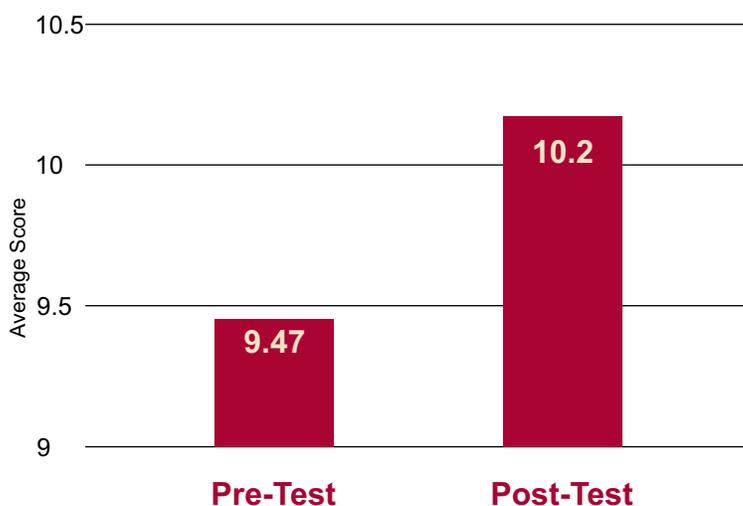


FIGURE 15 presents the mean scores for the child's Social Intelligence as observed by the Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,227) = 18.13; p < .05; \eta^2 = .07$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a small degree of observed change.

FIGURE 16.

Counselor Observation of Camper Curiosity

Curiosity is the search for information for its own sake.
Exploring a wide range of information when solving problems.

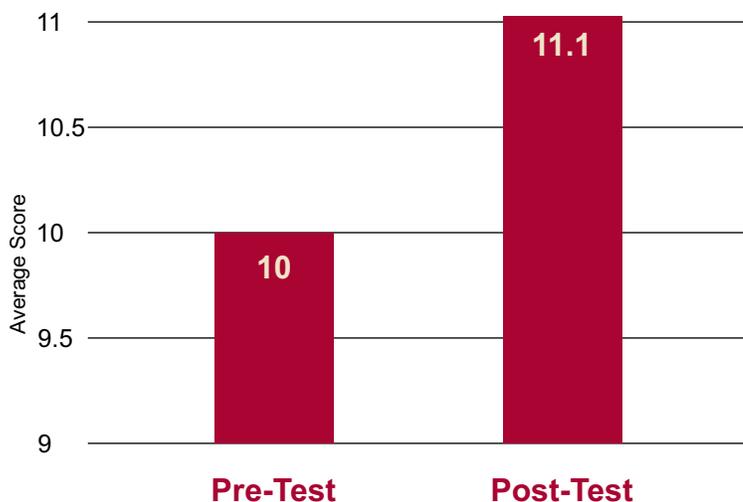


FIGURE 16 presents the mean scores for the child's Curiosity as observed by the Camp HOPE counselor. As seen in the graph, Hope Scores increased from pre-camp test to post-camp test. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that this increase in hope was statistically significant [$F(1,229) = 46.51; p < .05; \eta^2 = .17$]. Moreover, the partial eta square reflects a moderate degree of observed change.

Correlations Among the Measures

Table 5 on the next page provides the correlation matrix for all the scales described in this study. A correlation represents the level of relationship between two variables. The interpretation is based upon the strength of the relationship as well as the direction. Strength of a correlation is based upon Cohen's (1992) effect size heuristic. More specifically, a correlation (+ or -) of .10 or higher is considered small; a correlation (+ or -) of .30 is considered moderate, and a correlation (+ or -) of .50 is considered strong. With regards to direction, a positive correlation indicates that higher scores on one variable are associated with higher scores on the other variable. A negative correlation indicates that higher scores on one variable are associated with lower scores on the other variable. Using a correlation matrix is a parsimonious way to present several correlations among multiple variables. Identifying a specific correlation is based upon matching a row to a particular column.

Examples from Table 2

On the left side of the table the column marked "item" identifies the order of the correlations. The first item "hope" is also the next column labeled 1. The first correlation ($r = .79^*$) under the hope column represents the relationship between Hope and Resiliency (variable 2). We interpret this correlation as follows: "Participating children who scored higher on Hope had higher scores of Resiliency reflecting a strong positive correlation." Notice the correlation ($r = .79^*$) has an asterisk indicating the finding was statistically significant ($p < .05$) meaning that the observed relationship between these two variables was likely not due to chance. As another example, higher scores on children's Hope (column 1) was associated with higher scores on the counselor's observation of the child's Zest (row labeled 4; $r = .35^*$) and the strength was moderate. One more example will look at the correlation between Zest and Curiosity. Here we look at column 4 (Zest) and row 10 (Curiosity) and find the correlation is a positive value (.65*). Thus, higher scores on Zest are associated with higher scores on Curiosity and the correlation is strong.

Table 5.

Correlations of Children's Hope and Resilience with Counselor Observed Character Strengths.

| Item: | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Child Scores | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Hope | – | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Resiliency | .79* | -- | | | | | | | | |
| Counselor Observations | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Hope | .28* | .39* | -- | | | | | | | |
| 4. Zest | .35* | .38* | .69* | – | | | | | | |
| 5. Grit | .21* | .26* | .66* | .51* | -- | | | | | |
| 6. Self-Control | .22* | .30* | .61* | .43* | .73* | -- | | | | |
| 7. Optimism | .27* | .36* | .72* | .58* | .65* | .71* | -- | | | |
| 8. Gratitude | .36* | .41* | .67* | .67* | .60* | .56* | .72* | -- | | |
| 9. Social Intelligence | .36* | .38* | .70* | .63* | .65* | .71* | .70* | .73* | -- | |
| 10. Curiosity | .34* | .43* | .72* | .65* | .61* | .58* | .66* | .71* | .67* | – |

Note: All scores obtained at post-test. N = 233. * $p < .05$

Summary of Findings:

Correlational analysis demonstrated that an increase in children's Hope was associated with increases in the observed character strengths. More specifically, higher scores in Hope were associated with higher levels of energy (Zest), perseverance toward goals (Grit), ability to regulate thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Self-Control), an expectation that the future holds positive possibilities (Optimism), appreciation toward others (Gratitude), desire to seek out new things (Curiosity), and awareness of the feelings and motivations of others (Social Intelligence).

The purpose of this report was to present findings from the program evaluation of Camp HOPE California 2015. The primary outcome was to change the way children exposed to domestic violence believe in themselves, believe in others, believe in their dreams and find Hope for the future. The results of this study provide compelling evidence that Camp HOPE improves the Hope of children in a manner that was self-reported by the children and teens as well as observed by their camp counselors. Moreover, increases in Hope were associated with the character strengths of Zest, Grit, Self-Control, Optimism, Gratitude, Social Intelligence, and Curiosity.

Hope represents a positive psychological strength that promotes adaptive behaviors, healthy development, and both psychological and social well-being (Snyder, 1995). More specifically, Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib and Finch (2009) found that high levels of Hope were related to life satisfaction across the lifespan. Higher Hope is associated with better coping, health and health-related practices (Chang & DeSimone, 2001; Feldman & Sills, 2013; Kelsey, DeVellis, Gizlice, Ries, Barnes, & Campbell, 2011). While Hope has been shown to predict various indicators of well-being, it has also been shown to be malleable in intervention studies in the areas of mental health, coping with physical diseases, and intimate partner violence (Berendes, Keefe, Somers, Kothadia, Porter, & Cheavens, 2010; Smith & Randall, 2007). Psychological strengths like Hope tend to serve us best in difficult times. The capacity to formulate pathways and dedicate mental energy (agency) is the foundation to successful goal attainment.

Similar to Hope, the improved character strengths (e.g., Zest, Grit, Self-Control) assessed in this program evaluation have been shown to help prevent or buffer against negative effects of stress and trauma (Park & Peterson, 2009).

Correlational analyses showed that higher scores on Hope as reported by the child are associated with higher scores on the character strengths (e.g., Zest, Grit, Gratitude) as observed by the counselor. Similarly, higher scores on Resiliency as reported by children are also associated with higher scores on the character strengths as observed by the counselor.

This program evaluation also demonstrated that children exposed to domestic violence are likely to experience abuse, neglect, and other forms of household dysfunction as measured by the adverse childhood experience assessment. Subsequent analysis indicated that the improvement in Hope, Resilience, and Positive Character were similar regardless of adversity as experienced by the participating camper.

The results of this evaluation support a compelling argument for the power of Camp HOPE to change the lives of children exposed to domestic violence.



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