

Does Hope Reverberate Between Generations?

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Abstract

Intergenerational transmission refers to the transmission of stories, traits, abilities, ideas, behaviors, and various outcomes from parents to their children. To date, there has been little research on the intergenerational transmission of positive behavior, traits, and actions. To determine whether hope may be transmitted from one generation to the next, a qualitative study was performed, using narrative inquiry and thematic analysis. Over 4 months, four mothers of children with mental illness were engaged in repeated conversations about stories of hope related to their past and how they envisioned hope in their children. Findings indicated that hope could be transmitted to the next generation, either explicitly (verbally) or implicitly (i.e., expressed through actions involving one's children). We conclude that also positive patterns may be transmitted both explicitly and implicitly from one generation to the next. Transmitting hope between generations played a significant role in the mothers' experiences of hope.

Keywords

intergenerational transmissions, mental health, stories, hope

Introduction

Intergenerational transmission refers to the transmission of stories, traits, abilities, ideas, behaviors, and various outcomes from parents to their children. Intergenerational transmissions have been studied from a psychological (Bar-On et al., 1998; Berthelot et al., 2015; Verhage et al., 2018) and a sociological perspective (Lochner, 2007), in the context of family systems (Hartman, 2019), as well as in terms of biology and genetics (Dashorst et al., 2019).

A significant body of literature exists about the continuity of a myriad of adverse effects from parents to children, including maltreatment, violence, stress, PTSD, and other forms of trauma within families (Anderson et al., 2018; Assink et al., 2018; Dashorst et al., 2019; Enlow et al., 2014; Ertem et al., 2000; Montgomery et al., 2019; Widom & Wilson, 2015). Given all the negative patterns appearing in the literature, only some studies addressed possible ways to protect against transmission of trauma. For example, Narayan et al. (2017) conducted a study with 185 ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse mothers who were referred for clinical services at an urban public hospital following their young children's (ages 0–6 years) exposure to a traumatic event, such as exposure to family or community violence, direct child maltreatment, and

serious illness. These mothers completed the *Angels in the Nursery Interview*, in which they were asked to recall a memory of their childhood when they felt understood, loved, and safe. The authors found that having childhood memories of loving caregivers buffered against intergenerational transmission of trauma from mothers to their children (Narayan et al., 2017, 2019).

Although positive childhood memories acted as protection against transmission of trauma, there is little research available about the transmission of positive traits, abilities, behaviors, life satisfaction, and well-being across generations. Researchers have suggested that the transmission of these attributes could break the intergenerational cycle of negative behaviors, traits, and actions

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(Dobewall et al., 2019; Headey et al., 2014). Furthermore, the life satisfaction of adult children was recently shown to be directly influenced by the life satisfaction of their mothers (Dobewall et al., 2019).

Hope has long been identified as vital and fundamental to quality of life and well-being (Chamodraka et al., 2017; Cheavens, et al., 2005; Jevne & Miller, 1999; Valle et al., 2006; Waldman-Levi et al., 2020). There are many definitions of hope, most of which overlap, at least to some extent. In a systematic review, Stephenson (1991), a registered nurse, suggested that “Hope can be defined as a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfillment that is personally meaningful” (Stephenson, 1991, p. 1459). This definition is commonly used in the healthcare literature (Antonucci, 2013; Flesaker & Larsen, 2012; Larsen et al., 2007). Hope is fundamental to the ability to cope with physical and mental illnesses (Edey et al., 2003; Herth, 2000; Schrank et al., 2012). As such, hope is important for mothers who have a child with a disability such as mental illness. These mothers have to deal with their own emotions as well as the needs of her child. Literature suggests that mothers’ stress can be transmitted between generations (Powdthavee & Vignoles, 2008).

Although hope has been extensively studied, in health and disease, the possibility of hope being transferred between generations has not been previously investigated. Given recent suggestions (Dobewall et al., 2019; Headey et al., 2014) about the intergenerational transmission of life satisfaction and well-being, we wondered if hope might also be transferred from parents to children.

Aim

The purpose of this study was to address the following question: While continuity of adverse effects from parents to children is well known, could hope, too, be transmitted from one generation to the next?

Materials and Methods

This study sought to explore the transmission of hope between generations, using a constructivist framework, which acknowledges the construction of multiple realities through life experiences. We used a qualitative research design informed by a paradigmatic approach, as suggested by Polkinghorne (1995). A paradigmatic approach gathers stories as data and uses analytic procedures, that is, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), to identify categories of common elements in the data and create a relevant taxonomy from these. In thematic analysis, knowledge is constructed with the understanding that

“Meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85).

The paradigmatic approach as suggested by Polkinghorne (1995) includes both narrative analysis and analysis of narrative. Narrative analysis provides researchers with a way to describe particular events, actions, and different episodes, and compose them into stories to present the outcome of a study. Analysis of narrative examines concepts and finds common themes among the data set overall, using thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke suggested that in thematic analysis, knowledge is constructed through a logical process, in which “Meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). While repeatedly delving into the various data sources (i.e., transcripts, notes, and field texts), reliance on thematic analysis afforded a systematic way to organize, identify, analyze, and review repeated patterns about hope transmission between generations within and across the mothers’ accounts.

Participants

As we aimed to include both Palestinian and Israeli, we included two mothers from each group. Two Palestinian and two Israeli mothers of adult children with mental illness residing in Jerusalem, Israel, participated in this study. The mothers were healthy, 45–65-year-old women, married, and mothers to at least four children. The mothers were invited to participate through mental health clinics in East and West Jerusalem. Due to the complexity and multidimensionality of the data obtained, these four participants provided very rich and sufficient accounts.

Data Collection

After the study was approved by the relevant ethics board and written informed consent was obtained from each participant, the first author engaged the four mothers in repeated individual conversations about stories of hope related to the mothers’ past and how they envisioned hope in their children. Given the cross-cultural sensitive nature of this study, the first author had to develop close relationships and establish trust with each of the mother participants. Thus, eight to ten meetings were conducted with each mother over 4 months in narrative inquiry conversations. All these considerations limited the number of participants in this study. Narrative inquiry explores the everyday lived experience and focuses on listening, observing, sharing, and developing close relationships with others over time and place (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The lived experiences of mothers’ stories of hope were told, retold, and analyzed, exploring hope from their past towards their future. The conversations

were held at times and in places selected according to the mothers' convenience. Doing so enhanced the quality and depth of the qualitative data collected. Each conversation lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours. Conversations with the Israeli mothers were conducted in Hebrew (the first author's native language). In contrast, those with Palestinian mothers were conducted in the presence of a translator who simultaneously translated from Arabic to Hebrew. All conversations were audio-recorded using smartphone and laptop software and transcribed verbatim. As language differences may influence how meaning is constructed (van Nes et al., 2010), the first author wrote summaries of each meeting. After every couple of sessions, she used the same translator to read the outlines of the conversations to each mother to confirm that she had understood their meaning. During the conversations, the first author asked the mother participants whether they could think of any specific events or activities related to hope or lack of hope that had been passed on to their children, either explicitly or implicitly.

Data sets for this study included conversation transcripts, the first author's research journals, and field notes. Thematic analysis was conducted across these data sets. It provided a systematic way to organize, identify, analyze, and review repeated patterns that emerged and were related to hope transmitted between generations.

Data Analysis

Data sets were initially translated from Hebrew to English. To ensure that meaning was retained during the translations, the data were back-translated and presented to the individual mothers in their original language for their validation. An inductive approach was then used for data analysis, meaning the analysis was driven by the data rather than dependent on a pre-existing theory. From the mother participants' points of view, we sought to learn about hope moving from the mother's past experiences of hope to her children.

During conversations held between the first author and each of the mothers, trust developed over time, as part of the relational inquiry. Entering the field of narrative inquiry is to attend to a relational inquiry: listen to a person's experience as nested in their social, cultural, and institutional narratives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). Over time, the author purposefully engaged the mothers in repeated individual conversations informed explicitly by narrative inquiry, to develop their trust in the relationship.

In narrative inquiry, "Conversation is a far more common method of cocomposing field texts... to create a space for the voices and stories of both participants and researchers to be heard and composed" (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p. 167).

In the present analysis, the mothers' past experiences of hope, those of their elders from previous generations, and possible transmission of hope to their children were explored. Specifically, the analysis examined the effects of the environment, the social contexts, time, and cultural contexts that may have influenced their transmission of hope.

Through the narratives, layers of complexity and the context of experiences could be discerned (Rich, 2017). Following the conversations, accounts were developed for each mother, and after reading with them all that had been understood up until that point, we came to the part of the thematic analysis. We followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps for thematic analysis: (a) familiarization with the data; (b) initial coding; (c) searching for themes; (d) reviewing themes; (e) defining and naming themes; and (f) writing up the report. The first author initiated the analysis by annotating the printed texts and using highlighters to categorize potential patterns of interest. The coding process entailed grouping phrases from the data set into categories and then into themes. The themes were reviewed by the second and the third authors. Any disagreement was discussed, in reference to the original data set, until a joint agreement was reached.

Criteria used to assess rigor or trustworthiness is different in qualitative and quantitative research (Sandelowski, 1986). We used Creswell and Miller's (2000) criteria in this qualitative study. These criteria entail (1) prolonged engagement (8–10 meetings with each mother over 4 months), (2) triangulation (transcripts, research journal, and field notes), (3) peer review or debriefing (professional colleagues and hope scholars), (4) researcher reflexivity (continuously reflecting carefully on the researchers' biases, beliefs, and assumptions that could have shaped the study), (5) member checking (sharing the data with the mother participants for their validation), (6) rich, thick descriptions (the first author wrote detailed, deep, and dense summaries of each meeting), and (7) the audit trail (the researcher's activities over time were recorded in a specific journal).

The truth value was assessed also in terms of credibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). To ensure credibility, the stories from each conversation were reviewed with the relevant participant at the beginning of the next meeting. In addition, a wrap-up meeting was conducted with each mother after data collection was completed.

Results

As the first author read through each of the other participant's stories, she was aware of the uniqueness of each story. The four mothers shared their personal, familial, cultural, and emotional lived experiences with a particular focus on hope from the mothers' past that had reverberated

to their children. Reading story after story, the first author became increasingly aware of hope transmitted between generations.

The mothers had learned about hope and hoping processes as children and young adults and carried these lessons forward in their relationships with their children and grandchildren. They had never explicitly thought about hope before, but rather, they felt compelled to bring valued life lessons to their children, lessons that included ways to access hope. In this way, hope appeared to be deeply valuable to the mothers, a gift they were determined to pass on to their children. These lessons came from everyday life experiences, such as cooking and social gatherings, as well as from traumatic and stressful events, such as being rejected or forced to drop out of school.

The thematic analysis revealed that hope could be carried from one generation to the next. Sometimes hope remained silent and was taken implicitly, while other times it was explicitly expressed through various actions involving family members across multiple generations. In this study, the mothers frequently brought up childhood stories involving their own mothers' stories of hope, which traversed generations. For example, memories of relationships, skills, and hope for further education were transferred to the mothers' children.

The mothers reports included two types of hope transmission experiences: hope that was transmitted from one generation to the next in an explicit manner, and hope that seemed to be carried implicitly by the next generation. The two hope-related themes that emerged from these descriptions were (a) an explicit message of hope transmitted purposefully from one generation to the next and (b) an implicit message of hope, that the next generation apparently had understood, internalized, and implemented. Both types of messages played a significant role in the hope experiences of the mothers who participated in this study. Below are a few relevant examples extracted from the mothers' stories (presented with pseudonyms).

An Explicit Message of Hope Passed From One Generation to the Next

Amal. Amal's memories of her relationship with her mother were mainly related to her skills. These then served as an intergenerational thread of hope. Amal's mother taught Amal and her sisters to cook, sew, and embroider, skills that came to symbolize hope when Amal used them to consolidate her own family. When Amal practiced these specific occupations as an adult, she felt hopeful. Her hope flourished when she was able to teach these skills to her daughters. As she said, "My mom was a

good cook and taught me how to do it," she recalled. "I love to cook, and I passed on the love of cooking to my daughters as well. Now both of my daughters know how to cook traditional food; this tool of hope came to me from my mother."

Hob. Hob and her family lived with her grandparents, who treated her mother like "A housemaid during her childhood." Hob had a sister, but her sister did not help, so Hob helped and cared for her mother. As a mother and grandmother, Hob was grateful that she learned how to care for others and maintain a household, and she felt hopeful when she passed those qualities and skills to her daughters.

Neta. Neta's mother, a religious woman, cared for many people in their community. She spent hours riding buses, bringing bottles of nutritional drinks to new mothers and food to those who could not cook for themselves. Every Shabbat, Neta's mother invited homeless people to come to her home for a meal. She perceived all these activities as significant hope experiences, which she explicitly conveyed to Neta.

All week, my mother worked hard to help others. As we were closely connected, she often shared how these caring activities provided her with hope. I remember myself sitting beside her bed, listening to her stories of hope... and I would have gladly remained seated beside my mother all day.

Neta also cared for her younger brother and later for her sister, who struggled with diabetes. Caring was an explicit value she learned from her mother: "Looking after others was a hopeful priority for both my parents. Helping others was above all." Neta recognized that caring for others in general and her children, mainly, was a place where hope was present. Her mother's legacy of caring for others traversed generations and became an enduring hope for her.

Anna. Anna started caring for her mother at age eight after her father died. It was a hopeless time for her. Her mother, who had two other children, sent her to an orphanage. Anna came home only for holidays and the occasional weekend. She did not want to lose her mother, too, so she decided to take extra care of her. Taking care of her mother made Anna feel more hopeful. Part of what gave her hope was the belief that tomorrow would be better. "People who have hope—it gives [them] a lot of power because tomorrow might be better; maybe, just maybe, tomorrow will be better." The experience of caring for her mother taught Anna to look toward the future, and she transmitted this hope to her children.

An Implicit Message of Hope Passed From One Generation to the Next

Hob. When I was 15 years old, my grandfather said I should quit going to school. I was very good at school. I was happy to study, but I had an aunt, the daughter of Grandpa, who was only one year older than me. My grandfather did not want his daughter to continue school at that time. As he did not want her to feel different, my sister and I were dragged into helping with the housework, and eventually, we quit school... For me, education is hope. After I was forbidden to go to school, I still had hope. I could not learn, but I helped my younger siblings with their homework.

An exceptional quality that Hob carried from her childhood and passed onto the next generation was her profound respect for education. Education was a symbol of hope for her. Although Hob's grandparents forced her to quit school, she found a way to maintain her hope for learning, by teaching her brothers, who had been allowed to stay in school. Hob never returned to school, yet she continued to carry this hope implicitly, and when she became a mother, she encouraged her children to attend school. One of her daughters became a social worker, and the other a chemist.

Things I had always hoped for and carried with me, my kids, are now doing. Let me tell you, both my daughters studied at the university. One of them just finished her social work degree. The other became a chemist. I am so proud of them.

Neta. In a similar vein, Neta carried a profound implicit symbol of hope, the passion for studying. This hope, too, seemed to have its genesis in Neta's stories of her parents. Both her parents were illiterate. Neta knew that her mother longed for her children to be educated. This inspired Neta to work to acquire an education.

When Neta was denied access to high school, she refused to abandon hope. Her craving for an education became an implicit hope, a vision for a better future, although she never discussed it with anyone. This implicit hope was living inside her. She took this hope for education into her future mothering occupations, signing her children up for lessons in sports and music and encouraging them to study in school and university.

[I]t was important [for me] that my children get an education and acquire knowledge. By organizing them, I helped them to achieve their goals. I loved to help with their studies. I was reading their notebooks and checking their material. All my children had taken piano lessons, and two of them were in swimming classes for seven years. I felt it was my responsibility to have them study in a hopeful way and participate in extracurricular activities.

Anna. Another touchstone reverberating throughout Anna's life was a hopeful memory related to her father's violin.

Before World War II, my father's family bought a house in an excellent part of Budapest. It was close to the Danube. My father's grandparents lived in the same neighborhood. I still remember how beautiful it was. They were lucky during the war, because my dad had good work as a chemical engineer, and all of his family survived. In addition to his work as an engineer, he used to be an amateur violinist, but the Nazis broke his fingers during the war, so we never saw or heard him play, but we saw the violin.

Now all of my children play some musical instrument, the piano, flute, or guitar. And when they play together, it fills my heart with hope. It was part of being a mother, and my investment in teaching them, and paying attention to their process of learning music was significant to me. Now they each have their own music [which gives] hope and inspiration to them and me. One of my daughters even teaches music.

Her father loved to play the violin, but the Nazis broke his fingers, so she never saw him play, although she did see his violin. Her mother told Anna that her father had loved to play a variety of melodies and music. Her mother also used to sing to her and her siblings. Anna carried memories of these moments, which contributed to her evolving hope. Specifically, when Anna became a mother, she encouraged her children to take music lessons. At the time of this research, all four of her children were adults, and they still played many instruments, including her son, who lives with a mental illness and one of her daughters became a music teacher and an opera singer.

Discussion

This study among mothers of adult children with mental illness showed that transmitting hope between generations played a significant role in the mothers' experiences of hope. The mothers often mentioned their childhood experiences with their mothers. They also said that they would not have believed that these childhood stories had anything to do with hope before engaging in research conversations that focused on hope. Reflecting on their own mothers in this context allowed the mother participants to discover their sources of hope, which they then described as having been passed to their children both implicitly and explicitly.

The term we use to describe this passing of hope from one generation to another is "intergenerational hope reverberation." Intergenerational hope reverberation was a consistent finding among all of the mother participants. Mothers learned about hope and hoping processes as

children and young adults and carried these lessons forward in their relationships with their children and grandchildren. They had never explicitly thought about hope before; rather, they felt compelled to bring valued life lessons to their children, lessons that included ways to access hope. In this sense, hope appeared to be deeply valuable to the mothers. Although sometimes hope was implicit and other times explicit, there is no doubt that hope for these mothers was a gift they were determined to pass on to their children. These lessons came from everyday life experiences, such as cooking and social gatherings, as well as from traumatic and stressful events, such as being rejected or forced to drop out of school.

Each of the mothers told stories about the hope that reverberated from her past to her children. For example, Amal grieved the loss of her husband and found hope in teaching her daughters to prepare traditional foods. For Amal, connecting with her past and transmitting this connection to the next generation became a source of hope. Hence, those moments of preparing traditional food with her daughters allowed her not only to create a bridge between her mother and her daughters but also to convey to her daughters a message of hope.

Anna never saw her father play the violin, but knowing what music had meant to him led her to encourage her children to fill their lives with music; she made sure that they learned how to play an instrument, and one of her daughters became a music teacher. Hob and Neta could not complete their education with their peers, so they transmitted a love of higher education to their children. Hob's daughters earned graduate degrees, and three of Neta's children had PhDs.

In this study, the mothers' experiences of hope emerged from memories of both hopelessness and hope, which they had experienced in their childhood and young adulthood. Yet, their memories turned out to be a thread that sustained their hope and was conveyed to the younger generations. Thus, the processing, telling, and retelling of memories became stories of hope, which provided a solid intergenerational source of hope.

Intergenerational Patterns and Processes

Several scholars have studied intergenerational patterns and processes. Some of these studies provide a scholarly foundation for understanding the transgenerational patterns that we identified in these data, related to hope, mothering, and interactional patterns experienced by the mother participants. Family therapy pioneer Murray Bowen developed a transgenerational approach to family therapy, focused on repetitive interactional patterns (Bowen, 1975; Brown, 1999). He explained that families are complex interdependent emotional units influenced by internal and external stressors. Anxiety and emotional

sensitivities are projected from parent to child and thus transmitted down the generations. Therefore, therapy should take this transmission into account (Brown, 1999).

Scholars have commonly examined intergenerational transmission of trauma (Abrams, 1999; Belsky et al., 2009; Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Palosaari et al., 2013). Kellermann (2001) discussed various mechanisms to explain intergenerational transmission of trauma. Among the modes of communication identified in his study were repetitive interpersonal patterns, social and cultural beliefs, and family structures (Kellermann, 2001). Scholars have theorized that Holocaust survivors may have transmitted their traumas through some of these mechanisms. Solomon et al. (1988) further assessed posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Israeli soldiers injured during the 1982 Lebanon war. They compared soldiers whose parents were Holocaust survivors to soldiers whose parents were not Holocaust survivors. Injured soldiers with a family history that included Holocaust survivors were significantly more likely to struggle with PTSD than those without that history (Solomon et al., 1988).

The mechanisms by which negative traits and behaviors are transmitted between generations are relatively unclear (Stempsey, 2015). Psychodynamic approaches such as projection (Srouf & Srouf, 2006), identification (Rosenheck, 1986), and genetic factors (O'Brien, 2004) have been suggested in the literature, yet they lack empiric evidence. In contrast, transmission mechanisms were studied using animal models, which due to a more controlled design rendered clearer and interpretable results (Yehuda & Lehrner, 2018). In our study, the mothers' feelings of hope and hopelessness were transformed and then transmitted to their children as a hopeful attitude, which was meaningful for these mothers to convey. However, the underlying mechanisms of these transformative processes and their mode of transmission have yet to be thoroughly understood. Nonetheless, this issue is beyond the scope of this study, which focuses on the experiential perspective.

To the best of our knowledge, while the literature is replete with studies about the transgenerational transmissions of various negative behaviors, traits, and actions (Belsky et al., 2009; Daud et al., 2005; Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008), such as trauma, mistreatment of children, alcoholism, abusive behaviors, violence, and mental illness, there is virtually no literature about the transgenerational transmission of positive experiences, attributes, and traits or, more specifically, the transmission of hope itself through generations. Rosenthal and Marshall (1988) conducted one of the few studies about passing positive characteristics and behaviors from one generation to the next. The authors interviewed 62 adults in Canada to learn about the transmission of rituals in a family context

across three generations: parents, their children, and their grandchildren. They found that rituals (e.g., birthdays, holidays, and religious activities) served as connections between the past and future and provided a sense of continuity (Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988). Hence, Rosenthal and Marshall's findings are somewhat similar to ours, but they did not address the transmission of *hope* from one generation to the next.

Possible Explanations

We propose two possible explanations for why the present study found that hope reverberated between generations. The first offers a theoretical explanation, and the second is related to the nature of this study.

John Dewey's theory provides a theoretical framework that explains the appearance of hope as a transgenerational phenomenon. Dewey was an American philosopher and psychologist who developed a theory of experience and its relation to education. "Educative experiences," as termed by Dewey, has two folds. The first are those experiences that emerge from the past, and the second is that change what will come in the future (Dewey, 1986). Dewey noted that an educative experience is characterized by two principles: *continuity* and *interaction*. He defined *continuity* as past experiences leading to present and future experiences, and *interaction* as the negotiation between the person having the experience (internal conditions) and the surrounding environment (objective external conditions). Dewey suggested that an educative experience is rendered when one reflects on a real-life personal situation using these two principles. Doing so leads to further actions based on these reflections.

Second, as this study intentionally elicited stories of hope and promoted the language of hope, it is possible that the mothers were focused on and oriented toward stories of hope rather than stories of stress and trauma. The narrative inquiry methodology employed in this study encouraged the mother participants to reflect on their past, present, and imagined future experiences of hope. Neta and Anna referred to the importance of music in their childhoods and then in their own mothering experiences, and Amal's experiences with cooking were of a similar pattern. It seems that these reflections led the mothers to realize that some of their experiences had led to implicit lessons, which as mothers they chose to convey to their children explicitly, through actions. Thus, these actions were not at all incidental. Instead, as the mothers discovered, these actions revealed meaningful expressions of hope, which they had garnered from their past and transmitted to their children. Thus, using Dewey's terminology, the various examples of intergenerational hope reverberations identified in the present study may be conceptualized as the mothers'

application of the continuity principle to the educative experiences that they had gleaned through their past interactions. We learned from the mother participants about the way hope turns from an abstract feeling into something definable and concrete. Hope can be defined as the ability to learn from experience and the competence to teach others.

Limitations

It is important to mention some possible limitations to this study. This is a small study, which was conducted within the specific context of mothering and caring for an adult child with mental illness. There is no reason to believe that the presence of mental illness in these mothers' children would affect transmission of hope compared to mothers of children with no mental illness. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to study this phenomena in other contexts. Although the number of participants was relatively small, the stories that emerged from an intensive schedule of interpersonal meetings over a period of 4 months provided a rich data set, which in turn strengthened the credibility of the study. As with any other qualitative study, transferability may be more important than generalizability, and it will be left for the readers to determine whether the findings are applicable to their practice.

Conclusions

The central argument of this paper has been that negative patterns may not be the only processes transmitted between generations. Rather, hope can also be transmitted both explicitly and implicitly from one generation to the next. Sometimes that transmission is vivid and explicit, as in the case of Amal learning to cook from her mother. Sometimes it is hidden and implicit, as when Neta's illiterate mother indirectly encouraged Neta's hope to learn and acquire an education. In all of the cases in this study, each of the mothers appeared to internalize her own parent's hope which she then passed on to the next generation. Practitioners are used to deal with intergenerational negative attitudes, traits, and behaviors. We suggest that practitioners should pay attention, enquire, and facilitate with their clients discussions and stories about intergenerational positive resources such as hope. More research is needed to further explore possible mechanisms of hope transmission between generations in different cultures and contexts.

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Ethical Approval

The study was approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, No. Pro00056883, July 7, 2015.

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