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The roles of hopeful thinking in preventing problems and enhancing strengths

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Abstract

From its most famous tale, that of Pandora, hope was meant to prevent the emergence and reemergence of life difficulties. A new model defining hope as a combination of agentic pathways and goal-directed thinking is reviewed. Comparisons of the similarities of this theory to other existing theories are made. The beneficial roles of hope in primary (before the appearance of a problem) and secondary (after a problem has appeared) prevention are explored. Primary enhancement is introduced as involving those thoughts and actions that establish optimal functioning and satisfaction. Secondary enhancement is posited to describe those thoughts and actions that are undertaken over time so as to further functioning and satisfaction in order to reach peak levels. Using hope theory as a lens, these primary and secondary enhancement processes are described. The natural synergy between prevention and enhancement activities is discussed, along with the future priorities for using hope in prevention and enhancement efforts.



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Key words

Agency; Coping; Goals; Hope; Pathways; Positive psychology; Primary enhancement; Primary prevention; Secondary enhancement; Secondary prevention

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