



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
Hope Research Center

Camp HOPE America: Developing Hope and Resilience in Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence

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INTRODUCTION

Camp HOPE America is the first local, state, and national camping and mentoring initiative in the United States to focus on children exposed to domestic violence. The vision for Camp HOPE America is to break the generational cycle of family violence by offering healing and hope to the children who have experienced it (Hellman & Gwinn, 2016). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the camp's effectiveness at increasing hope and resilience in youth. Hopeful thinking among children is positively associated with perceived competence and self-worth as well as lower rates of depression and anxiety (Kwon, 2000). Hope also serves as a resilience factor when facing stressful life events and helps improve emotional well-being (Valle, 2006).



References Available Upon Request

METHOD

To assess changes in hope and resilience, a matched pre-camp, post-camp and 30 day follow-up assessment design was used. Matched comparisons were available for 782 campers from fifteen states across all three assessment periods. Comparisons were made on child self-reports of Hope and Resilience and counselor observations of Hope. Assessments, based on Snyder's (2000) Children's Hope Scale for Hope and developed by the Hope Research Center for Resilience, included a six point Likert-type response format (1=none of the time; 6=all of the time).

Hope Items

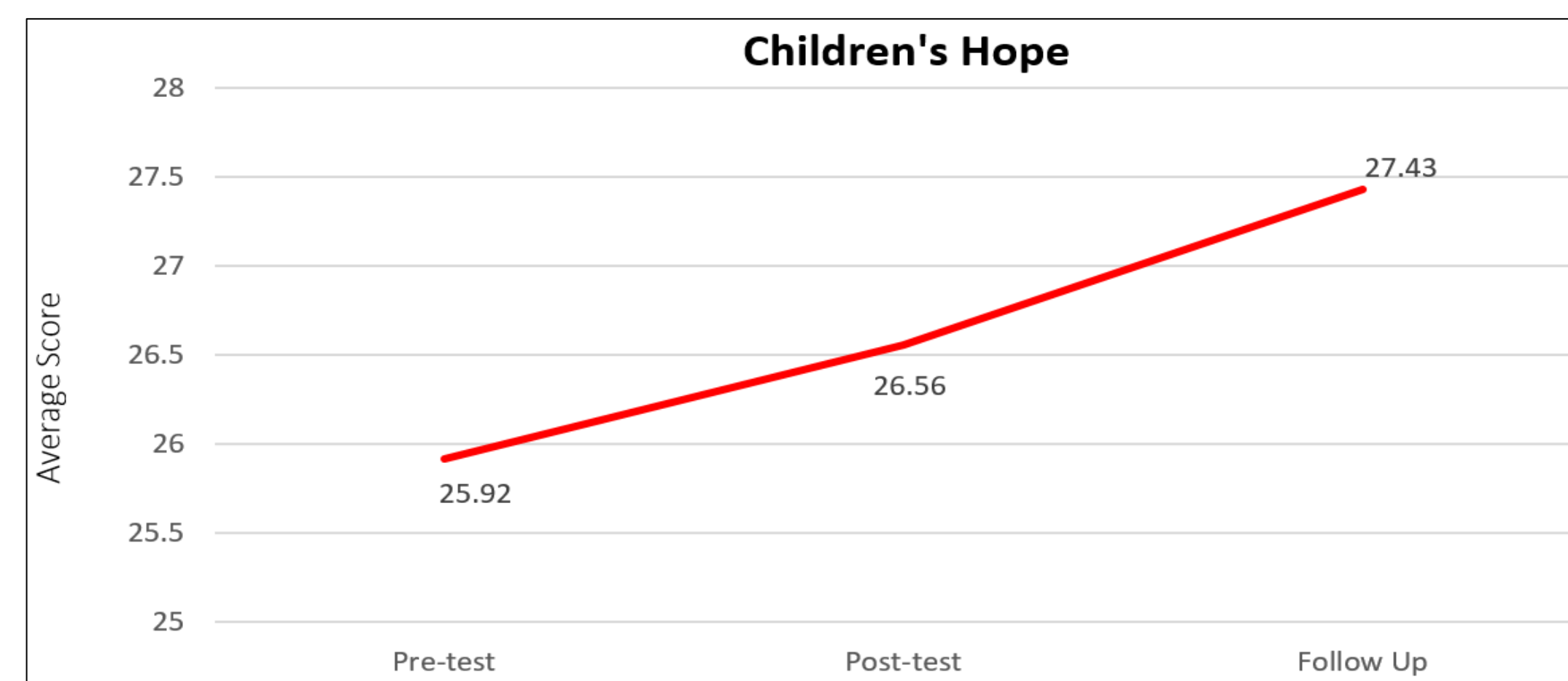
- I think I am doing pretty well.
- I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me.
- I am doing just as well as other kids my age.
- When I have a problem, I can think of lots of ways to solve it.
- I think the things I have done in the past will help me in the future.
- Even when others want to quit, I know that I can find ways to solve the problem.



RESULTS

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

-Hope Rising, Casey Gwinn & Chan Hellman

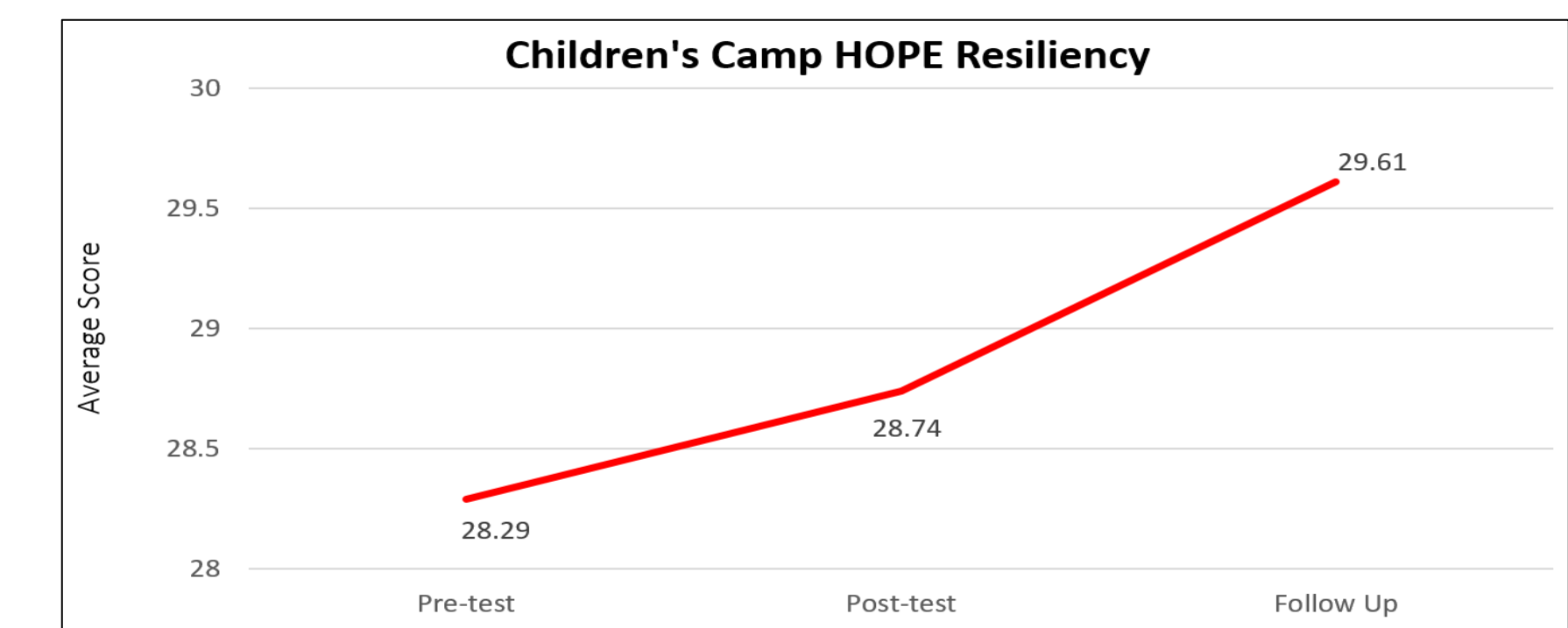


This graph illustrates the change in scores for the Children's Hope Scale. As seen in the graph, hope scores increased from pre-test to post-test and again at the follow-up assessment. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that the increase in children's hope was statistically significant [F (2, 781) = 36.80; p < .001]. This means that the individual's level of hope increased after participating in Camp HOPE.



Resilience Items

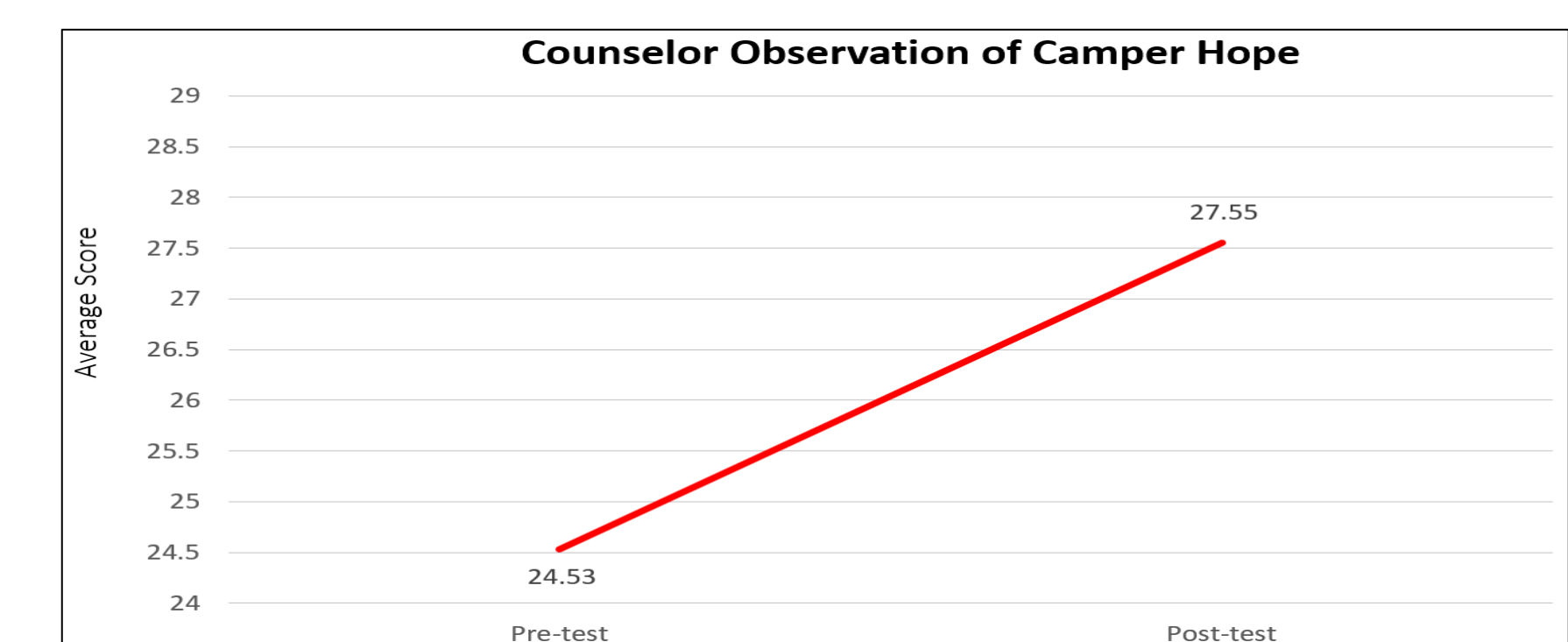
- I have friends who care about me.
- I'm part of a group that cares about each other.
- I like to encourage and support others.
- Others accept me just the way I am.
- Even when bad things happen, I stay hopeful.
- I think I will achieve my dreams.



The graph above illustrates the change in scores for the Camp HOPE Resiliency Scale. A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-camp, post-camp, and follow-up test mean scores. The results of the analyses showed an increase from pre-test to post-test and an again from post-test to follow-up. This increase in children's resiliency was statistically significant [F (2, 769) = 26.34; p < .001]. This means that the individual's level of resiliency increased after participating in Camp HOPE.

Camp HOPE resiliency is the combination of believing in self, believing in others, and believing in your dreams.

-Camp HOPE America Model, www.camphopeamerica.com



The graph above demonstrates the change in hope observed by the camp counselors. A repeated measures ANOVA was computed to examine the differences in pre-and post-test mean scores. Total hope scores [t(1062) = -16.66; p < .001] significantly increased; this means that individual's levels of observable hope increased after participating in Camp HOPE.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide compelling evidence that Camp HOPE America improves the hope and resilience of children exposed to domestic violence by providing pathways towards reaching their goals and encouraging agency. This study serves to evaluate the success of current Camp HOPE programs and will inform future curriculum. It also serves to stimulate further research interests in organizational efforts to nourish hope in children impacted by adverse childhood experiences.

