

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

EXPLORING WHAT MATTERS

THE ACTION FOR HAPPINESS COURSE

COURSE LEADER GUIDE



WELCOME TO THE TEAM

Hello. Congratulations on being approved as a Course Leader for the Exploring What Matters course; we're so delighted to have you as part of our amazing team of volunteer leaders who are helping to spread more happiness in their local communities.

As you have probably heard, we've been completely overwhelmed with the response to this, with a huge number of fantastic people putting themselves forward as Course Leaders. It's so inspiring to see so many people like you wanting to make a difference and we are incredibly grateful for all your support, patience and enthusiasm.

Thanks so much for all the effort you've already put in to find out about the course, find a venue and get a plan together. We know this takes real effort and commitment, but we're also confident that the end outcome will be something very special for your course participants - and hopefully a great experience for you too!

This Course Leader Guide is packed full of useful information and advice on how to organise and run your course, including practical tips, technical details, facilitation guidance and feedback from previous course participants and leaders.

We hope you find it helpful and it provides everything you need to make your course a success. But we are also very happy to answer any additional questions you've got - and would welcome your constructive feedback on our guidance too. So please feel free to get in touch with us at courses@actionforhappiness.org at any time.

Warmest wishes and huge thanks again

Mark and the Action for Happiness team



"I wholeheartedly support the Exploring What Matters course and hope that many thousands will benefit from it and be inspired to take their own action to create a happier world"

The Dalai Lama, patron of Action for Happiness

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WHY RUN THE COURSE?

It's great that you've put yourself forward as a course leader. As a reminder, here are some of the many reasons why this is a really amazing thing to do:

1. You are helping to create a happier world

We know the course makes a real difference. You're helping people discover more happiness in their own lives and also encouraging them to do more for others too.

2. It's a highly rewarding and enjoyable experience

Running the course takes real commitment, but course leaders consistently tell us that it's one of the most rewarding and enjoyable things they've ever done.

3. You will learn new things and develop your skills

Running the course will expose you to the latest research about wellbeing and help you enhance your skills for facilitating groups in an effective, engaging and interactive way.

4. It's a chance to connect with lots of great people

You will be bringing together a diverse group of people and during the course they will connect in increasingly meaningful and inspiring ways. Lasting friendships often develop.

5. You are a pioneer in the Action for Happiness movement

As a course leader you are one of a small but growing group of pioneers building this movement, taking these ideas to a wider audience and making a real difference.



“Setting the right atmosphere by creating a warm welcome was really important. The hardest thing was having to interrupt some great conversations in order to move on and keep to time!”

Natasha Warne, course leader

WHAT ARE LEADERS LIKE?

FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT COURSE LEADERS

- **Passionate.** People need to know that you really care about the ideas on the course and about them too. So you'll have a strong personal conviction about why these ideas matter and really want to make a difference - but in a way which is self-aware and authentic rather than pushy or arrogant.
- **Committed.** Organising the course takes lots of time and energy. So you'll be someone who's proactive and willing to put in the effort required to make it a success, not just at the start but for the whole 8 week course and beyond. You'll also be a reliable person who can be trusted to do what you say you're going to do.
- **Warm-hearted.** It's vital that people feel welcome and at ease with being there and taking part. So you'll be someone who is warm, kind and genuinely interested in other people. And when you have to interrupt their conversations to keep things to time, you'll be able to do this in an assertive but friendly way.
- **Perceptive.** To run the course effectively you need to be really "tuned in" to what people are experiencing and how things are going. So you'll be someone who is emotionally intelligent, perceptive to the needs of others and able to adapt your style and behaviour to bring out the best in people.
- **Supportive.** Occasionally people may raise difficult issues or behave in challenging ways on your course. So you'll be someone who is confident in handling this sort of situation - for example by responding sensitively, being firm when required and knowing where to refer people to for further support if needed.



“What I loved most about running the course was being part of a group of people connecting on a deep level to effect positive change in the world outside us. I was profoundly moved by the experience and would recommend it to everyone”

Lucy Roberts, course leader

BEING A COURSE LEADER

There are two different roles required to lead the Exploring What Matters course.

We recommend sharing these roles between two co-leaders, based on their relevant skills and interests (although in some cases a single leader can carry out both roles).



ORGANISER

The **ORGANISER** looks after the practicalities of running the course:

- Arranging the venue
- Promoting the course
- Communicating with participants
- Making sure everything is in place



FACILITATOR

The **FACILITATOR** brings the groups to life and leads the weekly sessions:

- Creating a positive group atmosphere
- Guiding the activities and discussions
- Encouraging people to participate
- Keeping sessions to time

The course attracts a mixture of '*seekers*' (people who may be struggling and searching for more happiness) and '*change-makers*' (people wanting to make the world a better place). As a course leader you need to be comfortable engaging with both these perspectives.

The course leader is NOT an expert or teacher; your role is to facilitate conversations.



"I love running the course. Getting together with people from completely different backgrounds to honestly explore some of the deepest subjects in life is just magic ... it's also loads of fun"

Alex Nunn, course leader

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

EXPLORING WHAT MATTERS

THE ACTION FOR HAPPINESS COURSE

PART 1: THE ORGANISER ROLE



HOW IT WORKS (FOR LEADERS)

WHAT YOU GET AS A COURSE LEADER:

- **Course materials.** Access to the full set of structured course materials, including 104-page course pack, downloadable videos and presentation slides for each session
- **Course leader guide.** Detailed guidance on how to organise and facilitate the course, packed with top tips about how to run the course effectively
- **Event page.** Dedicated webpage for your course (where all attendees have to sign up) and help promoting this to any existing Action for Happiness followers nearby
- **Advice.** Access to support from people who have run the course previously, to help with any questions you have about how to deliver your course
- **Funding.** The costs of delivering your course will be covered by Action for Happiness, (via donations made up-front by participants), up to a limit we'll agree together when planning your course. For example, this could include venue hire costs, travel expenses or snacks and drinks you purchase for yourself and participants.

WHAT YOU COMMIT TO:

- Having the relevant skills and characteristics to run the course
- Running the whole 8-week course using the set materials, structure and content
- Taking responsibility for the venue and logistics associated with delivering the course
- Doing whatever you can to minimise the costs of delivering the course
- Ensuring that participants adhere to the ground rules and sign-up/completion process
- Providing feedback from participants and course leaders to Action for Happiness
- Staying true to the Action for Happiness mission and ethos at all times.



“I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the research on happiness with the group and seeing the positive actions they’d taken each week. It inspired me to apply more of the techniques to my own life too”

Helen Eveleigh, course leader

HOW IT WORKS (FOR PARTICIPANTS)

OUR DONATION-BASED MODEL

The full 8-week course is valued at **£100** (approx. **\$140** or **€120**), which consists of £10 for each weekly session (approx. \$14 or €12) and £20 for the course book and resources.

To keep the course accessible to the widest range of people, participants are asked to make a **donation of their choice** to sign up for the course. The **recommended donation** is £100, but if people cannot afford this they are able to donate what they can instead. And if people want to donate more (to support those who have less) that is encouraged too.

Donations are made directly to Action for Happiness up front (via the event sign-up page) so course leaders don't need to handle the donations directly.

WHY ARE WE TAKING THIS APPROACH?

- We want the course to be accessible to as many people as possible - everyone deserves the chance to be happier and help create a happier world!
- But we also need to cover the costs of running the course (e.g. venue hire, materials) and we know that people value things more when they make a financial commitment.
- Some courses may generate a small surplus while others will end up costing more than participants donate. Our hope is that surplus donations in more affluent areas will help to support the course being made available in more disadvantaged areas.
- This approach also takes pressure off you as a Course Leader - because you will be asking participants to make a donation to a registered charity (rather than a fixed payment to you as an individual), while still having your costs covered.



“I wasn't happy at work but hadn't really taken the time to think about what I could do to change that. The course gave me the confidence to ask for a review of my role and create an action plan”

Helen Thompson, course participant

YOUR COURSE VENUE

TYPES OF VENUE

As a Course Leader you are free to choose the local venue where you feel it would be most appropriate to run your course. There are lots of types of potential venues, including:

- Community centre
- Training room
- Town hall
- Health centre
- Library
- Cafe / pub
- Education centre
- Yoga studio
- Church hall



We always recommend visiting your venue before booking it to be sure it's appropriate.

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING YOUR VENUE

- **Equipment.** Does the venue have the equipment needed (see next page)?
- **Style.** Does it have a welcoming and friendly feel?
- **Perception.** What other activities is the venue associated with? (Note: some venues have specific associations locally, e.g. a church or mental health clinic)
- **Convenience.** How convenient is the venue for the people who will be attending (e.g. central rather than remote; fairly easy to get to)?
- **Parking.** If people will be driving, is there suitable parking space nearby?
- **Refreshments.** Can people get refreshments at the venue (e.g. on-site cafe) or might you need to bring some for them?
- **Insurance.** Does the venue have Public Liability Insurance?
- **Accessibility.** Does the venue allow easy access for wheelchairs if needed?
- **Promotion.** Are there opportunities to promote the course to existing users of that building (e.g. notice boards, newsletters)?

YOUR EQUIPMENT



Each session of the course involves watching one or more videos, so you will need the capability to show these in your venue. This will normally require:

- Laptop or other device capable of playing the video file
- Projector with screen/wall to project on to (or alternatively a large digital TV)
- Speakers or sounds system so the group can hear the audio clearly too



If your venue doesn't have the necessary equipment then you could potentially arrange to borrow/hire this from another source. If you're not comfortable with setting up the equipment yourself then arrange for someone with the right technical skills to be there.

BEFORE EACH SESSION

- Download any videos and slides you need for that session to the actual computer you will be using and check they can be opened/played as expected
- Test the computer with the projector/speakers to make sure these work too

If you have problems getting the videos to play on your laptop or Mac, we recommend downloading & using this free **VLC Media Player**: www.videolan.org/vlc/index.en-GB.html

YOUR COURSE PAGE

CREATING YOUR BOOKING PAGE

Once your course has been approved we will create a special page for your course using the Eventbrite system. To get this set up we need the following information from you:

- **Full address of venue** - this is shown on a map on the page
- **Dates and times** - please complete the following sentence:
The course will run on [day of week, e.g. Tuesdays] from [start time] till [end time] on the following dates: [week 1 date, e.g. 1 Feb], [week 2 date], [week 3 date]... etc.
- **Maximum attendees** - once this number has been reached the site will switch to adding people to a “waiting list” and not take any further bookings.

The screenshot shows the Eventbrite interface for a course titled "The Action for Happiness Course (Leeds, 1 Feb 2016)". At the top, there is an Eventbrite logo, a search bar with the text "Search for events", and a "Browse Events" link. Below this is a banner for "ACTION FOR HAPPINESS". The course title is "The Action for Happiness Course (Leeds, 1 Feb 2016)", with a subtitle "Action for Happiness Course" and details "Monday, 1 February 2016 at 19:30 - Monday, 21 March 2016 at 21:30 (GMT) Leeds, United Kingdom". To the right of the text is a photo of a group of people. Below the text is a "TICKET INFORMATION" table with columns for "DONATION TYPE", "SALES END", and "AMOUNT". The table contains one row for "Donation of your choice" with a sales end date of "8 Feb 2016" and an amount field labeled "Enter donation (£)". Below the table is a "Note" and a "Register" button. To the right of the table is a "Save This Event" button. Below the "Register" button is a "WHEN & WHERE" section with a map showing the location of the "Quaker Meeting House" on "A660" and "St Mark's St". At the bottom of the page, there is a "Share" section with social media icons for Email, Share, Tweet, and Like, and a note that "18 people like this. Be the first of your friends."

Your booking page will have a unique URL (web address) as follows:

<http://afh-location-dd-mmm.eventbrite.co.uk>, e.g. <http://afh-leeds-1-feb.eventbrite.co.uk>

You will be set up as “Manager” for your course so you receive details when people sign up.

REGISTERING FOR YOUR COURSE

EVERYONE HAS TO REGISTER ONLINE

All participants have to register online for your course. This is important because:

- It means that they all agree to certain conditions - e.g. to respect the Ground Rules and to recognise that this is a non-therapeutic intervention run by local volunteers
- It gives them the chance to make their donation to attend the course
- It allows us to email them during the course and provide helpful information

The end date for bookings will be a week after your course starts, so people can join between weeks 1 and 2, if places are still available (we prefer people not to join after week 2). Once someone has registered online they will receive an email confirmation and be asked to complete a short survey about their wellbeing and attitudes (see page 18).

POSSIBLE REGISTRATION PROBLEMS

Most people have no problem in registering for courses online, but a few may need help:

- If someone is not very confident using technology (e.g. an older person without internet access) then they may need to get help from a friend or relative
- If someone comes along at short notice they may not have had time to register.

In both of these cases it can be helpful to have a web-enabled computer/device at the venue to help people complete their registration (especially for your first session).

REGISTERING FOR YOUR OWN COURSE

- **You and your co-leader must also register for a place on your own course.** This will show you the process your participants will follow and ensure that you also receive a copy of any emails we send to participants.
- To register on your page, choose "Enter promotional code" and use this special code for course leaders (no donation required): **EWMLEAD102**

Enter promotional code

If you have a promotional code, enter it here:

Apply

PROMOTING YOUR COURSE

WHY AND HOW?

Your course will only be a success if people sign up for it and get involved. Although we can help spread the word and contact people we're aware of, an essential part of your role as a Course Leader is promoting your course. There are lots of different ways of doing this:

- Word of mouth: tell family members, friends, colleagues, neighbours and local groups
- Online: sharing your course on Facebook and other social media networks
- Posters: putting up information about your course in places where potential attendees are likely to see them - e.g. notice boards at your venue, local library, supermarket, town/village hall, community centre etc
- Media: sending details about the course to local newspapers, magazines or websites

HOW WE CAN HELP

We will add your course to our website and email everyone we know who lives nearby (e.g. within 20km of your venue). We also provide a template poster and press release to promote your course, found here: www.actionforhappiness.org/resources-for-leaders



Poster



Press release



Example of local media coverage

WHAT WORKS BEST?

- There are three essential parts to a good course promotion effort:
1) **Build community.** 2) **Build connection.** 3) **Make it personal**
- We've learnt a lot supporting courses, read our top tips for promotion here: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-promotion

PRE-COURSE CHECKPOINT

CONFIRMING YOUR COURSE IS READY TO GO AHEAD

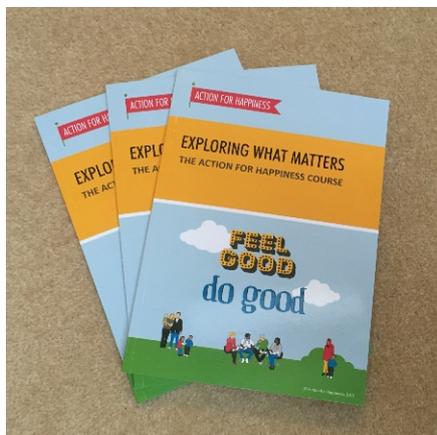
Around a week before your course starts we will have a Checkpoint Call with you to:

- Review how things are looking in terms of participant numbers
- Highlight if any of your course participants have reported very low wellbeing scores
- Answer any remaining questions you've got about running your course
- Run through a few final quick reminders and helpful tips
- Confirm how many course books to send out to you

WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE?

If your course doesn't have (or look like it will get) enough participants to make it viable (e.g. at least 5-6 people) then we may agree to postpone or cancel the course. This is not a decision we take lightly as people who have booked will of course be disappointed if so.

ORDERING COURSE BOOKS



During our Checkpoint Call we will agree together the number of course books that will be sent out to you. This will take into account the number of people already registered, how many more we expect might sign up, plus any copies that may be required for you or your co-leader too.

You will need to email us the address that you want these sent to and we will get these ordered immediately after the Checkpoint Call.

POTENTIAL DELIVERY ISSUES

- Books are delivered by a courier company and must be sent to an address where someone will be available to sign for the order. If no-one is there they will leave a note and you will need to arrange re-delivery for a different time.

COMMUNICATION

GET IN TOUCH IN ADVANCE

An important part of your role as a Course Leader is to communicate with participants via email outside of the face-to-face sessions. This is particularly helpful ahead of the first session, so they know who you are and what to expect. We recommend sending a friendly email a few days before to introduce yourself. Here's an example:

EXAMPLE EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Hello, we're so pleased that you're joining our Exploring What Matters course in <PLACENAME> starting on <STARTDATE>.

The course has been developed by Action for Happiness (with backing from the Dalai Lama) and we are the volunteers who will be running it for you locally.

As a reminder the course is happening at <VENUE> which is at <ADDRESS>. We will start promptly at <STARTTIME> so it would be fantastic if you could aim to arrive 15 minutes early so we've got time to say hello beforehand.

You will receive your own personal copy of the course book when you arrive, which has all the material for the course. Please bring a pen along as we will be asking you to write a few things down during the session.

We are really looking forward to meeting you and hope you enjoy the course.

Note: you may want to include other information too (e.g. parking, refreshments etc)

We also recommend sending 1-2 emails between course sessions if possible. For example you could send one to thank people for coming, with some follow-up links relating to the session; and you could send another a few days later to remind them what's coming up in the next session and that you're looking forward to seeing them. Action for Happiness will also send participants a few friendly emails during the course too.

IMPORTANT: PARTICIPANT PRIVACY

Please always use the blind copy (BCC) feature to respect people's privacy and not share their personal details. Please also respect any requests to opt out of emails.

EMAILING YOUR PARTICIPANTS

When participants sign up for your course they agree to be contacted by their course leaders and Action for Happiness via email (although they can choose to opt out later). There are two different ways you can email your course participants, as follows:

USING YOUR NORMAL EMAIL SYSTEM

You can get the email addresses of your participants and use these to send them messages directly from your normal email system, as follows:

1. Log in to your course page on Eventbrite at <http://eventbrite.co.uk/myevents>
2. Select the “Manage” option underneath your event title
3. Choose “Event Reports” from the “Analyse” section in the left-hand side menu and then click on the “Attendee Summary” report option
4. Scroll down to Copy and Paste people’s names/emails into your normal email system and send your message to them from there, remembering to use BCC to respect individual privacy and avoid participants seeing each others’ contact details.

The advantage of this approach is that the email appears more personalised and is less likely to end up in people’s spam folders. The downside is that it involves a bit of careful copying and pasting to make sure you’ve got the details right and not missed anyone.

SENDING FROM WITHIN EVENTBRITE

You can email all of your participants directly from within Eventbrite, as follows:

1. Log in to your course page on Eventbrite at <http://eventbrite.co.uk/myevents>
2. Select the “Manage” option underneath your event title
3. Choose “Emails to Attendees” under “Manage Attendees” in the left-hand side menu
4. Click the "Create new attendee email" button
5. Add your text as appropriate. We recommend add your own email title, deleting the example text which says "A message from Action for Happiness course:" and adding your own personalised message instead.
6. Choose the time to send your email (immediately or scheduled) and press Send.

The advantage of this approach is that it is simpler and quicker than manually copying people’s email addresses into a separate email. The downside is that the message appears less informal and there is a risk that it gets blocked by some people’s spam filters.

SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK

WELLBEING & ATTITUDES SURVEY

When someone registers for your course they will receive an email confirmation and be asked to complete a short survey about their wellbeing and attitudes. We also ask them to do this at the end of the course as this allows us to track the impact of the course. All data gathered is treated in confidence and used anonymously. The survey can be found here:

www.actionforhappiness.org/survey

Note: if one of your participants reports a very low wellbeing score we will let you know before your course so you can keep an eye out for them and provide support if needed.

GETTING FEEDBACK FROM YOUR PARTICIPANTS

As a Course Leader we would encourage you to seek out feedback from your participants, especially near the start of your course. People like the chance to share their views and you may benefit from hearing their encouragement and/or suggestions for enhancements. Here is the link to a feedback form which can be used after any of your sessions:

www.actionforhappiness.org/feedback

We will also email your participants and let them know that they can get in touch with Action for Happiness at any time if they have any questions or concerns about the course.

The screenshot shows the 'WELLBEING & ATTITUDES SURVEY' form. It includes a progress bar at 25%, a '2. About You' section with fields for Name and Email Address, a dropdown for 'Which course are you doing?', and radio buttons for 'Are you filling in this survey before or after the course?'. There are also links for 'COURSE LOCATIONS' and 'A Force For Good'.

Wellbeing and attitudes survey

The screenshot shows the 'YOUR VIEWS ON THE COURSE' feedback form. It includes a 'Name (optional)' field, a 'Date' field, and a table for rating various aspects of the course. The table has columns for 'Very Poor', 'Poor', 'OK', 'Good', and 'Very Good'. Below the table are text boxes for 'What have been the highlights for you?' and 'What could we do to make the course even better?'. A thank you message is at the bottom.

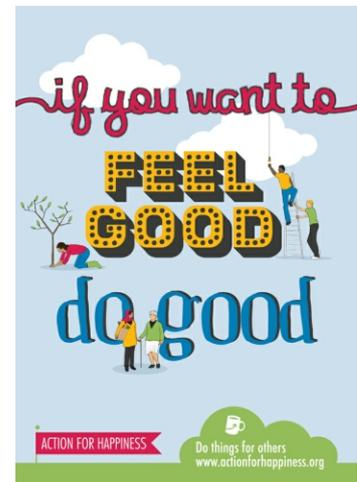
Rate	Very Poor	Poor	OK	Good	Very Good
The course as a whole:	1	2	3	4	5
The content of the sessions:	1	2	3	4	5
The way the course is facilitated:	1	2	3	4	5

Feedback form

PREPARING FOR THE COURSE

THINGS TO DO IN ADVANCE

- **Prepare.** Make sure the facilitator(s) are familiar with the course materials and have watched the videos
- **Communicate.** Send a friendly hello/reminder email to your course participants (see pages 16-17 for details)
- **Download.** Get copies of the videos and slides (optional) downloaded onto the computer you will be using
- **Test.** Wherever possible, check out the technology in advance, including computer, projector and audio
- **Bring.** Get hold of things you need to bring, e.g. course books, refreshments, name badges, pens, attendee list
- **Print.** You may like to print out some of our happiness posters to put up: www.actionforhappiness.org/posters



Example poster

THINGS TO DO ON THE DAY

- **Session timings.** Note down the timings for your session (see example on next page)
- **Arrive early.** Get there early to set things up and check the videos are working ok
- **Arrange the room.** Create a friendly space with the right number of chairs. Set up seats in a circle and make sure the room is a comfortable temperature. You may want to put up some posters inside the room and a welcome sign outside
- **Refreshments.** If your venue doesn't have a cafe we recommend bringing some refreshments (e.g. fresh fruit, biscuits or other snacks, juice/water, tea & coffee)
- **Name badges.** You may like to bring along some badges or stickers to help people get to know each others' names (and to help you remember them too!)
- **Spare pens.** People often bring pens with them but it's helpful to bring a few spares

FOR WEEKS 1 AND 2

- **Books.** Bring the course books and remind participants to bring them back each week
 - **Web-enabled PC.** In case someone new turns up and needs to book their place
- Note: the hardest part is getting ready for week 1. After that it's much easier!*

SESSION TIMINGS

EXAMPLE TIMINGS FOR A SESSION

- Beforehand Pick up things you need to bring (e.g. laptop, refreshments, books)
- 18:00 - 18:45 Arrive early at venue and get everything set up
- 18:45 - 19:00 Greet participants as they begin to arrive
- 19:00 - 19:10 **Welcome** (10 mins)
*In week 1: introduce yourself and run through Ground Rules;
In other weeks: ask about actions/outcomes from previous week*
- 19:10 - 19:25 **Tuning In** - mindfulness and good things (15 mins)
- 19:25 - 19:35 **Theme** - this week's theme (10 mins)
- 19:35 - 19:55 **Expert view** - watch the video (20 mins)
- 19:55 - 20:05 **Did you know** - keep this fairly brief (10 mins)
- 20:05 - 20:15 **Personal View** (10 mins)
- 20:15 - 20:20 **Break** (5 mins) - encourage people to stand up and move!
- 20:20 - 20:45 **Group discussion** - this is the most important bit! (25 mins)
- 20:45 - 20:55 **Action ideas** - what people will do as a result (10 mins)
- 20:55 - 21:00 **Close** (5 mins)
Refer to supporting resources for this week, mention next week's theme and thank people for coming

COURSE COSTS

WHAT COSTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

- **Venue hire:** this is normally the main cost involved
- **Refreshments:** providing snacks/drinks for your participants (note: if your venue has a cafe or other facilities then participants may be happy to buy these for themselves)
- **Other essential costs:** e.g. your travel to/from the venue; equipment hire

Please note: costs need to be agreed with us in advance - so please contact us if you discover that additional costs may need to be incurred.

HOW TO RECLAIM YOUR COSTS

- Here is an expense reclaim template you can use for claiming costs back: www.actionforhappiness.org/expenses
- You can claim half the costs before the start of the course (once the agreed minimum number of participants have signed up) and the remainder at the end (once you confirm the course has been completed as planned).

EXPENSE CLAIM	
For the Attention of: Action for Happiness - www.actionforhappiness.org www.1, 3 Kewstere Square, 138 Aldgate, London EC3N 4JF	
Ref: Delivery of Exploring What Matters course	
Expense Claim from:	
Name:	Facility Name
Address:	1st Church Lane, Hopperton, NE1 8PV, UK
Invoice Date:	31/01/18
Course details:	
Location:	St Andrew's Community Centre
	100 Lenny Lane
	Hopperton
	NE1 8PV
Cost Date:	30/01/18
Start:	18/01/18
End:	18/01/18
Overall course costs:	
Expense Reclaim:	£100.00
Subsidy/Grant:	£100.00
Other Expenses:	£100.00
Total Costs:	£300.00
Reimburse:	£150.00 (unless noted otherwise)
Bank details for payment:	
Account Holder:	123456789
Bank Name:	123456789
Account Number:	123456789
Bank Name:	
Branch:	123456789
Sort Code:	123456789
IBAN:	GB21 1234 5678 9010 1112 3456 7890 1011 1213 1415
Notes: (please ensure these appear as soon as possible as it will be too late if you have already incurred costs associated with delivering the course)	

KEEPING COSTS DOWN

We would be extremely grateful if you could do everything you can to minimise your costs. This helps us ensure the course is sustainable and can be delivered all around the country, including in more disadvantaged areas. Here are some ideas:

- Ask your venue for a discount - explain it is for a charitable cause; it's based on donations (rather than fixed fees) and provides a benefit for the community
- Get good value refreshments - e.g. use tap water rather than bottled water, choose simple snacks (e.g. bananas, oranges, biscuits) rather than canapés!
- Focus on no-cost ways of promoting your course - e.g. word-of-mouth, social media, or a story in the local newspaper - rather than paid-for marketing.

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

EXPLORING WHAT MATTERS

THE ACTION FOR HAPPINESS COURSE

PART 2: THE FACILITATOR ROLE



FACILITATION STYLE

As the Facilitator, your role is vitally important to the success of the course. You have the biggest influence over the experience that participants have in the session and you set the tone and style for the group interactions by the way you behave.

Here is our most important guidance on how to do the job well. This is based on having piloted the course with various different groups - and listening to their feedback.

1. CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE

- Your most important role is to help the group have a positive experience together
- Welcome everyone in person when they arrive and introduce them to each other
- Be warm and enthusiastic - thank people for their contributions
- Create an informal, friendly atmosphere (but show you know what you're doing)

2. BE A FACILITATOR (NOT A TEACHER)

- You are there to facilitate group conversations, not to be an “expert”
- Ask rather than tell - use the wisdom already in the room
- Take a neutral stance - focus on what the group thinks; don't impose your ideas
- You don't have to answer every question - ask the group what they think

3. ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS

- Make sure participants are aware of the Ground Rules and expectations
- Give people the chance to share other ideas about how the group should behave
- Encourage people to respect each others' views and listen to each other
- Participants don't have to agree, but we want them to be constructive and friendly

4. BE PREPARED

- Have a clear plan for the timings of your session - and stick to it!
- Make sure you are familiar with the topic and content beforehand
- Summarise as you go along - remind people what they've achieved and what's next
- **Remember: you don't have to know all the answers!**

FACILITATION STYLE (CONTINUED)

5. OBSERVE AND ADAPT

- Listen actively, stay interested and engaged during every session
- Pay attention to group behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal
- Adapt your style to the needs of your participants, being sensitive to differences
- Pay attention to the group's energy and motivation. If you feel energy lagging, consider asking people to move around or take a break

6. INVOLVE EVERYONE

- Encourage everyone to listen to each other and learn from each other
- Look out for people who aren't engaged - try to bring them in to discussions
- Ensure everyone has the chance to participate
- If any decisions need to be made, make sure they are made by the group

7. INTERVENE WHEN NEEDED

- Help the group avoid long discussions between just a few group members
- Watch for and close any side conversations. These limit the ability of others to focus, and often people are exchanging ideas that should be brought to the group
- Step in and mediate immediately if there are any obvious personal attacks
- If someone in the group is behaving inappropriately then a good place to start is to remind everyone of the relevant Ground Rules that everyone agreed to

8. BE HUMAN

- Explain that you are running the course as a volunteer and why it matters to you
- Say things in your own words (avoid just reading from the materials)
- Share your own personal examples - be willing to be vulnerable
- Relax and have fun! You don't have to know it all nor do everything perfectly
- Take a few minutes at the end of the session to summarise and congratulate people for what they have achieved

“Your most important role is to help the group have a positive experience”

OUR FACILITATOR TIPS

- **Timings.** It's really important to start on time (even if some people haven't arrived) and stick to the timings - otherwise the session will run over or get rushed
- **Seating.** Organising chairs in a circle is more friendly than in rows
- **Name badges.** If possible give people a sticker or badge to write their name on
- **Content.** You don't need to cover every single thing in the materials in detail; people can read it later in their own time. We found they'd rather spend the time on group discussions, which was the part of the course they liked the most
- **Get moving.** During session encourage people to get up and move about to meet new people and increase the energy in the room
- **Reflection.** Give people enough time to write down their ideas and thoughts in the boxes on the sheet before pushing them into a discussion
- **Comfort break.** It's good to have a break of about 5 minutes in the middle of the session. We found it helpful to have this at the beginning of the group discussion, with people taking a break and then forming themselves into groups
- **Discussions.** Group discussions are always the participant's favourite part. Try to make sure this section is always at least 20 minutes long and doesn't get cut
- **Connecting.** One of the things people love most about the course is the opportunity to connect with new people - so make sure they get the chance to
- **Sharing.** Remember to share your personal stories and experiences with the group too. The more you reveal about yourself, the easier you are to connect to

INTERRUPTING CONVERSATIONS!

Getting people to stop their discussions and come back to the group can be difficult. It's really important to have a firm but friendly way to make sure people stop chatting when you need them too, otherwise the session will get out of control and run over. You can try ringing a bell or tapping on a glass, or simply raising a hand in the air and making eye contact with people. It's also helpful to warn people you're going to finish discussions a minute before you do, so they've been warned and can start to wrap up their conversations.

GROUND RULES

The Exploring What Matters course is open to all and designed so that it can be set up and run by anyone who supports Action for Happiness, without the need for special expertise.

Because we are using this 'open and trusting' model for the course, it is important that all participants agree to some ground rules to respect and support each other. These will help ensure that the course runs smoothly and remains true to its underlying principles.

- 1) **We welcome different perspectives.** The course welcomes people from all backgrounds and points of view. There are no single right answers to these questions and all constructive perspectives are welcome.
- 2) **We are supportive and friendly.** The general spirit of the course is one where we treat each other in a supportive and friendly way. We may not always agree with each other, but we always treat each other the way we would like to be treated ourselves.
- 3) **We let everyone have a voice.** We respect each other by giving everybody the chance to contribute, listening to each other and not dominating or disrupting the conversation.
- 4) **We use the expertise in the room.** Although the course includes expert views and carefully designed materials, the real expertise is here in the room too. Our facilitator's role is to lead the session, not act as the expert. We can all contribute to each others' learning and what we get out depends on what we put in.
- 5) **We share a bit of ourselves.** We are each willing to share some of our unique personal perspectives. This is NOT group therapy and no-one should feel under pressure to say anything. But the best conversations tend to happen when we're willing to reveal a bit about ourselves and share how we feel inside, not just our intellectual ideas.
- 6) **We act with integrity.** We respect other people's confidentiality and trust others to do the same for us. We are willing to speak up if we feel other members of the group are not keeping to the spirit of the course or not showing respect for other participants.
- 7) **We are present.** We avoid distractions from phones or other devices so we can stay present in the room and give our whole selves during each session. We try not to derail the conversation and respect each other by allowing sessions to start and end on time.

All participants have a responsibility to ensure these ground rules are observed. If anyone feels they are not, they are encouraged to raise this in the group in a constructive way.

HANDLING DIFFICULTIES

DISRUPTIVE PEOPLE

- Some courses may have a participant who is prone to talking too much, disrupting conversations or sharing their opinion in an unnecessarily confrontational way
- We recommend dealing with this in a friendly but firm way and referring people back to the Ground Rules (about letting everyone have a voice and being kind etc)

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

- Some courses may have a participant who is depressed, isolated or vulnerable. Your responsibility is not to provide in-depth, one-to-one support (this is best left to qualified professionals), but you do need to be on the look out for participants who might need some additional friendly support and guidance
- At the start we recommend making it clear to the group that this is not group therapy and that if people feel they need additional support for mental health issues or other challenges, they should seek out appropriate professional support
- You should equip yourself with relevant information to **signpost** people towards local services that could help them if necessary. For example:
 - ❖ IAPT service: [www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)
 - ❖ Counselling service: www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk www.counselling-directory.org.uk
 - ❖ Local MIND support: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/local-minds

HOW TO SUPPORT PEOPLE IN NEED

Although the course can be helpful for people facing major challenges in their lives, it is not designed as a therapeutic intervention or to directly support people dealing with severe mental health issues. Please ensure you are familiar with our **Safeguarding Policy** to find out what to do when someone is at risk to themselves or others.



Our Safeguarding Policy: www.actionforhappiness.org/safeguarding

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

- **Facilitators:** they really appreciate the facilitators being warm and positive
- **Timings:** they prefer it when sessions stay on time, even when this means interrupting their discussions to move on
- **Different views:** they actually like it if some contributions are politely challenged by others in the group, as this helps them go deeper into the ideas (otherwise the discussion could become bland and full of platitudes)
- **Favourite things:** the things they liked the most were meeting like-minded people, hearing different perspectives, enthusiasm and the positive atmosphere



REFRESHMENTS

People get hungry and thirsty during sessions, especially if they are at the end of the day and they have come straight from work without eating. Some venues will have the facilities for people to get themselves drinks and snacks. But if not then you might want to provide some. We recommend having healthy snacks, such a fruit, available in addition to biscuits or crisps etc.



COURSE THEMES



WEEK 1: What really matters in life?

Lots of things are important in life, but how should we decide what really matters to us? This session explores whether a greater focus on happiness and wellbeing might be better for all of us. *(Video: Richard Layard)*

Anticipated outcome: *recognising that happiness matters and that ultimately we all want to live happy and fulfilling lives*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-1



WEEK 2: What actually makes us happy?

We're told that happiness comes from having more and earning more, but is this really true? Does happiness come from our circumstances or our inner attitudes? And can we learn how to be happier? *(Video: Ed Diener)*

Anticipated outcome: *recognising that there are practical things that we can do to be happier and to make others happier*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-2



WEEK 3: Can we find peace of mind?

Life can be highly stressful. In this session we'll explore how to deal effectively with life's ups and downs and cope with adversity. And we'll look at some skills which can help us be more resilient. *(Video: Jon Kabat-Zinn)*

Anticipated outcome: *recognising that we all suffer and struggle and there are practical things (like mindfulness) that can help us cope better*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-3



WEEK 4: How should we treat others?

Our society appears increasingly individualistic and competitive. Is this just human nature or are we naturally altruistic too? How should we behave towards others - and can we learn to be more compassionate? *(Video: Karen Armstrong)*

Anticipated outcome: *recognising that we are happier - and society is happier - when we do more to care for and help others around us*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-4

COURSE THEMES (CONTINUED)



WEEK 5: What makes for great relationships?

We're a social species and most of us know that our connections with others are vitally important. But what really affects our relationships and are there practical things we can do to enhance them? *(Video: Brene Brown)*

Anticipated outcome: *recognising the vital importance of human relationships and some practical ways that we can enhance our connections with others*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-5



WEEK 6: Can we be happier at work?

Work is a huge part of our lives, but many of us find our work to be stressful and frustrating. Do happier organisations get better results? What makes us happy at work? And what can we do about it? *(Video: Shawn Achor)*

Anticipated outcome: *recognise that work plays a huge part in our happiness and that there are ways to make our working lives better*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-6



WEEK 7: Can we build happier communities?

What does it mean to live well together - and why are some communities or societies much happier than others? In this session we'll explore how to create communities that are more caring, connected and happy. *(Video: Geoff Mulgan / Jody Williams)*

Anticipated outcome: *recognising that there are practical things we can do to create happier and more connected local communities*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-7



WEEK 8: How can we create a happier world?

This session brings together everything we've covered during the course. It aims to inspire each of us to live in a way that contributes to a happier world, not just for ourselves but for others too. *(Video: Mark Williamson / Narayanan Krishnan)*

Anticipated outcome: *making a commitment to taking on-going action to help create a happier and more caring world (and a happier self too)*

Link to resources: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-8

COURSE STRUCTURE

Each weekly session lasts 2 hours and is based around a big question, such as What really matters in life? What actually makes us happy? and How should we treat others?

The sessions each follow the same inspiring and interactive format, which includes:



Tuning in

Simple activities that are great for wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness exercise)



Expert view

An inspiring 15 minute TED-style video/talk from a leading expert



Personal view

A chance for you to reflect on your own personal experiences



Did you know?

Fascinating and surprising research findings relating to the theme



Group discussion

Sharing ideas in groups and listening to each other's perspectives



Action ideas

Everybody comes away with an action they hope to take as a result.

The following pages explain how to deliver each of these different activities.



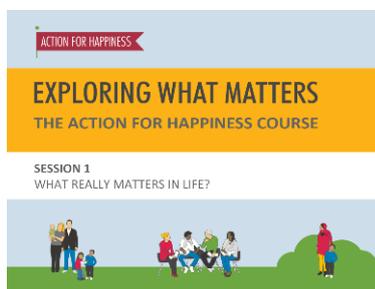
“I wouldn't be where I am now without that course. I still have bad days and life certainly isn't perfect. But it has really helped me so much. Now I'm trying to be the change that I want to see”

Jasmine Hodge-Lake, course participant

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE

WELCOME

- Welcome everyone to the group; introduce yourself and why you're running it
- In week 1, introduce Action for Happiness and explain that this is an 8 week course, and a bit about the format
- In weeks 2-8, welcome everyone back and ask people to briefly share any action they have taken from the previous week. It's really good to encourage people to share these with the group, and to acknowledge what they've achieved.



Example video: **Welcome to the course** www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-xuYCV8nGO

GROUND RULES (FIRST SESSION ONLY)

- In week 1 introduce and read through the Ground Rules
- Present the rules positively and explain that these are so the group can agree to the way we'd like to support and respect each other, so that everyone feels safe, respected, valued and included
- Ask for people to put their hands up if they agree to the ground rules. Do this with a bit of enthusiasm, as you are hopefully voting in something good



Example video: **Ground Rules** www.youtube.com/watch?v=Svnwmm26R0Q

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE (CONTINUED)

'ICE-BREAKER' (OPTIONAL)

This is a great way to create positive energy in the room and to help people get to know each other in the first session:

- Get people into pairs
- Ask them to find out the other person's name and one thing that makes them happy
- Go round the group introducing each other



TUNING IN

- In the first couple of sessions, explain that each week we will be starting with two activities that have been proven to have a powerful positive impact on happiness:
 - 1) a short mindfulness/meditation exercise; and
 - 2) an exercise to appreciate good things that have happened recently
- In later weeks the group will be familiar with these and won't need a reminder of what they are and why they're important.



Example video: **Tuning In - Introduction** www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dxa-29meaQ

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE (CONTINUED)

TUNING IN - MINDFULNESS

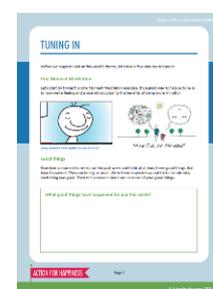
- Introduce and watch the Tuning In mindfulness/meditation video
- Occasionally a participant may feel uncomfortable taking part in this exercise so please make it clear that they can choose whether or not to take part
- During the video, sit still and meditate too, as they will be following your lead
- If you are a trained meditation teacher you can lead the group through your own mindfulness exercise instead of watching the video if you'd prefer



Example video: **Tuning in - Mindfulness** www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLDbKDGwV6E

TUNING IN - GOOD THINGS

- We all have a "negativity bias" and focus on what's wrong in our lives. This exercise helps us to choose to notice more of what's right (even when times are tough)
- Ask the group to think about the last week and to recall and write down 3 good things that have happened. These can be large or small, whatever comes to mind
- Once people have had a chance to write something, ask them to form pairs and share one good thing with each other (taking roughly half a minute each)
- If there's time ask 2-3 people to briefly share their good things with the group

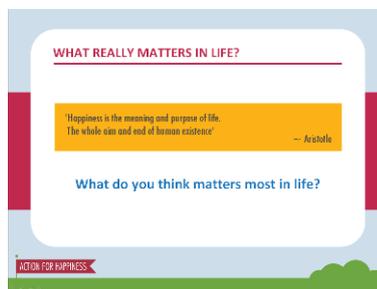


Example video: **Good Things** www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCpRnxFpgrI

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE (CONTINUED)

THIS WEEK'S THEME

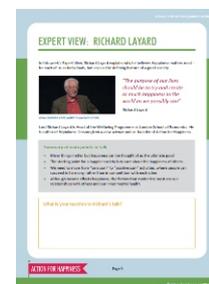
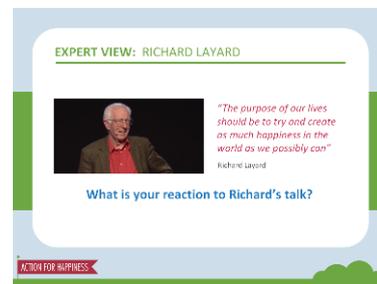
- Briefly introduce this week's big question and make a few quick observations to set the scene. Don't read the text from the sheet, just summarise it in your own words
- Then ask everyone to write down their own answers to the question in the box
- Ask if anyone would like to share their answers with the group
- Move on to the next section fairly quickly - and explain that there will be lots of time to discuss their ideas over the course of the session



Example video: **This week's theme** www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdH1TeI39jc

EXPERT VIEW

- Explain that you're going to hear the views of an expert and play the video
- Explain that this is one person's perspective and acknowledge that people here may or may not necessarily agree with it
- Ask them to make a note of the 1-2 points that struck them as most important in the talk - and explain that they'll have a chance to discuss these ideas more later
- *Note: it is not essential to have group discussions at this point and it sometimes works better to save these for later in the session*

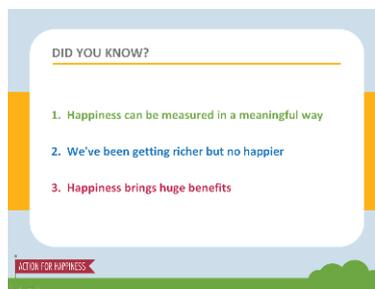


Example video: **Expert view** www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsIjziSpm-Y

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE (CONTINUED)

DID YOU KNOW?

- Explain you're going to look at some of the research relating to this week's theme
- Don't read through all the facts, as this is too much like a lesson. Instead try to summarise and pick out a few key points, then explain that the facts are there for them to read in their own time, and there are resources at the back of the book too
- A few questions may arise but you don't need to know all the answers. Ask them to just bear the facts in mind, as they will be having a longer group discussion later



Example video: Did You Know? www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNYtpgOmKcw

PERSONAL VIEW

- Now comes the chance to explore some more personal views and experiences.
- Encourage the group to really put themselves in the place described in the exercise. Then ask them quietly to write down their thoughts
- This time ask them to turn to someone different and share what came to mind
- Explain that while they don't have to share anything personal, it's through sharing personal views and experiences that we really connect with others
- Close this section by thanking the group for what they've shared



Example video: Personal view www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRM5C8WMOEQ

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE (CONTINUED)



GROUP DISCUSSION

- Explain that now the group now has the chance to spend a good period of time (about 20 minutes) together discussing their views around this week's theme
- They can talk about whichever aspects they like, but if they would like some ideas there are a couple of questions on the group discussion page in the materials
- It's good for people to have a comfort break, and we found a good place to put it is at the start of the group discussion. You might say: "feel free to get a cup of tea, then come back into groups of about 4 people to discuss..."
- Try not to let groups get bigger than around 4, or else some people feel left out
- The group discussion is consistently reported to be the most valued part of the course in the feedback, so really try to make sure they get a full 20 minutes for it, even if that means covering the other sections in the pack more quickly
- Emphasise the importance of listening to other people as well as sharing your views
- If you have more space outside the room, encourage people to use that too
- When you bring the group back, ask if there's anything that anyone wants to share. You may have to use your facilitation skills here to stop people dominating the conversation. Encourage them to carry on chatting after the session too.



Example video: **Group discussion** [www.youtube.com/watch?v= UGrvOBK908](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGrvOBK908)

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE (CONTINUED)

ACTION IDEAS

- Explain that this is the most important part of the session, as it's where we get to take some action. After all this is about "Action" for happiness and we'd like it if people felt inspired to make changes in their lives as a result
- But first, we found that participants appreciate something more peaceful at the close of the session. So ask the group to quietly reflect on everything we've covered in the session - for example by sitting in silence for a minute.
- Actions aren't compulsory and don't have to be big; they can be something small and personal, or something that they want to do for others or their community
- Ask them to write down their actions and how they will do them and when
- Ask 2-3 group members to share their action and how they're going to do it this coming week. Thank them and really encourage them to put these into practice.
- Say that you are looking forward to hearing back from people next week about their actions and how they made them happen. (In our experience it is the "how" which is the biggest obstacle to people actually making changes in their lives!)
- Consider asking: "What needs to happen for you to do this action"?
- Focus on do-ability - better to have easy action you do than harder one you ignore
- Try to lead/model by giving a simple personal example - and again when reporting back at start of next session, be ready to share your own action too
- Ask what people can do to remind themselves to do their action, e.g. add to their calendar, email/text, post on group Facebook page, write note on hand etc
- So the ask is: "write down an action that you can take this week and do whatever you need to do right now to make sure you remember it!"



Example video: Action ideas www.youtube.com/watch?v=okQY49bfBDg

HOW TO RUN THE COURSE (CONTINUED)

OTHER RESOURCES

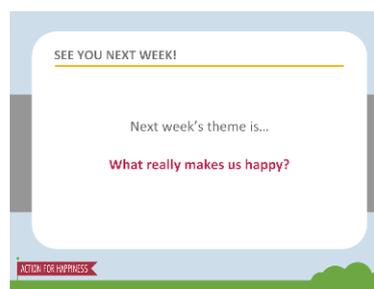
- Explain that this is the end of the session, but there are more resources relating to this week's theme in the course materials if they wanted to look in to it further



Example video: **Other resources** www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8vgs6YUGQE

WRAP-UP

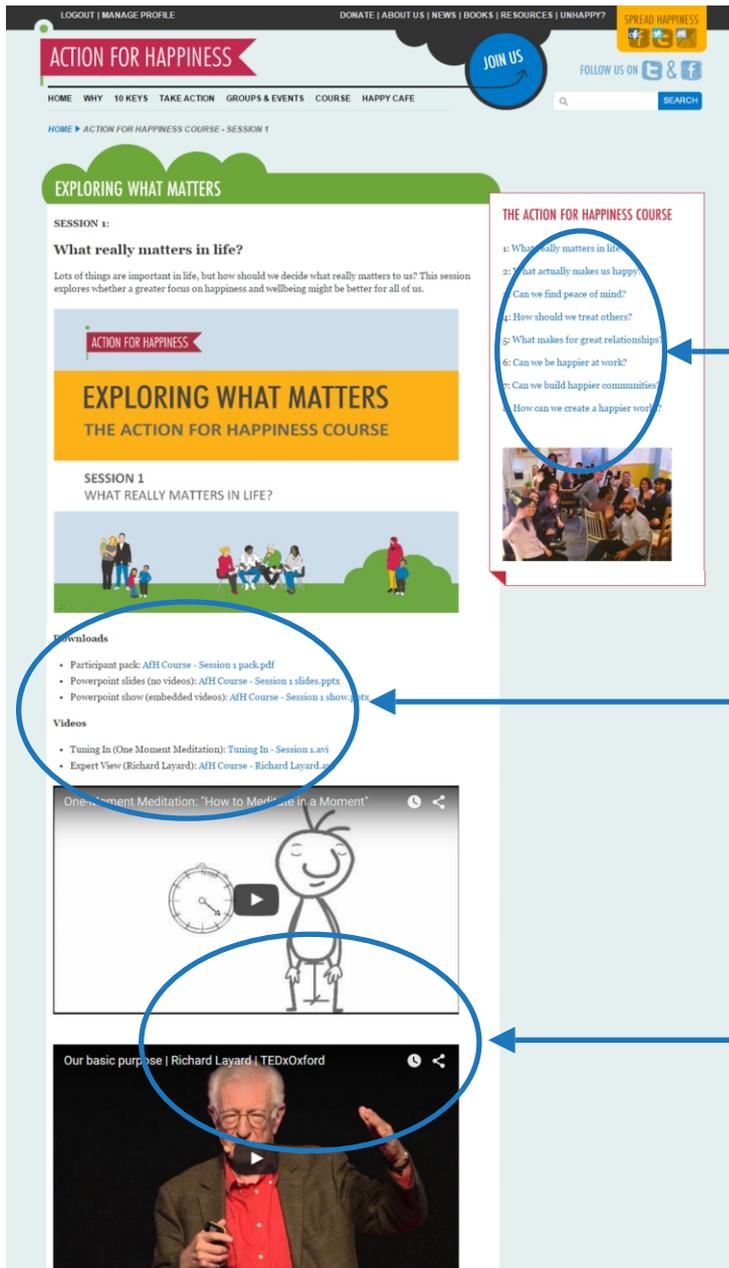
- Tell the group when next week's session will happen and what the theme is
- Encourage participants to provide feedback about the session, especially if they have constructive suggestions that could enhance future group sessions
- Tell them about any way you have for them to keep in touch in the meantime: it's good to have a group Facebook page - and when appropriate you could ask if it's ok to copy everyone in to the same email so they can contact each other directly
- Thank them for participating in the session



Example video: **Wrap-up** www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNnC7QJhVHY

FACILITATOR RESOURCES

For each session of the course, approved facilitators can access the materials they need via the Action for Happiness website at: www.actionforhappiness.org/course-menu



Resources available for each session include:

- Participant pack
- Powerpoint slides
- Downloadable videos

Session menu

Links to pack, slides and downloadable videos

Embedded videos to watch directly

AFTER THE COURSE



- The aim of Action for Happiness is to build a movement of like-minded people who connect together and take on-going action to help create a happier. So we would love to see groups continuing to meet after the 8-week course has finished
- As a Course Leader, you may decide you would like to run the course again (which would be fantastic!); alternatively some of your participants may decide to run the course; and hopefully your participants will want to keep meeting as a group too
- We have a recommended format for on-going group meetings - this is based on the course sessions, but more informal (no video, preparation or course book required). Please get in touch if you or your group would like to find out how this works.

SET-UP OR JOIN A LOCAL 'HAPPY CAFE'

Action for Happiness supporters have been setting up Happy Cafes in their local communities. It would be wonderful if some of your course participants wanted to set up (or join) a Happy Cafe in their local community. For more information check out:

www.actionforhappiness.org/happy-cafe



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Join the movement. Be the change
www.actionforhappiness.org



“I wouldn't be where I am now without that course. I still have bad days and life certainly isn't perfect. But it has really helped me so much. Now I'm trying to be the change that I want to see”

Jasmine Hodge-Lake, course participant



“I wholeheartedly support the Exploring What Matters course and hope that many thousands will benefit from it and be inspired to take their own action to create a happier world”

The Dalai Lama, patron of Action for Happiness

