

# ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

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## Guidelines for Hosting Happy Cafes

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This document has suggested guidelines for hosting a [Happy Café](#) gathering. These are based on activities tried out successfully at the first ever Happy Café in [Brighton](#).



### Hosting a successful gathering

- The hosts need to help create a **safe, friendly, relaxed and positive atmosphere**. They ensure everyone is welcomed and feels comfortable to take part in discussions, while also being given the opportunity to "opt out" of contributing if they prefer.
- Most people like a mixture of **open discussion** (non-guided) plus some **structured discussion** about [Action for Happiness](#) and related themes.
- It can work well to give people the chance to have open conversations in the first half of a gathering and offer a more structured discussion for the second half, perhaps around one of the [Ten Keys to Happier Living](#).
- Hosts need to ensure that people do not use the occasion to promote their own business. If someone would like to offer a workshop or a taster session, they should talk to the organiser to make sure that this relates to the Action for Happiness mission and to agree what is appropriate.
- **Action for Happiness badges** are useful to identify the hosts and attendees and to take advantage of any discount at the café may offer for those wearing the badges.
- Above all, hosts should feel relaxed, enjoy the event and let it evolve in a way that feels right. If people leave **feeling happier and more inspired to support Action for Happiness**, it has been a great success!



## Detailed suggested steps

1. **Get there early** to get everything ready.
2. **Reserve tables** for the numbers expected and mark the tables with Happy Café flyers.
3. **Bring Action for Happiness resources**, e.g. badges, [postcards](#) & [guidebooks](#).
4. **Give a warm welcome** to attendees as they come in, offer them a badge if they're not wearing one and suggest they grab a coffee.
5. **Start the proceedings** by saying something about the Action for Happiness movement, any local groups/courses, and the idea behind Happy Cafes.
6. **Help people relax**, by asking attendees to start by take a few deep breaths.
7. **Let people get to know each other**. Allow about an hour for people to chat to each other and have something to eat or drink. Getting them to share in pairs one or more good things that have happened to them that week is a good way to break the ice.
8. **Offer a structured discussion in small groups**. This could be around what makes them happy or grateful or the Ten Keys to Happier Living (see suggestions below).
9. **Encourage people to move** so they don't just talk to the same person all the time.
10. **Bring people into the conversation** in a friendly and encouraging way, especially keeping an eye out for people who don't seem to be participating
11. **Help people stay in contact** by circulating a sheet and inviting attendees to share their contact details if they wish to be kept informed of future gatherings.
12. **Bring the gathering to a close**, thank people for being there, talk about the next planned meetup and then clear away the materials and tidy up the area.



## Ten Keys Questions for Discussion

- **GIVING (Do things for others):** Why is it important? What do you do to help others? How could you do more acts of kindness?
- **RELATING (Connect with people):** Who matters most to you? What do you do to extend your relationships? Can we care too much about relationships?
- **EXERCISING (Take care of your body):** How do you stay active and healthy? What stops you from taking exercise? How can you overcome the obstacles?
- **AWARENESS (Live life mindfully):** Are you savouring life to the full? When do you stop to take notice? Do you practice mindfulness? What will you do to become more aware?
- **TRYING OUT (Keep learning new things):** What new things have you tried recently? What stops you from doing this? What can help you do learn and try new things?
- **DIRECTION (Have goals to look forward to):** What are your most important goals? What are you doing to achieve them? What more can you do?
- **RESILIENCE (Find ways to bounce back):** How do you bounce back in tough times? Is coping with failure the key to success? How can we be kinder to ourselves?
- **EMOTIONS (Look for what's good):** What are you feeling good about? Are you a glass half empty or glass half full person? How can you take a more positive approach?
- **ACCEPTANCE (Be comfortable with who you are):** Are you comfortable with the real you? Do you compare yourself with others? How does social media contribute? Are you always striving for perfection? What are your strengths?
- **MEANING (Be part of something bigger):** What gives your life meaning and purpose - your job, relationships, religion, community or good causes? Do you give these priority?

## Ten keys to happier living



<b>GIVING</b>	 Do things for others	<b>DIRECTION</b>	 Have goals to look forward to
<b>RELATING</b>	 Connect with people	<b>RESILIENCE</b>	 Find ways to bounce back
<b>EXERCISING</b>	 Take care of your body	<b>EMOTIONS</b>	 Look for what's good
<b>AWARENESS</b>	 Live life mindfully	<b>ACCEPTANCE</b>	 Be comfortable with who you are
<b>TRYING OUT</b>	 Keep learning new things	<b>MEANING</b>	 Be part of something bigger

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

## Ten Keys Action Ideas

### **GIVING** (Do things for others)

- Do three extra acts of kindness today. Offer to help, give away your change, pay a compliment, or make someone smile.
- Reach out to help someone who's struggling. Give them a call or offer your support. Let them know you care.

### **RELATING** (Connect with people)

- Make more time for the people who matter. Chat with a loved one or friend, call your parents or play with the kids.
- Make three extra connections today. Stop to chat in the shop, wave at a neighbour, learn the name of someone new.

### **EXERCISING** (Take care of your body)

- Be more active today. Get off a bus a stop early, take the stairs, turn off the TV, go for a walk - anything that gets you moving.
- Eat nutritious food, drink more water, catch up on sleep. Notice which healthy actions lift your mood and do more of them.

### **AWARENESS** (Live life mindfully)

- Give yourself a bit of head space. At least once a day, stop and take 5 minutes to just breathe and be in the moment.
- Notice and appreciate good things around you every day, big or small. Trees, bird song, the smell of coffee, laughter perhaps?

### **TRYING OUT** (Keep learning new things)

- Do something for the first time today. Sample sushi, try a new route, read a different newspaper or visit a local place of interest.
- Learn a new skill, however small. A first aid technique or a new feature on your phone. Cook a new meal or use a new word.

### **DIRECTION** (Have goals to look forward to)

- Take the first step. Think of a goal you're aiming for and do one thing to get started. Make a call, fill in that form, tell others.
- Share your dreams. Tell 3 people about an aspiration that is really important to you this year and listen to theirs too.

### **RESILIENCE** (Find ways to bounce back)

- Ask for help today. Confide in a friend, talk to an expert, reach out to a colleague, ask a neighbour to lend a hand.
- When something is troubling you, do something you really enjoy. Shift your mood and bring a new perspective on the problem.

### **EMOTIONS** (Look for what's good)

- Do something that you know will make you feel good. Listen to music, watch something funny, get outside or call an old friend.
- Try to smile and say something positive every time you walk into a room. Notice the reaction you get.

### **ACCEPTANCE** (Be comfortable with who you are)

- Ask a trusted friend or colleague to tell you what they think your real strengths are. Try to make more use of these.
- Be as kind to yourself as you are to others. See your mistakes as opportunities to learn. Notice things you do well, however small.

### **MEANING** (Be part of something bigger)

- Feel part of something bigger. Spend time with children, visit an inspiring location, gaze at the stars or join a club.
- Be more charitable. Give others your time, offer to help neighbours or friends, consider giving blood or volunteering.