

GG101x: The Science of Happiness



Happiness Team Leader Guide

Fall 2016

Dear Happiness Team Leader,

This guide is designed to support your efforts in organizing a Happiness Team during the edX course [GG101x: The Science of Happiness](#), which will bring together thousands of participants from around the world.

The Science of Happiness is the first MOOC to teach the ground-breaking science of positive psychology, which explores the roots of a happy and meaningful life. As a Happiness Team leader, you will play a key role in helping other students connect, learn, and apply the science of happiness to their own lives.

This guide explains the basics of organizing a Happiness Team. Please feel free to reach out to us with questions and ideas, and let us know if we can help your Happiness Team in any way.

With gratitude,

The GG101x staff
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OVERVIEW

What is a Happiness Team?

Happiness Teams are groups of up to 40 students who meet regularly in-person or virtually to review and discuss the course, and try happiness practices together. Although students are encouraged to participate in discussions within the [edX forums](#), joining a Happiness Team allows for deeper and more personal engagement with the course and with other students.

What happens at Happiness Team meetings is totally up to the Happiness Team leader, but we suggest you use the weekly course content to inspire your activities and discussions. During the midterm and final weeks, you might review the material and help each other study (see Sample Schedule below). You could also watch some of the suggested films together (see the “Happiness Cinema” sections throughout the course), or invite people to watch them at home and discuss them during the meeting.

Why lead a Happiness Team?

At GG101x, we know that happiness isn’t just an intellectual exercise. Becoming happier in life means engaging with the scientific findings on happiness and applying them to our own lives. By leading a Happiness Team, you are committing more deeply to this process and offering others social support, accountability, and a positive environment in which to explore these ideas.

Examples of Happiness Teams

Happiness Teams can be organized around a location, an interest, or an organization. It’s up to the Happiness Team leader to decide on the Happiness Team’s theme. Here are some examples of Happiness Teams you might form:

Place-based Happiness Teams. Organize a Happiness Team in your neighborhood, your city, or your state.

Interest-based Happiness Teams. Organize a Happiness Team of students interested in sports, technology, life coaching, art, writing, parenting, or teaching, for example. These Happiness Teams could spend some meeting time discussing how the course material applies to their interest of choice.

Organization-based Happiness Teams. Organize a Happiness Team at your office, your church, or your community center.

Happiness Team projects

In addition to working with course material, we also encourage Happiness Team members to collaborate on a project during the course. For example, you might volunteer to clean up your neighborhood or help a local charity, start a meditation group, teach gratitude to children, or anything else you can imagine.

Projects are not mandatory, but they can be a fun and creative way to get engaged and make an impact. We believe these ideas can change the world, and your Happiness Team is a great opportunity to do that. (The science of) happiness is meant to be shared!

LEADING A HAPPINESS TEAM

For information on how to create a Happiness Team and communicate with your Team on edX, [read this post](#).

What qualifies someone to lead a Happiness Team?

Happiness Team Leaders should be comfortable in front of a group, either in-person or virtually, friendly, and committed to completing the course material. Anyone can be a Happiness Team leader, as long as you are willing to put a little extra heart into managing your Happiness Team.

Key roles

The key roles of a Happiness Team leader include:

- **Finding a space** for your group to meet, such as a library, cafe, or community center. If you're setting up an online Team, see Resources for Online Meetings below.
- **Managing logistics** by scheduling the meetings and ensuring you have wifi, name tags, snacks, or whatever else the group might need.
- **Leading discussions** and deciding how to structure each meeting.
- **Taking notes** so you can share your Happiness Team's experiences with other students in the edX discussion forums.

Tips for leaders

- **Find co-leaders.** You might decide to share your leadership responsibilities with one or two other people.
- **Send invitations** that explain what people can expect in the meeting and how many members are coming. Include links to the content you will be discussing.
- **Pick a venue** that's large enough to fit your group and quiet enough for conversation.
- **Welcome people** so they feel comfortable arriving. You might print out a sign with the GG101x logo so newcomers recognize you.
- **Have people introduce themselves** and break the ice by telling a joke, or sharing one thing that makes them happy, for example.
- **Be respectful and curious.** Treat each person's experiences and thoughts as valid. Be kind and nonjudgmental of those who find it difficult to be happy.
- **Moderate the conversation** to make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance.

How often to meet

At your first meeting (or beforehand), consider asking students how often they prefer to meet and what times work best for them. It's common for Teams to meet every week or every two weeks.

Sample schedule

5 minutes: Welcome and introduction

30 minutes: Review course material

You might rewatch key course videos, ask people to share the material they found most interesting or challenging, or have them present summaries of the material (assigned beforehand). Each meeting could be associated with a specific "week" from the course, so that students know which material to complete before attending the meeting.

30 minutes: Discussion questions

Talk about some of the discussion questions with the group. Later, you might share some of the group's insights on the edX forums.

30 minutes: Happiness practice

If possible, work on a happiness practice. If not, invite people to share their experiences trying the practices or plans for doing them in the future. Gratitude and mindfulness might be good practices to try together, for example, while random acts of kindness and forgiveness might be better to discuss.

30 minutes: Happiness Team project

If you decide to work on a project, use this time to plan and collaborate on it. If not, you might spend extra time on the discussions.

Resources for online meetings

- [**Google Hangouts**](#) (free): Up to 15 people can join an audio or video call on Google Hangouts.
- [**Skype**](#) (free): Up to 25 people can join an audio or video call on Skype.
- [**FreeConferenceCall.com**](#) (free): Up to 1,000 callers can join your conference call, and you can generate local phone numbers for international callers.
- [**GoToMeeting**](#) (paid): You can give a presentation or share your screen in a GoToMeeting video conference.

FAQs

What kind of time commitment should I prepare for if I lead a Happiness Team?

It's up to you--you need to factor in preparation time (before the Happiness Team meetings), the amount of time you spend together as a Happiness Team, and any follow-up and documentation you intend to do. All in all, it should take no longer than two hours per week (plus the meeting itself).

How long are meetings?

Our suggested schedule is a two-hour meeting, but you can choose to have a shorter or longer meeting depending on how often you meet and what you plan to do during the meetings. For example, a Happiness Team within your company might choose to meet during a one-hour lunch break.

Can I charge money for these meetings?

GG101x is a free online course, so we encourage you to offer the meetings for free if possible. If you need to charge a nominal amount to cover the cost of meeting space, just make sure to explain to members exactly what the money is going toward.

What is the maximum number of people I can have on my Happiness Team?

We've set a maximum of 40 members for each Happiness Team. Remember, people may be busy or may drop out of the course, so it would be rare for every person to turn up for every meeting.

INFORMATION ABOUT GG101x

As a Happiness Team leader, you may receive questions about the course from students. Below are answers to some of the most common queries:

- GG101x is a live course, beginning September 6, 2016. Material can be accessed on the [main course site](#) on edX.
- To earn a verified certificate, students have to pay extra (\$50). [Verified certificates](#) require students to confirm their identity via photos and ID. They can be useful if students want to put the course on their job or school applications. The deadline to register for verified certificates will be announced later in the course.
- To earn any kind of certificate, students must receive a grade of 60% or higher by 11:59 pm UTC on November 29. Only problem sets, the midterm, and the final exam count toward student grades. (Students can view their grades in the [Progress](#) tab of the course. Some sections show 0 points because they are ungraded.)
- Students can earn continuing education credit from the course. US mental health professionals who are interested can find out more [here](#).

Course outline

Week 1: Introduction to the Science of Happiness

Week 2: The Power of Social Connection

Week 3: Compassion & Kindness

Week 4: Cooperation & Reconciliation

Midterm Exam

Week 6: Mindfulness

Week 7: Mental Habits of Happiness

Week 8: Gratitude

Week 9: New Frontiers & Happiness “Fit”

Week 10: Wrap-Up