

5 Golden Rules

Action for Happiness Brighton – proposed ground rules for Latest Bar meetings

Josh French revised Sept 22nd 2022 building on Paul's version

The bits **in bold** could be shared on the meetup/facebook description and perhaps in the future could be printed out. I think

The bits *in italics* are more for verbal explanation at the start of the meeting to give real clarity over the specifics such as food and opting out of speaking. (We wouldn't have to read it as a strict script as it's quite long but more to explain in our words).

1. **We really listen to each other**

- *Aim to stay focused on the topic being explored*
- *Use your phone as little as possible*
- *Give each other full attention and respect when anyone is speaking*
- *Keeping our contributions to conversations relevant and short so that everyone has the chance to share if they'd like to*

2. **We focus on what is working well**

- *We practice turning our attention to the positive and valuable, such as the things we feel grateful for and can learn from*
- *This helps us appreciate each other, creates a more enjoyable session and demonstrates the spirit of Action for Happiness!*

3. **We are open about our feelings**

- *It's helps us have a more meaningful connection with others if we are aware of our feelings and are willing to be open about them*
- *Talking about our emotions and experiences can create a richer, deeper discussion and more understanding between people (rather than focusing on differences of opinion)*

4. **We practice safe boundaries**

- *Be aware that there is no formal mental health support here – it's not a therapy group*
- *Be wise about how much you decide to open up, so you don't feel too vulnerable or uncomfortable*
- *There is no need to answer a question or share your reflections if you do not want to – just listening is fine*
- *If you feel like leaving during the meeting that is also fine (though you could first try breathing deeply to relax for two minutes, which can be helpful)*

5. **We maintain a spirit of kindness**

- *Please behave in a way that shows consideration for everyone else in the group.*
- *For example, snacks are OK, but hot foods brought in from outside can be off-putting for others*
- *Being respectful, kind and polite in the way we speak to each other and how we engage with the speaker/workshop*

Ways to introduce the rules

- We could introduce the ground rules once everyone is settled and perhaps had a mindful moment or mini-meditation if appropriate.
- Take enough time to talk through them, explaining that we're aiming for a really enjoyable, safe and positive chance to connect and learn together, and these golden rules can help us achieve this.
- Invite everyone to quietly reflect on how they can demonstrate these and support each other with them so that we are all contributing to a safe and positive space.
- We could also, ask people consider whether they are to be able to follow these 5 rules. If they think they might struggle with these, this may not be the right event for them and we may need to ask you to leave. (This may not be necessary, but could be handy depending on who is present).
- Be aware that as facilitators, we will need to step in if we don't feel these rules are being followed, so that we can create the most safe, positive space for all.
- Even if we don't have these on every table, it might be handy to have them written up somewhere and displayed so they can be front of people's mind during the meeting.