

how to live well – a shared exploration

what is it? This course is ambitious. It aims to help us live longer, healthier lives that are more energised, happy and fulfilled. We will work to improve our knowledge and activities in three interconnected areas – optimising wellbeing, nourishing relationships, and living with health, energy & resilience. The course is constructed partly on the recent state-of-the-art, evidence-based ENHANCE intervention for building wellbeing, with ingredients that focus on our values, self-determination theory's needs/goals/motivations, mindfulness & compassion, positive emotions & savouring, and the central importance of relationships.

We'll look too at ways of supporting close relationships, including using Singer's '*affect dyad*' to encourage sharing feelings and Grossmann's '*wise reasoning scale*' for skilful conflict resolution. We'll explore, as well, Dunbar's work on healthy social networks, and Haslam's fascinating focus on social identity. As Kurt Lewin put it "*There's nothing so practical as a good theory*", and we will use these relationship maps to develop highly practical ways of improving interpersonal and emotional intelligence skills – which are such hugely important aspects of our lives.

So, wellbeing, relationships – and life skills too. We'll introduce the '*mindbus model*' with its coping components built on values-focus, mindfulness, self-compassion, emotion processing, and wisdom. We'll also underline the foundational importance of the basic life skills – working well with exercise, sleep, diet & dependencies. The classic Norfolk study following more than 200,000 UK adults for over 11 years showed those with healthier lifestyles died at only a quarter of the rate of those with the worst. Those living most healthily were – for mortality risk and functioning – biologically 14 years younger than those living poorly. Yet most of us are not living well. Two US studies show that only 3% of the population tick all boxes for basic healthy lifestyle practices.

Potentially this course is life changing. What it will definitely provide is a huge amount of support for participants to live much more healthily, more productively, and with greater wellbeing. Broad-based lifestyle and wellbeing courses like this can definitely have major impacts. Two quite recent randomised studies (Andersen & Orth-Gomer) showed a halving of mortality in cancer sufferers and death rates reduced by two thirds in those with heart problems. And this course isn't only about life and death! It is also centrally about living more relaxed, energised & happier lives – wellbeing, relationships & life skills. Research now highlights clear pathways to do this.

who is the group for? The group is for anyone who wants to work seriously at helping themselves be healthier, less stressed, and more fulfilled. It will be hard work – and potentially tremendously rewarding. We will be 6 to 8 people (plus the facilitator, Dr James Hawkins). James will provide the knowledge base and many years of experience with these methods. We as a group will work together over three months to encourage and support each other on this "journey" of change. It's one of the great strengths of group work that we can inspire, challenge, empathise, learn from, and help each other.

course dates: The course involves ten two-hour sessions all running from 7.15 to 9.15pm on Monday evenings. Dates for the first nine sessions are weekly from 3rd September to the 29th October. This is followed by a three-week gap until the tenth & final session on 19th November. Further one-to-one follow-up is then an option.

cost & location: £325 or £225 for un/low waged (plus the fee for an initial individual session if you haven't already worked with James). The deposit of £125 will be refunded if there is no place available or if you cancel at least two weeks before the start of the course. Meetings will take place at 78 Polwarth Terrace, Edinburgh, EH11 1NJ. Entry is from the side of the house in Ashley Terrace. Buses 10, 27 & 38 run close by. ☎ 0131-337 8474, weekdays (6.00 to 9.00pm.). See too 🌐 www.stressedtozest.com
