



Notice distress, listen carefully, respond helpfully

Basic guide to the SAGE & THYME® Foundation Level Workshop

17 June 2019

Introduction

Psychological distress is common among patients, their families and carers. Effective communication is widely regarded as being a key factor in determining a patient's satisfaction, compliance with treatment and recovery. It also reduces staff burnout and increases satisfaction in staff.

The SAGE & THYME® Foundation Level workshop teaches the communication skills required to provide psychological support to people who are concerned or distressed, by recognising, listening and responding to their concerns.

The unique selling point for the SAGE & THYME is that whilst most courses with evidence that they change communication skills are run for 3-12 people over at least 20 hours, the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop teaches evidence-based core communication skills to a multi-disciplinary group of 30 people in only 3 hours.

SAGE & THYME training was developed by members of staff at Wythenshawe Hospital (now part of Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, MFT) and a patient in 2006.

'SAGE & THYME' is a mnemonic that provides a memorable structure for conversations, based on the evidence behind effective communication skills: Setting – Ask – Gather – Empathy – Talk – Help – You – Me – End.

The SAGE and THYME Foundation Level workshop, using a mixture of group work, a presentation, rehearsals and a film; reminds staff how to listen and how to respond in a way which empowers the patient. It discourages staff from 'fixing' and demonstrates how to work with the patient's own ideas first.

The workshop can be taught to any member of staff at any level (e.g. healthcare assistants, nurses, allied health professionals, doctors, medical secretaries), student or volunteer in contact with distressed people (not just patients – it can be carers, colleagues, students and others) and in any setting (e.g. hospital, patient's home, nursing home, hospice, social care). It teaches every day skills to everyone.

What is the impact of the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level Workshop?

Three peer-reviewed research studies (see list of references at the end of this guide) have been published to date on the impact of the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop on level 1 (reaction), level 2 (learning) and level 3 (behaviour change) of Kirkpatrick's model for evaluating training. In a hospital setting, participants show a significant increase from pre to post workshop in:

- perceived **confidence, competence and willingness to explore emotional concerns** of patients
- **knowledge**

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- **self-efficacy and outcome expectancy** (needed to translate the skills taught into practice)
- **expert-rated participant behaviour** when speaking to a simulated patient.^{1,2}

Motivation to use the skills in practice, and the **perceived usefulness** of the SAGE & THYME model, were high after the workshop.²

For district nurses, knowledge and confidence in helpful communication behaviours improved and was **sustained two months after training**. Motivation to use the SAGE & THYME model was high and remained so at two months. Some nurses reported that the model saved them time.³

Why choose to run the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop?

- It is the most widely taught foundation level communication skills training taught within healthcare in the UK – it has been **adopted by around 70 organisations**: NHS Trusts, CCGs, hospices, universities, charities and councils around the UK (see <http://www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk/map-organisations-st-fl-licences>).
- It is taught in **9 of the 10 NHS Trusts in the Shelford Group**.
- It is highlighted as an example of best practice in a number of NHS Trust **CQC reports** including Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust (rated outstanding) and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (rated good).
- The evidence behind the SAGE & THYME model is described in '**The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures**' (2015).
- **Three published papers** have described the positive impact of the training, along with a number of other independent evaluations (see <http://www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk/evidence-and-links>).
- It is highlighted as a way of improving staff communication in the Leadership Alliance for the Care of Dying People report entitled '**One Chance to Get It Right**'.
- It addresses care, compassion, competence, and communication, of the '**6Cs**', which are key staff skills promoted by NHS England.
- It is a case study in Macmillan Cancer Support's report on '**How we can support and empower NHS staff to deliver a good experience of care to patients**'.
- The knowledge and skills taught are applicable to:
 - **Nurses and Midwives**: sections 2 and 3 of the 'The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives' (2015).
 - **Doctors**: domain 3 of the 'GMC: Good Medical Practice' (2013).
 - **Health and care professionals**: section 7 of the 'Health and Care Professions Council: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics' (2012).

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- **Managerial and administrative staff:** the skills of listening and responding helpfully are the foundation of work in the NHS and in other industries.
- **Volunteers, students and others:** need to be able to listen and respond to other people who disclose their concerns to them.

Frequently asked questions

1. If I want to teach the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop, what do I need?

- At least 3 people and ideally a minimum of 4 people (to allow for staff leave and sickness), willing to become SAGE & THYME facilitators – each Foundation Level workshop requires one person to act as lead facilitator and two people to be co-facilitators - **each person must meet the person specification and pass the SATFAC course** (see point 2 below)
- One person to act as a mentor for the SAGE & THYME facilitators (see below)
- A licence for your organisation to run the training
- Learner packs
- The presentation in PowerPoint
- SAGE & THYME scenario films (available from the trainer area of the web site)
- A training room
- A computer and a projector
- A DVD player (or access to the internet to show the scenario films)
- Flip chart paper and pens
- People to teach (up to 30)
- Support for the training from a senior person in your organisation who will sign the licence (e.g. director of nursing, chief executive)
- Ideally some administrative support for booking rooms, catering, registering delegates, ordering packs etc.
- Funding to cover the training and support fees, licence and learner pack costs (see point 8)

2. Who can be a facilitator?

Firstly, if you wish to become a SAGE & THYME facilitator, you need to be prepared to trust SAGE & THYME as a model for interaction with patients. If you can't do this then you can't teach it.

Secondly, SAGE & THYME appears (to people who do not know much of it) to be simple, but it is not simple to teach. The ability to run 35 minutes demonstrations (rehearsals) and to engage 30 learners in the process requires teachers to integrate many facilitation skills at once.

The SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop must be trained by people with competence both in their area of practice (health or social care or organisational development) and as an educator. They must also have attended a SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop run by MFT.

Consequently, the SAGE & THYME teach-the-teachers course (SATFAC) is open to any trainer/ health and social care practitioner whose training/education/experience fits the following **person specification**:

SAGE & THYME facilitator person specification:

Experience:

- Background in the training of communication skills (desirable)
- Background in health/social care
- Experience of training using experiential training/ learning methods
- Experience of running groups/ workshops/ seminars
- Attended a SAGE & THYME foundation level course run by MFT

Skills:

- Confident in front of a group and able to deliver a lecture to up to 30 people
- Ability to carry out 'role play' in front of a group of up to 30 people
- Ability to run a small group session for up to 10 people
- Ability to deal with emotionally distressed learners
- Ability to deal with a diverse group of learners

Personal characteristics:

- Motivated to become a SAGE & THYME facilitator
- Open to new ideas
- Have time available to become a facilitator
- Commitment to facilitate at least 3-4 SAGE & THYME foundation level courses per year
- Advocate and use the SAGE & THYME model in their practice

3. What training does a SAGE & THYME facilitator need?

- SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop (3 hours) run by MFT.
- SAGE & THYME Facilitator (SATFAC) course (2 days) run by MFT - note that this course is assessed, and participants must pass, in order to be able to teach the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop.

4. What does the SATFAC course cover?

The SATFAC course was developed by Wythenshawe Hospital in collaboration with the Maguire Communication Skills Training Unit at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust. It covers:

- The theoretical and research background to the SAGE and THYME model (including exploring the risks to participants of the SAGE and THYME Foundation Level workshop).
- The principles and processes that govern the delivery of each session.
- Risk management approach to teaching SAGE and THYME.
- A chance to discuss concerns/questions about delivery of the course.
- Rehearsal time.

The training is delivered by MFT in collaboration with freelance trainers from other organisations.



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Each SATFAC course teaches 12 delegates and MFT reserves the right to cancel courses with insufficient people registered to attend. They run from 8:30am or 9:00am until 5:00pm each day (unless times agreed otherwise).

Most of the SATFAC course involves rehearsing the SAGE & THYME demonstration (rehearsal) as teachers of SAGE & THYME. SATFAC delegates, therefore, are all involved as teachers of SAGE & THYME three times over the course. They get verbal and written feedback on their skills as teachers, including the areas on which they can improve throughout the course.

The SATFAC trainers develop, during the SATFAC course, an opinion of the potential of each delegate to become a SAGE & THYME facilitator. Most delegates pick it up and are clearly able to be strong teachers of SAGE & THYME to the required standard. Others need more practice and can 'buddy' with the stronger trainers. Occasionally it is clear to all involved that a delegate is really struggling and is unlikely to be able to make it without a great deal of help and guidance: these people will not pass the SATFAC course. SATFAC trainers therefore, train, encourage and test out the delegates. Within 5 working days after the SATFAC course has ended, each delegate receives an email stating whether they have passed, along with some personal feedback from the trainers.

Thus, attendance on a SATFAC course does not guarantee that a person can become an authorised SAGE & THYME facilitator at the end of their training.

5. What other support is available to SAGE & THYME facilitators?

The **Reflect & Refresh (R&R) workshop** has been developed to support people who have passed the SATFAC course, to help them to consolidate their learning after they have had some practice running the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop. It is also intended for those facilitators who wish to update their skills after time off teaching SAGE & THYME. This training helps to ensure high quality delivery of the workshop.

An **annual study day** is run in Manchester with the aim of: updating SAGE & THYME facilitators on current developments and what other organisations are doing with regards to using SAGE & THYME; providing the opportunity to network with other facilitators; and trouble-shooting any issues that organisations may be having with running the training.

6. What is the role of the SAGE & THYME mentor?

The SAGE & THYME mentor should be someone within your organisation who has some experience of providing communication skills training and running interactive sessions, which include role-playing/rehearsals; and who is able to encourage and support the newly trained facilitators, and ideally watch them running a SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop.

It is recommended that the mentor holds 3 or 4 mentoring sessions with all the SAGE & THYME facilitators in the first year, in order to ensure that any problems/issues are addressed, and that the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop is being delivered in accordance with the terms of the licence.

7. What is the licence?

The licence is a legal agreement between two organisations: your organisation and the NHS Trust (MFT) which developed and owns the intellectual property rights to the SAGE & THYME model and training courses. An organisation cannot run any SAGE & THYME foundation level workshops until the licence agreement has been signed. Once the licence is in place, learner packs can be ordered from MFT.

There are two types of licence:

- **Organisation licence** – covers running workshops for staff, students and volunteers for one organisation.
- **Network licence** - covers running workshops for staff, students and volunteers for multiple organisations (e.g. Trusts, hospices, CCGs etc).

The main licence terms are the same for both licence, but the fee charged is different (current prices):

- **Organisation licence** – £1,400 per year (excluding VAT – charged to all non-NHS organisations) for an unlimited number of workshops.
- **Network licence** – based on the number of workshops run per year - £630 for the first workshop and £110 for each subsequent workshop), so 12 workshops per year would cost £630 + (11 X £110) = £1,840

8. How much does it cost to run the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop?

The cost will depend on the number of facilitators you intend to have trained and supported, which licence you will need and how many learner packs you will need.

The current prices for training, licenses and delegate packs can be found on our web site:

<http://www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk/prices>

Three examples are given below to give *an idea* of the costs involved for the first year of the licence, based on prices from 1 Jun 2019.

Example cost 1 - NHS Trust with an organisational licence:

Year 1

4 people attending the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop followed by the SATFAC course in Manchester = 4 x (£120 + £600) = £2,880.

4 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the Reflect & Refresh workshop in Manchester = 4 x £300 = £1,200

Organisation licence to run an unlimited number of workshops for one year - £1,400

Cost of learner packs based on 12 workshops each for 30 learners including postage and packaging (360 packs per year - current cost of £150 per box of 50 including p&p - 8 boxes) - £1,200

4 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the annual study day in Manchester = 4 x £80 = £320

Total cost - £7,000 (year 1) - excluding any VAT that may be payable on the licence fee (non-NHS organisations pay VAT)

Year 2

Organisation licence to run an unlimited number of workshops for one year - £1,400

Cost of learner packs based on 12 workshops each for 30 learners including postage and packaging (360 packs per year - current cost of £150 per box of 50 including p&p - 8 boxes) - £1,200

4 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the annual study day in Manchester = 4 x £80 = £320

Total cost - £2,920 (year 2) - excluding any VAT that may be payable on the licence fee (non-NHS organisations pay VAT)

Example cost 2 - consortium with a network licence:

Year 1

10 people attending the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop followed by the SATFAC course in Manchester = 10 x (£120 + £600) = £7,200.

10 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the Reflect & Refresh workshop in Manchester = 10 x £300 = £3,000

Network licence to run 12 workshops for one year = £630 + (£110 x 11) = £1,840

Cost of learner packs based on 12 workshops each for 30 learners (360 packs per year - £150 per box of 50 including p&p - 8 boxes) - £1,200

10 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the annual study day in Manchester = 10 x £80 = £800

Total cost - £14,040 (year 1) - excluding any VAT that may be payable on the licence fee (non-NHS organisations pay VAT)

Note that additional workshops over the original number of workshops agreed may be run, subject to the organisation paying an additional £110 per workshop (+VAT for non-NHS organisations) at the end of the licence year.

Year 2

Network licence to run 12 workshops for one year = £630 + (£110 x 11) = £1,840

Cost of learner packs based on 12 workshops each for 30 learners including postage and packaging (360 packs per year - current cost of £150 per box of 50 including p&p - 8 boxes) - £1,200

10 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the annual study day in Manchester = 10 x £80 = £800

Total cost - £3,840 (year 2) - excluding any VAT that may be payable on the licence fee (non-NHS organisations pay VAT)

Example cost 3 - hospice running limited number of workshops to several organisations:

Year 1

3 people attending the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop followed by the SATFAC course in Manchester = 3 x (£120 + £600) = £2,160.

3 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the Reflect & Refresh workshop in Manchester = 3 x £300 = £900

Network licence to run 3 workshops for one year = £630 + (£110 x 2) = £850

Cost of learner packs based on 3 workshops each for 30 learners (90 packs per year - £150 per box of 50 including p&p - 2 boxes) - £300

3 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the annual study day in Manchester = 3 x £80 = £240

Total cost - £4,450 (year 1) - excluding any VAT that may be payable on the licence fee (non-NHS organisations pay VAT)



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Note that additional workshops over the original number of workshops agreed may be run, subject to the organisation paying an additional £110 per workshop (+VAT for non-NHS organisations) at the end of the licence year.

Year 2

Network licence to run 3 workshops for one year = £630 + (£110 x 2) = £850

Cost of learner packs based on 3 workshops each for 30 learners (90 packs per year - £150 per box of 50 including p&p - 2 boxes) - £300

3 SAGE & THYME facilitators attending the annual study day in Manchester = 3 x £80 = £240

Total cost - £1,390 (year 2) - excluding any VAT that may be payable on the licence fee (non-NHS organisations pay VAT)

9. What does my organisation get in return for buying a licence?

- Permission to run SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshops
- Ability to order SAGE & THYME learner packs
- Teaching materials and the research evidence which includes:
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - Scenario films using the SAGE & THYME model
 - Learner packs
 - Learner certificate template
- Access to trainer and administrative support information on the password protected area of the web site
- Poster to use for advertising the workshops
- Regular updates from the developers including a SAGE & THYME newsletter
- Opportunity to contact a MFT SAGE and THYME trainer if problems/difficulties encountered

10. We will be providing the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshops to external organisations - can we charge them to cover our costs?

You are allowed to charge learners a royalty-free fee to cover your reasonable costs of the venue, catering and learner packs and also a proportion of the licence fee. However, you are not allowed to make a profit, and the maximum learner fee that you can charge is currently £60.

11. How can my organisation renew its licence?

Your organisation will be contacted about a month before the date of your licence renewal to ask if you wish to renew the agreement, unless you inform MFT that you wish to terminate the agreement at least 30 days before the anniversary date. The licence renewal fee will depend on whether you have an organisational or a network licence (see licence fee costs in point 7 above).

12. What do I do now if my organisation wishes to provide SAGE and THYME Foundation Level workshops?

- Identify a budget to pay the staff training costs, licence fees and learner packs.
- Identify at least 3 and ideally 4 members of staff **who meet the person specification** for SAGE & THYME facilitators and also understand what the SATFAC course entails. Note that most organisations opt to train more than 3 people to cover annual leave, sickness and provide some flexibility when organising the course dates.
- Identify someone within your organisation who will act as a SAGE & THYME mentor for the other SAGE & THYME facilitators
- Contact MFT to book the facilitator training. We recommend that people who are going to be SAGE & THYME facilitators in the same team attend the same SATFAC course wherever possible.
- Complete a licence request form - **the licence is negotiated in parallel to the facilitators receiving the training** - we can organise for the licence to come into effect after the date of signature (e.g. it can be signed in July but not come into effect until October when all your staff will have received their SATFAC training).
- Once the facilitators are trained, the licence agreement has been signed and the fees paid, your organisation will be able to receive the learner packs required to deliver SAGE and THYME Foundation Level workshop.

13. I need to put a business case together to gain funding for this course.

MFT has produced a business case guide that provides some of the information you will need to put in a business case/proposal for funding. This is available on the web site (see 'downloads' on right hand side of page): <http://www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk/running-fl-workshops-your-organisation>

You might also wish to refer to the evidence that others have produced on running the SAGE & THYME foundation level workshops, see: <http://www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk/evidence-and-links>

The business lead for SAGE & THYME in Manchester would also be happy to review your business case and provide advice and information before it is submitted.

14. I am organising the licence and the training, when should we schedule our first workshop?

New SAGE & THYME facilitators need to practice their skills as soon as possible after completing their SATFAC training. You can start advertising the workshops you plan to run as soon as the licence is signed.

It is recommended that you organise several SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshops in short succession (e.g. one per week/fortnight for the first month or two) to give all your SAGE & THYME facilitators the opportunity to consolidate their training.



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Our experience tells us that trainers need to build their confidence to train. This experience appears to be gained by teaching SAGE & THYME, then reflecting as teachers on the effectiveness of the training and receiving feedback from a mentor about strengths and areas for further development.

15. Why is there a cost for SAGE & THYME?

SAGE & THYME has no central funding. In order for the quality of the learning experience to remain high, the developers of SAGE & THYME have set high standards for the way it is taught. The charges pay for the infrastructure to disseminate the training, to research and to further develop SAGE & THYME.

16. Who do I contact for more information?

For **general information** about SAGE & THYME and to learn more about the training or to book a place on a course, please contact:

SAGE & THYME team: 0161 291 4210
sageandthyme@mft.nhs.uk

For information on **booking training on your premises**, please contact:

Dr Joanne Thomas, business lead on: 0161 276 6965
joanne.thomas@mft.nhs.uk

Please also visit our web site for more information on: what others say; videos explaining the SAGE & THYME model and the licence; current price list; evidence and links, and more:

www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk

17. References

1. Connolly M, Perryman J, McKenna Y, Orford J, Thomson L, Shuttleworth J, Cocksedge S. (2010). SAGE & THYME: A model for training health and social care professionals in patient-focused support. *Patient Education and Counseling*; 79: 87-93.
2. Connolly M, Thomas JM, Orford J, Schofield N, Whiteside S, Morris J, Heaven C. (2014). The impact of the SAGE & THYME foundation level workshop on factors influencing communication skills in health care professionals. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*; 34 (1): 37-46.
3. Griffiths J, Wilson C, Ewing G, Connolly M, Grande G (2015). Improving communication with palliative care cancer patients at home - a pilot study of SAGE & THYME communications skills model. *Eur J Oncol Nurs*; 19 (5): 465-472.