

# Effectiveness of Foundation Communication Skills Training Using SAGE & THYME® in a widespread roll –out across an Oncology Dept.

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## Introduction

Distress, anxiety and frustration are common phenomena in patients' cancer journeys. Suboptimal responses to these emotional and other concerns lead to escalating distress for patients, stress and burnout in hospital staff and complaints to organisations.

SAGE & THYME® was developed by University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (UHSM) as a means of training health and social care staff in Foundation (Level 1) psychological support skills in listening to and responding to patients' concerns.

SAGE & THYME® has been delivered successfully in other Foundation Trusts in London, but uptake has often been limited. There is also a paucity of longer-term summative evaluation data of training effectiveness of.

## Project Summary

Over the course of 12 months, SAGE and THYME® sessions were delivered to a total of 900 members of the oncology staff.

Participants were drawn from every patient-facing area, including medical, ward nursing, HCAs, outpatient and administrative staff.

Data collection: evaluations were completed immediately after attendance at session (formative) and several months after attendance (summative)

Data analysis: summative data were coded and analysed through *Survey Monkey*.

## Target Audience and Evaluation of Effectiveness

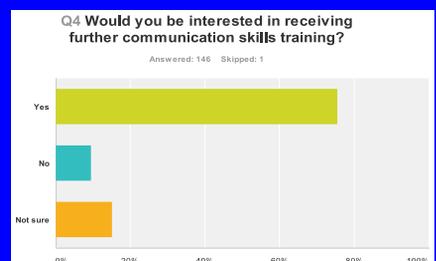
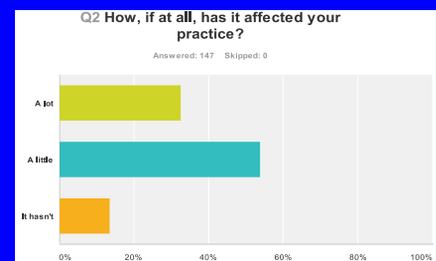
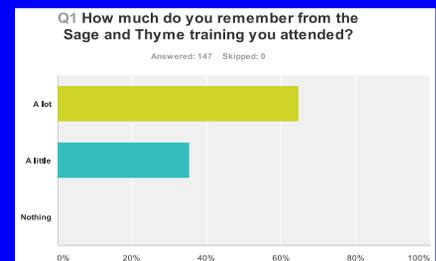
At time of summative evaluation, 803 participants had been trained in SAGE & THYME®. Data on roles was available for 402 people.

77.6% of staff dealing exclusively with cancer patients, and 66.9% of staff from areas involved with some cancer patients attended SAGE & THYME® training.

Able Angry Approach Ask <sup>Basic</sup> Cancer Care Conversation  
Daily Dealing  
Distressed Effectively Issue Listening <sup>Line</sup> Needs Points  
Practice Problem Solve  
Say Situation Solutions Think Thyme Understanding

3-6 months post-training, participants reported a significant recollection of learning. A word cloud demonstrates the most common recollections, consistent with the SAGE & THYME® model, including **Situation, Listening, Understanding**. The majority of respondents reported some impact on their practice; over 30% of these felt their practice had been affected "a lot." Over 75% of respondents expressed a clear interest in receiving further communication skills training.

AREA	Department	NO	YES	Grand Total	% COMPLIANCE
<b>full cancer</b>		26	90	116	77.59
71400	D7 - Clinical Haem Ward	2	9	11	81.82
71500	Decie Ward	4	20	24	83.33
CA210	5 South Ward	9	17	26	65.38
CA230	6 North Ward	3	20	23	86.96
SU030	Ward 7 North - GI	8	24	32	75.00
<b>partial cancer</b>		98	198	296	66.89
58900	Victor Bonney Ward	6	19	25	76.00
59000	Gynaecology Outpatients	6	11	17	64.71
64400	Haematology O.P.D.	6	13	19	68.42
66200	Ward A8 Hth	7	19	26	73.08
67800	Weston Ward	10	11	21	52.38
83800	Day Chemotherapy Hth	3	6	9	66.67
CA280	Day Chemotherapy Ckh	5	6	11	54.55
CA290	Cch Clinic 8	5	5	5	100.00
EN140	Urology Diagnostics	2	9	11	81.82
GYN06	Gynae - Opd	10	8	18	44.44
RA050	Minimally Invasive Unit - Emit	5	13	18	72.22
SIC01	Isic Outpatients	2	6	8	75.00
SU100	Ward Marjorie Warren	3	16	19	84.21
SUR16	New Charles Pannett	10	31	41	75.61
SUR22	Paterson Ward	2	19	21	90.48
TN110	Ward 10 5th - Hnb & Plastics	21	6	27	22.22
<b>Grand Total</b>		124	288	412	69.90



## Summary & Conclusions

- Foundation level communication skills training appears to have a longer-term impact on practice (subjectively, as reported by HCPs) several months after training;
- SAGE & THYME® however is only one approach to responding to distress, and one aspect of communication skills. Attendance at SAGE & THYME® sessions is associated with motivation to attend further communication skills training.
- The impact of this training on patient experience, patient care and team dynamics needs to be further assessed.

## Proposals for future

- ICHT propose to extend the delivery to another more challenging clinical area (Surgery);
- This will be delivered with a more robust evaluation programme including pre- and post-training evaluation, assessments of impact at ward level, and pre- and post-training evaluations of patient experience;
- Further communication skills courses are being developed in-house, including 'Breaking Bad News & Talking to Patients' and 'Effective Communication of Complex information and Uncertainty.'