

CASE STUDY

NHS Tayside

About NHS Tayside:

- Provides healthcare services for Angus, Dundee, Perth and Kinross areas
- Serves a population of about 405,000
- Delivers integrated health and social care with local authorities, GP surgeries, independent and third sector organisations
- Delivers healthcare in acute hospital and primary care community settings
- Supports the University of Dundee's Medical and Nursing Schools
- Includes over 60 GP surgeries and a variety of health centres
- Employs about 14,000 staff
- Leader in quality improvement for at least 10 years

What was the business challenge?

Communication was in the top three areas of complaints. The NHS Tayside Health Board was aware that staff communication skills needed to be improved and there was limited access to communication skills training for staff. The Health Board had already invested in advanced communication skills training by appointing Stephen Valentine, Health Behaviour Change Co-ordinator, deliver such training, but there was also a need for lower-level, accessible training for staff from a variety of backgrounds including nursing and others in contact with patients.



Why was SAGE & THYME training the solution?

The SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop was a good workshop to precede the existing advanced communication skills training being delivered. SAGE & THYME complimented the advanced communication skills course by teaching a similar ethos (that you can speak to and support someone about their worries without having a solution available to help them) and having a person-centred approach. It was also suitable for all staff to attend.

How was the training adopted?

The Learning and Development manager for Macmillan Cancer Support in Scotland, who supported Tayside's Macmillan nurse consultants, immediately reconsidered the value of the SAGE & THYME training. Macmillan agreed to pump-prime the training of 10 NHS Tayside staff to become SAGE & THYME facilitators and the SATFAC course was run locally in Dundee. Macmillan also funded the first year's licence and delegate packs for the workshops. NHS Tayside now provides funding for the SAGE & THYME training. Each year, Stephen collates the data collected from the workshop evaluations, and submits this information with a request for further funding from the Health Board.

The Health Board has a network licence. Places on the workshop are offered to NHS staff and to those from the third sector, care homes and local authorities. The attendees have included: nurses, volunteers, care home staff, allied health professionals, administrative staff, domestics, managers, porters, complaints team, practice educators, social workers, support staff for diagnostic services, dentists and dental nurses. SAGE & THYME training is often recommended by those colleagues who attend the training.

NHS Tayside works in partnership with local authorities, independent and third sector organisations to provide an integrated health and social care service for its residents. Senior managers and clinicians are very supportive of the SAGE & THYME training and recognise its benefits to patients and the organisation.

What are the benefits of the training?

- Increases staff confidence (including healthcare support workers) in speaking to patients and carers about their concerns
- Provides a helpful structure to engage in conversations and keeps conversations focussed
- Reduces anxiety about talking to others about their concerns.
- Wide application – skills taught can be used with staff and families – it's not restricted to use with patients
- Nearly 100% of delegates recommend the training to others
- Staff report that the training is useful and they demonstrate that they have learnt key messages about effective communication.

TIPS

What tips do you have for others wishing to run the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop?

1. Agree funding for 3-5 years from the start.
2. Include funding provision for training up new SAGE & THYME facilitators and for continued professional development of existing SAGE & THYME facilitators (e.g. attending the Reflect & Refresh workshop and Study Day).
3. Ensure that the staff identified to become SAGE & THYME facilitators, have the experience and manager's support, to deliver the workshops.
4. Get a firm commitment from staff wishing to become SAGE & THYME facilitators regarding how many workshops they will be expected to run each year.
5. Avoid running two workshops in a day (i.e. one in the morning and another in the afternoon) as it requires focus.
6. Share out the main tasks of delivering the workshop between the three facilitators (e.g. one delivers the presentation, another leads the first rehearsal).



About SAGE & THYME

The SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop was created by staff and a patient at University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust, to teach all staff how to listen and respond to patients/clients or carers who are distressed or concerned. It places published research evidence about effective communication skills within a memorable structure for clinical practice.

To discuss how SAGE & THYME could benefit your organisation, please ring Rachael/Mandy on **0161 291 4210** or email **sageandthyme@uhsm.nhs.uk**.

Web site: **www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk**