

Becoming a SAGE & THYME Facilitator

2 April 2024

Summary

- To become a **face-to-face** SAGE & THYME facilitator you need to attend a **SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop** run by MFT the day before attending a SAGE & THYME facilitators' course (SATFAC) (see further info below about teaching online).
- To become an **online** SAGE & THYME facilitator you need to attend a **SAGE & THYME Online workshop** run by MFT the day before attending a Online SAGE & THYME facilitators' course (OLS) (see further info below about teaching face-to-face).
- You need to meet the **person specification**. There are a number of questions on the SATFAC booking form which must be completed using examples of how you meet the person specification.
- The SATFAC and OLS courses are described by those who have completed them as hard work. A typical comment in the feedback is "Very intense course but extremely useful. Not only as to how to facilitate SAGE & THYME but also how to facilitate and teach other workshops."
- You must be able to arrive on time and attend the whole course. You will also have material to read in the evenings.
- Two of our trainers teach SATFAC/OLS and they decide after the SATFAC course (or after the assessment in the case of OLS) which delegates have demonstrated the skills required to become a S&T facilitator and be named on a SAGE & THYME licence. An email is then sent out within seven working days after the end of the SATFAC/OLS course to inform you of their decision.

Introduction to SAGE & THYME

The SAGE & THYME® structure was developed by clinical staff at the University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (UHSM) and a patient in 2006. On 1 October 2017, UHSM joined with Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to form Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (**MFT**). The SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop was designed to train all grades of 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. The SAGE & THYME Online workshop was created in 2020.

'SAGE & THYME' is a mnemonic which guides healthcare professional/care workers into and out of a conversation with someone who is distressed or concerned. It provides structure to psychological support by encouraging the health worker to hold back with advice and prompting the concerned person to consider their own solutions.

The SAGE & THYME structure

Setting	If you notice concern – think first of the setting create some privacy – sit down
Ask	"Can I ask you what you are concerned about?"
Gather	Gather all of the concerns – not just the first few – "Is there something else?"
Empathy	Respond sensitively – "You have a lot on your mind."
Talk	"Who do you have to talk to or support you?"
Help	"How do they help?"
You	"What do YOU think would help with your worries?"
Me	"Is there something you would like ME to do?"
End	Summarise and close – "Can we leave it there?"

The SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop

SAGE & THYME is designed as foundation level communication skills training, suitable for any member of staff (e.g. medical secretary, outpatient clerk, nurse, physiotherapist, doctor, social worker, student) and for any specialty. It can be used with patients and carers, students, colleagues and children – anyone who is distressed or concerned – inside and outside of health and social care.

The SAGE & THYME structure is taught in a 3 hour 'SAGE & THYME foundation level' workshop for up to 30 participants using three facilitators. The workshop uses a mix of small group work, a presentation and rehearsals.

The workshop format was informed by Social Learning Theory and therefore has several elements to encourage learning that will be implemented into practice:

- Participant attention is maintained by combining lectures, group discussion and rehearsals.
- Retention is assisted by a clear structure (the mnemonic 'SAGE & THYME'), which is reiterated through rehearsals and provided in the delegate packs.
- Participants reproduce the training by interacting with two rehearsals of a health or social care worker dealing with a concerned simulated patient.
- The scenarios used for rehearsal are suggested by the participants to make them relevant.
- Participants are motivated to change their behaviour by learning about the evidence on the impact of effective communication on patients (perceived outcome and usefulness of the skills), and by the process of group reflection.

MFT teaches and licences other organisations (e.g. NHS Trusts, hospices, universities) to deliver SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshops via the **SATFAC (SAGE & THYME Facilitator) course**.

Can S&T Foundation Level Facilitators teach the online S&T workshop?

Yes, if they read and absorb all the resources (guides and films) available in the trainer area of the SAGE & THYME web site and they practice teaching online with colleagues (estimated time commitment about 2-3 days in total) before they run a SAGE & THYME Online workshop.

The SAGE & THYME Online workshop

The SAGE & THYME Online workshop is equivalent to the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop, but some aspects of the teaching are different – the main one being the rehearsals are replaced with a film that demonstrates a conversation using SAGE & THYME that is stopped at various points to discuss the skills used for each element of the structure.

The online workshop is run for up to 20 participants on Zoom. It lasts 2 hours and 45 minutes workshop and is run by at least two facilitators.

It is highly interactive using a mix of small group work, a presentation and demonstration films, to teach participants how to have an evidence-based, structured conversation with someone who has concerns or is distressed.

MFT teaches and licences other organisations (e.g. NHS Trusts, hospices, universities) to deliver SAGE & THYME Online workshops via the **Online SATFAC (OLS) course**.

Can S&T Online Facilitators teach the face-to-face S&T Foundation Level workshop?

If your colleagues are qualified to run the face-to-face SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop, then you will also be able to assist them in running this as follows, once you have attended a SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop, they have taught you how to run the rehearsal and you have practiced this with them:

- Running the small group work
- Being the healthcare professional in a rehearsal

Note that you are not qualified to be the lead or the patient in a rehearsal.

If your organisation has no trained SAGE & THYME Foundation Level facilitators, then you will need to organise for some to be trained up before you can run the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop, but you would not need a new licence to run the face-to-face training.

A comparison of the Foundation Level and Online workshops can be found here
<http://www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk/our-online-training>

SAGE & THYME Facilitator person specification

To become a SAGE & THYME facilitator, a person must meet the following **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/online workshop 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/online courses per year
- Advocate and use the SAGE & THYME model in their practice

We have included a section in the SATFAC/OLS booking form for you to complete where you need to demonstrate how you meet the person specification by addressing each of the above categories. A member of the SAGE & THYME team will review each booking form received and decide whether or not each candidate is suitable or not to attend the training. This will be fed back to you and also sometimes to the key contact for your area.

Becoming a SAGE & THYME facilitator

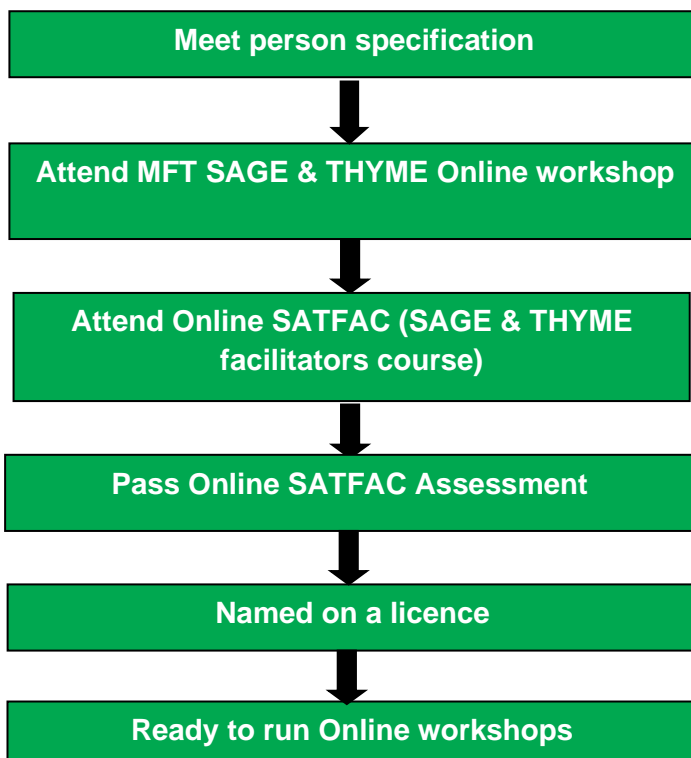
Being a SAGE & THYME facilitator can be very enjoyable and rewarding – see what others say about it:
www.sageandthymetraining.org.uk/what-people-say-about-sage-thyme

The process for becoming a SAGE & THYME facilitator is as follows:

SAGE & THYME Foundation level:



SAGE & THYME Online:



The SATFAC (SAGE & THYME facilitators) Course

The original SATFAC course was developed by MFT in collaboration with the Maguire Communication Skills Training Unit at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust. The online SATFAC course was developed by MFT only. The courses cover:

- The theoretical and research background to the SAGE and THYME model (including exploring the risks to participants of the SAGE and THYME workshop).
- The principles and processes that govern the delivery of each session.
- Opportunities to discuss concerns/questions about delivery of the course.
- Rehearsal time (face-to-face)/online teaching practice.

The training is delivered by MFT in collaboration with trainers from other NHS Trusts and freelance trainers.

The **SATFAC** course runs from 8:30am or 9:00am until 5:00pm each day (unless times agreed otherwise) and **participants must have attended a SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop run by MFT, the day before attending the SATFAC course.**

The **Online SATFAC (OLS)** course runs over 1.5 days and **participants must have attended a SAGE & THYME Online workshop run by MFT, the day before attending the SATFAC course.**

If you wish to become a S&T facilitator, **you must be able to attend the whole of the SATFAC/OLS training** (i.e. you cannot arrive late or leave early) - the course is fast-paced and intensive and if you are not present for the whole course you will miss some key learning/feedback.

The aim of the **SATFAC** course is to train individuals to facilitate the SAGE & THYME Foundation Level workshop and be confident to:

- Lead or co-facilitate
- Work effectively with a large group of 30 and small groups of 10
- Understand and describe to learners the theoretical and policy background to the SAGE & THYME model
- Use the key communication skills, thus modelling effective communication skills to the group at all times
- Lead/participate in the rehearsals to clearly demonstrate the SAGE & THYME model and work as a team with the other facilitators
- Invite contribution and participation from the whole group
- Manage group dynamics
- Maintain a 'safe' learning environment where participants feel included, challenged to learn but not judged or de-skilled
- Optimise the learning by making the SAGE & THYME model explicit.

The aim of the **Online SATFAC** course is to train individuals to facilitate the SAGE & THYME Online workshop and covers:

- Using the SAGE & THYME structure in a conversation
- Skills needed for online teaching
- Facilitation skills for group work and discussion
- Understanding the evidence behind each element of the SAGE & THYME structure and the evidence on the impact of SAGE & THYME on communication skills
- How to teach each part of the online workshop including some practise sessions
- Practical issues with teaching online.

The SATFAC/OLS course can make people feel outside their comfort zone as they have to take risks and practice learning how to run the SAGE & THYME rehearsals in front of their colleagues.

Most of the SATFAC/OLS course involves rehearsing the SAGE & THYME demonstration as teachers of SAGE & THYME. SATFAC/OLS delegates, therefore, are all involved as teachers of SAGE & THYME during the course. They get verbal feedback on their skills as teachers, including the areas on which they can improve.

The SATFAC/OLS trainers develop, during the SATFAC/OLS 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 the SATFAC trainers that a delegate is really struggling and is unlikely to be able to make it without a great deal of help and guidance - in such instances the delegate will not be authorised to become a SAGE & THYME facilitator.

SATFAC trainers will use a structured approach to assess each delegate's suitability (either during the SATFAC course or during the online assessment day) to be named on the training licence. An email is then sent out within seven working days to inform delegates of their decision.

Everyone who completes SATFAC will receive an attendance certificate and will gain valuable knowledge and skills to transfer to other areas of practice. Note that **attendance on a SATFAC/OLS course does not guarantee that a person can become an authorised SAGE & THYME facilitator and named on a licence.**

Preparation is of key importance

We have taught hundreds of people on SATFAC/OLS. They tell us consistent things about it:

They wished they had prepared better: read the papers/research evidence; spoken to colleagues who had previously done the course; attended a SAGE & THYME Foundation Level/Online workshop in their area prior to applying for SATFAC/OLS; used some or all of the SAGE & THYME structure in real conversations before applying to learn how to teach it; prepared for the fact that their facilitation skills would be assessed.

Summary

- To become a SAGE & THYME facilitator you need to attend a SAGE & THYME Foundation Level/Online workshop run by MFT the day before attending a SATFAC/Online SATFAC (OLS) course.
- You need to meet the **person specification**. There are a number of questions on the SATFAC/OLS booking form which must be completed using examples of how you meet the person specification.
- The SATFAC/OLS course is hard work and you must be able to arrive on time and attend the whole course. You will have reading in the evenings.
- SATFAC trainers decide after the SATFAC/OLS course which delegates have demonstrated the skills required to become a S&T facilitator and be named on a SAGE & THYME licence.
- Your preparation really matters.

Michael Connolly
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