

# Evaluating the Self-Harm Assessment & Management for General Hospitals (SAMAGH) Training Programme: findings from a focus group

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## Introduction

Biopsychosocial assessments and management of hospital-presenting self-harm can improve patient-outcomes. However, limited training is available for healthcare professionals on biopsychosocial assessments and management of self-harm patients, including clinical sub-groups such as high-risk self-harm patients and patients with frequent self-harm presentations. We previously developed and delivered an innovative e-learning and simulation-based training: The Self-Harm Assessment and Management for General Hospitals (SAMAGH) training programme for healthcare professionals in Ireland.

## Aim

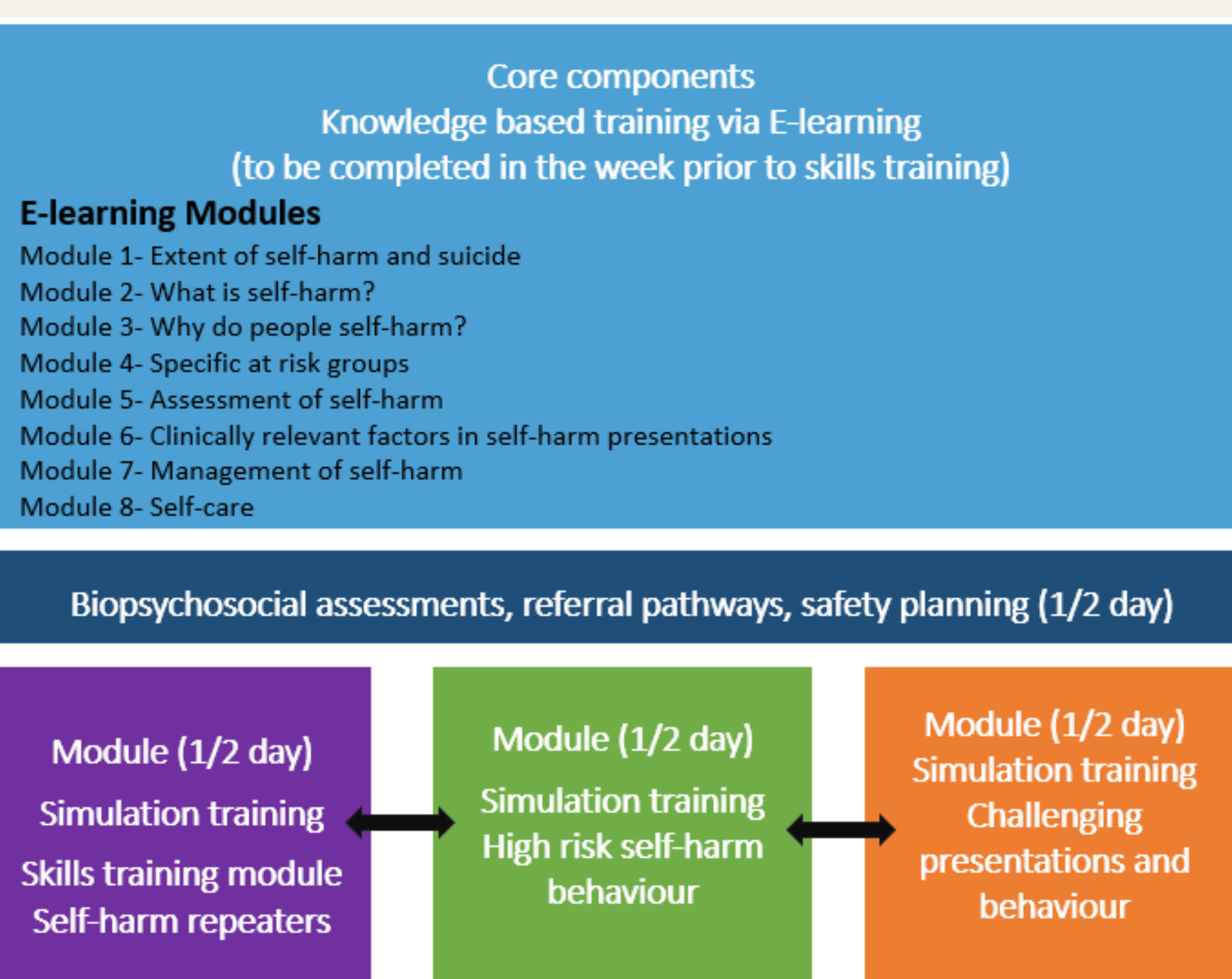
The aim of this study was to evaluate the Self-Harm Assessment and Management for General Hospitals (SAMAGH) training by examining the experience, attitudes, and knowledge of healthcare professionals involved in the training.

## The SAMAGH Training Programme



Facilities of the simulation labs, SAMAGH Training, ASSERT Centre, UCC

SAMAGH is a simulation training delivered to healthcare professionals in Ireland. It is an advanced training for those working with clinical sub-groups of patients who self-harm (people with high-risk self-harm and frequent self-harm repetition). SAMAGH includes an E-learning component, to be completed prior to attending the 2-day simulation training. Groups of 8-10 healthcare professionals attend the training and are divided into two groups where they conduct three simulation sessions each with patient actors. Meanwhile, peers are observing through a two-way mirror, being a unique opportunity for peer learning. After each of simulation sessions, participants engage in reflective feedback with their peers and a facilitator.



## Methods

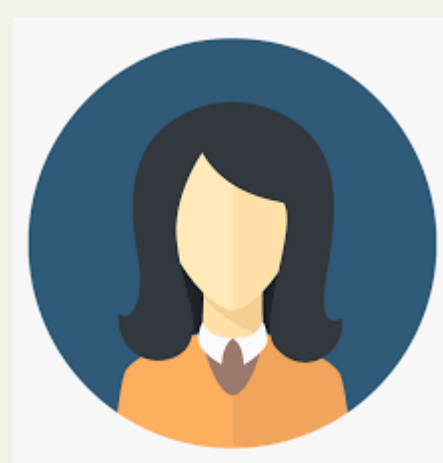
Between November 2019-November 2020, 35 healthcare professionals participated in the SAMAGH training, and a subgroup was invited to partake in an online focus group to discuss their experiences and implementation with the SAMAGH training facilitated by two independent researchers. A topic guide was used to facilitate the focus group discussion to ask about healthcare professionals' experiences and existing challenges when offering support to self-harm patients. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, with two independent researchers coding and identifying relevant themes



## Results

A total of six participants, including five clinical nurse specialists and one consultant psychiatrist, participated in the focus group which lasted 90 minutes. Three main themes were identified:

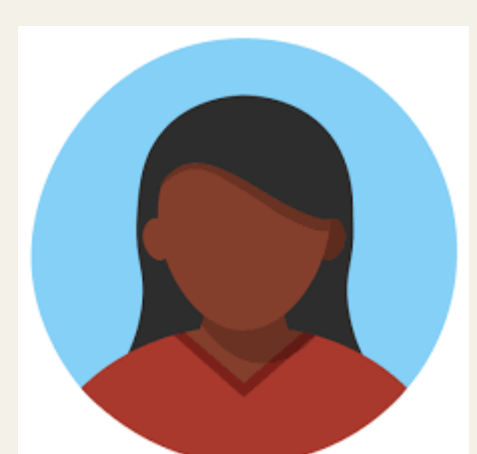
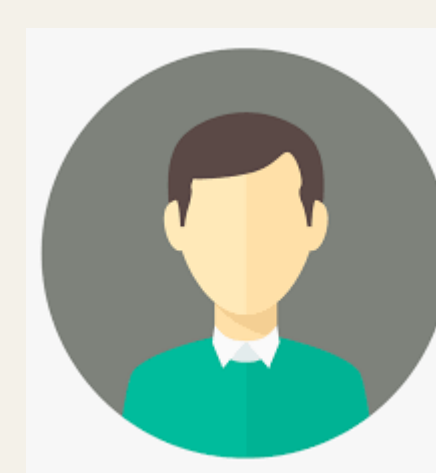
- 1) Lack of available training in self-harm assessment and management.



"There is so little training, education on this particular field. I was 6 years into the job before the SAMAGH training came in." (P2)

- 2) Experience of the SAMAGH training, including suitability of the training for healthcare professionals, and barriers and facilitators to attend the training.

"I am new to this post, I started in July and was clinically active from around October so I found having the course very helpful. To have the information that was available in the modules. And the scenarios themselves, I found very helpful to look back at the recordings and that level of analysis of your own performance." (P3)



"Time off work. From our point of view we kinda sold it as this is our job we have to go to this training. This was one of the one and only times where we dug our heels and said we are doing it and we weren't met with resistance." (P5)

- 3) Impact of the SAMAGH training on healthcare professionals and specific patient sub-groups.

"I received great benefit from attending the SAMAGH training. I felt this was a great investment in me, which will be utilised in my practice going forward and will have a positive impact on clients presenting to the Emergency Department." (P1)

## Conclusions

Participants identified the SAMAGH training as relevant, unique, and an opportunity to learn from colleagues. They reported lack of self-harm training available and supported that similar trainings should be delivered nationwide to all healthcare staff supporting self-harm patients, including colleagues in primary care. Findings from this focus group provide evidence for the suitability and sustainability of simulation training for self-harm with the potential for wider implementation. By providing this evidence, the SAMAGH training addresses Ireland's national strategy to reduce suicide, specifically Goal 5 which aims to 'ensure safe and high-quality services for people vulnerable to suicide'.



## References

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