Writing a SAGA Elevator Speech
A SAGA Chapter Program

Purpose of program: To assist SAGA members in becoming comfortable introducing SAGA and/or smocking to the public, with an accurate, consistent message.

Program time: 45 to 60 minutes

Supplies needed: Blackboard/whiteboard/easel & paper; paper and pen/pencil for each participant; stop watch or timer with seconds.

Program outline: Facilitator introduces the program and goals. “At the end of this program we hope we’ll all have a short answer to the question ‘What is SAGA?’ or ‘What is smocking?’ that we are comfortable giving when someone asks what we’re doing, or where the adorable dress my granddaughter is wearing came from.” If appropriate, remind participants that the smock-in will provide opportunities to use what is developed. This should take about 2 minutes.

Facilitator asks group to name important points they would like to communicate about SAGA/Smocking. Facilitator or assistant should capture each point on the blackboard (whiteboard/easel paper.) Allow about 3 minutes; try to get 5-10 points, and allow as many different participants as possible to contribute a point.

Now, ask the group for stereotypes and myths about smocking. Again, capture the items on the blackboard. You need not write out in detail—just a key word or two so everyone remembers what’s been said. Remember that stereotypes are not the same as myths, and both stereotypes and myths can be true, false, or some combination. Allow about 5 minutes for this part of the exercise. Don’t allow debate about the points offered.

Looking at these two lists, the group picks up to three key points, and identifies any jargon or buzz words they want to define or delete. For example: chapter/guild distinction is jargon. Use a word that will be understood by your audience, such as “group.” Take about 5 minutes for this process.

Give individuals 10 minutes to write a 25 second speech that answers one of these questions:
• What is SAGA?
• What is smocking?
• (sees you smocking) What are you doing?

If there are more than 20 present, divide into pairs or triads.

Everyone may answer the same question, you can assign different questions to different people (pair/triad), or each person (pair/triad) can pick which one to
answer. You might demonstrate how long 25 seconds is with timed silence, or reciting a 25 second poem!

After 8 minutes, give a 2 minute warning so speeches can be finished up. At 10 minutes, ask that all pens be put down (no re-revising as the first speeches are read!)

Have participants read their speeches to the group. Let them know you will use a stopwatch and cut off at 30 seconds. After each speech, ask the group to give feedback about the thing they liked best—give a positive comment to each participant. It can be, “I liked how you smiled when you talked about smocking.” This should take about 20-25 minutes. In a really, really big group, you can divide into two or three sections for this part.

Collect all the speeches at the end (or assign someone to collect) and type them into one document to share with the group. It is best to actually collect them—don’t let someone say, “Oh, you can’t read my writing, I’ll email it to you.”

Ask the group to evaluate the program/exercise. Was it useful? Do they expect to use all/part of the speech they created? Will they feel more comfortable in the future introducing SAGA or smocking to a stranger? Gracefully receive feedback as facilitator, too.

Send your own evaluation (and samples of the speeches if you are comfortable doing so) to information@smocking.org.

Thank you!!
Facilitator Training

Chapters considering using the Writing a SAGA Elevator Speech program may have one or more facilitators participate in a conference call training. The training is very helpful to conducting the exercise but is not required.

Trainings will be scheduled as needed, by dial in conference call with internet access preferred. Our conference call system requires a long distance dial in, that is, each participant will pay for her own phone call. The calls will last about 30 to 45 minutes.

Call Agenda
- Roll call/introductions
- Purpose/goal of chapter program
- Purpose of conference call
- Participate in short version of exercise, using Web in place of blackboard.
- Read example of “elevator speech.”
- Questions and answers
- Call Evaluation

Follow up support is available by email or phone.