

The Unbearable Dread of Sleep: *Helping Traumatised Clients suffering from Night-time Flashbacks, Nightmares, Night Terrors and Night-time Panic Attacks*

Christiane Sanderson

Video Course
CPD hours: 6 / CE credits: 6

Price: £135



Online video access remains available for 1 year from the date you receive the video course.

"A ruffled mind makes a restless pillow." — Charlotte Brontë

We live in a culture that demands maximising each day. Those that are able to work are all too often required to work inordinately long hours and those who claim to need very little sleep are applauded. In addition, daylight hours are being extended by white and blue light through the use of devices which impairs natural sleep and wake cycles.

While sleep problems are associated with a number of physical and mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, hormonal changes, obesity and a range of medical conditions, clients who are traumatised tend to experience **more severe sleep disturbances such as night-time flashbacks, trauma related nightmares, night terrors and night-time panic attacks.**

Many traumatised clients are able to armour themselves during the day to keep distressing thoughts, feelings and memories at bay through distractions, only to find that when the armour is removed at night that what was kept at bay is unleashed, leading to a dread of going to sleep, insomnia, disrupted sleep, disturbing dreams and nightmares, and night time panic attacks. In addition, clients whose sleep is consistently compromised will suffer from sleep exhaustion, **impaired cognitive and executive functioning, daytime dissociative states, in particular depersonalisation, as well as a compromised immune system and concomitant physical health problems all of which exacerbates trauma symptoms.**

This training will explore the relationship between traumatised clients and a range of sleep disturbances such as dread of going to sleep, insomnia, night-time flashback, trauma related nightmares, night terrors and night-time panic attacks, and fear of waking up and how prolonged sleep deprivation impacts on traumatised clients.



It will identify a number of practical strategies and CBT-Insomnia (CBT-i) interventions that have proved effective in improving sleep.

Emphasis will be placed on introducing additional trauma informed strategies to aid sleep such as grounding and emotional regulation skills, the use of anchors, and other sensory cues designed to calm the sympathetic nervous system and make the sleeping space safe. It will also identify a number of methods to manage night-time flashbacks, trauma related nightmares, night terrors and night-time panic attacks and reduce their impact to reduce the terror of sleep and restore the quality of sleep. Consideration will also be given how clients already on sleep medications can benefit by combining these with trauma informed sleep interventions.

Equipped with these additional interventions, practitioners will be able to help traumatised clients to feel safe to go to sleep, reduce sleep disturbances and restore healthy sleep patterns.

This training workshop will familiarise practitioners with a range of additional trauma informed strategies to aid sleep such as grounding and emotional regulation skills, to calm the sympathetic nervous system, the use of anchors, and other sensory cues designed to make the sleeping space safe. It will also introduce a range of practical CBT-i interventions to improve sleep including:

- **Cognitive restructuring**
- **Stimulus control and regulated sleep restriction**
- **Autogenic techniques and progressive muscle relaxation**

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the range of sleep problems and sleep disturbances associated with physical and mental health problems
- Examine the purpose and function of sleep and how sleep deprivation impacts on physical and mental well being
- Discuss additional sleep problems that are common in traumatised clients such as dread of going to sleep, insomnia, night-time flashbacks, trauma related nightmares, night terrors and night-time panic attacks, and fear of waking up
- Explain the role of dissociation in sleep disturbances and how disturbed sleep can induce dissociative states in particular depersonalisation
- Discuss how to manage night-time flashbacks, trauma related nightmares, night terrors and night-time panic attacks and restore sleep including:
 - **Avoiding amygdala hijacking**
 - **Refocusing of senses and**
 - **Stepping out of flashbacks by building awareness of safe zones**
- Identify how clients on sleep medication can combine these with psychological interventions to improve sleep

About the speaker

Christiane Sanderson BSc, MSc. is an Honorary Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Roehampton, of London with 35 years of experience working with survivors of childhood sexual abuse and sexual violence. She has delivered consultancy, continuous professional development and professional training for parents, teachers, social workers, nurses, therapists, counsellors, solicitors, the NSPCC, the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Committee, the Methodist Church, the Metropolitan Police Service, SOLACE, the Refugee Council, Birmingham City Council Youth Offending Team, and HMP Bronzefield.

She is the author of *Counselling Skills for Working with Shame*, *Counselling Skills for Working with Trauma: Healing from Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse*, *Counselling Adult Survivors of Child*



Sexual Abuse, 3rd edition, *Counselling Survivors of Domestic Abuse*, *The Seduction of Children: Empowering Parents and Teachers to Protect Children from Child Sexual Abuse*, and *Introduction to Counselling Survivors of Interpersonal Trauma*, all published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. She has also written *The Warrior Within: A One in Four Handbook to Aid Recovery from Sexual Violence*; *The Spirit Within: A One in Four Handbook to Aid Recovery from Religious Sexual Abuse Across All Faiths* and *Responding to Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse: A pocket guide for professionals, partners, families and friends* for the charity *One in Four* for whom she is a trustee. Her next book, *The Taboo of Sibling Sexual Abuse: Working with Adult Survivors* is out soon with *nscience publishing house*.

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