

Personality Disorder or Adaptation to Threat: *Attachment, Relational Trauma and Enduring Personality Changes*

Christiane Sanderson

Video Course
CPD/CE credits: 6

Price: £145



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

Early experiences in childhood shape how we relate to others and how much we value ourselves in relationships. How parents and caregivers relate and respond to their child from infancy forms the template for later attachments in childhood and adulthood. Research shows that **adverse childhood experiences, relational trauma and early narcissistic injuries render individuals highly vulnerable to developing personality disorders**. Analysis of data from 42 international studies of over 5,000 people showed that 71.1% of people who were diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder reported at least one traumatic childhood experience. (*University of Manchester, Lancaster University, Manchester NHS Foundation Trust, published in Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavia*). The most common form of adverse experience reported by people with BPD was physical neglect at 48.9%, followed by emotional abuse at 42.5%, physical abuse at 36.4%, sexual abuse at 32.1% and emotional neglect at 25.3%.

At this training workshop, which would be especially relevant for counsellors, psychotherapists and psychologists across modalities, we will be presenting relevant elements of attachment theory and research, we will look at the role of attachment, the range of attachment styles, including disorganised attachment, and how these link to personality disorders, in particular Borderline Personality Disorder (*aka Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder*), Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Anti-social Personality. We will explore how personality disorders present in the therapeutic space and how they impact on the therapeutic relationship.



Emphasis will be placed on **understanding personality disorders as adaptations to relational threats and how to reframe these as enduring personality changes rather than a personality disorder**. The training will evaluate the traditional psychiatric formulation of personality disorders and compare these to current conceptualisation of personality disorders in ICD-11 (2022) and the DSM-5-TR (2022) Alternative Model for Personality Disorders. This will be combined with clinical formulations that reframe personality disorders as **disorders of attachment and relational trauma** rather than a personality disorder. The focus will be on understanding *what happened to the person* rather than *what is the problem* and what they had to do to survive including enduring changes in their sense of self and personality.

This reformulation of personality disorders enables us, as therapists, to work in a more compassionate, non-judgemental and non-shaming way. It humanises those who have been labelled with a personality disorder and enables them to make contact and facilitate connection. With our understanding of *personality disorders* as manifestations of deep emotional suffering in response to traumatic attachments, we are able to transform the therapeutic process for our clients to create a sustained positive impact on their lives and relationship patterns.

Learning Objectives:

- Enhance awareness of the role of attachment, relational trauma and personality disorders
- Examine the **link between impaired attachment in childhood and vulnerability to developing personality disorders**
- Examine current conceptualisation and formulation of personality disorders in ICD-11 and the DSM-5 Alternative Model for Personality Disorders formulation
- Discuss the impact and **effects of relational trauma and traumatic bonding in which relationships become places of fear rather than safety**
- Identify how impaired attachment and relational trauma can be misdiagnosed as personality disorders, in particular Borderline Personality Disorder (*aka Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder*), Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Anti-Social Personality and early attachment experiences
- Explain how to work with enduring personality changes

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*.

© nscience UK, 2022 / 23

There is no known commercial support for this program

For more information on how to access webinar joining links, handouts and video recordings please visit <https://www.nscience.uk/faqs/>

Questions and requests for information: customerservices@nscience.co.uk

If you have a disability, please contact us in advance of the course so we can accommodate your needs:

customerservices@nscience.co.uk

US: +18337161044

UK/Europe:
+44(0)2070961722

Australia:
+1800861953



nscience UK is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. nscience UK maintains responsibility for this program and its content.