



## Advanced Therapeutic Skills Workshop 2: *Psychological Defences as Relational Strategies* Video Course

Kathy Steele

Video Course  
CPD hours: 3 / CE credits: 2.75

Price: £69



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

At *nscience*, we are proud to launch a **new, highly-immersive and therapeutic skills focused set of online evening sessions with internationally acclaimed Trauma expert Kathy Steele**. At each of these evenings, we will explore one special topic per session relevant to working with challenging clients who have experienced complex trauma and dissociation. Each session will **be focused on specific practical clinical skills**. This will include a 75-minute didactic training module with time for comments, questions, and clinical applications. Next, we will offer 90 minutes of case consultation – attendees can bring anonymized cases for discussion. Attendees can sign up for individual sessions or for the entire series of five sessions at a discounted price.

### **About this workshop:**

Understanding psychological defences as relational strategies delves into the complex realm of how individuals safeguard themselves within interpersonal dynamics, particularly within therapy. Expanding upon psychoanalytic notions of defence mechanisms, rooted in the works of Anna Freud and later ego psychologists like Hartmann, highlights their role as shields against anxiety.

Clinical challenges arise as therapists navigate these defences within therapy. **Our clients' use of defences like intellectualization or denial, obstructs vulnerability, hindering authentic engagement**. Recognizing these nuanced behavioural patterns requires a deep understanding of individual psychodynamics.

Moreover, these defences within therapy pose difficult challenges. For instance, a client's projection might hinder perceiving the therapist accurately, creating barriers to trust and rapport. As therapists, we must delicately balance challenging these defences for growth while creating a safe space that encourages our clients to lower their guard gradually.

At this session, we evaluate how psychological defences as relational strategies present multifaceted challenges for therapists. Decoding and addressing these defences demand a keen understanding of psychoanalytic theory, individual dynamics, and the complexities of therapeutic relationships. Therapists face the nuanced task of navigating clients' protective shields, fostering a balance between challenge and safety for authentic growth.



We are familiar with defences in general, such as avoidance of emotions, aggression, or projection. But often defences are employed to protect against vulnerability and authenticity in the therapeutic relationship. We will **discuss several ways in which clients can engage with the therapist that block adaptive relationship and stall therapy, and practical interventions to reduce these defences.**

#### Learning Objectives:

- Distinguish animal defences against threat from psychological defences
- Identify at least 5 psychological defences that impact the therapeutic relationship

#### About the speaker

**Kathy Steele**, MN, CS has been treating complex trauma, dissociation, and attachment issues since 1985. She is in private practice with Metropolitan Psychotherapy Services and is Adjunct Faculty at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, US. Ms. Steele is a Past President and Fellow of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD) and has also previously served on the Board of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS). She has been involved with developing treatment guidelines for Dissociative Disorders and well as for Complex Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Ms. Steele has received a number of awards for her work, including the 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award from ISSTD, an Emory University Distinguished Alumni Award in 2006, and the 2011 Cornelia B. Wilbur Award for Outstanding Clinical Contributions. She is known for her humour, compassion, respect, and depth of knowledge as a clinician and teacher, and for her capacity to present complex issues in easily understood and clear ways using an integrative psychotherapy model that draws from both traditional and somatic approaches. She is sought as a consultant and supervisor, and as an international lecturer.

She has co-authored three books as part of the acclaimed Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology: The Haunted Self: Structural dissociation of the personality and chronic traumatization (2006, Van der Hart, Nijenhuis, & Steele – W. W. Norton); Coping with trauma-related dissociation: Skills training for patients and therapists (2011, Boon, Steele, & Van der Hart – W. W. Norton); and most recently, Treating trauma-related dissociation: A practical, integrative approach (2017, Steele, Boon, & Van der Hart – W. W. Norton). She has also (co)authored numerous book chapters and journal articles.

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**There is no known commercial support for this program**

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