

**Presentation Title:** Overcoming Barriers to Trauma Treatment with the Sleeping Dogs Method

**Presentation Time:** 90 Minutes

**Content Level:** Intermediate

**Potential to Distress:** No

**Abstract**: This presentation provides an overview of the Sleeping Dogs method. This presentation is for professionals who are working with chronically traumatized children who have severe trauma symptoms, but are unable or unwilling to engage in trauma therapy. The Sleeping Dogs method can be used by therapists, residential staff, foster care workers and caseworkers in child protection services.

Chronically traumatized children can struggle with severe symptoms and they are violent, avoidant, dissociate, have sexualized behavior, they self-harm or are suicidal. Trauma treatment is recommended, but they are unable or unwilling to engage in trauma focused therapy. These children often have experienced abuse or neglect within their families and child protection services are involved. Trauma treatment seems impossible and there are so many issues, it is unclear where to start. The temptation to ‘let sleeping dogs lie’ and not focus on processing the traumatic memories but behavior can be strong. This presentation provides an introduction to the Sleeping Dogs method which can be used make a structured analysis of the child’s potential barriers to engage in trauma processing. Treatment is then focused on overcoming these specific barriers, so they can participate in trauma processing with for example EMDR or TF-CBT, and on supporting the child and famliy during processing and integration. Key elements of the Sleeping Dogs method are psychoeducation with the use of metaphors, increasing the child’s support system and collaboration with the child’s network, the child’s biological family and child protection services.

The Sleeping Dogs method (Struik, 2019) can be used to engage children, who are unwilling or unable to discuss their trauma, in trauma focused therapy. The research data of a pilot study (Struik, Lindauer, & Ensink, 2017) show this is a promising and relatively short method.

**Learning Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

* Assess whether a child needs stabilization prior to trauma processing
* Analyze children’s barriers to trauma focused treatment
* Plan interventions to overcome these barriers
* Recognize the order in which intervention need to be planned

**Presenter(s)**

**Arianne Struik, MA**   
Arianne Struik is a clinical psychologist, family therapist and EMDR Europe consultant, originally from the Netherlands. She worked in Child and Adolescent Mental Health for twenty-two years as a clinical psychologist and program director with children living at home, in foster care and residential care. She moved to Australia and became director of The Institute for Chronically Traumatized Children (ICTC) from which she provides specialized trauma treatment in remote areas, as well as workshops, training, supervision and research. She developed the award-winning Sleeping Dogs method, described in the book Treating Chronically Traumatized Children and teaches internationally on the treatment of trauma and dissociation in children. She is member of the ESTD Child and Adolescent Committee and the Australian Psychological Society EMDR Interest Group national committee.