

# BONDAGE AND DISCIPLINE, DOMINANCE AND SUBMISSION, AND SADOMASOCHISM (BDSM)/KINK

## 6

Brian is a white gay man of 55 who has been working with you in therapy for several sessions on the panic attacks and nightmares he has been experiencing following witnessing a person committing suicide at a tube station some months ago. For a couple of weeks you have sensed that there are some aspects of his life that he hasn't been completely open about with you. At the end of a session he looks uncomfortable and says that there is something he has to tell you which he hopes won't influence your opinion of him but which has been holding him back from talking about all aspects of his life. He says that he is in a 24/7 BDSM relationship as a slave for his partner, Jordan.

Think about:

- What is your formulation/understanding of the key issues for Brian?
- What themes can you imagine emerging as you continue?
- What assumptions might you bring to this?
- How would you proceed?

Being a kink-aware professional you let Brian know that you have some understanding of BDSM practices and relationships. He has probably already seen *SM 101* and *Powerful Pleasures* on your bookshelf, and that probably helped him to tell you about this aspect of his life. Like many people, the idea of '24/7' BDSM is one that you find difficult to understand, so you note your negative gut reaction as one you want to bracket as much as possible and explore in supervision. Your initial response to Brian is that you are quite open to talking about this aspect of his life with him and are committed to working affirmatively with people of all sexualities.

After a little online research you discover that '24/7' can mean different things to different people, but that it generally implies some sense of BDSM being a more integral part of a relationship than the odd kinky scene. Early in the next session with Brian you thank him for his courage for mentioning it, and say that you would like to understand a bit more about what being a 24/7 slave means to him. He explains that Jordan and he always take the

same D/s roles in their sexual life, and that they also organise aspects of their domestic life in this way. For example, Brian always serves Jordan his evening meal, and they have a regular spanking session every evening. Brian also always wears a discrete collar underneath his clothes to signify Jordan's 'ownership' of him. However, in many aspects of the relationship Brian takes control (finances and social events). You explore with Brian whether the BDSM aspect of his life relates to the issue which brought him to you at all. He says that mostly it does not except that he finds the daily spankings to be the one time he can really forget about what happened, and he has some worries that his focus on the suicide, and death more broadly, is taking away from the pleasure he used to gain from serving Jordan. You explore these issues in subsequent sessions as well as considering Brian's feelings around mortality, and addressing his fear of travelling on the tube again.