

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Resource Guide

How to Recognize Narcissism:

Traits and Characteristics of Individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder

- Extreme self-centeredness
- See others as an extension of themselves
- The belief that they are "special" and superior to others
- An idealized self of self, and a high value of self-image and status
- Refusal to take blame or responsibility for misunderstandings or conflicts
- Project unwanted or unacceptable behaviors or attitudes in themselves onto others
- Motivated more by "power" or winning rather than by love and belonging
- Afraid to acknowledge they have needs or vulnerabilities
- Narcissistic rage in the form of verbal abuse, extreme criticism, devaluation, and sometimes violence or threats of violence
- May lie or fabricate stories for sympathy or attention, dismiss if questioned or if dishonesty is exposed
- Play games, create anxiety, and "toy" with people they see as vulnerable and/or of lower status for "fun"

Gaslighting:

What is it?

- Lies about anything and everything, then denying the lies
- Describes events only in way that make them the innocent/good/noble one
- Denies remembering at all, tells you it's your imagination or you are "crazy"
- Makes you question your sanity, perception of reality, feelings, or memories
- Refuses to acknowledge a problem; shuts off discussion with "I'm not going to argue with you" or other dismissive statements
- Labels behaviors such as "being a bitch", "crazy", "psycho", in order to avoid subject entirely
- Causes you to try and "prove" you are right or accurate to them
- Makes victim constantly worry about "where you stand" with the person
- Makes victim apologize even when they are clearly not at fault; victim defends the narcissist against others

What Does this Look Like in Different Roles?

Specific descriptions and issues to be aware of with various roles.

The Narcissistic Parent:

- Has an idealized “favorite” or “golden child who they feel reflect their idealized self
- Often has an unconsciously chosen “scapegoat” or “disappointing” child on whom they project their disowned or denied traits
 - Neither child is actually “seen” as a separate, 3- dimensional person with their own dreams, desires, and feelings—rather they are experienced as an extension of the NPD
- Sees children are responsible for completing the parent and are expected to meet the parent’s needs, rather than the other way around
- Can be both smothering and controlling and at the same time dismissive and neglectful
- Tends to shame their children for being too “needy”, clingy, or whiney—the Narcissistic parent is put off by children’s needs
- Often has contempt for their children and sets the bar too high making it impossible to meet—then in turn withholding love or approval the child

The Narcissistic Spouse or Partner:

- Begins relationship pursuit with “love bombing”, idealizing their target and expressing idealized love
 - Once relationship is secured, begins to criticize, devalue, withdraw, or otherwise become hurtful towards previously perceived “perfect” partner
 - Becomes angry when asked to be supportive of partner in a situation of loss or need
 - Provokes emotional responses and uses partner’s reactive anger, hurt, or tearfulness to regulate their own moods; not satisfied until partner breaks down
 - Creates continuous anxiety through inconsistency, withholding, contradictory statements
 - Resists any in depth conversations, especially about “the relationship”
 - If boundaries are held or they are not treated as “special” they will become victims and blame partner for upsetting them, scaring them etc.
 - Sees expression of love and tenderness as weakness; may express disdain or ridicule
 - Reacts strongly to any implication they don’t know something or that they might need help with something
 - Are arrogant or condescending to reestablish superiority
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The Narcissistic Spouse or Partner

Continued:

- Continuously projects unwanted parts of themselves onto partner; engages in verbal cruelty If asked for something, (attention, affection, etc.) immediate response is to withhold it
- Sees every interaction as who is winning and who is losing; is extremely reactive to criticism
- Uses partner as “supply” or for some use; i.e. money, status, sex, prestige, etc.
- Often has affairs then lies about, telling partner they are “crazy”

The Narcissistic Friend:

- Initially appears fun, charismatic, adventurous, and upbeat
 - Suddenly stops calling, and disappears Gets angry when you ask them for support, time, or anything in which they must go out of their way
 - Treats you differently depending on who else is present; ignores you if others they consider superior are present
 - Doesn't want to hear about your experiences; cut you off after a few sentences, or advise you to “stop whining”—are not curious about you
 - May expect you to pay for activities, then don't pay you back
 - Borrows things you value and won't return them, or says you must have loaned that to someone else
 - Talks negatively about you to others; may fabricate damaging stories that do not resemble truth
 - After mistreating you, may call weeks later as if nothing ever happened
 - Cancels constantly—always late, thoughtless
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The Narcissistic Boss

- Constantly appears irritated if you need time or guidance from them Has very little interest in what you are thinking or feeling
 - Has obvious “favorites” and spends most of his/her time with that person to exclusion of others; this person can do no wrong
 - May subtly make fun of, ridicule, or scapegoat those who are outside the “inner circle” they have identified
 - Takes credit for your accomplishments
 - Criticizes your ideas
Microaggressions: eye rolling, walking out in middle of meeting, constantly looking at phone as if you’re not important
 - Appears always “busy” but accomplishes very little
 - Thinks anyone who criticizes them must be jealous
 - Ignores you purposefully to keep you anxious
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The Impact of Narcissistic Relationships

Understanding Post Narcissistic Abuse Syndrome

- Clinical depression and anxiety
 - Inability to think straight
 - Questioning your memory
 - Dissociating for hours at a time
 - Psychosis, loss of touch with reality
 - Suicide or suicide attempts
 - Nightmares and inability to reach restorative sleep
 - Gastrointestinal distress
 - PTSD including flashbacks, mood swings, avoidance, and isolation
 - Premature aging
 - Difficulty accomplishing tasks
 - Emotional numbing and joylessness
 - Mistrust of others and avoidance of future relationships
 - Shame
 - A sense of having “lost yourself”
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Healing and Recovery; Finding Your True Self

if you have been dealing with a narcissist—healing is possible. You can recover, and you can create a life of peace, joy, and happiness, no matter how trapped or hopeless you might be feeling now.

Steps to finding your true self:

- Eliminate all contact if possible
 - Learn about Narcissistic Personality Disorder
 - The stages of grief; Shock, Denial, Bargaining, Guilt, Sadness and Sorrow, Anger, Acceptance, Reattachment
 - Internal Family Systems; finding the lost parts of self
 - EMDR; assimilating traumatic memory and shifting negative core beliefs
 - Finding Community
 - Validation, Emotional Safety, Time, Physical Safety, and Sharing Your Pain with Others
 - Self care; Identifying with yourself again
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