

# Narcissistic Personality Disorder

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Narcissistic personality disorder — one of several types of personality disorders — is a mental condition in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance, a deep need for excessive attention and admiration, troubled relationships, and a lack of empathy for others. But behind this mask of extreme confidence lies a fragile self-esteem that's vulnerable to the slightest criticism.

A narcissistic personality disorder causes problems in many areas of life, such as relationships, work, school or financial affairs. People with narcissistic personality disorder may be generally unhappy and disappointed when they're not given the special favors or admiration they believe they deserve. They may find their relationships unfulfilling, and others may not enjoy being around them.

Narcissistic personality disorder involves a pattern of self-centered, arrogant thinking and behavior, a lack of empathy and consideration for other people, and an excessive need for admiration. Others often describe people with NPD as cocky, manipulative, selfish, patronizing, and demanding. This way of thinking and behaving surfaces in every area of the narcissist's life: from work and friendships to family and love relationships.

People with narcissistic personality disorder are extremely resistant to changing their behavior, even when it's causing them problems. Their tendency is to turn the blame on to others. What's more,

they are extremely sensitive and react badly to even the slightest criticisms, disagreements, or perceived slights, which they view as personal attacks. For the people in the narcissist's life, it's often easier just to go along with their demands to avoid the coldness and rages. However, by understanding more about narcissistic personality disorder, you can spot the narcissists in your life, protect yourself from their power plays, and establish healthier boundaries.

Signs and symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder:

- Grandiose sense of self-importance
- Lives in a fantasy world that supports their delusions of grandeur
- Needs constant praise and admiration
- Sense of entitlement

Ending an abusive relationship is never easy. Ending one with a narcissist can be especially difficult as they can be so charming and charismatic—at least at the start of the relationship or if you threaten to leave. It's easy to become disoriented by the narcissist's manipulative behavior, caught up in the need to seek their approval, or even to feel “gaslighted” and doubt your own judgement. If you're codependent, your desire to be loyal may trump even your need to preserve your safety and sense of self. But it's important to remember that no one deserves to be bullied, threatened, or verbally and emotionally abused in a relationship. There are ways to escape the narcissist—and the guilt and self-blame—and begin the process of healing.

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