

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER

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Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a dramatic disorder wherein one gets extremely pre-occupied with personal power, adequacy, vanity, and prestige. Individuals suffering from this personality disorder perceive themselves as the best and cannot recognize destructive damages that they cause to others. It is derived from a Greek myth called “narcissism” in which Narcissus (a handsome boy) falls in love with his image. A survey conducted by the World Health Organization in 2012 found that one percent of world’s population is affected by this disorder, with men being the majority.¹ This disorder was historically referred to as megalomania; a severe egocentrism disorders that was first discovered in 1968.

According to Goodman and Leff, Narcissistic Personality Disorder falls under ‘Cluster B’ conditions.² Individuals with Cluster B disorders tend to have distorted self-image and unstable emotions. Further, NPD is characterized by exaggerated self-importance and superiority, pre-occupation with power and success, and abnormal self-love. However, these behaviors and attitudes are not a sign of self-confidence, but a bottomless sense of insecurity and self-esteem.³ Those having this disorder lack empathy for others. Instead, they strongly believe that they are the most powerful in the society. NPD involves socially unacceptable behaviors such as arrogance, uncaring, and struggle for supremacy. These traits make narcissists to be described as self-centered, cocky, demanding, and manipulative. They spend more time concentrating on improbable personality outcomes such as looking for fame and demanding

1. Goodman, Cynthia, and LcswLeff. *The Everything Guide to Narcissistic Personality Disorder: Professional, Reassuring Advice for Coping with the Disorder - at Work, at Home, and in Your Family* (Holbrook: F+W Media, 2012), 12.

2. Ibid, 23.

3. Ronningstam, Elsa. *Identifying and Understanding the Narcissistic Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 71.

special treatments. Besides, they engage in risky sexual behaviors, take bold financial decisions, and defend their self-esteem.

Mental health professionals are yet to establish the cause of this personality disorder. However, they believe that it is caused by a combination of biological vulnerabilities, psychological factors, and social interactions with childhood caregivers. Other researchers believe that this disorder is likely to develop in children who experience unwarranted pampering parenting styles. Parents who want their children to maintain their self-esteem by specializing in some areas also contribute to the development of NPD.⁴ On the other hand, it may develop from neglect, trauma, and abuse that authorities or parents inflict in children. Some scientific findings have established that genetics account for fifty percent of NPDs. As well, peer interactions and the environment contribute to narcissism. Majority of mental health specialists subscribe to the “bio-psychosocial model of causation”, which links NPD to biological, social, psychological, and genetic factors.⁵ This is an indication that no single factor is responsible for NPD; rather, it is a multi-complex disorder.

In conclusion, NPD is a personality disorder that is associated with a long-standing prototype of ostentation, lack of empathy, and irresistible need for self-admiration. Narcissists believe that they the most powerful and respected individuals in their localities, therefore, the rest of the population must feel and appreciate their importance. Individuals with this personality disorder exhibit disdainful, patronizing attitudes, or snobbishness. Though such behaviors were common in the sixteenth century, they are generally unacceptable in the twenty first generations. This is because they deviate from the socially defined norms and cultural practices. Instead, they

4. Donaldson, Pressman, and Robert Pressman. *The Narcissistic Family: Diagnosis and Treatment* (San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 47.

5. Campbell, Keith, and Joshua Miller. *The Handbook of Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder: Theoretical Approaches, Empirical Findings, and Treatments* (Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 82-83.

result in considerable impairment of work, social, and normal functioning of the society.

Although there are no known causes of this disorder, it is believed that environmental, biological, social, and psychological factors are responsible for its development.

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