

Condition:



Narcissistic Personality Disorder

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What is Narcissistic Personality Disorder?

An individual with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), thinks, feels and behaves very differently from an ordinary person. Those with NPD are characterised by an inflated sense of self-importance, a lack of empathy for others, and a constant need for admiration.

Having high self-confidence and self-esteem are positive traits and should not be confused with Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Work

As NPD can only be diagnosed by a mental health professional, it is likely to be undiagnosed. However, you may be reading this because you or someone you know believe that one or more of the associated traits apply to you.

You can seek support to help you to identify realistic employment goals based on your work history and personal ambitions. It might be the case that another person's input can help give a sense of how your ambitions might be achieved and to break down the necessary steps to help you achieve your goals.

Some workplace adjustments might include:

- Changing your working hours to avoid busy times
- Flexible working (e.g. altering start/finish times, particularly during acute episodes; working from home where appropriate and possible, part time working, job sharing)
- Changing tasks or the pace of work to avoid exacerbating the condition
- Allowing for reasonable time off for appointments and treatment
- More frequent and/or longer break
- Your employer providing a place to rest without being disturbed

What does Narcissistic Personality Disorder feel like?

Narcissistic Personality Disorder is characterised by an over inflated and grandiose sense of self. This can be difficult to think about in oneself even if there are negative effects on your personal life. It is often difficult to know on your own whether it is your personality that is having an adverse effect on your life or whether there is some other reason. NPD might be preventing you as an individual from achieving your full potential.

What causes Narcissistic Personality Disorder?

The causes of Narcissistic Personality Disorder can be hard to pin down to a specific. However there are known to be several environmental and genetic factors that could lead to an individual developing the traits of a narcissistic personality, such as:

- Experiencing unreliable or inconsistent care from parents during childhood
- Having suffered from abuse or neglect at a young age
- Observing manipulative behaviour from a parent or carer acting as a role model.
- Being consistently overindulged by parents or family members from a young age
- Not having received realistic feedback about one's behaviour or achievement from a young age
- Being born with an over sensitive temperament

Talking to Your GP or Health Professional

Narcissistic Personality Disorder can only be diagnosed by a mental health professional. It is difficult to self-identify that there is any problem as you may feel like you are fine on a day to day basis.

The most effective means of diagnosis is spending time with a professional therapist who will be able to identify whether you have evolved a narcissistic personality. The above symptoms will be persistent and chronic and a professional will be able to identify them although this may take some time.

Treatments

Psychotherapy or counselling is the primary method of treatment for NPD. With psychotherapy, you may gain insight into your behaviour and how it affects you and your relationships with others. With ongoing treatment, you can learn how to develop more positive and fruitful relationships with yourself and others.

This may bring about a change in attitudes, resulting in more constructive behaviour. It can help you to build up your self-esteem and acquire realistic expectations of yourself and others. It can also help with realistic and achievable goal setting and a better tolerance of when situations do not go as planned.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), family therapy, or group therapy are types of talking therapies that can help to achieve these ends.

Self-Management

Talk to friends and family with a view to achieving a realistic understanding of yourself wherever possible.

As signs of a narcissistic personality are difficult to spot on your own, you might try talking to someone whose opinion you value and trust, who will give a true reflection of the way that you come across and relate to them and others.

You may wish to reflect on the way that you relate to people in conversation. Does the other person have an opportunity to add to the conversation, or is it always dominated by what is going on for you?

This does not mean that it is automatically unhealthy to talk about yourself. There may be times when it is appropriate to do so e.g. talking about your achievements at a job interview or talking with a friend about your plans. A narcissistic personality is prevalent when an individual only wants to talk about themselves, and exaggerates their qualities and accomplishments to try and impress others.

Seek out ways of getting help from a qualified mental health professional if you feel that you are persistently affected by the symptoms listed on the previous page.



Take notice

Taking notice and being mindful of your surroundings. Allowing yourself to gain a heightened awareness of your self-understanding.



Be active

What could you do for yourself that you have not tried before? Perhaps take up a new sport or hobby. Physical activity is a great way to build up true self-esteem and trying something new is a great way to become a more active participant in your own life.



Keep Learning

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.



Connect

This can be in any form; talk to someone, speak to someone new, ask how someone's weekend was or put aside 5 minutes of your day to find out how someone really is. This can then in turn help with developing relationships which is something that you might be struggling with.



Give Back

Think about volunteering or maybe doing some charity work or getting involved with local community projects. Challenging yourself to come up with a voluntary project will provide a sense of satisfaction and the knowledge that you can help others, instead of being the one is always being helped.

Useful links

