

## DSM-5 Narcissistic Personality Disorder Criteria (5)

1. Grandiosity with expectations of superior treatment from other people
2. Fixated on fantasies of power, success, intelligence, attractiveness, etc.
3. Self-perception of being unique, superior, and associated with high-status people and institutions
4. Needing continual admiration from others
5. Sense of entitlement to special treatment and to obedience from others
6. Exploitative of others to achieve personal gain
7. Unwilling to empathize with the feelings, wishes, and needs of other people
8. Intensely envious of others, and the belief that others are equally envious of them
9. Pompous and arrogant demeanor

**From Millon:** “Were narcissists able to respect others, allow themselves to value others’ opinions, or see the world through others’ eyes, their tendency toward illusion and unreality might be checked or curtailed. Unfortunately, narcissists have learned to devalue others, not to trust their judgments, and to think of them as naïve and simpleminded. Thus, rather than question the correctness of their own beliefs they assume that the views of others are at fault. Hence, the more disagreement they have with others, the more convinced they are of their own superiority and the more isolated and alienated they are likely to become.” (Millon, 2011, p. 415)

**From Kernberg:** “These patients present an unusual degree of self-reference in their interactions with other people, a great need to be loved and admired by others, and a curious apparent contradiction between a very inflated concept of themselves and an inordinate need for tribute from others. Their emotional life is shallow. They experience little empathy for the feelings of others, they obtain very little enjoyment from life other than from the tributes they receive from others or from their own grandiose fantasies, and they feel restless and bored when external glitter wears off and no new sources feed their self regard. They envy others, tend to idealize some people from whom they expect narcissistic supplies, and to depreciate and treat with contempt those from whom they do not expect anything (often their former idols). In general, their relationships with other people are clearly exploitative and sometimes parasitic. It is as if they feel they have the right to control and possess others and to exploit them without guilt feelings – and behind a surface which very often is charming and engaging, one senses coldness and ruthlessness. (p. 17)

**From Beck:** “Another conditional assumption of power is the belief of exemption from normal rules and laws, even the laws of science and nature. (p. 251-252)

Millon, T. (2011). Disorders of personality: introducing a DSM/ICD spectrum from normal to abnormal. Hoboken: Wiley.

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**From Millon:** “There is also a tendency for them [narcissists] to flout conventional rules of shared social living. Viewing reciprocal social responsibilities as being inapplicable to themselves, they show and act in a manner that indicates a disregard for matters of personal integrity, and an indifference to the rights of others.” (p. 389)

**From Millon:** “Narcissists are neither disposed to stick to objective facts or to restrict their actions within the boundaries of social custom or cooperative living... Free to wander in their private world of fiction, narcissists may lose touch with reality, lose their sense of proportion, and begin to think along peculiar and deviant lines.” (Millon, 2011, p. 415)

**From Millon:** “Rarely physically abusive, anger among narcissists usually takes the form of oral vituperation and argumentativeness. This may be seen in a flow of irrational and caustic comments in which others are upbraided and denounced as stupid and beneath contempt. These onslaughts usually have little objective justification, are often colored by delusions, and may be directed in a wild, hit-or-miss fashion in which the narcissist lashes out at those who have failed to acknowledge the exalted status in which he or she demands to be seen.” (Millon, 2011, pp. 408).

**From Millon:** “Under conditions of unrelieved adversity and failure, narcissists may decompensate into paranoid disorders. Owing to their excessive use of fantasy mechanisms, they are disposed to misinterpret events and to construct delusional beliefs. Unwilling to accept constraints on their independence and unable to accept the viewpoints of others, narcissists may isolate themselves from the corrective effects of shared thinking. Alone, they may ruminate and weave their beliefs into a network of fanciful and totally invalid suspicions. Among narcissists, delusions often take form after a serious challenge or setback has upset their image of superiority and omnipotence. They tend to exhibit compensatory grandiosity and jealousy delusions in which they reconstruct reality to match the image they are unable or unwilling to give up. Delusional systems may also develop as a result of having felt betrayed and humiliated. Here we may see the rapid unfolding of persecutory delusions and an arrogant grandiosity characterized by verbal attacks and bombast.” (Millon, 2011, pp. 407-408).

**From Millon:** “Deficient in social controls and self-discipline, the tendency of CEN narcissists to fantasize and distort may speed up. The air of grandiosity may become more flagrant. They may find hidden and deprecatory meanings in the incidental behavior of others, becoming convinced of others malicious motives, claims upon them, and attempts to undo them. As their behaviors and thoughts transgress the line of reality, their alienation will mount, and they may seek to protect their phantom image of superiority more vigorously and vigilantly than ever... No longer in touch with reality, they begin to accuse others and hold them responsible for their own shame and failures. They may build a “logic” based on irrelevant and entirely circumstantial evidence and ultimately construct a delusion system to protect themselves from unbearable reality.” (Millon, 2011, p. 415)

Beck, A.T., Freeman, A., Davis, D.D., & Associates (2004). Cognitive therapy of personality disorders. (2nd edition). New York: Guilford.

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**From Beck:** “The failure to be superior or regarded as special activates underlying beliefs of inferiority, unimportance, or powerlessness and compensatory strategies of self-protection and self-defense.” (p. 241)

**From Beck:** “He or she [the narcissist] remains firmly rooted in the importance of a flawless or powerful image... Without a flawless image, core beliefs of inferiority become activated.” (p. 246)

**From Beck:** “The core belief of narcissistic personality disorder is one of inferiority or unimportance. This belief is only activated under certain circumstances and thus may be observed mainly in response to conditions of self-esteem threat. Otherwise, the manifest belief is a compensatory attitude of superiority.” (p. 249)

**From Beck:** “Narcissistic individuals also use power and entitlement as evidence of superiority... As a means of demonstrating their power, narcissists may alter boundaries, make unilateral decisions, control others, and determine exceptions to rules that apply to other, ordinary people.” (251)

**From Beck:** “Out of their vehement certainty of judgment, boundary violations of all sorts may occur, as narcissists are quite comfortable taking control and dictating orders (“I know what’s right for them”) but quite uncomfortable accepting influence from others” (p. 251)

**From Beck:** “Another conditional assumption of power is the belief of exemption from normal rules and laws, even the laws of science and nature. (p. 251-252)

**From Beck:** “Thus, he or she is apt to approach any number of situations feeling automatically entitled to personal gratification. If others fail to satisfy the narcissist’s “needs,” including the need to look good, or be free from inconvenience, then others “deserve to be punished”... Even when punishing others out of intolerance or entitlement, the narcissist sees this as “a lesson they need, for their own good” (p. 252).

**From Beck:** “The patient with NPD often has a low tolerance for frustration and expects not only to have wishes easily gratified but also to remain in a steady state of positive reinforcement. Conditional assumptions may include the notions, “If I want something, it is extremely important that I get it,” and “I should feel happy and comfortable at all times,” and “If I’m not happy, no one can be happy,” and “I need to feel special to feel happy.”

**From Beck:** “Various studies have found that patients with BPD are characterized by disorganized attachment representations. Such attachment representations appear to be typical for persons with unresolved childhood traumas, especially when parental figures were involved, with direct, frightening behavior by the parent. Disorganized attachment is considered to result from an unresolvable situation for the child when the parent is at the same time the source of fright as well as the potential haven of safety.” (p. 191)

Moor, A. and Silvern, L. (2006). Identifying pathways linking child abuse to psychological outcome: The mediating role of perceived parental failure of empathy. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 6, 91-112.

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**From Moor & Silvern:** “The act of child abuse by parents is viewed in itself as an outgrowth of parental failure of empathy and a narcissistic stance towards one’s own children. Deficiency of empathic responsiveness prevents such self-centered parents from comprehending the impact of their acts, and in combination with their fragility and need for self-stabilization, predisposes them to exploit children in this way.” (p. 95)

**From Moor & Silvern:** “Only insofar as parents fail in their capacity for empathic attunement and responsiveness can they objectify their children, consider them narcissistic extensions of themselves, and abuse them. It is the parents’ view of their children as vehicles for satisfaction of their own needs, accompanied by the simultaneous disregard for those of the child, that make the victimization possible. (p. 104)

**From Moor & Silvern:** “The indication that posttraumatic symptoms were no longer associated with child abuse, across all categories, after statistically controlling for the effect of perceived parental empathy might appear surprising at first, as trauma symptoms are commonly conceived of as connected to specifically terrorizing aspects of maltreatment. However, this finding is, in fact, entirely consistent with both Kohut’s (1977) and Winnicott’s (1988) conception of the traumatic nature of parental empathic failure. In this view, parental failure of empathy is predicted to amount to a traumatic experience in itself over time, and subsequently to result in trauma-related stress. Interestingly, even though this theoretical conceptualization of trauma differs in substantial ways from the modern use of the term, it was still nonetheless captured by the present measures.” (p. 197)

## Dark Triad Personality References

Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2002). The dark triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 36, 556–563.

“First cited by Paulhus and Williams (2002), the Dark Triad refers to a set of three distinct but related antisocial personality traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Each of the Dark Triad traits is associated with feelings of superiority and privilege. This, coupled with a lack of remorse and empathy, often leads individuals high in these socially malevolent traits to exploit others for their own personal gain.” (Giammarco & Vernon, 2014, p. 23)

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