

Quranic Psychology – Is Narcissism a Sin?



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surely all praise is due to Allah the Lord, Evolver, Maintainer of all that exists. He is the One Who taught the Quran and created the human one. Then He sent the Book down onto the heart of His servant and messenger, Muhammad, so that he would take us from the darknesses into the light, by His permission. We glorify Him with praise and we seek forgiveness from Him. We ask him for all good and we seek refuge with Him from every evil. There is none to be worshipped except Him. Then, we bear witness that there is no god except Allah and we bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

About the Quran

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكْمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ
ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ

الْمُمْتَرِينَ

Say: "Shall I seek [a] judge other than Allah. - when He it is Who hath sent unto you the Book, explained in detail." They know full well, to whom We have given the Book, that it hath been sent down from thy Lord in truth. Never be then of those who doubt. (Surah Al An‘Am 6:114, Yusuf Ali Translation [amended])

Commentary

Study Quran: Here, as elsewhere, the Quran connects proper judgment among human beings directly to the sending down of The Book (see also 2:213; 3:23; 4:105; 5:41-49). The verse occurs in the context of the Meccans’ lack of acceptance of the Prophet (saas) and the message he brought, and their request for a “sign or miracle to prove his prophet-hood.” The Prophet is ordered to respond, “Shall I seek a judge other than Allah, when it is He Who has sent down the Quran” in Truth, with its inimitable language, and its clear criterion as to right and wrong? For Muslims, the Quran is the miraculous proof of Allah and His divine message.

This verse is followed by several detailed examples showing how the Quran explains things. Among them is the allegory of the good person with his/her divine mission and the evil person with his/her mission of evil. This contrast of evil and good is repeated throughout Quran.

أَوَمَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي
بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ
مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

Can he who was dead, to whom We gave life, and a Light whereby he can walk among men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness, from which he can never come out? Thus to those without faith their own deeds seem pleasing. (Surah Al An‘Am 6:122, Yusuf Ali Translation)

Commentary

Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali: Here is the allegory of the good person with his/her divine mission, contrasted with the evil person with his/her mission of evil. Allah giving life to one who was dead is a metaphor for spiritual awakening, while Light is a common Quranic symbol for spiritual guidance and revelation. The opposite type is one who refuses to submit to Allah’s guidance, and plots and burrows against all that is good. Moreover, this evil person will never change. These two personality types must be seen as polar opposites of one another.

Quranic Perspectives on Narcissism

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to study Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), or Megalomania as it is sometimes called, and to ask, from a Quranic perspective, whether or not these “psychological disorders,” constitute a sin as defined by Allah, Subhanna wa Taala.

There are numerous reasons we should study the disorders, in ourselves and in others. Severe symptoms of NPD or megalomania can significantly impair the person's mental capabilities to develop meaningful human relationships, such as friendship, kinship and marriage. That includes the abilities to function socially, either at work, or at school, or within important societal settings.

Both narcissists and megalomaniacs can take Believers away from their true religion, Islam. That is especially true if people with the disorders are attracted to Leadership positions, as a means of promoting and validating their self views. Or, they live within our family. In the worst case, they can, and have conspired, to attack and kill Believers in order to maintain their power. In either case, they can make the lives of others around them miserable.

Most importantly, Allah commands that we judge between righteous and evil people, so that we won't be lead astray by them:

وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَأَحْذَرُهُمْ أَنْ
يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ
يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

And this (He commands): Judge thou between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they beguile thee from any of that (teaching) which Allah hath sent down to thee. And if they turn away, be assured that for some of their crime it is Allah's purpose to punish them. And truly most men are rebellious. (Surah Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:49, Yusuf Ali Translation)

Definition of the Problem

Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is a personality disorder characterized by a **long-term pattern of exaggerated feelings of self-importance, an excessive craving for admiration, and struggles with empathy**. Megalomaniacs, by comparison, are obsessed with power, success, and wealth, the belittling of others, and feelings of intense superiority. They often suppress the inalienable rights that Allah has given us, and even the freedom to practice our religion.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders indicates that a person with NPD possesses at least five of the following nine criteria, typically without possessing the commensurate personal qualities or accomplishments for which they demand respect and status.

The traits of megalomaniacs differ only slightly, and are classified within the NPD spectrum. Each psychological trait is cross-compared, in the table below, with what Allah SWT instructs about such people in Quran:

Nine Traits of Narcissists:	Mentioned in Quran	Quranic Reference
Shows arrogant , haughty behaviors or attitudes.	-Shaitan arrogantly refused to bow down to Adam -Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious	2:34 4:36, 31:18-19*
Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g. exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).	-Seek pomp and glitter of this life; do not follow them -See themselves as god -Dazzling speech but causes ruination/corruption (fasad) on earth	18:28*, 6:70 21:29*, 38:2, 45:23 2:204-205
Is preoccupied with fantasies of power , unlimited success, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.	-Want to be seen of men	4:38, 8:47, 34:18, 107:6
Believes that they are "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should only associate with high-status people or institutions.	-Seek honor with unbelievers	4:139
Requires excessive admiration. Love to be praised . Ego easily bruised by criticism.	-Think no punishment for craving praise. -Spreaders of vanities are liars	3:188 26:223
Has a sense of entitlement (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with their expectations).	-Think everything will be forgiven -Claim sanctity for themselves	7:169 4:49
Is interpersonally exploitative (i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve their own ends). Manipulative, lying, gaslighting .	-Exploit in marriage -If manipulate words, Allah will not change their hearts -Liars, manipulators - <u>Woe to falsehood mongers</u> -Group plotting and planning -Secret Councils -Hypocrites plot for advantage -Hypocrites blaspheme after believing	2:231 5:41 29:12, 4:62 <u>51:10</u> 74:18-20 58:8 4:141 9:74
Lacks empathy : is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.	-Care not for fellow man	4:53
Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of them.	- Evil (sharr) of the envious one	113:5

Added Traits of Megalomaniacs:		
Obsessed with power, wealth, success, and intense superiority.	-If any seek power and glory, all power resides with Allah -Wealth and sons are allurements of life	35:10* 18:46
Condescension, belittling of others, as well as feelings of already having dominated others.	-Slander others -Belittle Prophets’ followers	68:11 11:27, 26:111
Excessive drive to maintain control over others. Need to maintain domination.	-Pharaoh sought to dominate -Others seeking “dominion” can’t do simplest things compared to Allah SWT	43:51 38:10
[Seek out leadership roles to validate and reinforce views of self, and to exert power over others.]	-Wicked leaders in every town -Leaders can be arrogant -Leaders can be unbelievers	6:123 7:88, 7:75 7:90
Comorbidity Traits		
Blame others. Throw others under the bus.	-Shaitan blamed Allah SWT for his downfall, rather than question his own personal failing. -Mutual recriminations in Hell	7:16* 34:31-35
Sadism. Enjoys inflicting pain in others.	-Blame is on those who oppress men -Shaitan promised to mislead Allah’s human creation -A party would lead you astray	42:42 4:119 4:113
Fail to be self reflective, or recognize their disorder hurts themselves in the short and long run. Almost never change (e.g., drop out of therapy).	-Injures their own soul. -Never will change. -Allah changes condition only if change their own soul -Allah may forgive if transgressed against own soul	4:111, 6:104*, 10:108, 17:15, 39:41, 41:46, 6:111 above 13:11 39:53

Examples in Personality Critiques in Quran

Arrogance:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُفْرًا

مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾

"And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster. (Surah Luqman, 31:18, Yusuf Ali Translation)

See themselves as god:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَهٌ مِّنْ دُونِهِ ۖ فَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

If any of them should say, "I am a god besides Him", such a one We should reward with Hell: thus do We reward those who do wrong. (Surah Al-Anbiya (The Prophets) 21:29, Yusuf Ali Translation) (See also 38:2, 45:23.)

Blame Others:

﴿ قَالَ فَبِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١١﴾

He [Shaitan] said: "Because Thou hast thrown me out of the way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on Thy straight way: (Surah Al-A'raf (The Heights) 7:16, Yusuf Ali Translation [Amended]) (See also 34:31-35.)

How Believers Should Deal with Narcissists/Megalomaniacs

Do not follow or obey them:

﴿ وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ ۗ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٨﴾

And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, or one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds. (Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18:28, Yusuf Ali Translation)

Take not as protectors for friends (nor help them):

يَتَّيِّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا ءَابَاءَكُمْ وَءِخْوَانَكُمْ ءَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا
الْكَفَرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِّنكُمْ فءَأُولَئِكَ هُم الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

O ye who believe! take not for protectors your fathers and your brothers if they love infidelity above Faith: if any of you do so, they do wrong. . (Surah At-Tauba (The Repentance) 9:23, Yusuf Ali Translation) (See also: 5:2, 60:1-2)

Don't associate with them, but admonish them:

ءَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ
وَءَعْظُهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِى أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا ﴿٦٣﴾

Those men, (Allah) knows what is in their hearts; so keep clear of them, but admonish them, and speak to them a word to reach their very souls. (Surah An-Nisa (The Women) 4:63, Yusuf Ali Translation) (Talking with them: 4:61-64, 16:25; use words of Quran: 25:52; Say “I submit to Allah”: 40:66)

The Glorious Quran Provides Guidance to Protect Us from Being Lead Astray

يَتَّيِّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مِّنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ
إِلَى اللّهِ مَرَجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

O ye who believe! Guard your own souls: If ye follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray. the goal of you all is to Allah. It is He that will show you the truth of all that ye do. (Surah Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:105, Yusuf Ali Translation)

Conclusion

From these clarifying ayat, one could conclude that Narcissism/Megalomania is more than just an inconvenient personality disorder. Rather it is a fundamental sin, because at its basis is the failure to surrender oneself to Allah SWT, and to follow His Guidance. This sin is present in some People of the Book, in Unbelievers, and in Hypocrites residing within our Muslim community.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾

The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will): Nor did the People of the Book dissent therefrom except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account. (Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:19, Yusuf Ali Translation)

Duah

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

[Those] who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): "Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire. (Surah Al Imran 3:191, Yusuf Ali Translation [amended])

ANNEX – [Narcissistic personality disorder](#), From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), or megalomania as it is sometimes called, is a personality disorder characterized by a long-term pattern of exaggerated feelings of self-importance, an excessive craving for admiration, and struggles with empathy. Megalomania is the old name for NPD, although the former term used to be its own psychiatric classification (Wikipedia redirects “megalomania” to NPD).

Associated features

People with NPD exaggerate their skills, accomplishments, and their degree of intimacy with people they consider high-status. Such a sense of personal superiority may cause them to monopolize conversations, or to become impatient and disdainful when other persons talk about themselves. When wounded in the ego, either by a real or a perceived criticism, the narcissist's displays of anger can be disproportionate to the nature of the criticism suffered;[10] but typically, the actions and responses of the NPD person are deliberate and calculated. Despite occasional flare-ups of personal insecurity, the inflated self-concept of the NPD person is primarily stable.

Narcissistic personality disorder varies in its intensity, and type. In the study *Disorders of Personality: DSM-IV-TM and Beyond* (1996), Theodore Millon suggested five subtypes of narcissist

- Unprincipled narcissist : Deficient conscience; unscrupulous, amoral, disloyal, fraudulent, deceptive, arrogant, exploitive; a con artist and charlatan; dominating, contemptuous, vindictive.
- Amorous narcissist Sexually seductive, enticing, beguiling, tantalizing; glib and clever; disinclined to real intimacy; indulges hedonistic desires; bewitches and inveigles others; pathological lying and swindling. Tends to have many affairs, often with exotic partners.
- Compensatory narcissist : Seeks to counteract or cancel out deep feelings of inferiority and lack of self-esteem; offsets deficits by creating illusions of being superior, exceptional, admirable, noteworthy; self-worth results from self-enhancement.
- Elitist narcissist: Feels privileged and empowered by virtue of special childhood status and pseudo-achievements; entitled façade bears little relation to reality; seeks favored and good life; is upwardly mobile; cultivates special status and advantages by association.
- Normal narcissist:Least severe and most interpersonally concerned and empathetic, still entitled and deficient in reciprocity; bold in environments, self-confident, competitive, seeks high targets, feels unique; talent in leadership positions; expecting of recognition from others.

To the extent that people are pathologically narcissistic, the person with NPD can be a self-absorbed control freak who passes blame by psychological projection and is intolerant of contradictory views and opinions; is apathetic towards the emotional, mental, and psychological needs of other people; and is indifferent to the negative effects of their behaviors, whilst insisting that people should see them as an ideal person. To protect their fragile self-concept, narcissists use psychosocial strategies, such as the tendency to devalue and derogate and to insult and blame other people, usually with anger and hostility towards people's responses to the narcissist's anti-social conduct. Because their fragile egos are hypersensitive to perceived criticism or defeat,

people with NPD are prone to feelings of shame, humiliation, and worthlessness over minor incidents of daily life and imagined, personal slights, and usually mask such feelings from people, either by way of feigned humility, or by responding with outbursts of rage and defiance, or by seeking revenge. The merging of the inflated self-concept and the actual self is evident in the grandiosity component of narcissistic personality disorder; also inherent to that psychological process are the defense mechanisms of idealization and devaluation and of denial.

The DSM-5 indicates that: "Many highly successful individuals display personality traits that might be considered narcissistic. Only when these traits are inflexible, maladaptive, and persisting, and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress, do they constitute narcissistic personality disorder." Given the high-function sociability associated with narcissism, some people with NPD might not view such a diagnosis as a functional impairment to their lives. Although overconfidence tends to make people with NPD very ambitious, such a mindset does not necessarily lead to professional high achievement and success, because they refuse to take risks, in order to avoid failure or the appearance of failure. Moreover, the psychological inability to tolerate disagreement, contradiction, and criticism, make it difficult for persons with NPD to work cooperatively or to maintain long-term, professional relationships with superiors and colleagues.

Comorbidity

The occurrence of narcissistic personality disorder presents a high rate of comorbidity with other mental disorders. People with NPD are prone to bouts of psychological depression, often to the degree that meets the clinical criteria for a co-occurring depressive disorder. Moreover, the occurrence of NPD is further associated with the occurrence of bipolar disorder and substance use disorders, especially cocaine use disorder. In that vein, NPD also might be comorbid with the occurrence of other mental disorders, such as histrionic personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, or paranoid personality disorder.

Causes

The causes of narcissistic personality disorder are unknown. Researchers apply a biopsychosocial model of causation, whereby the occurrence and the expression of NPD – a pathological amplification of the traits of the narcissistic personality – are consequent to a combination of nature and nurture, of environmental and social, genetic and neurobiological factors.

Genetic

Narcissistic personality disorder is an inheritable psychological condition; research evidence indicates that a person is more likely to develop NPD if said personality disorder occurs in the medical history of his or her family.[15][17] The results reported in A Twin Study of Personality Disorders (2000) indicate that the rate of occurrence of personality disorders in twins determined that there is a moderate-to-high likelihood of the heritability of NPD;[17] and the research of The Genetic Epidemiology of Personality Disorders (2010) indicates that specific genes and genetic interactions (epistasis) contribute to the formation of NPD, and to the development of a narcissistic personality, yet how genetics influences the developmental and the physiologic processes underlying NPD remains undetermined.[18]

Environment

Environmental and social factors also exert significant influence upon the onset of NPD in a person. In some people, pathological narcissism may develop from an impaired emotional attachment to the primary caregivers, usually the parents.[19] That lack of psychological and emotional attachment to a parental figure can result in the child's perception of themselves as unimportant and unconnected to other people, usually family, community and society. Typically, the child comes to believe that they have a personality defect that makes them an unvalued and unwanted person;[20] in that vein, either overindulgent and permissive parenting or insensitive and over-controlling parenting are contributing factors towards the development of NPD in a child.

In Gabbard's *Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders* (2014), the following factors are identified as promoting the development of narcissistic personality disorder:

- An oversensitive temperament (individual differences of behavior) at birth.
- Excessive admiration that is never balanced with realistic criticism of the child.
- Excessive praise for good behaviors, or excessive criticism for bad behaviors in childhood.
- Overindulgence and overvaluation by parents, family, and peers.
- Being praised by adults for perceived exceptional physical appearance or abilities.
- Trauma caused by psychological, physical or sexual abuse during childhood.
- Unpredictable or unreliable care-giving by the parents.
- Learning the behaviors of psychological manipulation from parents or peers.[22]

Studies of the occurrence of narcissistic personality disorder, show that:

- cultural elements also influence the prevalence of NPD, because narcissistic personality traits more commonly occur in modern societies than in traditionalist conservative societies.
- the brains of people afflicted with NPD, specifically, a lesser volume of gray matter in the left, anterior insular cortex. Those are the regions of the brain identified and studied – the insular cortex and the prefrontal cortex – are associated with the human emotions of empathy and compassion, and with the mental functions of cognition and emotional regulation.

Although the DSM-5 indicates narcissistic personality disorder as a homogeneous syndrome, there is evidence of two subtypes of narcissism:

- (i) Grandiose narcissism, characterized by the personality traits of grandiosity, arrogance, and boldness; and
- (ii) Vulnerable narcissism, characterized by the personality traits of defensiveness and hypersensitivity. The research indicates that people with grandiose narcissism express behavior "through interpersonally exploitative acts, lack of empathy, intense envy, aggression, and exhibitionism."

Symptoms

Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is a personality disorder characterized by a long-term pattern of exaggerated feelings of self-importance, an excessive craving for admiration, and low levels of empathy for others. People with NPD often spend much time daydreaming about achieving power and success, and the perceived injustice of failing to do so. This is a pattern of

obsessive thoughts and unstable sense of identity, often to cope with a sub-par real life. People with the diagnosis in recent years have spoken out about its stigma in media, and possible links to abusive situations and childhood trauma. Such narcissistic behavior typically begins by early adulthood, and occurs across a broad range of situations.

The causes of narcissistic personality disorder are unknown, but theorized to be linked to certain types of traumas. About one percent of people are believed to be affected with NPD at some point in their lives. It occurs more often in men than women, and typically affects younger as opposed to older people. The narcissistic personality was first described by the psychoanalyst Robert Waelder, in 1925. The term narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) was coined by Heinz Kohut in 1968.

Signs and symptoms

People with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) are characterized by the personality traits of persistent grandiosity, an excessive need for admiration, and a personal disdain and lack of empathy for other people. As such, the person with NPD usually displays arrogance and a distorted sense of personal superiority, and seeks to establish abusive power and control over others. Self-confidence (a strong sense of self) is a personality trait different from the traits of NPD; thus, people with NPD typically value themselves over others, to the extent of openly disregarding the wishes and feelings of anyone else, and expect to be treated as superior, regardless of their actual status or achievements. Socially, the person with NPD usually exhibits a fragile ego (self-concept), intolerance of criticism, and a tendency to belittle other people, in order to validate their own superiority.

Treatment

Narcissistic personality disorder is rarely the primary reason for which people seek mental health treatment. When people with NPD enter treatment (psychologic or psychiatric), they usually are prompted by difficulties in their lives, or are seeking relief from some other disorder of their mental health, such as a major depressive disorder, a substance use disorder (drug addiction), or bipolar disorder. In general, psychotherapy is the basis for treating narcissistic personality disorder.

Treatments for narcissistic personality disorder have not been well studied. Therapy is difficult, because people with NPD usually do not consider their own issues as symptoms, despite mental distress. People with NPD may have other comorbid psychiatric conditions as well, making it more difficult to identify the symptoms.

Prognosis

The effectiveness of psychotherapeutic and pharmacological interventions in the treatment of narcissistic personality disorder has yet to be systematically and empirically investigated. Clinical practice guidelines for the disorder have not yet been created. The presence of NPD in patients undergoing psychotherapy for the treatment of other mental disorders is associated with slower treatment progress and higher dropout rates.

Epidemiology

The lifetime rates of narcissistic personality disorder are estimated at 1% in the general population; and between 2% and 16% in the clinical population. A 2010 review found rates of NPD of up to 6% in community samples, and that the yearly number of new cases of NPD in men is slightly greater than in women.

History

The historical use of the term narcissism, to describe a person's excessive vanity and self-centeredness, predates the modern medical classification of NPD (narcissistic personality disorder). The mental condition of narcissism is named after the Greek, mythological character Narcissus, a beautiful boy, born of a nymph, who became infatuated with his own reflection in a pool of water. At first, Narcissus did not understand that the image he saw in the pool of water was a reflection of himself. When he did understand that fact, he pined for the unattainable image and died of grief, for having fallen in love with someone who did not exist outside of himself.

Megalomania

Megalomania is a mental state in which the affected individual is subject to an obsession with power and the belittling of others, as well as feelings of intense grandiosity. Those with megalomania often show symptoms such as: condescension, overestimation of one's abilities, feelings of uniqueness, inflated self-esteem, and have a drive to maintain control over others. In addition to this, megalomaniacs have dreams of power, success and wealth. It shares many similarities to narcissism, though there are a few differences. Megalomaniacs are generally more concerned with superiority, while narcissists are more associated with feelings of excessive self-worth. Megalomania does not share narcissistic traits such as a sense of entitlement, attention-seeking behavior, desire for admiration or intolerance towards criticism. While narcissists are preoccupied with attempting to belittle others, megalomaniacs believe they have already dominated others, and need to maintain the domination. Also, megalomaniacs are highly conceited, while narcissists, particularly the vulnerable type, can often have low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.