



# **NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER (NPD): Threat under the carpet & Role of counselling.**

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**Abstract :** A complicated and frequently misdiagnosed personality illness is narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). A variety of symptoms, such as grandiosity, a lack of empathy, and a desire for adulation, are present in people with NPD. These symptoms can significantly affect a person's personal and professional life and make it difficult to establish and maintain good relationships. Even though NPD is a severe condition, it frequently goes undetected, and those who have it may not even be aware of their symptoms. This essay examines the characteristics of NPD, possible repercussions, and the function of counseling in the management and treatment of the illness. The study examines the body of research on NPD and counseling, concentrating on psychotherapy's efficacy in treating NPD.

**IndexTerms - Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) Counseling.**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

A distorted self-image, a lack of empathy, and a desire for adulation are the hallmarks of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), a mental health disease. Grandiosity, an obsessive fixation on one's own needs and wants, and a disregard for other people's feelings are common traits of people with NPD. It may be difficult to establish and preserve good relationships in both personal and professional spheres when these symptoms are present. Even though NPD is a severe condition, a lot of people with it go undetected, and even those who do may be reluctant to get treatment. This essay examines the characteristics of NPD, possible repercussions, and the function of counseling in the management and treatment of the illness.

## **II. NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER:**

The disorder known as narcissistic personality disorder is complicated and frequently misdiagnosed. NPD is defined as "a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy" by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) (APA, 2013). The disorder affects approximately 1% of the population and is more common in men than women (Kacel et al., 2011).

Individuals with NPD often exhibit a range of symptoms, including:

- A grandiose sense of self-importance
- A preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success, power, beauty, or love
- A belief that they are special or unique and can only be understood by other high-status individuals
- A need for excessive admiration
- A sense of entitlement
- A lack of empathy for others
- A tendency to exploit others for personal gain
- A sense of envy toward others or a belief that others are envious of them
- Arrogant or haughty behaviours and attitudes

People with NPD may find it difficult to establish and preserve good relationships in both their personal and professional lives as a result of these symptoms. Their behavior could turn off possible friends or love partners, and they might find it difficult to sustain deep connections with others.

## **III. POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF NPD:**

Neural program termination (NPD) can have major and far-reaching effects. People who have the illness may experience difficulties in both their personal and professional lives, and others may be negatively impacted by their actions. People with NPD may find it difficult to collaborate with others at work since they may be contemptuous of other people's thoughts and perspectives. They could find it difficult to accept constructive criticism, and they might respond adversely to input from superiors or coworkers. These behaviors may limit an individual's career chances and make it difficult for them to keep a job. People with non-psychotic personality disorder (NPD) may find it difficult to establish and sustain deep relationships with others. They could find it difficult to feel empathy for other people and disregard their partner's needs and feelings. These behaviours can lead to strained relationships and may contribute to feelings of loneliness or isolation.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a serious problem that is frequently ignored or unrecognized, according to a number of studies. A 2009 study by Pincus et al. found that people with NPD frequently project an appealing, self-assured, and socially adept persona that conceals their true weaknesses and fears. It may be challenging for clinicians to identify NPD because of this veneer, particularly if the patient withholds symptoms from them.

Additionally, while people with NPD are frequently successful and high-functioning, some environments may even accept or even admire their behavior. But beyond the surface, there may be dysfunction and misery that is hidden by this accomplishment. According to a study by Ronningstam et al. (2014), people with NPD are more likely to experience interpersonal problems, substance misuse, depression, and anxiety, all of which can have detrimental long-term effects.

The tendency of society to romanticize narcissistic behavior, especially in specific situations like politics or entertainment, is another obstacle to recognizing NPD as a problem. Because of this idealization, people with NPD may end up being praised rather than held responsible for their harmful actions. Researchers discovered that those with NPD were more prone to act abusively, especially in romantic relationships, in a study by Dahlen et al. (2010).

Overall, the above literature suggests that NPD is indeed a threat under the carpet, often hidden by the facade of success and charm that individuals with NPD often present. This makes it all the more important for mental health professionals to be vigilant in their assessments and to actively address NPD in their counselling practices.

#### IV. TREATMENT FOR NPD

Treatment for NPD can be a complex and long-term process. There is no single approach to treating NPD, and the best approach may depend on the severity of the condition and the individual's willingness to engage in treatment. Psychotherapy is the most common treatment for NPD, and it can be beneficial in helping individuals with NPD gain insight into their behaviour, emotions, and thoughts.

One form of psychotherapy that has demonstrated promise in the treatment of NPD is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT assists people with NPD in recognizing and altering harmful thought and behavior patterns. It entails determining the underlying assumptions and ideas that guide a person's behavior and thought process, questioning them, and substituting more sensible and constructive assumptions in their place. Rather of examining the fundamental causes of an individual's NPD, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) focuses on altering the person's thoughts and behaviors.

For NPD, group therapy is another useful treatment option. Individuals with NPD collaborate with others who have comparable issues in group treatment. The group's therapist leads conversations and teaches the participants how to communicate with one another in a constructive and encouraging way. For people with NPD, group therapy can be especially helpful in fostering greater empathy and self-awareness.

Medication is another treatment option for NPD in addition to psychotherapy. Antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and antipsychotic drugs can be used to treat symptoms including sadness, anxiety, and aggression that frequently co-occur with NPD. There is no medication particularly made to treat NPD.

#### V. ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN TREATING NPD

Counselling plays a critical role in treating individuals with NPD. The primary goal of counselling is to help individuals with NPD develop a greater awareness of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Counselling can also help individuals with NPD develop coping skills and strategies for dealing with their symptoms.

One of the most significant challenges in treating NPD is that individuals with this disorder often have difficulty acknowledging their problems and seeking treatment. Many individuals with NPD believe that they are superior to others and may be resistant to the idea of seeking help. Counselling can help these individuals understand the impact of their behaviour on others and develop motivation to seek treatment.

Counselling can also help individuals with NPD develop greater self-awareness and empathy. By exploring the underlying causes of their behaviour, individuals with NPD can develop a greater understanding of their emotions and learn how to regulate them. This can help them develop more positive relationships with others and reduce their risk of engaging in destructive behaviour.

#### VI. STIGMA OF NPD AND ITS EFFECTS ON COUNSELLING

##### Stereotypes and Fallacies Regarding NPD and NPD Patients

Beliefs that stigmatize people with NPD are frequently a result of how narcissistic people are portrayed in the media as conceited, demanding, and challenging to deal with. People with NPD may be harmed by these misconceptions because they may be discouraged from seeking assistance out of embarrassment or fear of being judged. Furthermore, by preventing the development of a solid therapeutic alliance, these ideas may have a detrimental effect on the counseling process.

Studies indicate that mental health practitioners are also prone to these misconceptions. Researchers Rees and colleagues (2021) discovered that clinicians were less likely to suggest psychotherapy or medication as a treatment option for patients with NPD if they had stigmatizing thoughts about them.

#### VII. ADDRESSING STIGMA AND BIAS IN COUNSELLING

Improving outcomes for clients with NPD in counseling requires addressing bias and stigma. There are various actions that mental health practitioners can take to lessen stigma and enhance care for individuals with NPD.

Increasing knowledge and expertise about personality disorders, such as NPD, is one tactic. Mental health practitioners can diagnose and treat patients more accurately by being better informed about these conditions. By analyzing their own attitudes and presumptions, physicians can also attempt to confront their own prejudices and ideas regarding NPD.

It has also been demonstrated that therapeutic approaches like dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) are successful in treating NPD. These interventions can lessen maladaptive behaviors, help clients with NPD acquire new coping mechanisms, and enhance interpersonal connections.

### VIII. LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

When researching narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and the function of counseling in treating it, there are some restrictions and difficulties to take into account. Among the restrictions and difficulties in this field of study are:

1. **Limited research:** Despite the prevalence of NPD, research on the disorder is still limited. This is partly due to the stigma associated with personality disorders in general, including NPD. As a result, there are still many gaps in our understanding of the disorder and the most effective ways to treat it.

2. **Complexity of the disorder:** NPD is a complex disorder that can present in a variety of ways. This can make it difficult to diagnose and treat, as there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Additionally, individuals with NPD may be resistant to counselling or other forms of treatment, which can make it challenging to address the disorder.

3. **Stigma and bias:** As discussed earlier, there is still a significant amount of stigma associated with NPD and personality disorders in general. This can make it difficult for individuals with NPD to seek help and for counsellors to provide effective treatment. Additionally, there may be bias and stereotypes among mental health professionals regarding individuals with NPD, which can impact the quality of care they receive.

4. **Ethical considerations:** Counselling individuals with NPD can present a number of ethical challenges for mental health professionals. For example, it may be difficult to maintain boundaries with clients who exhibit narcissistic traits or to balance the needs of the client with the needs of others who may be impacted by their behaviour.

5. **Lack of resources:** Finally, there may be a lack of resources available for individuals with NPD and for mental health professionals who work with them. This can include a lack of specialised training or education on NPD, limited access to evidence-based treatments, and a lack of support for family members and loved ones who are impacted by the disorder.

It is crucial to keep studying NPD and the part counseling plays in its treatment, despite these obstacles and restrictions. Through advancing our knowledge of the condition and creating efficient treatments, we can lessen the detrimental effects of NPD on people around them and assist those who have it in leading healthier, more satisfying lives.

### IX. CONCLUSION

An important mental health illness that can have a big effect on people's life is narcissistic personality disorder. An exaggerated sense of self-importance, a deficiency in empathy, and a desire for praise are frequently indicative of NPD. NPD is treatable even though there is no known cure for it. Treatments for NPD may include counseling, medication, and psychotherapy.

A very important element of treating NPD is counseling. It can support the growth of coping mechanisms, empathy, and self-awareness in people with NPD. People with NPD can learn how to control their emotions, form more good connections with others, and enhance their general quality of life by working with a qualified therapist. People with NPD can learn how to control their symptoms and lead happy, purposeful lives with the correct care and assistance.

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