

Narcissistic personality disorder

When you have narcissistic personality disorder, you may come across as conceited, boastful or pretentious. You often monopolize conversations. You may belittle or look down on people you perceive as inferior. You may have a sense of entitlement. And when you don't receive the special treatment to which you feel entitled, you may become very impatient or angry. You may insist on having "the best" of everything — the best car, athletic club, medical care or social circles, for instance.

But underneath all this behavior often lies a fragile self-esteem. You have trouble handling anything that may be perceived as criticism. You may have a sense of secret shame and humiliation. And in order to make yourself feel better, you may react with rage or contempt and efforts to belittle the other person to make yourself appear better.

When to see a doctor

When you have narcissistic personality disorder, you may not want to think that anything could be wrong — doing so wouldn't fit with your self-image of power and perfection. But by definition, a narcissistic personality disorder causes problems in many areas of your life, such as relationships, work, school or your financial affairs. You may be generally unhappy and confused by a mix of seemingly contradictory emotions. Others may not enjoy being around you, and you may find your relationships unfulfilling.