

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)

When Their Self-Image Fuels the Need for Escape



What is Narcissistic Personality Disorder?

Narcissistic Personality Disorder is a mental health condition marked by an inflated sense of self-importance, a deep need for admiration, and difficulty empathizing with others. Beneath the surface confidence lies a fragile self-esteem that's easily wounded by criticism or perceived failure.

What Does it Look Like?

- > **Grandiosity**
They present as supremely confident, but minor criticism sends them into defensive rage.
- > **Entitlement**
Rules don't apply to them. They expect special treatment and become frustrated when it isn't given.
- > **Lack of Empathy**
Your concerns, your exhaustion, your pain don't register. Conversations always circle back to them.
- > **Exploitative Relationships**
People exist to serve their needs. When you're no longer useful, you're discarded.

How Does NPD Contribute to Relapse?

For someone with NPD, substances prop up a self-image that struggle to accept real life's disappointments.

- 1) **Fragile Self-Esteem**
When admiration isn't available, substances provide artificial feelings of power and invulnerability.
- 2) **Short-Term Programs Can't Rebuild a Sense of Self**
Developing genuine self-worth takes longer than 30, 60, or even 90 days of treatment.
- 3) **Without Treating NPD, Relapse Risk is High**
They leave treatment still chasing validation, still avoiding the internal work required for lasting change.

Prevalence:

6.2% of U.S. adults¹

Co-Occurrence:

64% develop a substance use disorder in their lifetime²

Relapse Risk:

2-3x Higher rates of alcohol and drug dependence³

Sources: ¹ NESARC Wave 2, NIAAA. ² Stinson et al., Journal of Clinical Psychiatry: NESARC data on NPD and substance use. ³ NESARC Odds Ratios for NPD and Substance Use Disorders

Long-Term Treatment for NPD and Addiction

Clients with NPD exhibit denial, resistance to feedback, and an inability to admit vulnerability. Someone who believes they're special won't engage authentically in a program they can charm their way through. Real change requires enough time to confront the emptiness beneath the grandiosity.

Our **long-term, progress-based model** provides the extended structure NPD demands. Clients advance through the program when they demonstrate genuine humility and accountability in their relationships, not when they've learned to say the right things.



“Clients with NPD are masters at performing the part of a recovering addict. Families need to give enough time to see whether their humility is genuine.”

 **Brook McKenzie, LCDC**
CEO, Burning Tree Ranch



Dual Diagnosis Treatment for NPD

When NPD and addiction occur together, treating only the substance use leads to relapse. They return to seeking validation through substances because nothing else fills the void.

- **Treating Both Conditions Together**
Without addressing NPD, the craving for artificial confidence remains.
- **Developing Internal Self-Worth**
Real self-esteem must be developed to replace the need for substances and external validation.
- **Providing Enough Time**
It takes more than 30 days to dismantle defenses built over a lifetime.

Dual Diagnosis:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation's only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at www.BurningTree.com.

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