



The aftereffects of Narcissistic Abuse

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Narcissists need to feel superior. They believe they are superior to others and act as such. So, the narcissist wants to undermine you. The narcissist needs to make sure you know that you are not worth much. You are below them. You are inferior to them. Depending on how long you were with a narcissist, and how old you were at the time, the effects of their behaviour and actions can vary. People will differ in how they experience the aftereffects of narcissistic abuse. Generally though, the younger you are when you experience narcissistic abuse the more severe the aftereffects, and the same applies if you have spent quite a long time with someone narcissistic.

1. Narcissistic abuse can result in mental illnesses such as posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety and/or depression. These tend to be the most common ones, although others could also emerge depending on the individual. Prolonged stress and trauma occur because the victim is continually in a state of fight or flight, not knowing what the response of the narcissist will be. Victims tend to be hypervigilant, always on the lookout for what is coming next. Sometimes the abuse can lead to dissociation and even amnesia for abusive situations.
2. Other physical health issues that can result from the trauma and stress are: sleeping problems, nightmares, difficulty eating or eating disorders, weakened immune system, digestive problems, skin conditions, and fatigue.
3. Linked to depression and fuelling depression is a lack of sense of self and self-worth. Narcissistic abuse lowers the self-esteem and confidence of the person on the receiving end. This in turn can make it hard to leave a narcissistic relationship because the person thinks they are only worthy of abuse and nothing better. They think that this is the best treatment they can expect from anyone. As a result of narcissistic abuse many people report they have lost who they are; they have lost their identity.
4. Mental functioning can be affected resulting in memory problems, lack of, or poor decision making, confusion, and trouble concentrating.
5. Anger, irritability and even rage can be shown by people abused by narcissists as they may act out the pain they feel from the harm that was done to them.
6. Victims of narcissistic abuse often have trouble setting boundaries. Narcissists won't let you have boundaries. They want whatever they want, and you must give it to them.
7. Over-focusing on the needs of others is another outcome of narcissistic abuse. The narcissist demands that you focus entirely on their needs and so their victims learn to forget that they have needs too. Their relationship with the narcissist is such that they come to focus on

pleasing other people and meeting the needs of others solely. Related to this is that victims of narcissistic abuse will respond rapidly. If someone needs help or wants something done, the victim will stop what they are doing, even if it is inconvenient, and help out.

8. People who experience narcissistic abuse will always be blamed for anything that the narcissist perceives has gone wrong. Victims of narcissists tend to always feel they are in the wrong, even if they are not. They interpret everything as their fault. Shame and guilt are rife among those who have experienced narcissistic abuse.
9. It is not unusual for victims of narcissistic abuse to isolate themselves. This is also fuelled by the victim feeling a great deal of mistrust for others.
10. After a relationship with a narcissist has ended, it is difficult for anyone to trust another person and form new relationships. Their experience has left them wary of people, and it can take some time and a lot of work for the narcissist's victim to be comfortable in a new relationship.
11. Because the narcissist is always acting as the dominant one and has to have everything go their way, people who have experienced narcissistic abuse usually feel helpless and powerless. And this can be the case even long after the relationship with the narcissist ends.
12. One of the most insidious consequences of narcissistic abuse is that the victim protects the abuser, even when others try to get the victim out of the situation. The narcissist has gotten such a hold over the victim that they don't believe they can survive without the narcissist and so cling on to them because they believe they cannot make it through life without the narcissist.

This is quite a horrifying list. And it is even more horrifying when you consider the percentage of the population which is narcissistic or sociopathic or psychopathic. Numbers are around 3-4 %. That means there are a lot of people out there in the world struggling with some, or even all, of these aftereffects. People who are battling with various aspects of their lives and are a long way from living the kind of life most people want. If you have experienced narcissistic abuse and you recognise yourself as experiencing any of these consequences, then know that help is available. If you got out of the relationship, then that was the most important part. And now you can go forward and get the help and support you need to heal and make a new and better life for yourself.