Nico di Angelo, from the book series *Heroes of Olympus*, is a fifteen-year-old son of Hades. Nico was born in 1932, around the time of World War II, but due to circumstances he, along with his sister, were frozen in time when he was six years old after his mother was killed. In the year 2007 he was found and taken with his sister to a camp meant to be for the children of gods, but his sister was sent on a quest and killed in the same week. It was then that it was revealed who Nico’s father was and people started to avoid him, not going near him or talking to him. Now alone, afraid, and with no home Nico wanders the world trying to find a way to help the people that avoid him.

It was when his sister died, and Nico’s father was known, that he started to develop anxiety. He was left alone at a young age, never went to school and had no friends or anyone to talk to. Nico would constantly hide in the shadows or corner of the room, speaking in a quiet voice. Whenever he had to introduce himself to someone he would stutter and fiddle with his ring in nervousness. His house-life was not much better, since the closest thing to a home he had was the underworld. This led Nico getting nervous whenever he had to sit at a dinner table with the very few friends that he could count on one hand. He would never speak up and he would not eat much either, nothing more than a few bites. Everyone else left him, so it would only be a matter of time before they did as well.

Nico is also gay, but being born in Italy during 1932, to him that was not normal or acceptable. Nico constantly had conflict with his sexual identity which led to more nervousness and struggles whenever he would interact with anyone he knew. He had to suppress his emotions because he was taught that being gay was wrong. The added fear of having to hide this from others and scared that they might find out only added more to his anxiety.

It is because of all these symptoms and reasons that I have decided to diagnose Nico with Social Anxiety Disorder, a mental health condition where every day social interactions cause irrational anxiety, fear, and self-consciousness. There are various signs from Nico in the books which support this. Nico developed a psychological vulnerability at the age of ten, and since he lost everyone close to him, he had no one to go to. Nico had little to no time to form meaningful relationships because he was quickly shunned for being a son of hades, and the war that was going on (the main plot point of the books) he did not have the time to try and build lasting relationships. Nico explains that he does not want to draw attention to himself and prefers to sit in a corner and watch, not wanting to risk the possibility of being awkward or nervous in front of people. Whenever there is a large group of people Nico is also described to feel nauseous and dizzy. Even in his hectic life Nico could not do simple things like talk to people during mealtimes because of his fear that they would reject him.

There are many other possible diagnoses for Nico, but rather than them being considered as a different diagnosis for Nico and disregarding his Social Anxiety Disorder, I would like to add these diagnoses on top of his Social Anxiety Disorder. The reason why I thought of these diagnoses and decided to diagnose Social Anxiety was because I am sure that Nico also has these two disorders but I think that they amplify his Social Anxiety, which is shown subtly throughout his interactions in the books.

The first additional disorder is Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. In the books Nico is confirmed to be diagnosed with ADHD. His fiddling and nervousness that I mentioned above could be attributed to ADHD. However, Nico seems to be able to sit still in corners and in the shadows away from people regardless of his ADHD. On top of that despite his diagnosis with ADHD Nico does not really show any actual other symptoms to his ADHD. His lack of other symptoms believes me to think that while he does have ADHD it is only slight, and his nervousness and fiddling during social interactions can be attributed to having Social Anxiety, rather than dominantly being ADHD. Nico’s ADHD still most definitely plays a part in his actions, but rather than being the dominant disorder I think that it amplifies his Social Anxiety even further than what it is.

The second possible diagnosis is that Nico has C-PTSD. Nico’s mother was killed when he was six, and his sister when he was ten. Nico has also fought in two wars (again this is just the major plot points of the series that I won’t go too deep in). To add to that Nico also fell into Tartarus, the place in Greek mythology where all the worst souls and monsters go to be tortured. Nico has shown a struggle when controlling his emotions, and his nervousness and fiddling, as well as his habit of sitting away from the group, could be attributed to him having C-PTSD. Nico is also said to have nightmares and be jumpy on occasion.

Given all the trauma that Nico has been through, and all the symptoms it would be not unreasonable to diagnose Nico with C-PTSD. However, while I do think he has C-PTSD that does not mean he also does not have anxiety. In fact, I think that the best diagnoses of Nico would be that he has Social Anxiety, C-PTSD, and ADHD. Individually all these disorders have similar, and sometimes overlapping, symptoms, and given Nico’s experiences and trauma it would make sense that Nico has all three of these disorders and that they feed off each other. In fact, his anxiety most likely developed as a result of his trauma.

Nico does try to overcome his disorders. While he does not see a psychiatrist or get therapy, he has been reaching out and has a small group of people he can call his friends whom he can trust and a boyfriend. These people understand what he has been through, many of which also fought in wars and have seen their share of death and appreciate him for who he is and help him through his troubles. While he still gets anxiety when talking to new people, and gets nightmares, he has gotten a lot better with the help of his friends who he could confide in.