



Narcissistic Abuse

What is narcissistic abuse?

Narcissistic abuse is any kind of domestic abuse that is carried out by somebody with narcissistic traits. It is a form of abuse characterized by emotional abuse and coercive control.

A narcissist is described as someone who is seemingly confident, but they actually lack self-worth and have difficulty dealing with criticism. Narcissists often have an excessive need for attention and want to create a sense of superiority over the other person. Most narcissists do not take responsibility for their behavior and shift the blame to you or others.

Narcissists exhibit behaviors similar to abusive behavior. Although, a diagnosis is required to establish a narcissistic personality disorder, the following information is helpful to be able to distinguish narcissistic abuse.

The abuser may be a narcissist if:

- They are self-absorbed
- They are approval seeking
- Have an exaggerated sense of self-importance
- They are demeaning
- They are demanding
- They feel entitled and or require constant, excessive admiration
- They are having high standards or are perfectionists
- They are compulsive or consumed with details

Signs of narcissistic abuse:

- They are aggressive towards you (in the sense that, you are unable to have a healthy argument)
- You may feel attached or reliant on them
- They resort to gaslighting, meaning they:
 - Lie with certainty
 - Deny your truth and demand proof
 - Use tricks, such as giving you wrong information
 - Use manipulation to confuse you

Why is gaslighting harmful?

Gaslighting is a strategy used to gain or maintain power and control. In particular, gaslighting may seriously harm your mental health, as it may lead you to:

- Disconnect with your own judgment and thinking
- Second-guess yourself
- Question your feelings
- Justify the abuser's behavior
- Feel insecure and have low self-esteem
- Approach with extreme caution and doubt when speaking or 'walk on eggshells'

How do I respond to narcissistic abuse?

Abuse is abuse and it is not okay, no matter the abuser's circumstances and diagnosis. If you are a victim of abuse, refer to safety planning and or a Shamsaha advocate for help.