

Becoming a Narcissist Whisperer

Narrative Concepts and Techniques for Working with Narcissistic Personalities

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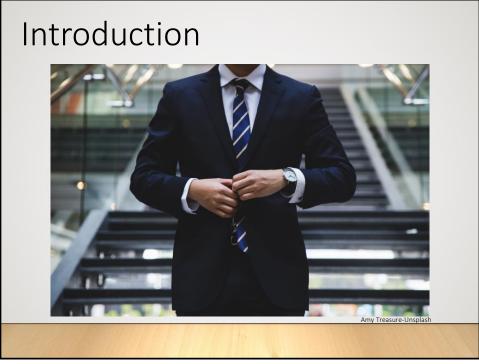
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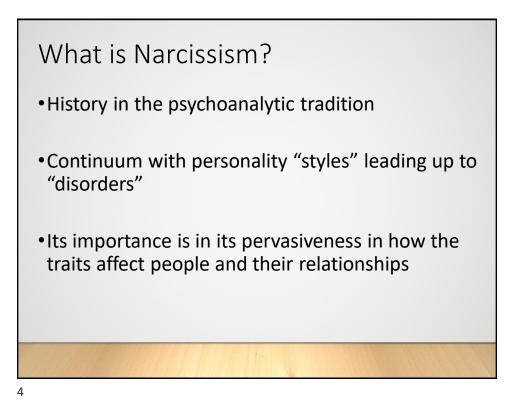
Dr. Stephen "David" Hall is the Co-founder and Chief Maven of PsychMaven. He holds clinical licenses in Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling and is the Founder & Lead Therapist of Haven Family Psychiatry in Knoxville, TN. He works with a wide variety of issues in his practice, but has a particular love for business executives and professionals, along with all of the accompanying dynamics. He also serves as the director of the Narrative Institute.

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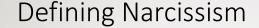
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Defining Narcissism

- Narcissistic Personality Disorder (DSM-5)
 - A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts

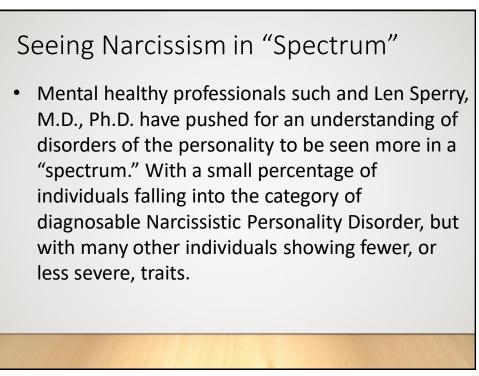


- To be diagnosed, at least five of the following must be present:
- 1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance.
- 2. Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.
- 3. Believes that he/she is "special" or unique and can only be understood by, or associates with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).
- 4. Requires excessive admiration.

Defining Narcissism

- To be diagnosed, at least five of the following must be present (continued):
- 5. Has a sense of entitlement (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations).
- 6. Is interpersonally exploitative (i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends).
- 7. Lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.
- 8. Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her.
- 9. Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.





Narcissism in Action

Presentation:

- Will often enter treatment for reasons they see as external to themselves (e.g., conflict with children, spouse, work, church, legal).
- Will not easily see themselves as part of the "real" problem, but will sometimes give lip service to superficial points ("We don't communicate well").

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Narcissism in Action

Typical Family of Origin:

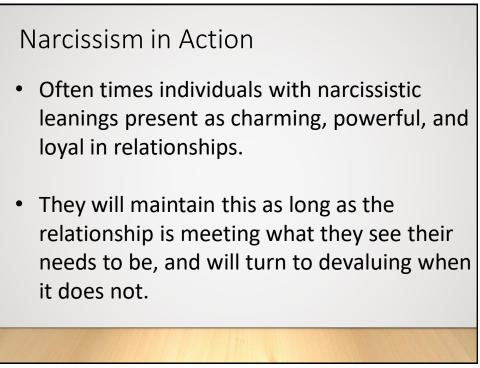
- Can have been overindulged, over-praised, and over valued by family; but the attention is shallow in nature and deeper and healthy affirmation is withheld
- Examples can include affirmation of performance over personhood, or rewards of money versus engagement.



Narcissism in Action

Defense Mechanisms

- Idealization
 - A person or object is all good
- Devaluation
 - A person or object is all bad
- Denial
 - Insisting on a point of view that maintains their grandiose view of themselves, actions, and/or achievements; even when logic and evidence clearly show otherwise.



Narcissism in Action

Archetype of the Narcissist

• *The Hero*- The benevolent center of the story who will do good, and should be admired and adored.



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Narcissism in Women Only about 25% of individuals diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder are women. Current studies have focused on traits of willfulness and conflict-driven autonomy as hallmarks of narcissism in females. Some theorists suggest that Borderline Personality Disorder can be seen as a feminine version of Narcissism.

Other "Cluster B" Personality Disorders

Borderline Personality Disorder (DSM-5)

- A pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affect, and marked by impulsivity.
- Narcissism is differentiated from Borderline by the relative stability of self-image and lack of selfdestructive, impulsivity, and abandonment concerns.

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Other "Cluster B" Personality Disorders

Antisocial Personality Disorder (DSM-5)

- A pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others.
- Narcissism lacks the same impulsivity, aggression, and sometimes deceit. Antisocial personalities have less of a need for admiration, and narcissism does not have the same conduct issues.
- It is worth noting that 25% of men who meet the criteria for Narcissist Personality Disorder also meet the criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder.



Other "Cluster B" Personality Disorders

Histrionic Personality Disorder (DSM-5)

- A pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking.
- Histrionic tendencies have less excessive pride in achievements, typically more display of emotions, and are not disdainful or dismissive regarding the sensitivities of others.

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Narrative Therapy Overview

Philosophically built on Post-Structuralism and Existentialism

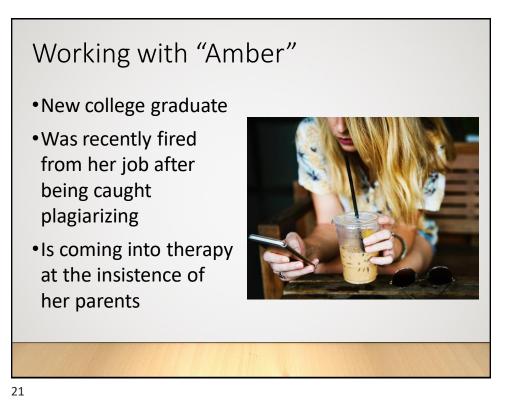
- Post-Structuralism is a philosophical approach which sees no experienced structure as constant, independent of its means of interpretation
- Existentialism sees the beginning of all knowledge as stemming from the personal experience of the individual.

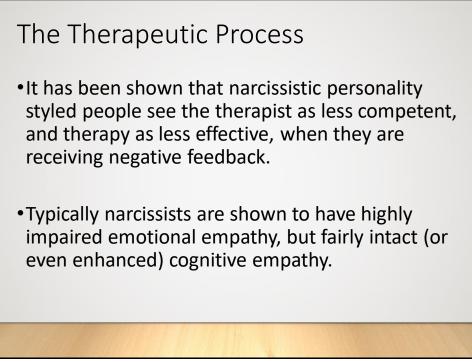
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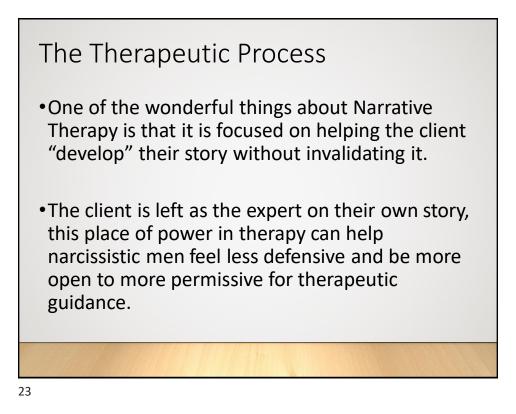
Working with "Clint"

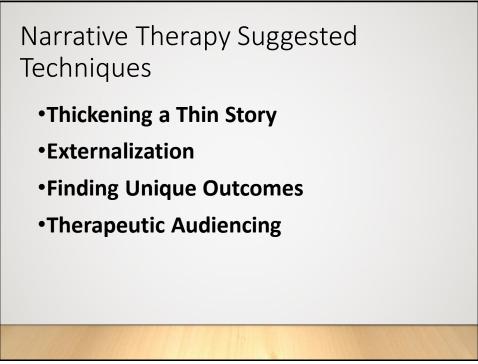
- High level business executive
- Is coming into therapy with his wife, who is showing signs of depression
- Is stuck on the idea of how wife needs to be "fixed"













Thickening a Thin Story

•Where a **thin story** is rigid and simple (e.g., "My wife is stubborn"), a **thick story** is a layered multistory that allows for different directions to be taken and can incorporate important subplots.

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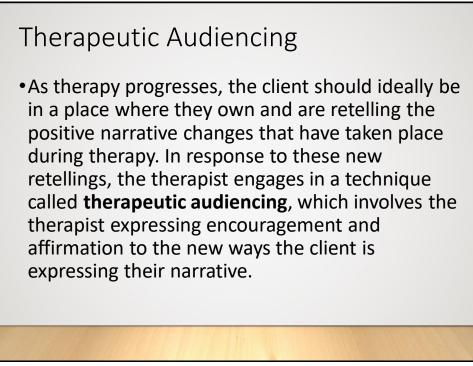
Externalization

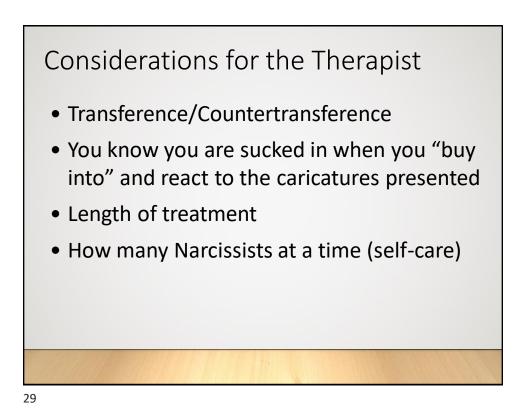
- Narrative therapy challenges the ways clients make a difficulty a part of their identity. In telling their story, a client might talk about how they felt particularly anxious; like when they started a new job. A narrative therapy approach might ask the client to give a name to this anxious feeling and they may start calling it, "Pressure."
- •The dysfunction then ceases to be part of the identity and therefore will activate fewer defenses.

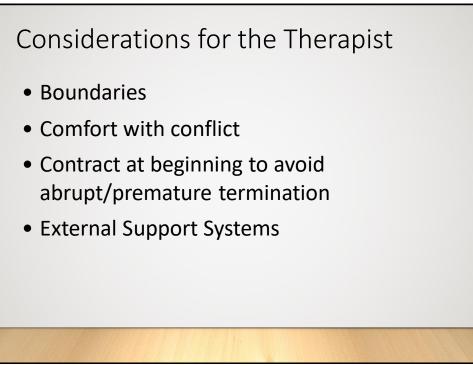


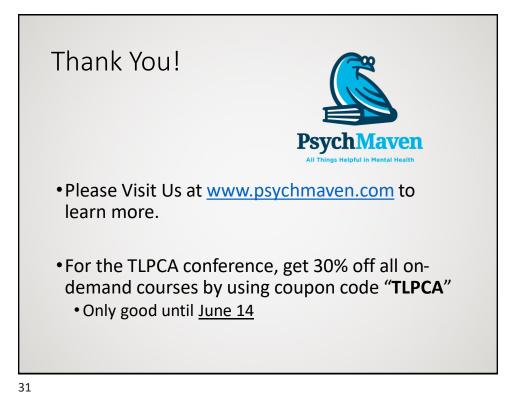
Unique Outcomes

- "Can you remember a time when Pressure didn't have such a strong voice in your life? When to you think Pressure has been at his weakest in your story?"
- By finding a point when the outside problem was weak or not present, the client can then explore the reasons for this and use the learned strategies to disempower the problem as they are experiencing it presently









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