

Red Flag Checklist: Identifying Narcissistic Behavior

Signs you are in a narcissistic relationship

By Jenn G

[wholesomeallies.com](https://www.wholesomeallies.com)

This checklist is designed to help you identify common narcissistic traits and behaviors in relationships.

Recognizing these patterns is the first step toward breaking free from toxic dynamics and reclaiming your well-being.

If you notice several of these red flags in someone's behavior, it may indicate narcissistic tendencies.

1. Grandiosity and Superiority

- Believes they are inherently special, unique, or superior to others.
- Exaggerates achievements, talents, or importance.
- Expects to be recognized as exceptional without commensurate achievements.
- Frequently brags or name-drops to impress others.
- Looks down on others as inferior or unworthy.

2. Lack of Empathy

- Unable or unwilling to recognize or validate others' feelings, needs, or experiences.
- Dismisses or minimizes your emotions when you express pain or discomfort.
- Shows little remorse or guilt for hurting others.
- Exploits others' vulnerabilities for personal gain.
- Struggles to offer genuine support or compassion.

3. Manipulative Behavior

- Uses guilt, shame, or fear to control or influence you.
- Gaslights you by denying your reality, making you doubt your memory or perception.
- Plays the victim to gain sympathy or avoid accountability.
- Uses charm or flattery to manipulate situations to their advantage.
- Withholds affection, attention, or resources as punishment.

4. Entitlement

- Expects special treatment and becomes angry when it's not given.
- Demands excessive time, attention, or resources without reciprocation.
- Feels entitled to your possessions, space, or energy.
- Ignores boundaries and acts as if rules don't apply to them.
- Expects others to cater to their needs without question.

5. Constant Need for Admiration

- Requires excessive praise, attention, or validation to feel good about themselves.
- Becomes upset or angry when they are not the center of attention.
- Fish for compliments or reassurance regularly.
- Compares themselves to others to feel superior.
- Becomes jealous or competitive when others receive attention.

6. Exploitative Relationships

- Takes advantage of others to achieve their own goals.

- Uses people for money, status, or resources without giving back.
- Expects you to prioritize their needs over your own.
- Rarely reciprocates kindness or generosity.
- Views relationships as transactional rather than mutual.

7. Lack of Accountability

- Refuses to take responsibility for their actions or mistakes.
- Blames others for their problems or failures.
- Deflects criticism by turning the focus back on you.
- Makes excuses or justifies harmful behavior.
- Rarely apologizes sincerely or changes their behavior.

8. Emotional Volatility

- Has unpredictable mood swings or outbursts.
- Reacts with extreme anger or rage when criticized or challenged.
- Uses intimidation or threats to control others.
- Alternates between being overly affectionate and cold/distant.
- Creates a “walking on eggshells” environment.

9. Boundary Violations

- Ignores or disrespects your boundaries.
- Invades your privacy (e.g., snooping through your phone or emails).
- Pressures you to do things you're uncomfortable with.
- Dismisses your requests for space or autonomy.
- Acts possessive or controlling in the relationship.

10. Triangulation

- Brings a third party into conflicts to create jealousy or competition.
- Compares you to others to make you feel inadequate.
- Uses others to validate their opinions or actions.
- Creates drama or tension by pitting people against each other.
- Uses past relationships or exes to manipulate your emotions.

11. Love-Bombing and Devaluation

- Showers you with excessive attention, affection, or gifts early in the relationship.
- Quickly becomes overly invested or pushes for commitment.
- Suddenly withdraws affection or becomes critical after the initial “honeymoon phase.”
- Alternates between idealizing and devaluing you.
- Makes you feel like you’re never good enough.

12. Control and Domination

- Tries to control your decisions, appearance, or behavior.
- Isolates you from friends, family, or support systems.
- Monitors your activities or demands constant updates.
- Dictates how you should think, feel, or act.
- Uses financial control or other forms of power to dominate you.

13. Lack of Genuine Intimacy

- Struggles to form deep, meaningful connections.
- Relationships feel one-sided or superficial.

- Focuses on their own needs and ignores yours.
- Avoids vulnerability or emotional depth.
- Uses intimacy as a tool for manipulation rather than connection.

14. Projection

- Accuses you of behaviors or traits they exhibit.
- Blames you for their mistakes or shortcomings.
- Denies their flaws by attributing them to you.
- Makes you feel like the problem in the relationship.
- Refuses to acknowledge their own toxic behavior.

15. Cycle of Abuse

- Alternates between abusive behavior and apologies or promises to change.
- Creates a cycle of tension, explosion, and reconciliation.
- Makes you feel hopeful that things will improve, only to repeat the pattern.
- Uses intermittent reinforcement to keep you hooked.
- Leaves you feeling confused, drained, and stuck.

How to Use This Checklist

- Reflect on your relationship and mark the behaviors you've observed.
- If you notice multiple red flags, consider seeking support from an online therapist, [coach](#), or trusted support group.
- Remember: You deserve a relationship built on mutual respect, trust, and empathy.

Note: This checklist is a tool for awareness and self-reflection. It is not a diagnostic tool, as only a licensed mental health professional can diagnose Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). However, recognizing these patterns can help you make informed decisions about your relationships and prioritize your healing.

You are not alone, and recovery is possible 