

For therapists:

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## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is now being recognised as a phenomenon that is effecting people severely. It is also recognised that those with narcissistic personality disorder are showing extremely adept ways of inflicting emotional abuse. Research shows that Clinical studies have demonstrated that children of parents with personality disorders are more likely to develop psychiatric disorders themselves if the personality disorder is characterised by hostility. Being raised by a parent who is perceived to exhibit traits akin to that of narcissistic personality disorder, often leaves Adult Children Of (perceived) Narcissistic parents (ACONs) without opportunities to narrate their stories and voice their perspectives. In search of these opportunities, some of them turn to social media and develop ACON communities online. These blogs and online communities are filled with conversations and examples of the subtleties and extremes of emotional abuse and the damage it results in. Throughout this paper Adult Children of Narcissist are used as examples of people who have been subjected to emotional abuse.

When the DSMV was being developed for 2013 a global group of professionals proposed the narcissistic victim syndrome be added to the DSMV however there was not enough empirical evidence to support it being entered into the DSMV.

Online communities were at the same time developing their own explanations and language for discussing extreme emotional abuse and developing their own identities around this. Shortly after the DSMV was released the ABS released media statements around descriptive statistics for emotional abuse.

This is their press release from

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4102.0Media%20Release52014?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4102.0&issue=2014&num=&view=>

### **One in four women has experienced emotional abuse by a partner (June 2014)**

More than 2 million women and 1.2 million men have experienced emotional abuse by a partner, according to the latest Australian Social Trends (AST) article released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

"This is equal to one in four Australian women and one in seven men experiencing abuse such as a partner constantly insulting them to make them feel ashamed, belittled or humiliated, or trying to control where they went or who they saw," said Mr David Skutenko, ABS Director of Social and Progress Reporting.

"We found that many of these people had also experienced physical or sexual violence by their partners. A third of women and nearly a fifth of men who experienced emotional abuse by their current partner had also experienced physical or sexual violence by them.

"Nearly two thirds of women who had experienced emotional abuse by their current partner had felt fear or anxiety as a result, compared with less than half of men.

"Over a third of women and a quarter of men who had experienced emotional abuse by their current partner had also experienced physical or sexual abuse as a child," said Mr Skutenko.

### **Further Research Shows:**

A study of more than 300 blog entries only once was the word domestic violence or family violence used as a way to explain the life experiences these ACONs were blogging about, despite them describing physical and sexual abuse scenarios and emotional abuse scenarios. The thing they focused on the most and reported as the most damaging was the emotional abuse and psychological game playing (Cusack, 2017). It is not known why these online communities are not identifying with domestic and family violence, but what is known is they have developed their own way of explaining family systems and emotional abuse utilising systems which effectively helps them to re-shape their identity.

#### **Working with Adult Children of Narcissists (ACON's) and ESN's (Ex spouses)**

##### **Types of narcissists**

Narcissistic personality disorder knows no bounds of culture or race or gender or socioeconomic status.

There are two types of narcissists grandiose (Overt) and depressive (Covert). Studies show predominantly men are grandiose and women are covert, but there are always exceptions and truth is the more you study it the more you realise it is on a continuum which moves from covert to overt to psychopathy. If you want to know more about types of narcissists look at the videos on my website [www.handsfullofhope.com](http://www.handsfullofhope.com). Types of narcissists.

##### **In a therapy room how do you work out if someone is a narcissist if that person is not in the room?**

The main thing to remember is a narcissist believes they are their persona. The biggest pain and threat to them is someone to expose their real self to them or others.

Ask your client questions such as "If you back them (the person you or they perceive to be a narcissist) into a corner by telling them the truth about themselves such as saying you did this for this reason, not because you care, or you are really doing this to get your own way – what is their response?"

Grandiose responses will be about annihilating the threat by using power over tactics and by putting down that person far past where you and I would stop (assuming we are not narcissists). For example when we recognise that this arguing is damaging the relationship to a point of no return we stop but a narcissist doesn't stop there, they continue and damage others because they feel as if they have to annihilate the threat totally.

A covert narcissist will drop into poor me, verbalise suicidal ideations and remind you how sick they are or feign a serious disease or situation or they will switch into martyr and

rescuer simultaneously and rescue you from some thing because they know your weaknesses but it will also be used to get attention. Female covert narcissists are often idealistic about love and romance and get attention from drama.

Do not confuse ability to hide narcissistic behaviour which is referred to as functionality with the type of narcissist, they can seem like the same thing but are not. Some posts incorrectly refer to covert narcissists as less functional narcissists, but it's not the same thing.

### **Diagnosing**

NB\* as a counsellor you are not allowed to diagnose but this is easily remedied by giving a client homework. I usually give a few websites or just the homework Could you to google malignant narcissist or could you google narcissistic mothers and read a few websites on this and we can discuss it next session. This often results in the client reaching a revelation themselves about their parent or spouse or both and explains their behaviour. The benefit of this in therapy is that it shifts a lot of a victims' identity from self-blame to understanding that what was presented to them as their fault was often a re-storying which was false. This is the beginning of reworking the sense of self and the beginning of understanding reality as it really was, not as they were told. Because their lives were re-storied for them as a therapist be extremely careful not to make suggestions when the client is re-storying as the client may be re-traumatised.

## Symptoms of Emotional Abuse

**ACON's who were scapegoats for significant amounts of time and spouses and ex-spouses of narcissists:**

- usually have a deteriorated sense of self
- are usually high empaths if they are coming to counselling
- often have a lot of self hatred/loathing and tend to think out of a self-blaming paradigm if they were the scape goat.
- Often exhibit symptoms of trauma including hypervigilance, sleep disturbances, low self image,
- Often say things like I wasn't abused nothing bad happened to me I don't really know what's wrong with me – this is the biggest red flag if they say this and exhibit trauma symptomology.
- can model narcissistic behaviour regardless of their main role in the family however the test is empathy. A 'true' narcissist will pick up information using mirror neurons but will think it rather than feel it – they will then calculate when and where to exploit it and use it to their advantage. Narcissists do feel sorry for themselves and feel pain for themselves don't mistake this as empathy.

Empirical literature, although scant, indicates that there are definite negative effects on children of narcissistic parents, both during childhood and continuing into adulthood (Berg-Nielson & Wichstrom, 2012; Bradley, 2000). The negative impact of having been parented by someone high in narcissism can lead to a diminished sense of self, identity issues, poor relationships with others (Collins, 2004; Dutton, Denny-Keys & Sells, 2011), a heightened risk

of existential trauma and other trauma responses (Crocker, 2009; Fogel, 2008). Furthermore, in a study of 230 narcissistic parents and their 10- to 12-year-old offspring, Horne (1998) hypothesised that parental depression and narcissism would predict adolescent empathy, narcissism, self-esteem and pleasing-others behaviour within the family. Horne's second hypothesis was that same sex parent-child dyads would produce more significant results than mixed sex parent-child dyads. Using multiple regression analyses on data from questionnaires and observations, Horne found that narcissistic mothers enhanced their daughters' narcissistic tendencies. In contrast, it was shown that narcissistic fathers elicited other-pleasing behaviour in their adolescent daughters. Similarly fathers as narcissistic parents brought out either empathy or narcissism in adolescent offspring. Girls with narcissistic fathers had higher scores for empathy and 'pleasing-others' than boys with narcissistic fathers. Overall, where there was a narcissistic mother, the effect on daughters' narcissism was greater than it was on sons.

Lack of empathy, low self-esteem and egotism are all traits exhibited in NPD, where a strong persona is expressed through a grandiose sense of self. In some cases the impact of being parented by a PN is the development in children of traits that are similar to those of the parent, such as grandiosity and lack of empathy, whilst in other children there seems to be more often the development of a 'complementary' behaviour response that can be described as *pleasing others behaviour* (Horne, 1998). Pleasing others behaviour compliments narcissism insofar as the narcissist demands to be pleased. The research shows that offspring of narcissists are likely to be affected by their parents in terms of their behaviour and potential to exhibit psychiatric disorders (Berg-Neilson and Wichstrom, 2012; Horne, 1998). Another area, which is reportedly greatly affected in ACONs, is their sense of self and identity.

### **WORKING with ACONs/ESN's**

1. Identifying what is going on in their lives and what they perceive is happening or has happened. Work out who you think might be the narcissists in their lives but keep it to yourself.
2. Get them to read up on that type of narcissist (Malignant narcissist or grandiose narcissist or covert narcissist – they will identify with this more by reading others stories on line than reading the DSMV). NB a client who comes to therapy as an ESN will often later recognise one of their parents/carers was narcissistic also. Clues to look for are an enabler parent, who gives and gives but doesn't talk about herself or get her or his needs met or a withdrawn parent who interacts very little with the

family. Chances are these parents are surviving the narcissist by either people pleasing or withdrawing emotionally and sometimes physically (Gaming addiction etc) There is not a benefit to telling them directly. There is also not a benefit to them if they identify one parent and you then tell them the other one is too when they are still working through the first. Nobody likes being an orphan!

3. Discuss what they read and their perceptions and reactions to what they read.
4. Trauma work building their sense of self utilising non-cognitive therapy such as psychodynamic Jungian, expressive and experiential therapies and subconscious work. Also helpful and used world wide by those working with narcissistic abuse are Interpersonal Family Systems therapy, Inner Voice Dialogue Therapy, gentle gestalt and shamanic therapy. Most of these therapies work well with Australian indigenous cultures as well. The damage to ACON's and ESN's is held in the psyche. Based on Freudian Re-enactment theory a client who is an ESN or ACON is re-enacting past events which are unprocessed. When you live with psychological games all the time it is difficult to process when you don't know what reality is so this makes the psyche overwhelmed and full of things which are unprocessed. Things are stored in the psyche as symbols and metaphor not logic and language, therefore cognitive therapies utilising logic are not going to take a client who has been exposed to emotional/psychological abuse very far in their healing and may end up covering up damage.

#### **Things I have learnt as a therapist –**

- a. be careful when **re-storying** with an ACON – something narcissists do is re-story and make the scapegoat or target the one to blame in their re-storying and make the narcissist the hero or one who is in the right. In reality this is not often the case but when you re-story make sure you are not suggesting how to re-story or what the re-story is because this can re-create the same damage or trigger the client. **It is imperative that you are getting the client to suggest and rearrange the story or symbols from their psyche or subconscious not yours.** It can mean taking a little longer but it means not damaging the client. This can be difficult when they have a very eroded sense of self because it means they will be uncertain of themselves and choices and decisions but time and patience is worth the effort.
- b. Telling the client what to do increases or maintains their eroded sense of self. They have most likely been told what to do, what to think, how to act and how to spend their time for most of their relationship with the N. instead teach them how to check in side and notice what their body is telling them. Is it hot or cold, war, loose, tight, where? What does their gut/intuition tell them? What does their logic tell them? When they put these things all together what do they notice about the strength of each? What is the answer they know now?
- c. Re-parenting an ACON is tricky – don't set yourself up as the parent- it will fail unless you are trained in psychodynamics. Alternative suggestions – inner parts/inner child work. When an ACON is growing up they are often overwhelmed and at these times they are unable to process what is occurring. As a narcissist adjusts reality and lies a lot there are many more times of overwhelm and the innocent parts of the targeted person are often

rejected by the narcissist also. This means many stunted facets or parts which were unable to process what overwhelmed them. When I say inner child work I mean everyone has facets like on a princess cut diamond. Each facet is an aspect of us. We have many parts some which have been tucked away from the light or exiled. Get the clients' adult parts to re-parent these exiled parts of themselves because you can't touch the parts in their psyche as you are tangible and the psyche is not. Hugging a client or patting them on the shoulder or being their parent telling them what to do does make them feel a little better as they re-enact old stuff but it doesn't fix the problem in the psyche, only they can do that (with guidance from their therapist). What you can do is model love and acceptance etc to each rejected part as it helps them to then accept that part within themselves by getting their adult self to nurture their exiled self. Another tip is to work out who in their lives they would defend or protect. Eg a niece, child of their own etc. This is so that when you ask them how you would parent this little person they say I don't know you can ask what would you do if ... was in this situation and you were with them? How would you help them? Would it be safe to imagine you doing that to little you? What would it look like?

- d. Asking what you are feeling can be a trigger. Narcissists often elicit information about what someone is feeling then use it against that person to harm them. For this reason clients who have experienced narcissistic abuse are often very protective of their feelings and inner world as this is where their real pain lies. This is the stuff they had abused most of all. Instead ask what do you notice happening in your body or just what are you noticing.

Why Narcissistic abuse is extreme emotional abuse:

A person with a true narcissistic personality disorder utilises psychological games to maximise control and they do it in a more extreme way than other non-narcissistic psychological game players. Narcissistic game players have long term and short games and a very complex system for keeping their target destabilised. Additionally, the NPD sufferer combines this with roles assigned in the family to there is a double fulcrum for leverage for the person experiencing NPD to use on family members. A manipulator who is not narcissistic does not have such a structured system for game playing, or both long and short term plans with their game playing, they tend to react in the moment more than plan ahead for years or months.

**Things research has shown me:**

Scapegoats have trauma symptoms, existential trauma. They often have additional abuse and trauma but not always.

They often do not identify with or use the words domestic violence or family violence despite it existing within their experiences.

They have had little positive witnessing and mirroring in their lives and benefit greatly from it.

They can find it difficult to read positive facial expressions but are very perceptive of negative ones.

There are many games narcissists play. They are made from building blocks called tactics. Then using the tactics in different combinations they make different psychological games. These have been divided into levels of sophistication and duration. They are the simple games the complex games and the master games. The games you can get off my website <http://handsfullofhope.com> under the videos link.

NB the Master games has not been posted yet.

There are six main family roles which do not vary. These are the scape goat the golden child, the ignored one, the clown, the narcissist and the enabler. The difference is that the narcissist chooses the roles and assigns them then manipulates them to maintain control and divide and conquer the group. There are many family roles in different models however this is these are the names of the roles that the communities on line of ACONS and ESNs are using as their own identified ways of explaining their experiences.

The role of scapegoat is used world-wide in groups it is the combination within the group of all these roles that is unique to narcissists.

This family does not move in and out of functionality it remains dysfunctional. The roles at times are changed by the narcissist to manipulate, divide and conquer the family members.

ACONs are inculcated into believing they are always wrong and can't win. Any opposition from the offspring to the parent is punishable by withdrawal of love, coupled with contempt and shaming. Consequently, ACONs may develop the belief that the badness they feel as a result of PN parenting is badness in the very core of their being. Shaw adds that exposure to a PN parent inhibits the development of skills used for responding and relating spontaneously in developing Children of perceived Narcissists (CONs). Similarly, Fogel (2008) refers to this lack of responsive nature as *psychic deadness*, defined as "the experience of having a sense of self that is numb and deadened and/or has an absence of aliveness" (Fogel, 2008, p.iii). Fogel concludes that psychic deadness exists when a narcissistic parent uses projection, a process of the narcissistic parent believing that their own negative emotions are actually negative traits of the child not themselves. Fogel also indicates that introjection occurs whereby the child identifies as being the negative version of the PN that has been projected onto them. These processes, which lead to different types of 'mortification' for the child, effectively deaden their psyche. Further evidence of how an ACON is affected when relating to themselves and others was produced by Herzog, (2004) when he investigated the sense of self in four cases of CONs, who reportedly suffered 'narcissistic deformation'. When referring to *narcissistic deformation*, Herzog was referring to a "character structure in which the self is taken as object and in which control of, rather than relating to is the principal mode

of interaction with others” (Herzog, 2004, p.894). Narcissistic pathology may disrupt this developmental process of the self and consequently of relational skills and organisation within the PN’s offspring (Herzog, 2004).

Several authors have noted the negative effects that being an ACON has on the psyche or subconscious, which in turn affects relational abilities (Crocker, 2009; Fogel, 2008; Gardner, 2004; Somerstein, 2007). Both Fogel (2008) and Somerstein (2007), using case histories of offspring of perceived narcissists, demonstrated that psychic deadness is passed inter-generationally and trans-generationally through the narcissistic family. Somerstein (2007) studied six ACON men who, despite abuse and removal from their family, were shown to live to please their fathers in adulthood. Somerstein reports that these men, who were all ACONs, failed to learn how to please themselves and were hindered in their ability to love. While Gardner (2004) refers to this phenomenon as ‘finding the ACON’s true self in exile’ in order to comply by self-sacrificing, Somerstein calls it ‘filial passivity’, Fogel (2008) refers to it as ‘psychic deadness’, and Crocker (2009) refers to it as an existential trauma wound which occurs to the authentic self. What those constructs have in common is a notion that the development of identity and sense of self in the ACONs is subverted by the dominating persona of the PN.

Gardner (2004) proposes that ACONs exhibit vast fluctuations between ‘absorption and abandonment’ from PN parents. In her investigation into existential trauma in ACONs, Crocker (2009) concluded that when a child seeks contact with a parent and that parent is narcissistic, the child experiences the parent as too preoccupied with her/his own self to attend to the child’s psycho-social and emotional needs. The child feels an absence, which manifests into insecurity and fear. The child is then forced through repetition of these experiences to construct an acceptable self by rejecting or hiding traits and desires, which are unacceptable. Although this acceptable self initially helps the child deal with the demands of the alternating ignoring and intrusion, it also leads to the child struggling later in life with the constructed acceptable self in order to feel real.

In her phenomenological study of six health care professionals who perceived their parents as narcissistic, Crocker, (2009) focused on evidence of existential trauma in the case material on these health workers. Backed by evidence from psychological literature, Crocker found support for the hypothesis that existential trauma occurs when a child does not exist

as a separate person psychologically for the parent(s) or other care givers. As a result of this type of parent-child relationship, Crocker found that the participants in her study perceived their parents as non-protecting, shaming, abusive, physically and or emotionally absent, stern, rigid, absent, hostile, angry and mean. Moreover, she noted that 'children of narcissus' commonly report a lack of memories from childhood, physical or emotional abandonment, physical and/or sexual abuse, traumatic stress, shame and the feeling of not existing. It is clear from the reporting and observation of people who perceive themselves to have been parented by a narcissistic parent/s that their sense of self is often significantly compromised as a consequence of this experience.

#### Games played by emotional abusers and narcissists

Narcissists are the most adept group of utilising emotional abuse hence they are used in my papers as the extreme example of emotional abuse.

Games impact clients in the following ways;

We all make narratives about what occurred in our life. It is how we make sense of the world. In order for us to make a narrative we take information from the left hemisphere of our brain which is logical and rational and we merge this information with affect from our right hemisphere. When the two parts of information combine to make sense we have a congruent narrative which makes sense to us. Often those emotionally abused are told to think one thing by the abuser through a process of grooming and inculcation and then have affect which is not congruent but oppositional to the left hemisphere information which has come from others telling them what is true. This causes stress as the two hemispheres are giving opposing information which at times makes it difficult or impossible to make sense of reality. Constantly living in this non-integrated state of not knowing what is reality leads to stress responses in the body and existential trauma (Trauma every day just from life). Those growing up under parents with narcissistic personalities are often living in this existential trauma which also effects their physical and psychological development and their sense of self/identity and relationship to the world and others. Hence not being able to process narratives means overwhelm and overwhelm is a state of trauma, which brings about physiological trauma responses of fight flight freeze and fuse. Working with emotional abuse is akin to trauma work and at times accompanies trauma, with the added part of

helping the client by giving reality checks in the here and now (you can't reality check their past you weren't there).

Furthermore ACON's are inculcated into believing they are always wrong and can't win (If they are the scapegoat). Any opposition to the offspring is often punishable by withdrawal of love and combined with contempt and shaming. This essentially gives ACON's who were scapegoats a belief they are bad to the core, not written into the book of life or black in the middle. In addition trauma itself brings a lot of shame with it due to the social stigma, the chemical changes in the brain and the lack of control over symptoms which is added to this already large amount of shame. Fogleman refers to this as psychic deadness on AOCNs which he defines as the experience of having a sense of self that is numb, deadened and/or has an absence of aliveness. This is an extreme description however on a continuum you may find this exists more in ACONs than a normative population.

## Emotional Abuse Games and the systemic way they develop them.

Narcissists are particularly adept at psychological warfare as they have several systems they utilise and combine which totally saturates their target in an altered reality. For example A Narcissist uses family role assignment, the scapegoat, the golden child, the ignored one and the enabler, plus the narcissist and in fewer numbers is the role of the entertainer/distracter. Each family member is assigned one of these roles which serves the purpose of stopping mutiny by dividing and conquering family members. A golden child is treated as right, good, favoured no matter what and no matter what their behaviour is like. A scapegoat is treated as the opposite which is as the one to blame for the family problems, the one who is never good, right or perfect (despite the fact that they usually are the one doing everything right) and who gets punished for others mistakes and faults and is not protected from danger but often placed in front of it. The entertainers job is to break the tension before the narcissist rages and the ignored one is not given attention of any sort and given messages of you don't exist. The enabler takes on the role of reinforcing these

roles in each family member by making the narcissist the ruler and stopping any rebellion. At times the narcissist will switch these roles just temporarily to further divide and conquer between the siblings, then switch the roles back again. This ensures the scape goat continues competing and doing the right behaviours to gain the narcissist's approval and lets the golden child know they cannot always be the golden child unless they play the game right. If a child moves out of the family the roles are often reassigned. Alternatively, a golden child may move from golden to scapegoat when they see and reveal they see the games and faults of the narcissist.

A narcissist then teaches the family members to feel guilt, false guilt in inordinate amounts. Then adds to this manipulating responsibility by teaching each family member incorrect responsibility so the narcissist doesn't have to take any responsibility and the scapegoat takes all responsibility and the enabler also takes all responsibility where the scapegoat is not present. The narcissist then combines this with bullying, to ensure there is motivation not to challenge the guilt or responsibility rules and assumptions.

When false guilt, incorrect responsibility assignment and bullying are combined with role assignment this is the underlying foundation upon which a narcissist plays games and controls family members. Outsiders do not see this hidden foundation so are often unaware of the games being games which are detrimental to family members because of not understanding the assumptions and foundation upon which it is played.

To make games the narcissist takes simple behaviour tactics and combines them together to make simple games. They then take these simple games and combine them together to make complex games and over time the complex games are combined and used with a long term plan which is referred to as the master game and also used to create short term games and plans.

For tactics and simple games see the videos on [www.handsfullofhope.com](http://www.handsfullofhope.com) under the video link.

In complex games the narcissist utilises undermining like an expert. They undermine relationships and potential help for the target, this includes friendships, medical practitioners, therapists, siblings, relatives, no relationships are safe.

The narcissists also will undermine any events that the target looks forward to including weddings, graduations, holidays, job interviews etc. The narcissist will also destroy possessions which the target has attachment to and often make it look like an accident.

They will also undermine the targets potential and current prospects, this includes first day on a new job, getting into university, college or any other goal oriented progression. Female covert narcissists are notorious for undermining the teenagers schooling so the teen ager will not become a more successful adult then them. Alternatively overt/grandiose narcissists are more likely to be the helicopter parent who is pushing their child to claim success and then say it is their success it is because of the parent being so great the offspring is great. Narcissists both types struggle with others having autonomy so will undermine targets autonomy and ability to think and feel separate from the narcissist. Finally narcissists undermine pets often giving the target a pet then later removing it, or using the pet to hurt and control the target. This can range from simple rehoming a pet to killing a pet in front of the target.

All of this undermining is referred to as Bunny boiling by ACON communities, from fatal attraction movie where he boils her bunny rabbit pet.

Additional complex games include smear campaigning, bunny boiling, love bombing, guilt tripping, double binding, divide and conquer, identity undermining/inculcation, brainwashing and puberty competition. Google search will reveal the content of each game.

### **The long term master game of narcissists have three main phases:**

The first phase is the love bombing phase. In this phase the narcissist will flood the target with everything they desire, read them like a book and meet all their needs and be everything that person wants. The idea of love bombing is to get the target to fall in love with the narcissist in a way which is like addiction. It stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain much like and addiction.

The second phase is the degradation phase where the narcissist grooms the target to accept small amounts of game playing and small amounts of abuse, gradually increasing the degradation amounts much like boiling a frog in water. In the degradation phase all the games are slowly introduced and confusion ensure. The narcissists flips from degradation to love bombing to degradation and back to keep the addiction going and to keep the target from noticing the amount of degradation. The degradation eventually becomes more and the love bombing less. Any time during this phase the target challenges the narcissist identifying the games denial is used and the games are very well hidden for high functioning

narcissists. The higher the functionality of the narcissist the more they are able to hide their games. Lower functionality means less ability to hide the games. This is the longest phase and is generally taking up most of the relationship. The aim of the degradation phase is to get the target completely dependent on the narcissist for love and for reality and even at times for finances, acceptance and resources. This feeds the narcissists sense of control and narcissistic supply (power and admiration of the narcissist is narcissistic supply). Once the victim is totally reliant on the narcissist the discard phase begins.

The discard phase is where the narcissist starts to really be abusive and not hide it anymore, even if they are functional. The narcissist begins the decompensation part of their personality disorder and are no longer caring what the target knows, They aim to destroy the target. Examples of destroy include anything from undermining all of reality and increasing their mental instability, to giving them drugs and then suggesting they kill themselves while under the influence. The narcissist eventually discards the need for the target as soon as they find a new target and begin the master game again. Some narcissists will keep their first target on the hook using them still but treating them very badly while pursuing the new target that way when the new target fails they have a backup to return to. This discard phase is the most dangerous phase. During this phase the narcissistic game player take great enjoyment from torturing the target mentally and intensity of games and irrationality of behaviour increases dramatically.