



Signs that you are a Victim of Narcissistic Abuse

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Abstract:

Repeated abuse has long lasting pernicious and traumatic effects such as panic attacks, hypervigilance, sleep disturbances, flashbacks (intrusive memories), suicidal ideation, and psychosomatic symptoms. The victims experience shame, depression, anxiety, embarrassment, guilt, humiliation, abandonment, and an enhanced sense of vulnerability. C-PTSD (Complex PTSD) has been proposed as a new mental health diagnosis by Dr. Judith Herman of Harvard University to account for the impact of extended periods of trauma and abuse. In "Stalking - An Overview of the Problem" [Can J Psychiatry 1998;43:473-476], authors Karen M Abrams and Gail Erlick Robinson write: "Initially, there is often much denial by the victim. Over time, however, the stress begins to erode the victim's life and psychological brutalisation results. Sometimes the victim develops an almost fatal resolve that, inevitably, one day she will be murdered. Victims, unable to live a normal life, describe feeling stripped of self-worth and dignity. Personal control and resources, psychosocial development, social support, premorbid personality traits, and the severity of the stress may all influence how the victim experiences and responds to it... Victims stalked by ex-lovers may experience additional guilt and lowered self-esteem for perceived poor judgement in their relationship choices. Many victims become isolated and deprived of support when employers or friends withdraw after also being subjected to harassment or are cut off by the victim in order to protect them. Other tangible consequences include financial losses from quitting jobs, moving, and buying expensive security equipment in an attempt to gain privacy. Changing homes and jobs results in both material losses and loss of self-respect." One's (or someone else's) looming death, violation, personal injury, or powerful pain are sufficient to provoke the behaviours, cognitions, and emotions that together are known as PTSD. Even learning about such mishaps may be enough to trigger massive anxiety responses. The first phase of PTSD involves incapacitating and overwhelming fear. The victim feels like she has been thrust into a nightmare or a horror movie. She is rendered helpless by her own terror. She keeps re-living the experience through recurrent and intrusive visual and auditory hallucinations ("flashbacks") or dreams. In some flashbacks, the victim completely lapses into a dissociative state



and physically re-enacts the event while being thoroughly oblivious to her whereabouts. In an attempt to suppress this constant playback and the attendant exaggerated startle response (jumpiness), the victim tries to avoid all stimuli associated, however indirectly, with the traumatic event. Many develop full-scale phobias (agoraphobia, claustrophobia, fear of heights, aversion to specific animals, objects, modes of transportation, neighbourhoods, buildings, occupations, weather, and so on). Most PTSD victims are especially vulnerable on the anniversaries of their abuse. They try to avoid thoughts, feelings, conversations, activities, situations, or people who remind them of the traumatic occurrence ("triggers").

Biography:

1. Sam Vaknin is the author of "Malignant Self-love: Narcissism Revisited" and other books about personality disorders. His work is cited in hundreds of books and dozens of academic papers: <http://www.narcissistic-abuse.com/mediakit.html> He spent the past 6 years developing a treatment modality for Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). Over the years, with volunteers, it was found to be effective with clients suffering from a major depressive episode as well..

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