

Analyzing the Significance of Family Dynamics for Patients with Antisocial Borderline & Narcissistic Personality Disorders

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Introduction

What Is A Personality Disorder?

An enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment” (APA). Someone with a personality disorder has a consistently different worldview from most people in society that starts when they are a young adult and never completely goes away. It eventually causes problems in that person’s interpersonal relationships and internal functioning.

There are three clusters of personality disorders. Cluster B is the “dramatic or emotional” cluster. It includes **Antisocial**, **Borderline**, **Histrionic**, and **Narcissistic** personality disorders.

Why Are We Studying Them?

- These disorders affect every part of a person’s life, and the lives of the people around them.
- Personality disorders are characterized by troubled relationships, and lead to extreme difficulties in relationships, especially parentchild relationships.
- In recent years **NPD** has shown an increase in prevalence within the general population.
- **BPD** has a very high prevalence rate in mental health settings due to the extreme impairment of those afflicted.
- **ASPD** is disproportionately prevalent in forensic settings and has a high comorbidity rate with disorders like substance abuse and conduct disorder.

Methods and Prevalence

Methods:

- We decided that a literature review best suited our project.
- Our literature review was conducted from the winter of 2015 to the spring of 2016.
- Keywords used: ‘antisocial personality disorder,’ ‘borderline personality disorder,’ ‘narcissistic personality disorder,’ ‘family dynamics,’ ‘family,’ and ‘personality disorder.’
- Databases used: PubMed, PLOS One, EbscoHost, Nature, Scientific American Mind, eScholarship, and Academic Journals AP Source.

Prevalence of Cluster B Personality Disorders:

NPD	ASPD	BPD	HPD
General Population: 06.2%	General Population: 2-3%	General Population: 1.65.9%	General Population: 2%
	Forensic Settings: 70% or higher	Outpatient: 10% Inpatient: 20%	

In addition, 14.79% of American adults have at least one of the twelve personality disorders recognized by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

The Historical Origins of Narcissism

The original Greek myth tells of a man named Narcissus, the son of the god Cephissus and the nymph Liriope. His mother was told that he would live a long life as long as he “if he ne’er know himself.” When he saw a reflection of himself for the first time on the surface of a lake, he fell in love with his image. He stayed there so long and became so intensely infatuated with himself that he fell into the lake and drowned. On the shore where he fell into the water, a flower—whose official scientific name is Narcissus—sprouted from the soil. This flower is more commonly known as the daffodil, pictured on the bottom left. The painting titled Narcissus at the Source by Italian renaissance painter Caravaggio on the top left, depicts Narcissus falling in love with his reflection before his death. Freud was the first to use the term “narcissistic” in 1910 and Otto Rank was the first to write a paper—“On Narcissism”—that focused solely on this trait. However, it was not until the ‘60s and ‘70s that narcissistic personality disorder was more deeply considered and researched. Kernberg and Kohut were two of the largest contributors to our modern understanding of NPD. Although the diagnosis of NPD is somewhat contemporary, the concept of narcissism is an ancient one that is increasingly relevant in today’s world.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)

What is NPD?

- Individuals afflicted with NPD:
 - Are defined by their sense of grandiosity and egotistical behaviors
 - Often fantasize about having the perfect life, career, romance, etc.
 - Are entitled and arrogant
 - They believe that they are especially unique, and should be treated as such
 - Require lots of praise and admiration to feel selfassured and worthy
 - Are exploitative and take advantage of others to achieve their own ambitions
 - Are chronically envious
 - Lack empathy and have a reduced sense of morality

What factors lead to the development of NPD?

- NPD can be caused and influenced by a number of elements, but the extent of which these elements influence the development of NPD cannot be determined.
 - Genetic transmission has been explored as a potential cause of development; however, no solid correlation has been found. Even if there was a relationship, genetic transmission couldn’t be the sole factor in the development of NPD.
 - Environmental factors play a significant role in the development of personality disorders. Genetic components can lead to greater sensitivity to environmental factors, but a personality disorder won’t develop unless the environmental factors are present.

Why is the family so important in the development of NPD?

- Typical Parenting Trends:
 - Devaluing Parents are cold, indifferent, unempathetic and controlling.

Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)

What is ASPD?

- Individuals afflicted with NPD:
 - Are characterized by indifference towards laws and social norms
 - Utilize pathological lying
 - Engage in reckless, impulsive and irresponsible behavior regarding themselves or others
 - Demonstrate prominent aggression
 - Lack concern for others
 - Lack a conscience or capacity for remorse
 - Generally have a history of childhood conduct disorder

What factors lead to the development of ASPD?

- ASPD can be caused and influenced by a number of elements, but the extent of which these elements influence the development of ASPD cannot be determined.
 - Genetic transmission has been found to be a significant factor in the development of ASPD.
- Research shows that ASPD has a stronger genetic correlation than both NPD and BPD; however, similarly to the other personality disorders, genetic transmission can’t be the sole factor in the development of ASPD.
 - Environmental factors play a critical role in the development of personality disorders. Genetic components can lead to greater sensitivity to environmental factors, but a personality disorder won’t develop unless the environmental factors are present.

Why is the family so important in the development of ASPD?

Parents display: Children observe:

- High levels of intrusiveness
- Denial of a child’s independence

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

What is BPD?

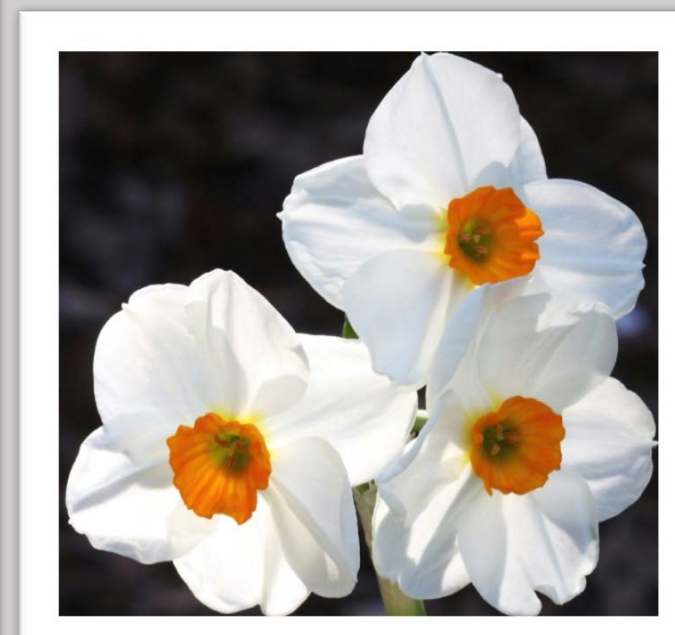
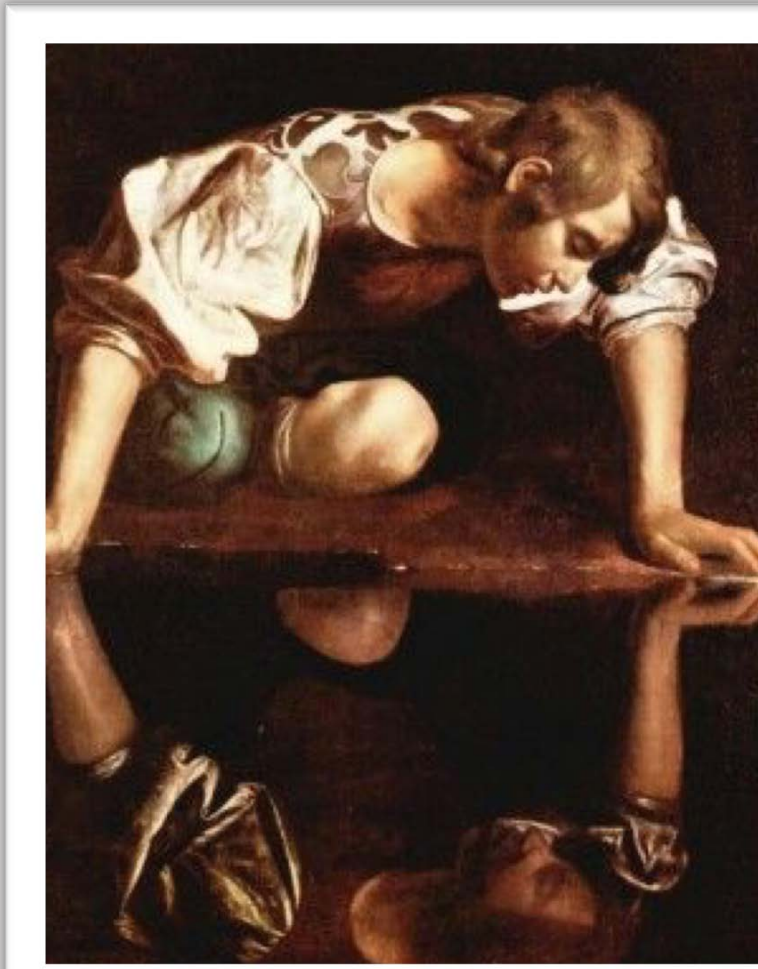
- Individuals afflicted with BPD experience:
 - Intense fears of abandonment alongside feelings of perpetual emptiness
 - Volatile relationships where patients either idolize or despise people
 - Identity turmoil, characterized by fluctuating opinions, beliefs and goals
 - Impulsive, reckless and paranoid behaviors
 - Unstable mood fluctuations, where patients will quickly fluctuate between neurotic and psychotic
 - Suicidal behavior and nonsuicidal self injury (NSSI)
 - A sense of unresolved anger that is difficult for patients to control
 - Extreme dissociative symptoms caused by stress

What factors lead to the development of BPD?

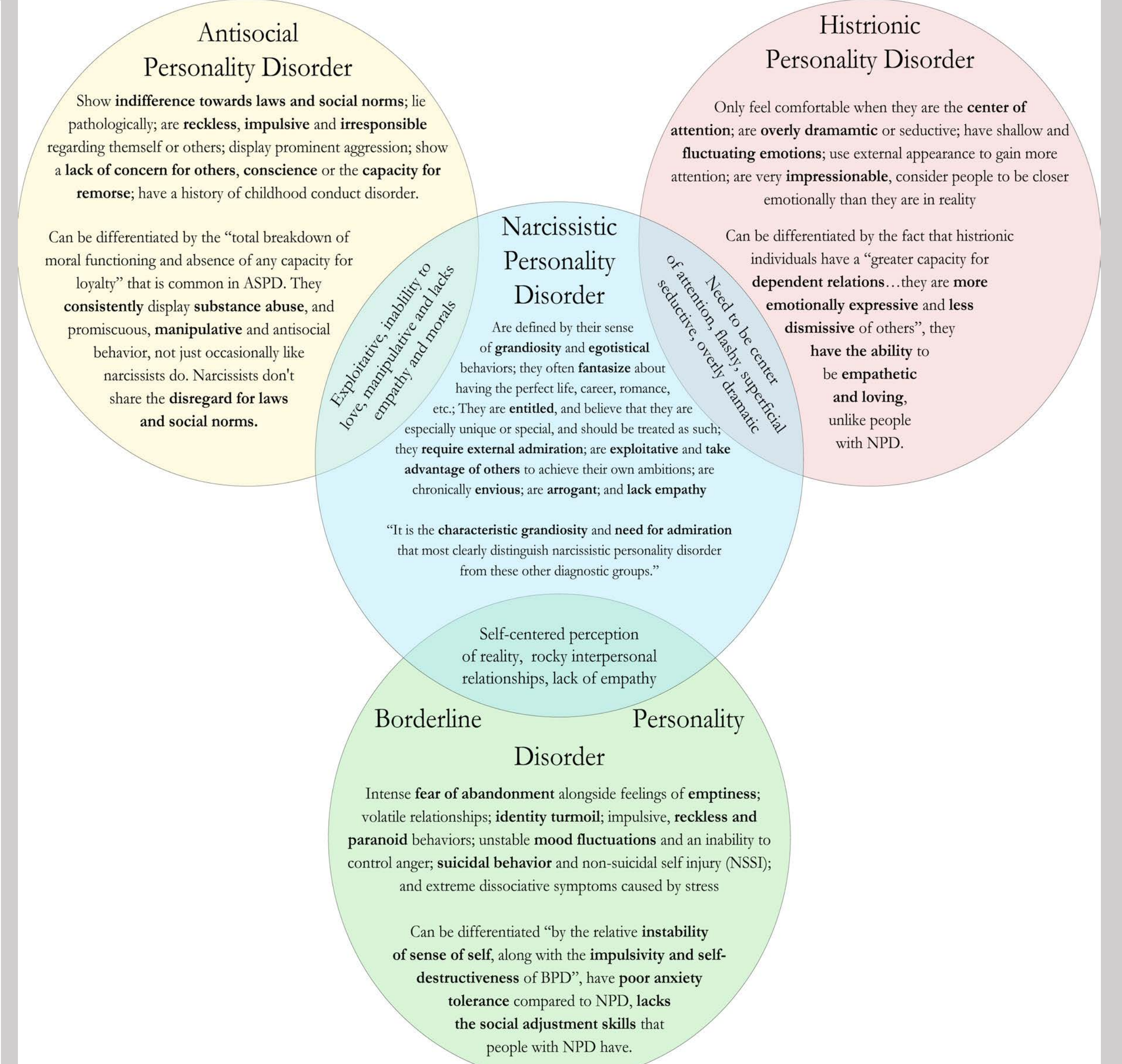
- BPD can be caused and influenced by a number of elements, but the extent of which these elements influence the development of BPD cannot be determined.
 - Genetic transmission has been studied, and is considered a partial cause of development. BPD has been found to have a slightly stronger genetic correlation than NPD; however, like with NPD, genetic transmission can’t be the sole factor in the development of BPD.
 - Environmental factors play a significant role in the development of personality disorders. Genetic components can lead to greater sensitivity to environmental factors, but a personality disorder won’t develop unless the environmental factors are present.

Why is the family so important in the development of BPD?

- Patients often report negative childhood experiences such as:
 - Child physical/sexual abuse and/or neglect
 - Hostile conflict (e.g. abuse, tension, fighting, and other traumatic experiences)



BPD	BPD vs. NPD	NPD	ASPD vs. NPD	ASPD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely were physically or sexually abused as children • Risk factors include neglect, hostile conflict, early parental loss or illness, parental divorce or ASPD, poor or ineffective parenting, and other negative or traumatic childhood experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents may have their own psychological disorders, creating rocky relationships and possibly passing on genetic factors that may cause problems in their children • Genetics may play a small role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely were emotionally abused or neglected as children • Parents either devalue or overvalue their children • Parents promote a false sense of reality • Parents see children as “narcissistic extensions;” their children are “loved” if they are perceived as “good enough” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents may have their own psychological disorders, creating rocky relationships and possibly passing on genetic factors that may cause problems in their children • Genetics may also play a role; however, ASPD tends to much more influenced by genetics than NPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely were physically or sexually abused as children • Families are selfabsorbed, neglectful or cruel • Drinking, violence, inconsistent rules, & lack of recognition of empathetic behaviors are common • Children become numb to violence by witnessing parental violence and begin to view it as okay or “normal”



Discussion

Removing NPD from the DSM, a Spectrum of Personality Disorders & an Increase in NPD Prevalence.

- There is an ongoing debate that began before the publication of the DSM V on whether or not NPD should be included as an official diagnosis, since the increase in prevalence was making the condition seem increasingly “normal.” In addition, there is another debate around the idea that the DSM should diagnose Cluster B personality disorders along a spectrum instead.○ Silicon Valley is a region of entrepreneurship where many of these narcissistic traits can help new companies succeed in this highly competitive environment. However, the downside is that this fosters even more narcissism, which can be detrimental in relationships with other people, in and outside of the office, and potent in large quantities.
- Additional Research on Family Dynamics.
 - In our research, we found no shortage of information on the treatment of ASPD, BPD, and NPD.
- However, there weren’t many articles that solely addressed the role that family dynamics played in the development of these disorders. Our research suggests that families play a significant role in the development of PDs; therefore, we believe that more research should address the role that families play in the etiology of these conditions.
- Improving Regulations & Standards on Child Abuse.
 - A common cause of development across all three personality disorders is childhood abuse and neglect. Although our country has standards and regulations intended to stop these events, there are still “3.6 million referrals are made to child protection agencies involving more than 6.6 million children” (childhelp.org). A more efficient and streamlined system for the prevention and postresponse services for child abuse could potentially prevent many debilitating disorders from developing.

Conclusion

Similarities:

- All three personality disorders stem from negative environmental (usually childhood) experiences, and family dynamics create personality disorders in two ways: often including childhood abuse, trauma, and neglect.
- Genetic transmission from parent to child creates greater sensitivity to environmental triggers; all personality disorders are never entirely genetic.
- Behavioral traits could be observed while growing up, and then are internalized by the child, incorporated into habit and lead to relationship turmoil later in life.

Differences:

- ASPD and BPD tend to be the result of physical/sexual abuse or neglect, whereas patients with NPD tend to have been emotionally abused and/or neglected in their youth
- Overvaluation by parents could potentially cause NPD, but not BPD or ASPD; however, parental overvaluation reportedly leads to milder cases of NPD than parental devaluation does.

Lack of Information:

- A couple months into our research, we removed histrionic personality disorder (HPD) from our project due to a lack of research content available to us. Similar to the other Cluster B personality disorders, the lack of research on family dynamics caused some difficulties.
- We intentionally chose to focus on family dynamics because there was a lack of information on the topic. Therefore, our literature review was uneven and certain personality disorders had more content than others. The fact that there wasn’t much research in this area is precisely why research on this topic should be emphasized, especially since family dynamics play such a crucial role in the development and wellbeing of children.

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