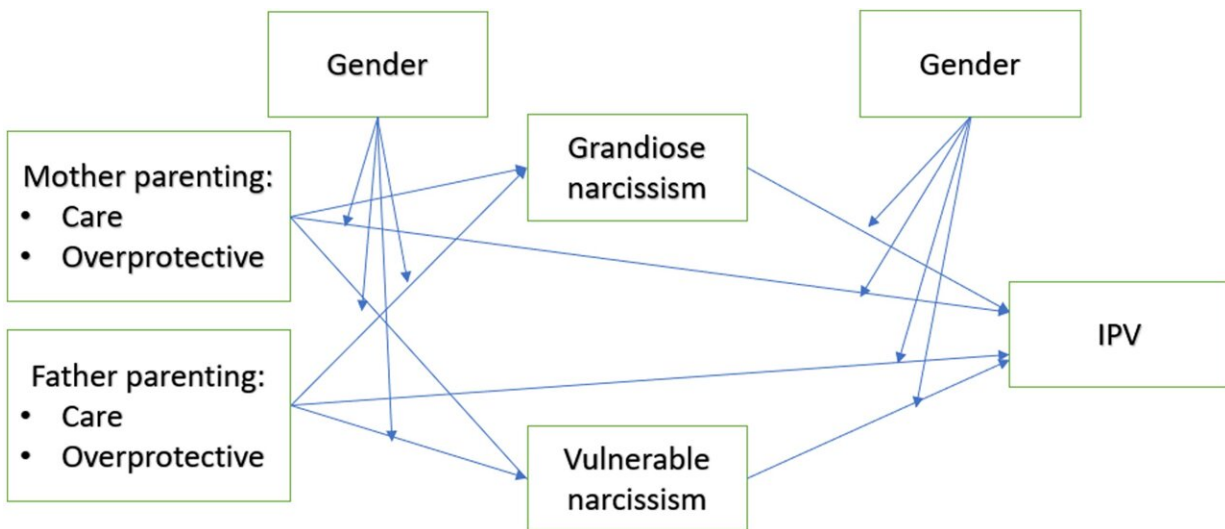


# Unraveling the gendered undertones of narcissism

June 6 2024



Credit: *Sex Roles* (2024). DOI: 10.1007/s11199-024-01471-4

The researchers found that the trait manifests itself in vulnerable and subtle ways in women, which deviates from stereotypical manifestations of (male) narcissism that are typically expressed in grandiose and overt ways.

Psychologists Dr. Ava Green, Lecturer in Forensic Psychology at City, and Dr. Claire Hart, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Southampton, have, for the first time, examined the combination of narcissism origins and narcissism's role in violence. It is also the first

time both male and female narcissism have been examined in detail. The studies have been [published](#) in the journal *Sex Roles*.

Most research to date on inter-partner violence focuses on grandiose narcissism, and mostly on men.

"There has been little research on vulnerable narcissism and on narcissism in women," explained Dr. Green. "Part of this relates to the need to use gender-inclusive assessments of narcissism that move beyond traditional male-centric frameworks. Our research addresses this gap."

Dr. Hart added, "Narcissism is a complex personality trait. We all exhibit narcissistic features to varying degrees, which can be expressed in both grandiose and vulnerable forms. Individuals who exhibit more grandiose features are self-assured and socially dominant whereas individuals who exhibit more vulnerable features are introverted and have lower [self-esteem](#). Both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism share an antagonistic core, demonstrated by high levels of entitlement and willingness to exploit others."

## **Narcissism and partner violence**

Studying 328 adults (176 women and 152 men), Dr. Green and Dr. Hart examined the complex dynamics between [childhood experiences](#), narcissism, and perpetration of intimate partner violence in males and females.

Men scored higher on grandiose narcissism while women scored higher on vulnerable narcissism.

Dr. Green said, "We found that grandiose narcissism in men was associated with greater perpetration of psychological partner violence, while vulnerable narcissism in women was linked with greater

perpetration of physical, sexual, and psychological partner violence.

"For women, recalling having a caring mother during childhood was associated with reduced levels of vulnerable narcissism and subsequent perpetration of violence toward their partner, highlighting possible buffers that can be acknowledged and integrated into intervention programs."

## **Narcissism and bullying among friends**

Dr. Green and Dr. Hart also examined how grandiose and vulnerable narcissism contribute to bullying among friendship groups, surveying a total of 314 women.

Dr. Hart said, "When examined separately, higher scores on vulnerable narcissism were associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in verbal, physical, and indirect forms of bullying. Higher scores on grandiose narcissism were associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in physical or verbal bullying.

"However, when both types of narcissism were considered simultaneously, only vulnerable narcissism emerged as a significant predictor of physical and verbal bullying, highlighting the relevance of this form of narcissism in bullying perpetration among women."

Dr. Green added, "These findings show that narcissistic women are less likely to manifest the stereotypical expressions of grandiose narcissism that closely resemble masculine features of males in society, potentially due to fears of receiving backlash for violating feminine gender stereotypes.

"Instead, features of vulnerable narcissism, which more closely aligns with femininity, is a greater risk marker for offending behaviors in

women and, as a consequence, more likely marginalized and disregarded due to its elusive and subtle features."

A better understanding of the role [narcissism](#) plays in women can help to inform and tailor appropriate gender-specific interventions to reduce the perpetration of intimate partner [violence](#) and bullying.

**More information:** Ava Green et al, Gendering Narcissism: Different Roots and Different Routes to Intimate Partner Violence, *Sex Roles* (2024). [DOI: 10.1007/s11199-024-01471-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-024-01471-4)

Ava Green et al, Mean Girls in Disguise? Associations Between Vulnerable Narcissism and Perpetration of Bullying Among Women, *Sex Roles* (2024). [DOI: 10.1007/s11199-024-01477-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-024-01477-y)

Provided by City University London

Citation: Unraveling the gendered undertones of narcissism (2024, June 6) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-06-unraveling-gendered-undertones-narcissism.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.