**MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

**MARCH FEBRUARY**

**NARCISSIM- PART 2 - GASLIGHTING**

**The information in this article is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional mental health advice, diagnosis or treatment.**

**SCRIPTURE**: *He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved (Psalm 62:2, NIV)*

**DENIAL**: Regardless of the situation, my peace will not be disturbed.

AFFIRMATION: I will be treated with respect at all times and my spirit will not be broken.

Our February topic addressed the mental health issue of Narcissism, including typical characteristics and behaviors of the Narcissist.

A formal diagnosis of Narcissism is not needed to utilize another form of mental manipulation, known as Gaslighting. Gaslighting is also known as Ambient Abuse and is not limited to persons diagnosed with Narcissism.



The name Gaslighting comes from a 1938 thriller play in 1880s London, written by the British

Novelist and playwright, Patrick Hamilton, which tells the story of a marriage based on deceit

 and trickery, and a husband committed to driving his wife insane in order to steal from her.1

Gaslighting is identified as a form of manipulation and control. Victims of Gaslighting are deliberately and systematically fed false information that leads them to question what they know to be true, often about themselves and to question their own perception, and even their sanity.

1. **Difference Between Gaslighting and Manipulation**:
* Gaslighting is a specific form of psychological abuse that targets a person’s sanity and perception of reality.
* Manipulation, on the other hand, encompasses a broader range of tactics used to exert power or control over others.
* Gaslighting can occur in personal or professional relationships, targeting victims at the core of their being: their sense of identity and self-worth.
* Manipulative individuals engage in Gaslighting to gain power over their victims. This could be due to warped enjoyment or a desire for emotional, physical, or financial control.
1. **Recognizing Gaslighting**:
* Effective Gaslighters are hard to detect. Victims’ actions and mental state often reveal the manipulation.
* Gaslighters may have personality disorders like narcissistic personality disorder or psychopathy.
* Gaslighters present different faces to their prey and the world, making victims fear that speaking out won’t be believed.2
1. **ABUSER STRATEGIES**
* Initially, Gaslighters lie about simple things, gradually escalating the volume of misinformation.
* [Inducing disorientation and confusion by Gaslighting, lying, or denying their actions](https://psychcentral.com/pro/identifying-ambient-abuse).
* [Incapacitating the victim by taking away their resources, withholding information, or refusing to help them](https://psychcentral.com/pro/identifying-ambient-abuse).
* [Creating a shared psychosis by convincing the victim that they are both crazy and that no one will believe them](https://psychcentral.com/pro/identifying-ambient-abuse).
* [Abusing information by using the victim’s personal information against them, threatening to expose their secrets, or blackmailing them](https://psychcentral.com/pro/identifying-ambient-abuse).
* [Isolating the victim by cutting off their contact with friends and family, making them feel guilty for socializing, or sabotaging their relationships](https://psychcentral.com/pro/identifying-ambient-abuse).
* They may accuse the victim of lying when questioned, deploying occasional positive reinforcement to confuse.
* Simultaneously, they attempt to turn others against the victim, even friends and family, by labeling them as liars or delusional.

**SUSCEPTIBLE VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS**

* Those who are overly responsible and conciliatory and who tend to confuse compassion with guilt are ripe for manipulation as they are conditioned to defer their authority.
* Those with poor interpersonal standards and low self-esteem have a high threshold for abuse and a willingness to ignore mistreatment.
* Those who are exceedingly lonely may act out of desperation, not discernment.
* Those who are controlled by their emotions throw caution to the wind.
* Those who seek approval seek redemption through others.
* Those with poor boundaries let others in intensely and prematurely.
* Those who abide by naive notions of Universal goodness in all people.3

*You deserve to be loved and respected. Remember, the Kingdom Promise of harmonious relationships. Should you suspect that you or a loved one is in a manipulative relationship, do not suffer in silence. Seek the support of a mental health professional, family, and trusted friends.*

Footnotes

1Frezza, Daniel. ["About the Playwright: Gaslight"](https://web.archive.org/web/20210112142739/https%3A/legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/uthrc/00367/hrc-00367.html); Southern Utah University. Archived from Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia on 12 January 2021.

2Heller, Sheri, Rev, CLSW. Identifying Ambient Abuse, <http://Psychocentral.com>; medically reviewed by Scientific Advisory Board; 28 September 2016.

3-Bellafonte, Ginia. “Crazy, he calls me (and terrified, I Agree)” New York Times; archived from the original (24 May 2007), on 5 June 2015.