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## Meta-cognitive and interpersonal difficulties in overt and covert narcissism

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### ABSTRACT

This paper profiles meta-cognitive (affect-dysregulation, empathy and identity-concerns) and interpersonal difficulties in both **overt (ON) and covert (CN) narcissism**. It explores mediation effects of meta-cognition in interpersonal difficulties. Participants ( $n = 177$ ) completed self-report measures of ON and CN, affect-dysregulation, empathy, identity-concerns, and interpersonal difficulties. **Analysis confirmed that ON and CN are independent constructs. Both are associated with identity-impairment, however each reflect different internal and interpersonal difficulties. ON was associated with a lack of vicarious personal distress and interpersonal difficulties characterized by dominance/control, neediness/intrusiveness and lack of assertion. CN was associated with affect-dysregulation and fantasy (index of empathy) and reported interpersonal problems characterized by vindictiveness/self-centeredness and social inhibition. CN was negatively associated with coldness/distance. Meta-cognition mediated some interpersonal problems in both ON and CN. A lack of personal distress mediated the negative relationship between ON and non-assertiveness and suppressed intrusiveness, suggesting a lack of vicarious distress may contribute to interpersonal difficulties due to an intrusive social style. In CN, all interpersonal difficulties were mediated by affect-dysregulation and identity-impairment. Results reinforce the importance of differentiating between ON and CN in future research.**

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### 1. Introduction

The conflict between meta-cognitive processes<sup>1</sup> and interpersonal relationships are considered central to the maintenance of narcissism (Dimaggio et al., 2002; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001a), whereby inner experience of affect, perception of self (identity-impairment), perception of others (empathy) negatively impact interpersonal functioning (APA, 2000).

Two explanatory models of narcissism link meta-cognitive processes and interpersonal difficulties. Morf and Rhodewalt's (2001a) 'Dynamic Self-Regulatory Processing Model of Narcissism' (DSRM-N) proposes that the interaction of intrapersonal processes, interpersonal strategies and social feedback influence narcissistic behavioral patterns. Vulnerability, due to limited self-knowledge and inability to self-regulate, is juxtaposed by a sense of grandiosity and entitlement, resulting in internal conflict. Meta-cognitive deficits prevent this conflict being recognized or resolved. Consequently those with narcissistic traits seek social approval to bolster self-esteem. Similarly interpersonal difficulties mean attempts to engineer positive feedback fail, which increases

aversive affect-states and further oscillations between grandiosity and vulnerability. Dimaggio et al.'s (2002) Integrated Narcissism Model (INM) also suggests that a non-integrated mind state and inability to self-reflect leave narcissistic individuals excessively dependent on others to confirm a sense of identity and regulate their negative affective states. However, an inability to express their inner states or decenter<sup>2</sup> results in problematic interpersonal relations. This interpersonal cycle maintains narcissistic dysfunction.

However, Wink (1991) distinguished between two statistically independent forms of narcissism, Overt (ON) characterized by grandiosity, entitlement and self-absorption and Covert (CN) characterized by hypersensitivity, vulnerability and dependence on others. Both forms are thought to share common meta-cognitive deficits which result in conflicting feelings of grandiosity and vulnerability, however they cope by suppressing one and projecting the other, resulting in different presentations (McWilliams, 1994).

This suggests that beneath the grandiose exterior of ON, a vulnerable depleted inner-self exists, while CN project emotional vulnerability and suppress entitlement (Akhtar & Thomson, 1982; Broucek, 1991; Kohut, 1971).

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Hence, although both models outline the interplay between meta-cognitive and interpersonal difficulties, neither distinguishes between ON and CN. Similarly, understanding of the relationship between meta-cognitive and interpersonal presentation in ON and CN is limited to fairly descriptive accounts. This paper aims to investigate whether presentational differences between ON and CN lead to different meta-cognitive processes (affect-dysregulation, empathy and identity cohesion) and interpersonal difficulties. It also explores whether meta-cognition mediates interpersonal presentation.

## 2. Meta-cognitive factors

**Affect Regulation** is defined as conscious or unconscious procedures which maximize pleasant and minimize unpleasant emotions (Westen, 1995). Poor affect regulation leads to increased affective intensity, lability and distress (Mendoza-Denton, Ayduk, Mischel, Shoda, & Testa, 2001). Difficulty regulating affect is considered a central feature of narcissism, although empirical findings remain inconclusive (Krystal, 1998). Some studies suggest emotional lability is associated with ON (Emmons, 1987; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001a), while others show abnormally neutral moods and lack affective flexibility (Baumgardner, Kaufman, & Levy, 1989). Rose (2001) found ON reported little anxiety or depression whereas CN showed a high degree of negative affect. ON may experience the same affective dysregulation as CN, but be unable or unprepared to recognise it (Krystal, 1998; McWilliams, 1994). If so, ON is unlikely to be associated with affect-dysregulation, whilst CN is likely to be associated with negative affective experiences.

**Empathy:** Lack of empathy is a diagnostic feature of narcissism (APA, 2000; Kohut, 1971). Davis (1983) outlines four aspects of empathy; two affective; empathic concern [EC] and personal distress [PD] and two cognitive; perspective taking [PT] and fantasy [F]. EC and PT are pro-social features (Davis & Kraus, 1991) improving quality of and satisfaction with relationships (Leith & Baumeister, 1998). In contrast, PD and F are associated with social difficulties; PD is linked to increased fearfulness, uncertainty and over-sensitivity, while F is associated with loneliness and social anxiety (Davis, 1983).

Watson, Biderman, and Sawrie (1994) found that both ON and CN lacked most features of empathy, but ON was negatively associated with vicarious PD while CN had a positive association.

**Self-Identity:** Narcissism is theoretically associated with contradicting self-perceptions due to a mismatch between representations of internal and 'ideal' self (Emmons, 2000; Kernberg, 1991). Akhtar and Thomson (1982) claim both types of narcissism employ opposite but equally incomplete identities as protective masks – ON presents as grandiose and arrogant while CN presents as vulnerable and fragmented. ON's report greater identity cohesion than non-narcissists, however this identity is thought to be inflexible and grandiose (Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). Heightened emotionality and low confidence linked to CN is associated with identity diffusion, suggesting unstable identity (Briere, 2000; Rose, 2001).

**Interpersonal Difficulties:** Dysfunctional interpersonal relations, considered a key enduring feature of narcissism, are suggested to arise from limitations in meta-cognitive abilities (Dimaggio et al., 2002; Kohut, 1971; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001a). It is thought attempts to gain approval through dominating and self-aggrandising behaviour, rather than garnering social approval is common in ON (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001b). In contrast, CN is associated with hypersensitivity, insecurity and vindictiveness due to interpreting others' actions as malevolent (Wink, 1991). This is asserted to lead to a sense of entitlement which may negatively impact their interpersonal relations (Broucek, 1991; Wink, 1991).

Spousal descriptions of ON and CN differ (Wink, 1991). ONs were described as aggressive, outspoken, egotistical, self-centered and intolerant, whilst CNs were described as anxious, emotional, defensive, complaining and bitter. Interestingly, ON and CN were both described as equally arrogant, demanding, and argumentative, suggesting they share some interpersonal difficulties.

**Meta-Cognitive and Interpersonal Difficulties:** Although ON and CN are thought to share core difficulties, meta-cognitive processes may mediate interpersonal difficulties differently and lead to a lack of awareness of own and others' concerns. Grandiosity in ON is thought to impede access to any sense of vulnerability (arising from affect-dysregulation and identity-diffusion). However, an over-reliance on others' opinions and lack of empathy are considered likely to influence their social interactions. We suggest the meta-cognitive deficits associated with ON will mediate interpersonal difficulties characterised by dominant, intrusive and controlling behaviour.

Alternatively, open expression of affect-dysregulation, identity diffusion and need for approval paired with a limited empathic capacity, is thought likely to influence interpersonal style in CN differently. We expect that interpersonal relations will be coloured by excessive neediness, unforgiveness and social inhibition.

We aim to identify the meta-cognitive difficulties (affect regulation, empathy and identity concerns) and interpersonal difficulties associated with ON and CN, and examine how meta-cognitive processes may mediate each interpersonal presentation.

## 3. Method

**Participants** ( $n = 177$ ) were recruited from two samples; 68 undergraduates and 109 from local communities incentivized with a draw-prize.

Mean age was 27.56 years ( $SD = 11.94$ , range 18–76). 72% of participants were Australian, were proficient in English, and had completed secondary-school education.

## 4. Measures

ON was measured using the **Narcissistic Personality Inventory** (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) a 40-item inventory. Items are based on DSM-III criteria for NPD, however are sensitive to differences in non-clinical populations. Reliability ( $\alpha = .83$  to  $.85$ ) and construct validity are established (Emmons, 1987). Test-retest reliability was established ( $r = .72$ ) (Emmons, 1987).

CN was measured with the **Hypersensitivity Narcissism Scale** (HSNS; Hendin & Cheek, 1997), a 10-item measure of narcissistic vulnerability and hypersensitivity suitable for non-clinical populations (Hendin & Cheek, 1997). Acceptable reliability ( $\alpha = .62$  to  $.75$ ) and construct validity were established ( $r = .63$ ) (Hendin & Cheek, 1997).

The **Inventory of Altered Self-Capacities** (IASC; Briere, 2000) is a 63-item self-report inventory. Two subscales were used; **Affect Dysregulation** (AD, 9 items) and **Identity-Impairment** (II, 9 items). Internal reliability is adequate (subscale  $\alpha = .78$  to  $.93$ ; total  $\alpha = .89$ ) (Briere, 2000).

The **Interpersonal Reactivity Index** (IRI; Davis & Kraus, 1991) measures empathy with 28 self-report items assessing 4 components; empathic concern, perspective taking, personal distress, and fantasy. Adequate internal reliability ( $\alpha = .70(EC)–.78(PD)$ ) and construct validity have been confirmed (Davis & Kraus, 1991).

The **Inventory of Interpersonal Problems** (IIP-64; Horowitz et al., 2000) was used to assess interpersonal difficulties. Respondents rate 39-items with the prompt "It is hard for me to..." and 24-items addressing "The following are things I do too much" which load onto eight subscales (each 8 items): *Domineering/Controlling*,

Vindictive/Self-Centered, Cold/Distant, Socially Inhibited, Nonassertive, Overly accommodating, Self-sacrificing, Intrusive/Needy. Internal reliability ( $\alpha = .76$  to  $.88$ , total  $\alpha = .96$ ) and construct validity have been established (Horowitz, Alden, Wiggins, & Pincus, 2000).

#### 4.1. Procedure

To reduce order-effect bias, measures were order adjusted. Undergraduates completed the questionnaires over two sessions; first the narcissism measures (NPI and HSNS), then demographic questions, IRI, IASC, and IIP-64. Community participants were posted questionnaire packs after indicating consent and completed the questionnaires in reverse order.

## 5. Results

The two measures of narcissism were normally distributed; the mean for the NPI was 17.5 ( $SD = 6.97$ , range 3–36), and 4.1 ( $SD = 2.18$ , range 0–9) for the HSNS.

**Construct Independence:** Zero-order correlations confirmed the presence of linear composite variables, representing ON (NPI) and CN (HSNS) that could be treated as independent. A significant but weak relationship was detected between ON and CN ( $r = .267$ ,  $p < 0.0005$ ), however the 7.1% overlap ( $R^2 = .071 \times 100$ ) was considered to result from high power, rather than represent a meaningful relationship.

**Canonical Correlations:** Multivariate analysis of canonical correlations were used to investigate the strength of associations between the measures of ON and CN and measures of affect-dysregulation, empathy, identity concerns and interpersonal difficulties. Based on association strength it was decided *a-priori* that canonical correlations of .40+ reflected meaningful relationships (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Two canonical variables were consistently evident throughout analysis, reflecting independent constructs. As Canonical Variable 1 (CV1) was consistently associated with HSNS and Canonical Variable 2 (CV2) with the NPI, it was concluded that CV1 represented CN and CV2 ON. These variables showed different patterns of association with all measures of meta-cognitive and interpersonal difficulties (Appendix 1). Once established, these CVs were analyzed for association with measures of meta-cognitive and interpersonal difficulties.

**Affect-Dysregulation:** A significant pattern of association was only found between CN and affect-dysregulation (.829) which explained 30.5% ( $1 - .695 \times 100$ ) of the variance. This canonical correlation was strongly related to the HSNS (1.007). No meaningful association was evident between the NPI and affect-dysregulation ( $-.027$ ).

**Empathy:** The four IRI subscales; EC, PT, PD and F showed significant patterns of association with the CVs (Wilk's Lambda = .650,  $p < 0.0005$ ), which explained 35% ( $1 - .650 \times 100$ ) of the variance. CV1, associated with CN (.897) had a strong association with Fantasy (.907).

**Identity-Impairment:** Two patterns of association (Wilk's Lambda = .703,  $p < 0.0005$ ) were found between CVs and Identity-Impairment which explained 29.7% ( $1 - .703 \times 100$ ) of the variance. CV1, related to CN (.987), was strongly associated with Identity-Impairment (.858) whilst CV2, correlated with ON ( $-.994$ ), showed a negative relationship with Identity-Impairment ( $-1.039$ ).

**Interpersonal Difficulties:** Two significantly different patterns of association were detected among the IIP-64 subscales (Wilk's Lambda = .520,  $p < 0.0005$ ) which explained approximately 48% ( $1 - .520 \times 100$ ) of the variance. CV1 was strongly negatively related to the HSNS ( $-.985$ ), suggesting that high scorers on the HSNS will display high levels of Social Inhibition ( $-.650$ ), Vindic-

tive/Self-centeredness ( $-.442$ ), and relatively low levels of Coldness/Distance (.423) (Table A2). CV2, positively associated with the NPI (.852) showed a significant positive pattern of association with Domineering/Controlling (.726) and Needy/Intrusive (.430). It was negatively associated with Non-assertiveness ( $-.468$ ) (Appendix 2).

**Mediation effect of Meta-Cognitions on Interpersonal Difficulties:** Regression path analyses were conducted using Sobel's (1982) test of significance, to determine whether meta-cognitive deficits did indeed mediate interpersonal difficulties. For all analyses the significance level was set at  $\alpha = .05$ . Mediation was only performed for canonical correlations previously proven significant.

**ON:** Regression coefficients were obtained for the relationship between the NPI total score and the three significantly associated IIP-64 subscales; Domineering/Controlling, Intrusive/Needy and Nonassertive. These relationships were then tested for any mediation effects of Personal Distress or Identity-Impairment. Of these, two proved significant. Personal Distress significantly mediated the relationship between the NPI and Non-assertiveness (Sobel =  $-2.43$ ,  $p = 0.015$ : Unadjusted effect: .214,  $se = .057$ ,  $p < .0005$ ; Adjusted effect: .259,  $se = .056$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). Interestingly, the beta-coefficient increased when Personal Distress was introduced to the regression of NPI and Intrusive/Needy scale, suggesting an unusual suppression effect, rather than mediation (Agresti & Finlay, 1997) (Appendix 3).

**CN:** Regression coefficients were obtained for the relationship between HSNS scores and the significantly associated IIP-64 subscales: Socially Inhibited, Cold/Distant and Vindictive Self-Centered. Univariate analysis found three meta-cognitive scales to be significantly related to CN, Affect-Dysregulation, Fantasy and Identity-Impairment. These were then tested for mediation effects on interpersonal difficulties. Affect-Dysregulation and Identity-Impairment both appeared to significantly mediate the relationship between the HSNS and all three IIP-64 scales. The relationship between the HSNS and Social Inhibition was significantly mediated by Affect-Dysregulation (Sobel = 3.62,  $p < .0005$ : Unadjusted effect: 1.319,  $se = .203$ ,  $p < .0005$ ; Adjusted effect: .935,  $se = .243$ ,  $p < .0005$ ) and Identity-Impairment (Sobel = 2.88,  $p = .003$ : Unadjusted effect: 1.319,  $se = .203$ ,  $p < .0005$ ; Adjusted effect: .831,  $se = .235$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

The negative association between HSNS and Cold/Distant was also significantly mediated by Affect-Dysregulation (Sobel = 2.15,  $p = .032$ ) (Appendix 4) and Identity-Impairment (Sobel = 2.28,  $p = .022$ ) (Appendix 5). Although the relationship between the HSNS and Cold/Distant was highly significant in the unadjusted model ( $B = 783$ ,  $p < .0005$ ), it became insignificant when adjusted for mediation with Affect-Dysregulation ( $B = .502$ ,  $p = .061$ ) and Identity-Impairment ( $B = .243$ ,  $p = .339$ ), indicating a complete mediation effect.

Finally, the relationship between HSNS and Vindictive/Self-Centered interpersonal problems was also mediated by Affect-Dysregulation (Sobel = 2.67,  $p = .007$ : Unadjusted effect: 1.023,  $se = .175$ ,  $p < .0005$ ; Adjusted effect: .724,  $se = .211$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and Identity-Impairment (Sobel = 2.72,  $p = .007$ : Unadjusted effect: 1.023,  $se = .175$ ,  $p < .0005$ ; Adjusted effect: .732,  $se = .208$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

## 6. Discussion

This study supported assertions that there are two independent forms of narcissism characterized by stable, but different, meta-cognitive styles. Both share identity difficulties but differ in patterns of association with affect-dysregulation, empathy and interpersonal problems. Meta-cognitive factors do appear to influence interpersonal style differently in ON and CN. These findings have implications for future theory and understanding of narcissism.

Most striking is that ON and CN were both significantly associated with identity-impairment. This suggests that rather than representing healthy narcissism (Rose, 2001; Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004), grandiosity may defend against identity diffusion (Kohut, 1971) and the continuous search for reassurance and admiration in ON seems to indicate a lack of identity cohesion (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001b).

Identity-impairment is associated with a lack of awareness of one's goals, needs and behaviour and problems maintaining a coherent sense-of-self. This may partially explain the chronic sense of emptiness associated with narcissism, as identity-impairment is characterized by difficulty discerning what thoughts and emotions belong to oneself or another (Briere, 2000).

ON and CN were related to different affective self-experiences and vicarious responses to others. CN was strongly associated with affect-dysregulation whilst ON was unrelated. This supports the notion that high scorers on ON do not report affective difficulty as they are unaware of, or unwilling to acknowledge their inner-states (Dimaggio et al., 2002; McWilliams, 1994; Raskin et al., 1991). Morf and Rhodewalt (2001b) suggest that ONs' continual search for admiration and external gratification indirectly indicates their difficulty regulating internal mood states. Similarly, Emmons and Colby (1995) found that despite ONs reporting little distress, measures of physiological arousal, revealed the opposite. Although this cannot be inferred from self-report findings, ONs appear to ignore affect-dysregulation, outsourcing esteem-regulation to others.

High scores on CN were associated with high levels of affect-dysregulation i.e. extreme emotion and difficulty controlling mood-state (Briere, 2000). Previous findings that emotional lability is linked with narcissism (Emmons & Colby, 1995; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998), may be further clarified by distinguishing between ON and CN.

Results indicate ON and CN differ in empathic capacity, although patterns differ to previous research. ON was related to a lack of personal distress, suggesting affective disconnection or unawareness of others' emotional states (Dimaggio et al., 2002; Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984). Although previous studies found a negative relationship between ON and the pro-social aspects of empathy (Watson et al., 1984), this study found no meaningful relationship.

Surprisingly CN was only associated with the fantasy scale, in contrast to studies which established a moderate relationship between CN and personal distress (Watson et al., 1994). High personal distress is linked with vulnerability and fearfulness. However, an inability to decentrate may prevent vicarious affect in CN. This complex relationship requires further investigation. The cognitive capacity for fantasy has previously been associated with anxiety, isolation and loneliness (Wilson & Barber, 1983). It would be interesting to explore whether this association with fantasy represents a harboured grandiosity (Broucek, 1991). A statistical trend, short of significance, suggested high CN scores are related to a lack of empathic concern and perspective-taking. Further research with a larger sample or alternative measures of empathy may clarify these findings.

Results confirmed that ON and CN report experiencing very different interpersonal problems, which reinforce clinical descriptions of their differing interpersonal styles. ON appears to present as maintaining control and detachment, yet needing social affirmation. CN is linked with a socially detached presentation, but also socially anxious and distrustful. This adds credence to claims that interpersonal relations are important but also shaming and a source of distrust (Kohut, 1971; McWilliams, 1994; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001b). ON was associated with identity-impairment, suggesting internal conflict as despite classic descriptions of ON as vehemently self-sufficient, results indicate some awareness of their reliance on others (Wink, 1991).

ON was associated with intrusiveness, dominance and control and negatively associated with non-assertiveness. A controlling and manipulative interpersonal style may mean that losing control will threaten the individual's sense of identity and reduce consideration of another's viewpoint (Horowitz et al., 2000). Interestingly, ON was also associated with intrusiveness/neediness, characterized by difficulty being alone. Although ONs' are frequently described as socially detached, this study supports assertions of an over-reliance on social interaction for support, stimulus and distraction.

Associations between CN and social inhibition, vindictiveness and self-absorption is congruent with previous descriptions of introversion and hypersensitivity in CN: Being both reliant on yet suspicious of others (Wink, 1991). The strong association with social inhibition and CN suggests an avoidance of socializing to guard against disapproval and rejection. Vindictiveness and self-centeredness indicates unwillingness to forgive slights, however, the low scores on coldness and a negative association with social distance imply CN does not result in detachment. It is difficult to infer how the opposite of cold/distance may manifest.

These results are strikingly similar to Wink's (1991) study of self and partner ratings of narcissists' interpersonal style. Partners described ONs as aggressive, assertive, evasive and self-centered, and CNs as anxious, bitter, defensive and emotional. Despite claims that narcissism is characterized by a lack of self-awareness (Dimaggio et al., 2002) this congruence between self and other ratings suggests some awareness regarding interpersonal difficulties, but these individuals are perhaps unaware of the causes.

ON and CN showed different patterns of spillage from meta-cognitive difficulties into the interpersonal domain. Only a lack of personal distress mediated interpersonal difficulties in ON; it appeared to enhance intrusiveness/neediness and mediate assertiveness further exacerbating interpersonal difficulties. An unusual suppression effect appeared to enhance the relationship between ON and intrusive/needy interpersonal style when personal distress was included. This statistical anomaly suggests a complex relationship requiring further research. Our findings support descriptions of ON as self-centered; as awareness of others is compromised by preoccupation with their own concerns (Kernberg, 1991; Wink, 1991).

Interestingly, identity-impairment did not mediate interpersonal difficulties in ON, reinforcing conjecture that a grandiose exterior protects against a depleted inner-self. Although no significant relationship was found between ON and affect-dysregulation, there is a strong association between identity-impairment and affect-dysregulation (Briere, 2000), suggesting dysregulated affect, however those high on ON are unaware or unwilling to report this. While self-report methodologies are unlikely to penetrate such defenses a measure of unconscious affectivity, may provide insight.

CN was associated with affect-dysregulation, fantasy and identity diffusion. Both affect-dysregulation and identity diffusion mediated all interpersonal difficulties associated with CN; social inhibition, vindictiveness, self-centeredness and lack of distance. This supports claims that meta-cognitive deficits are central to interpersonal presentations in CN. Although only evident in CN, findings also support views that narcissists rely upon others for self-regulation, yet are socially avoidant (Dimaggio et al., 2002; Emmons & Colby, 1995; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001b). Despite previous research linking fantasy-proneness to both social reticence and chronic emotionality (Davis, 1983), this study did not find fantasy to mediate interpersonal style in CN. This may be due to their harbouring grandiose fantasies (Kohut, 1971).

As both types of narcissism were associated with identity-impairment and interpersonal problems, it seems unlikely that ON represents a healthy form of narcissism and CN a pathological one (Rose, 2001; Sedikides et al., 2004). Although CNs reported more

aversive affect, self-report methodology may limit detection of affect-dysregulation in ONs. Previous studies employing alternative methodologies found ONs to be more emotionally labile than non-narcissists (Emmons and Colby, 1995). Thus ONs, rather than representing a healthier aspect of the personality style, may just be less willing to report their emotional difficulties, or their interpersonal presentation may be more culturally acceptable (Lasch, 1978).

This research confirms claims that narcissism is not a single construct, but has two stable subtypes (Broucek, 1991; McWilliams, 1994). Our findings cast doubt on the suggestion that the overt and covert ‘faces’ represent two mood-states experienced at different times in narcissism (Dimaggio et al., 2002).

The findings do support the notion that both ON and CN possess a sense of grandiosity and vulnerability, however suppress and project alternate aspects of their personality (Akhtar and Thomson, 1982; Broucek, 1991; Kohut, 1971; Wink, 1991). In ON feelings of insecurity may be suppressed as such dysregulation is not reported, presenting as grandiose and domineering. Surprisingly ON was associated with identity-impairment, although the lack of mediation with interpersonal difficulties suggests it does not directly impact social relations. Despite a self-assured exterior, ON does relate to experiences of emptiness.

CN presentations are thought to suppress grandiosity and openly express their insecurities (Kohut, 1971). This study provides some detailed findings regarding this assumption. CN was associated with meta-cognitive patterns of affect-dysregulation and identity-impairment and a socially inhibited, vindictive although not completely detached interpersonal style. The mediating effects of affect-dysregulation and identity-impairment on their interpersonal style, suggests these vulnerabilities are openly expressed, and impact interpersonal relations. Kernberg’s (1991) suggestion that the internal world not reflected in a CN interaction style may explain why fantasy did not mediate interpersonal style. The vindictiveness and self-centeredness related to CN may also indicate an underlying sense of importance they feel is unrecognized by others. Further supporting the argument that ON and CN present stable, alternate patterns of meta-cognitive and interpersonal experiences, as both were associated with very different interpersonal styles, empathic capacities and experiences of affect, yet share a lack of identity cohesion. A longitudinal study may further understanding of the stability of mood-state in the two faces of narcissism.

Future research would benefit from different methodologies to further understanding of the dynamic interplay of these features. Narcissism is associated with a high degree of both self and social deception (Raskin et al., 1991), self-report may not adequately measure all meta-cognitions. However self-report methodology still provides insight into the conscious experiences of narcissists.

The pronounced differences between ON and CN highlight the importance of considering both types of narcissism in future research. The DSRM-N and INM model may benefit from distinguishing between ON and CN. Moreover current descriptions of narcissism may obstruct covert presentations being recognised.

This study provides support for the DSRM-N and INM models, however only the unidirectional effect of meta-cognitive processes on interpersonal style were tested. It would be valuable to explore the reciprocal relationship between these meta-cognitive and interpersonal experiences.

**7. Conclusion**

This research has contributed empirically to understanding of narcissism and further delineates between ON and CN. Findings demonstrate that meta-cognitive factors do indeed appear to impact interpersonal difficulties, however shows an important

distinction between the different presentations of ON and CN. While both ON and CN appear to experience impaired identity, their meta-cognitive processes and interpersonal interactions are markedly different. By considering ON and CN independently, it has also expanded previous models of narcissism (DSRM-N; INM), and contributed to a more nuanced understanding of narcissism. Whilst both ON and CN are associated with a sense of identity-impairment, affective patterns and interpersonal interactions differ.

**Appendix 1**

See Table A1.

**Appendix 2**

See Table A2.

**Appendix 3**

See Fig. A1.

**Appendix 4**

See Fig. A2.

**Appendix 5**

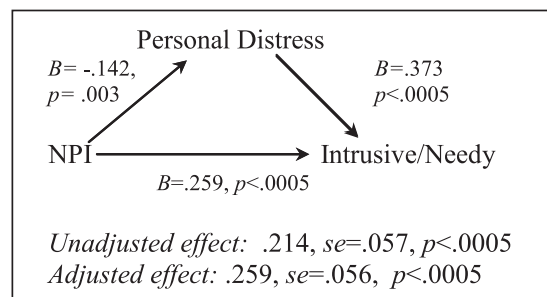
See Fig. A3.

**Table A1**  
Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Meta-Cognitions.

	CV1 (CN)	CV2 (ON)
Affect-dysregulation	.829	-.027
Empathic concern	-.367	-.305
Perspective taking	-.328	-.147
Personal distress	.273	-.897
Fantasy	.907	.273
Identity-impairment	.858	-1.039

**Table A2**  
Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Interpersonal Problems (DV’s).

	CV1 (CN)	CV2 (ON)
Domineering/Controlling	.008	.726
Vindictive/Self-Centered	-.442	.268
Cold/Distant	.423	-.302
Socially Inhibited	-.650	-.009
Non Assertive	-.299	-.468
Overly Accommodating	-.278	.340
Self-Sacrificing	.080	-.309
Needy/Intrusive	.216	.430



**Fig. A1.** Personal distress mediation on NPI-intrusive/needy.

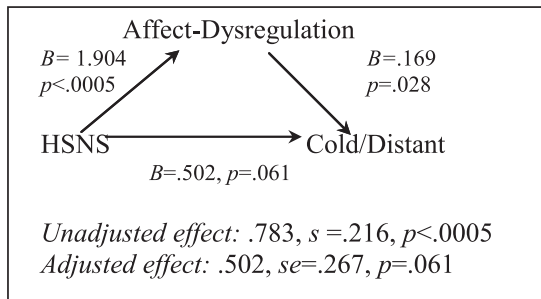


Fig. A2. Affect-dysregulation mediation on HSNS-cold/distant.

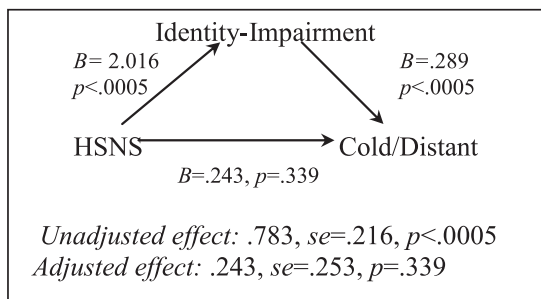


Fig. A3. Identity-impairment mediation on HSNS-cold/distant.

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