

The Empath's Advocate

Therapist Screening Checklist



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Therapist Screening Checklist: Questions to Ask When You're Dealing With Narcissism or Narcissistic Abuse

Purpose: This checklist is designed to help individuals screen therapists for experience with narcissistic abuse, high-conflict dynamics, and trauma-related manipulation. This material is licensed for individual, personal use only and may not be reproduced or distributed without permission.

Training & Experience

- What experience do you have working with clients affected by narcissistic abuse or high-conflict relationships?
- Are you familiar with trauma bonding, gaslighting, and intermittent reinforcement?
- Have you worked with clients who were scapegoated or emotionally abused within family systems?
- Do you have experience with narcissistic dynamics in families, romantic relationships, or workplaces?
- What training or continuing education have you completed related to emotional abuse or complex trauma?

Perspective on Narcissism & Abuse

- How do you differentiate normal relationship conflict from emotional abuse or coercive control?
- Do you believe narcissistic abuse is a real and distinct form of psychological harm?
- How do you handle situations where one party consistently avoids accountability?
- What is your view on "both sides" when there is a pattern of manipulation or abuse?

Validation & Reality Testing

- How do you help clients who doubt their own perceptions due to gaslighting?
- How do you validate a client's lived experience without reinforcing self-blame?
- How do you respond if a client says they feel confused or destabilized?

Boundaries & Safety

- How do you support clients in setting boundaries with narcissistic or high-conflict people?
- What is your stance on low contact or no contact when abuse is ongoing?
- How do you help clients manage guilt or fear when setting boundaries with family members?

Legal & Court-Related Considerations

- Do you have experience working with clients whose cases involved court proceedings or legal disputes?
- Can your clinical notes or testimony ever be subpoenaed or used in court?
- Under what circumstances might you be required to testify or release records?
- How do you document sessions when clients are involved in high-conflict or legal matters?
- Are you comfortable maintaining neutrality if a case becomes litigious?

Therapist Fit: Red Flags vs. Green Flags

- **RED FLAGS:** Minimizes or dismisses narcissistic abuse; pressures reconciliation; focuses on forgiveness prematurely; suggests you are responsible for the abuser's behavior; appears uncomfortable discussing power or manipulation.
- **GREEN FLAGS:** Understands trauma bonding and gaslighting; uses language of patterns and safety; respects your boundaries and pace; validates your experience without encouraging victimhood; supports self-trust and clarity.

Your Notes

Therapist Name: _____

Date of Consultation: _____

What felt validating? _____

What raised concerns? _____

Overall reaction after session (calm, anxious, supported, unsure): _____

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