

How Families Protect Their Narcissist

All families that have a narcissist among them protect that person. It's just a part of the dysfunctional system when living in the fog of narcissistic abuse.

There are many ways that the family does this.

To start with, the family revolves around the narcissist. If the narcissist is an overt one, she often uses fear to rule her family. Whether she is physically or psychologically abusive, no one wants to see her rage because it's terrifying. If she's covert, then she will use guilt to rule. The covert narcissist is incredibly good at using guilt to control her family. She also may appear helpless, needing their assistance constantly. As an example, she may say she needs her adult child to do things around her house for her, because she doesn't know how to do those things.

The fear of disapproval is always a powerful weapon for narcissists. Most people will do anything a narcissist wants rather than face the shaming, scathing criticisms or mocking of the overt narcissist or the disappointment, guilt & shaming of the covert narcissist. They will try their hardest to please the narcissist & do anything she wants to avoid that disapproval. The narcissist knows this & has no trouble using that fear to her advantage.

Families with a narcissist also are often in denial. They minimize the abuse the narcissist does or excuse it away. They say things like the overt narcissist had a bad day, that's why she screamed at the children. Or, the covert narcissist simply doesn't know any better—you can't get mad at her for what she said or did.

In a dysfunctional family, the narcissist is protected from anger at all costs. No one can express any anger—that is only acceptable behavior for the narcissist. While it's completely acceptable for an overt narcissist to scream, rage, punch walls or hurt people, or give the silent treatment, everyone else is to stuff their anger deep inside, never expressing it at all. This is especially important if you're angry with the narcissist—you must never, ever express anger at her, no matter what she has done. If you do, you'll see rage like you've never seen before. Narcissists can't handle anyone being angry at them. That would imply they did something wrong & that might make them look bad. They can't handle looking bad even for a moment, & even when there are no other witnesses.

Families with a narcissist accept the narcissist's reality as their own. If the narcissist says something or someone is bad, the family believes this to be the truth. They see things through the eyes of the narcissist rather than having their own views, opinions & perceptions.

Once the narcissist's child grows up, if that adult child begins to reveal the trauma & abuse she endured, the family continues in their denial by invalidating that pain in many ways. The family may refer to the abuse as “difficulties” “hurts” “challenges”

or something like that rather than call it abuse or deny there was any abuse altogether. Extended family also may say they never saw any signs of problems while the child was growing up, or they may tell the adult child to get over it—that's in the past. Some folks even blame the adult child by saying she should've asked for help when things were happening. The adult child's pain isn't important to the dysfunctional family—protecting the narcissist is.

Many dysfunctional families continue living in this manner indefinitely, but you don't have to! Once you see these behaviors are dysfunctional, you know better than to participate in them. You can see them for what they are—dysfunction of people who are still living in the fog of narcissistic abuse. You have every right to protect yourself from them & their hurtful behavior however seems appropriate to you.