

Life With High Functioning C–PTSD

Many people who have experienced narcissistic abuse end up with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Complex PTSD. PTSD includes things like flashbacks, anxiety, depression, intrusive memories, nightmares, sleep disturbances, trouble concentrating, hyper-vigilance, bad short term memory, & a negative outlook on life. Complex PTSD has the same symptoms plus a few extra such as difficulty regulating emotions, anger issues, fear of abandonment, low self-esteem, panic attacks & being perfectionists to name a few.

When you've been raised with narcissistic parents, children learn early in life how to just keep on going no matter what. It's not because they're told they're capable or strong or they can do anything—it's simply expected of children of narcissists to keep going. They aren't supposed to need rest or breaks. They are supposed to just keep going & doing no matter what.

Anyway once these children grow up, this is so ingrained in them that frequently continue that behavior, even with C–PTSD. So many of us with this debilitating disorder keep pushing & pushing ourselves even on our worst days rather than take care of ourselves. As a result, we suffer needlessly & not a lot of people believe we're actually sick. They think we can't be too bad off since we keep going & doing things.

People close to us may not even see us struggling, because we just keep going somehow. We often don't show a lot of evidence of our struggles, even when they are at their worst. When I have a flashback or get very depressed or anxious, I get very quiet. Normally, I'm rather quiet anyway so this isn't a red flag, especially to anyone who knows me.

I know it's hard, but we have to stop being so high functioning! We have to start taking better care of ourselves & part of that is letting people know that we're having a bad day or need some help. It's a scary thing, thanks to having narcissistic parents who instilled the dysfunctional belief in us that we are never supposed to have any needs, but even so it must be done!

You know those people in your life who are safe & those who aren't. Start opening up more to the ones who are safe. It's ok to admit to them that you're having a bad day & why. They won't judge you for having nightmares, flashbacks, or debilitating anxiety. Even if they don't have C–PTSD themselves, they can at the very least empathize with you. They don't want to see you suffering & will be glad to help you if they can.

It's hard to know what to ask for from others when you haven't got experience in asking for help, I know. Try to get in touch with your needs. Think about it. If I could have anything in the entire world at this moment, what would help me the most

at this moment? When you take the limits off your thinking, it does help you to come up with something that can help.

You'll probably discover, like I did, what would help you isn't something huge, but something small like a hug or going out for coffee with your best friend. Those things are certainly reasonable requests to ask of someone you're close to, so why not ask? No one who genuinely loves you will object to giving you a hug or scheduling a coffee date, especially if they know it'll help you!

For me anyway, I've learned the things that help me the most when my C-PTSD is flaring up are small things, like spending time with my husband or chatting on the phone with my best friend. I think many of us with C-PTSD feel like such a burden. We feel like asking for help from others will involve them doing some huge tasks constantly. The truth though is that really isn't the case. The biggest thing I've found I need from someone is to listen to me talk about trauma, sometimes many times. Granted, that can be hard on the person listening, but again, anyone who genuinely loves you won't mind because they want to help you.

So please, stop trying to do it all. Life with C-PTSD is hard enough. Don't make it harder! It's ok to ask for help & to take care of yourself.