

Narcissism is a trait that we all have - to a greater or smaller extent. Research findings suggest that we have it to an increasingly high extent. Narcissistic individuals are known for their low level of empathy. Is their insensitivity manifested externally, automatically (i.e. beyond their control), e.g. in their weak or incongruent mimic reactions to someone else's facial expression of emotion? Are these people unable or unwilling to empathize with others? Can the empathic sensitivity of narcissists be modified by incentives influencing their motivation? Do their ability to understand, use and manage their own emotions and influence other people's emotions affect their relationships with others? If so, how? Does their demand for attention and excessive self-focus lead to their rejection by the social environment in the long run? Can their self-focus be modified, reduced for the benefit of these individuals and their social environment? These are just some of the questions undertaken in the project. The proposed research project aims to clarify and resolve controversies concerning the ability and motivation to take someone else's perspective and to experience compassion in narcissistic individuals, their ability to recognize and understand other people's intentions and feelings, their ability to "catch" the emotions of other people, their emotional intelligence. A new potentially beneficial self-regulatory approach (self-distancing) will also be sought and tested in narcissistic individuals, an approach that, according to our preliminary results, might promote both their well-being and good relations with other people. The project includes a variety of methods: from a psychophysiological study (measuring electrical activity of facial muscles in reaction to other people's emotional expressions), questionnaires and cognitive tasks. Most of the proposed research is experimental. We plan to apply the cutting-edge advanced methods of statistical network analysis to data from some of our studies. These methods enable including natural processes occurring in groups (social networks), such as reciprocity, transitivity, a tendency to form sub-groups, a tendency to like people who are already liked by others etc in a study of interpersonal interaction and relations. The proposed methodology allows for better recognition of person and situation interplay in research. One of the objectives of the project, in addition to a better understanding of narcissism, is to promote innovative and computationally efficient methods of network analysis to the study of social psychology and personality.