

## **Narcissism and Prosocial Motivation - Description for the General Public**

### **Research project objectives**

The current project is to suppose to search for methods which could motivate narcissistic individuals to act more prosocially. Trait of narcissism reflects conceit, interpersonal dominance, and tendency to manipulate other people. All contemporary theories of narcissism concur that narcissists are not genuinely prosocial. Narcissists possess a desire to maintain sense of superiority over others and they do not really care about other people. There are, however, ways to motivate narcissistic individuals to act more prosocially and the current project is devoted to this topic. Some of them have already been tested and the results were encouraging: offering tangible benefits for prosocial behavior, providing audience for the activity, explicitly asking a person to take the recipient's perspective. Some others, that at face value seemed effective turned out either unsuccessful when applied to narcissistic individuals or even back-fired by further decreasing prosociality: explicitly asking for help, that is putting social pressure, or presenting the task as communal, related to sensitivity for others. Still, many other interventions remain untested and await systematic empirical examination. In this project we would like to investigate the effects of interventions that based on what we know about the inner world of narcissists, are particularly promising. Among them we would like to focus on: situational increase in the importance and visibility of their morality for themselves, increasing self-compassion to decrease entitlement and strengthen connection with others (emphasizing the sense that we are bonded by common humanity), self-distancing (as in *looking at oneself from a perspective of a fly on the wall*) and taking the perspective of the person in need or a victim of a wrongdoing.

### **The planned research**

Two major domains of prosocial behavior will be used as outcomes: generosity, as evidenced in resource sharing and donations to charities and volunteering, and forgiveness, as evidenced by resigning from retaliation for an offence. A set of correlational and experimental studies will test our hypotheses. We plan to use methods allowing for clear distinction between subjective (self-reported measured by questionnaires) and objective (actual) behavior. The latter will be measured via questions about whether the person donated to charity anytime over the past year, and decisions made DURING the study, which represent whether the person agrees to "volunteer for charity" WHILE completing the survey. Finally, we will also look at the familiarity of the recipients of the prosocial actions (strangers versus close ones, relatives) to see if this factor plays an important role for narcissists.

### **Reasons for choosing the research topic**

Narcissism and its low concern with fellow human beings, and lack of prosocial motivation is a common obstacle in everyday interpersonal interactions all over the globe. Identifying sustainable, cost-effective interventions which could motivate narcissistic individuals to counteract their selfish tendencies for the benefit of other people and the community is an important outcome of the project that can find applications in multiple settings, from educational through therapeutic to business ones.