



# EMPLOYEE

## ASSISTANCE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

PROVIDED BY SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## SIGNS YOU MAY BE DEALING WITH A NARCISSIST



The term narcissist is often used when describing somebody who is selfish, conceited, or seems to only think of themselves.

People might even be tempted to describe someone who constantly takes selfies or who brags about their accomplishments as a narcissist. However, using the term narcissist to describe

common and often harmless selfish traits and behaviors trivializes a serious clinical disorder. Someone with narcissistic personality disorder can cause substantial emotional damage to those

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**Saint Alphonus**  
A Member of Trinity Health

**EAP MISSION** Saint Alphonus Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, confidential counseling service that assists employees and their families with issues that affect their quality of life at home and work.

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they interact with. Because of how much damage they can cause others, it's important to be able to identify the signs of a narcissist.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) describes narcissistic personality disorder as a "pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy and behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy" that includes at least five of the following nine personality traits: Grandiose sense of self-importance, preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success or beauty, believes that he or she is "special" and can only be understood by other high-status people, requires excessive admiration, has a sense of entitlement, exploits others for personal gain, does not have empathy for others, is often envious of others or thinks others are envious of them, and shows arrogant behaviors or attitudes. Narcissists can be very charming and outgoing but their excessive self-focus eventually becomes too much for the people around them to handle.

It is important to keep in mind that narcissism lies on a spectrum from mild to severe and only those who lie on the severe side of the narcissistic spectrum will be diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder. Also, just because someone has a few narcissistic traits doesn't mean they are a narcissist. A little bit of narcissism can be good for us but if someone has many narcissistic traits it will usually have a negative impact on their life and those around them.

To figure out if someone you know might be a narcissist, it is helpful to know what types of traits and behaviors to look for. Some common narcissistic traits and behaviors are listed below:

- **Never apologizes when they make a mistake or hurt someone's feelings.**  
A narcissist might say "I'm sorry you feel that way" and "I'm sorry you're so angry" but these are not apologies for their behavior.
- **Does not take responsibility for their actions and blames others instead.**  
A narcissist will blame others even when it's something they caused. A narcissist might say, "I wouldn't have punched the wall if you hadn't have made me so angry."
- **Unable to empathize with others.**  
The narcissist is unable to see things from another person's perspective or know what the other person is feeling.
- **"Gaslights" others.** Gaslighting is a form of manipulation where the narcissist makes a person doubt their sense of reality by telling them they are remembering things incorrectly, such as what they said to the narcissist in an argument. The narcissist will change facts from the past and make a person question their memory. Anger and intimidation from the narcissist can occur if the person doesn't accept their false version of reality.
- **Sensitive to even the slightest criticism or perceived criticism.** Because they have a fragile self-esteem, narcissists can't handle any form of criticism and may lash out in anger or sulk into a depression if criticized.
- **Never feels remorseful or guilty**
- **Projects what they do onto others.**  
Projection is a defense mechanism whereby the narcissist denies something they do and attributes it to others. For example, a narcissist might tell his partner that he or she is being selfish or narcissistic when in fact it is the narcissist who is being selfish and narcissistic.
- **Twists your words.** For example, if you tell a narcissist that you need his help with the kids more often, he might tell you that he doesn't appreciate you calling him a terrible father.
- **Braggs or boasts often.** The narcissist will often mention the important people they know or the important things they have done in their life.
- **Refocuses the topic of conversation by going off on tangents.** In order to avoid talking about a topic, a narcissist will not answer a question and instead go off on a tangent about a different topic.
- **"Burns bridges" with others.** Because of their self-focus and selfish behaviors, a narcissist will have a hard time keeping friends and will often "burn bridges" with friends, family members, and coworkers.
- **Makes you feel like you're going crazy.** Because of their repeated gaslighting, projection, and blaming, the narcissist will make you question both yourself and reality and make you feel like you're going crazy.

These are just some traits and behaviors to look out for when you think you're dealing with a potential narcissist. Again, keep in mind that just because someone has a few of these traits doesn't mean that he or she is a narcissist. If you think you may be dealing with a narcissist in your life, it's best to seek counseling to find out how to best deal with him or her. Interacting with someone who has narcissistic personality traits requires setting firm boundaries to reduce the manipulation that can occur. If you are having difficulty with someone close to you and notice that they have many of the narcissistic traits above, the Saint Alphonsus EAP department has counselors available to help you.



## CROCK POT BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

### INGREDIENTS

- 4-6 cups butternut squash peeled & chopped (1 ½ lbs)
- 1 apple large dice
- 1 carrot large dice
- 1 onion large dice
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 ½ cups chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- salt and pepper to taste
- ½ cup heavy cream

### INSTRUCTIONS

- A fix it and target it creamy soup.
1. In a medium sauce pan sauté butter and onions together until tender.
  2. Add all ingredients to the crock pot except for the heavy cream.  
  
Cook on high for 3-4 hours or until vegetables are soft.
  3. Puree soup with a hand (immersion) blender and stir in heavy cream. Return to the crock pot and cook for an additional 30 minutes.

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COOK  
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SERVINGS  
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# BREAKING FREE FROM CODEPENDENCY

“Codependents are people who love other people more than they love themselves,”



says Melody Beattie, author of *Codependent No More*. In her book, Beattie explains that it’s important to understand codependency and codependent traits because it can lead to negative emotional consequences. This includes a deep need for approval from others, a pattern of avoiding conflict, and a tendency to ignore one’s own needs.

## Do you have codependent tendencies?

Consider the kinds of relationships you have versus what you want. Are they mutual, healthy, loving, happy, or do they tend to be more distant, one-sided, and have elements that are significantly unhealthy? Review the following behaviors. If you answer “yes” to one or more of them, you may have codependent tendencies.

### • Do you prioritize others’ needs over your own?

Low self-esteem, low self-worth, anxiety, and trauma can contribute to codependent behaviors. These behaviors often include not being able to set the boundaries needed to take care of oneself, feeling like or being seen as a “doormat,” struggling with self-doubt and blame, and more. When this happens, someone with codependent tendencies may experience feelings of anger, resentfulness, and hurt – further contributing to depression or staying in harmful, unsafe, or unhealthy situations for too long.

• **Do you have a habit of trying to fix other people’s problems?** People who struggle with codependent behaviors tend to over-involve themselves in others’ lives. According to Beattie, when we base our relationships on feeling needed or entangling

ourselves in other people’s pain, we can neglect ourselves, which can contribute to self-hate and self-disgust, shame, resentment, and guilt. When reflecting on your behavior patterns, consider if you have the propensity toward helping others more than helping yourself. Do you ever have a thought similar to: “If I just helped my [friends, family, colleagues and neighbors], maybe I’d get the connection I crave [in love, work and life]?”

• **Does a loved one’s addiction or illness consume your life?** When someone struggles with codependent behaviors, they tend to fall into dysfunctional relationship patterns. For example, if someone who struggles with codependency is closely connected to someone who struggles with addiction, they may focus all their energy on helping their loved one get or stay sober. They may also stay at home with their loved one because they think it will help them avoid the temptation to use. This is a key part of the definition of codependency: We are only OK if the other person is OK.

## How to break free from codependent tendencies in relationships

When we love and serve others to the point of our own detriment, we also risk the quality of our relationships. To break out of and free from these patterns, we must begin to shift focus from others to ourselves. We can do this in a number of ways:

• **Seek professional help:** If you believe you may have codependent tendencies, talk to a therapist

who can help you explore and work to shift and change your thoughts and behaviors. Considering joining a support group such as Codependents Anonymous.

• **Relinquish control with boundaries:** Reflect on what your motivation is behind your rescuing, caretaking, and worry related behaviors. Are you trying to help, or are you trying to control another person? Boundaries can help you practice self-care by setting limits around how much physical and mental space we give others.

• **Care for yourself before you care for others:** The old adage of “put your own oxygen mask on before you help others” directly applies here. We cannot show up as our best selves if we are not prioritizing caring for ourselves. This is not a selfish act, on the contrary, it’s an act of self-love.

• **Identify your wants and needs:** Create some time and space to sit and reflect, writing down what it is that you want and need in a relationship. This improved awareness leads to changes in behaviors and the beginning of building healthy boundaries and relationships.

## RESOURCES:

*Codependents Anonymous*  
[coda.org](http://coda.org)



*The Codependent Perfectionist Podcast* – Apple Podcasts  
[tinyurl.com/3kuczjw2](https://tinyurl.com/3kuczjw2)



*A Codependent Mind*  
– Podcast on Spotify  
[tinyurl.com/yzau23tn](https://tinyurl.com/yzau23tn)



*The Codependency No More Podcast* – Podcast on Spotify  
[tinyurl.com/42fz4n7s](https://tinyurl.com/42fz4n7s)



*Codependency Books*  
– Barnes & Noble®  
[tinyurl.com/25evdpvm](https://tinyurl.com/25evdpvm)



## EAP COUNSELORS

### SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**Jared Belsher – Supervisor**  
MA, LCPC, NCC

Jared is a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC) and national certified counselor (NCC) who has worked in outpatient mental health clinics and in private

practice since 2007. He received a bachelor’s Degree in Political Science and a master’s Degree in Community Counseling from Northern Arizona University. His approach to counseling is strength-based, which means that rather than dwelling on

things that are wrong, he focuses on the strength individuals have, and how they can use those strengths to overcome their obstacles. He uses a person-centered approach and additional counseling techniques such as cognitive-behavioral

therapy (CBT) to help clients discover healthier ways to cope and think about a problem.

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# GRIEF AND HEALING

“Grief, I’ve learned, is really just love. It’s all the love you want to give but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go.”

—*Jamie Anderson*

Loss and grief are universal experiences, though when we are in the throes of them, we couldn’t feel more alone. Recently I experienced a major loss in my life. Often, I had a hard time climbing off the floor, dealing with unpredictable and inconvenient crying spells, lack of motivation to do anything, a constant sense that my life as I knew it or wished it to be, was over. And, it was, it is. What I am finding though is that although I certainly did not expect to experience such a loss, my life continues. “So, now what?” I ask myself. Most days I don’t have an answer other than to suit up, try and show up, and put one foot in front of the

other. Some days are better than others, some hours are easier, some are harder.

A funny thing about grief is that it can be shared. It can be the thing that connects us to others in ways not possible without it. Human suffering is where we can find our humanity, we see people in kinder ways, knowing that we can’t see all that each of us may carry. We look for the often-subtle signs of loss; there we can find connection. Loving an idea, thing, or someone inherently carries the risk that we might lose them. Most of us find it worth risking that possibility. It’s a part of love we often don’t consider, however the grief we feel when we lose our beloved mirrors the love we felt, which can be so very painful but fitting and true.

So, what can we do to help ourselves through the pain of loss and grief? We can let the feelings come. Create a space for their rightful order in the bereavement process. Talking with someone, such

as a counselor at the EAP, a friend, family member, or grief support group. Journaling can also be an effective outlet for our sadness. We can take breaks from the sorrow through positive distractions such as taking a walk, being in nature, watching or listening to something funny, focusing on our workday, helping someone else. Connection with others can be one of the greatest gifts grief and loss can give us. Choosing others who are likely to ‘get you’ and what you are experiencing can ease our and their suffering, providing a unique balm to our souls. Though some of the losses we encounter in this life will never leave us, and perhaps nor should they, the feelings do change over time. I don’t think we ever stop missing those we love that we have lost, but I do believe with adequate time and support, they create spaces in us to appreciate what we do have and have had in ways nothing else does.

Please know that you are not alone. Here at the EAP, we would be honored to walk alongside you as you navigate your own bereavement process. We are just a phone call away.

## EAP COUNSELORS

### SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**Jenny Lee Doty, MSW, LCSW**

Jenny Lee has been practicing as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for nearly a decade. She has worked in the mental health field for more than 20 years in a variety of treatment settings including but not limited to schools, day treatment centers, hospitals, and local community agencies. Jenny Lee has provided treatment to children, pre-teens and teens, and adults in individual, group, and family settings.

Jenny Lee is skilled in working with complex family units, emotional and behavioral issues, trauma, depression, mood disorders, anxiety, co-occurring diagnosis, psychotic disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, gangs, and those involved with foster care and Child Protective Services. Jenny Lee practices from a strength-based approach to treatment, while using a combination of interventions tailored to meet each individual’s needs.



**Melissa Young, MSW, LCSW**

Melissa has been a Mental Health Professional for 30+ years having the opportunity to serve in a variety of mental health settings, with diverse client populations, working in various roles. As a Clinical Social Worker she has had the opportunity to work with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence; as an Outpatient Psychotherapist within a Community Mental Health Center; a Peace Corps Volunteer in Asuncion, Paraguay; Hospice Social Worker; and currently working as a Counselor at the Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program and Safe Connections LLC. She employs an eclectic approach to her work with clients, believing that a trusting and supportive relationship is key to any therapeutic success. In addition to her professional life, she is a mother of three sons and is a proud dog, cat, chicken and horse owner.

#### Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

##### Regular Appointment Hours:

9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Monday-Friday  
(special appointment hours by request)

**Phone: (208) 367-3300**

##### Locations:

6140 W. Emerald St., Boise, ID 83704  
3025 W. Cherry Ln, Meridian, ID 83642

##### Counselors:

Jared Belsher, MA, LCPC, NCC  
Jenny Lee Doty, MSW, LCSW  
Melissa Young, MSW, LCSW

**Website: [saintalphonsus.org/EAP](http://saintalphonsus.org/EAP)**

**Email: [EAP@saintalphonsus.org](mailto:EAP@saintalphonsus.org)**



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