CHAPTER 1

Dark Personalities and Cyber Misconduct
The New Territory

1.1 The Dark Triad/Tetrad

At first, a more elaborated description of Dark Tetrad personalities is in place. The book is about their behavior, and to better understand their role in performing cyber deviance and cybercrimes, there is a need to know their characteristics. Therefore, a thorough description of their primary qualities will be presented here. Some of this description is based on the one advanced by Cohen (2016, 2018).

The Dark Tetrad is a constellation of four theoretically separable, albeit conceptually and empirically overlapping, personality constructs that are typically construed as interpersonally maladaptive: psychopathy, narcissism, Machiavellianism (Smith & Lilienfeld, 2013), and sadism. A narcissistic personality is marked by grandiosity, entitlement, and lack of empathy (Smith & Lilienfeld, 2013). Extreme self-aggrandizement is the hallmark of narcissism, which includes an inflated view of self, fantasies of control, success, and admiration, and a desire to have this self-love reinforced by others (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Machiavellianism, another constituent of the Dark Tetrad, is associated with disregarding the importance of morality and using craft and dishonesty to pursue and maintain power (Smith & Lilienfeld, 2013). Three interrelated beliefs define the Machiavellian personality: an avowed conviction in the effectiveness of manipulative tactics in dealing with other people, a cynical view of human nature, and a moral outlook that puts expediency above principle (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Psychopathy, the third element, has been described as impulsivity and thrill-seeking combined with low empathy and anxiety (Spain et al., 2014). Psychopathy is marked by the person's lack of concern for others, social regulatory mechanisms, impulsivity, and guilt or remorse when their actions harm others (O'Boyle et al., 2012).

In recent years, scholars suggested that the Dark Triad should be expanded to the Dark Tetrad with the addition of sadism, especially

when investigating deviant online behaviors because sadism has predicted additional variance in these behaviors (Kircaburun, Jonason, & Griffiths, 2018a, 2018b; Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018; Alavi et al., 2022; Gajda et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023). The addition of subclinical sadism (dubbed "everyday sadism") to the triad has been proposed, as it explains antisocial behavior independently of that accounted for by the triad. Everyday sadism is an individual differences factor that captures the predatory motivation to cause harm or distress to innocent others and taking pleasure in doing so – which conceptually differs from those high in trait psychopathy to whom this harm is purely instrumental (Moor & Anderson, 2019; Perez del Valle & Hand, 2022).

The frequently used approach, which is applied here, is to conceptualize the Dark Tetrad as being multidimensional, that is, comprised of multiple traits (Wu & Lebreton, 2011; Olckers & Hattingh, 2022). Indeed, most research on the Dark Tetrad personality in the workplace was based on the multidimensional model (Schyns, 2015; Furtner, Maran, & Rauthmann, 2017). The characteristics common to the four Dark Tetrad constructs are highly salient: They all include the tendency to deceive, manipulate, and exploit others for selfish gains. However, as mentioned earlier, these four constructs have unique characteristics (Wu & Lebreton, 2011; Lee et al., 2013). The somewhat modest correlations among measures of the Dark Tetrad (e.g., ranging from 0.25 to 0.50) suggest that each contains a substantial amount of specific variance (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Lee et al., 2013). This does not mean there is still a debate on treating the Dark Tetrad traits as unidimensional versus multidimensional. Some of this debate will be presented in the following section. This book will continue with the approach that each dimension should be treated separately despite their similarities. For this purpose, the following sections review in depth the main characteristics of each of the constituents of the Dark Tetrad.

1.1.1 Narcissism

The term narcissism, originally developed by Freud (1914/1991), was derived from the story of Narcissus, who, according to mythology, fell in love with his image in a reflecting pool. So moved was Narcissus by his reflection that he did not eat, drink, or sleep, resulting in his demise. Freud incorporated this term into his psychoanalytic theory to identify individuals who exhibit excessive self-admiration because of an unhealthy relationship between their ego and libido (Freud, 1914/1991). Since Freud coined the term, narcissists have been regarded as people who love themselves too

much for their own good (Boddy, 2011). Today, narcissism often refers to a psychological personality disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) or a subclinical version of the trait, often studied by personality and social psychologists (Jonason et al., 2012).

Narcissism is a personality characteristic that describes individuals ranging from those who can function normally in society to those who are clinically impaired by their grandiose perception of themselves and their willingness to exploit others (Wu & Lebreton, 2011). Central to the clinical description of pathological narcissism is a core dysfunction related to managing intense needs for validation and admiration. When individuals fail or struggle to effectively manage these needs because of extreme or rigid behavior or impaired regulatory capacities, the frequent result is several negative psychological consequences that may be characteristically grandiose or vulnerable (Wright et al., 2013).

The psychoanalytic tradition regards narcissism as a defense against feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, or other psychic wounds. While Hogan and Fico (2011) found this view excessively speculative, they contended that the dark side tendencies originate in childhood. They framed the origins of these tendencies in terms of something resembling attachment theory. Hogan and Fico (2011) cited Millon and Grossman (2004), who noted that the narcissistic personality reflects the attainment of a self-image of superior worth, learned mainly in response to admiring and devoted parents. Destructive narcissism is a reaction to prolonged abuse and trauma in early childhood or adolescence. Narcissism is a defense mechanism that deflects hurt and trauma from the victim's "true self" into a "false self" that is omnipotent, invulnerable, and omniscient. This "false self" concept refers to individuals who present a self-concept that is not who they are but rather a facade of who they feel society thinks they should be. The false self is used to obtain any form of positive or negative attention to satisfy the narcissist's labile sense of self-worth. The false self is a "fabricated personality" that serves as a defense mechanism to avoid conflict or rejection (Herbst, 2014).

Thus, narcissists possess feelings of dominance, entitlement, and exploitation and display exhibitionism. As such, narcissism has been associated with self-enhancement, which involves convincing oneself and others that one is worthwhile, attractive, competent, and lovable (Wu & Lebreton, 2011). Schyns (2015) cited Babiak and Hare (2006), who put it clearly: "Narcissists think that everything that happens around them, in fact, everything that others say and do, is or should be about them (p. 40)." Narcissism is not necessarily pathological but has an independent

developmental sequence that stretches from infancy to adulthood. In its healthy form, mature narcissism produces behaviors such as humor and creativity. However, pathological narcissism occurs when one cannot integrate the idealized beliefs one has about oneself with the realities of one's inadequacies. Pathological narcissists seek recognition from idealized parental substitutes as an emotional salve for their shortcomings (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

It is useful to think of narcissism as having three components: the self, interpersonal relationships, and self-regulatory strategies (Brunell et al., 2008). As for the self, the narcissist self is characterized by positive "specialness," and uniqueness, vanity, a sense of entitlement, and a desire for power and esteem. Regarding personal relationships, narcissistic relationships contain low empathy and emotional intimacy. In their place, many shallow relationships range from exciting and engaging to manipulative and exploitative. Narcissists have several additional interpersonal strategies for maintaining self-esteem beyond simply controlling others or taking credit from them. For example, narcissists seek the admiration of others. They also strive to associate with high-status individuals from whom they can gain status by association. They will brag, show off, and otherwise draw attention to themselves or act colorfully to gain notoriety (Aplin-Houtz et al., 2023). Narcissists will shine when there is an opportunity for glory, but they will underperform when recognition is unavailable. As for self-regulatory strategies, these are strategies for maintaining inflated self-views. For example, narcissists seek out opportunities for attention and admiration, brag, steal credit from others, and play games in relationships. When narcissists are good at this, they feel good; they report high self-esteem and positive life satisfaction. However, when unsuccessful, they evidence aggression and sometimes anxiety and depression (Brunell et al., 2008; Campbell et al., 2011).

As a construct, narcissism appears widely in social personality, clinical psychology, and psychiatric literature. The social-personality literature conceptualizes narcissism as a normally distributed trait in the population, for which there is no qualitative cutoff (taxon) for elevated narcissism. Grijalva and Harms (2014) mention that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* describes narcissism as a grandiose preoccupation with self-importance, the belief that one is unique and more important than others. Additional diagnostic criteria for a narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) include "fantasies of unlimited success," "hypersensitivity to criticism," "entitlement," "exploitativeness," and "a lack of empathy." Like other personality traits, narcissism exists from high to low levels

(Grijalva & Harms, 2014). In addition, narcissism relates to other "normal" variables, such as Machiavellianism and psychopathy.

According to Campbell et al. (2011), the clinical and psychiatric literature conceptualizes narcissism as an NPD, a continuing and flexible character structure associated with grandiosity, lack of empathy, and a desire for admiration. According to the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (DSM) advanced by the American Psychiatric Association and the DSM-IV version of it, there are nine specific symptoms of narcissism (e.g., "Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes"; "Believes that he or she is 'special' and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people [or institutions])" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). To be diagnosed as having an NPD, an individual must have five of the nine traits. Moreover, narcissism must also cause distress or damage. For example, if an individual feels good about themself, has good relationships, and performs at work reasonably well, they would not be considered to have an NPD. These criteria result in a relatively low prevalence point for NPD. By contrast, the prevalence of those with narcissistic symptoms (but without causing sufficient distress to cross the line into the clinical disorder) is much larger. This pattern of characteristics is sometimes known as subclinical narcissism (Campbell et al., 2011; Dow, 2023).

The trait narcissism's core aspects are similar to pathological narcissism: egotism, low concern for others, and dominant, aggressive, or manipulative behavior. However, trait narcissism is characterized by fewer neurotic and great self-enhancing tendencies than pathological narcissism (Treadway et al., 2017). Derived from an overidealized and grandiose self-concept, narcissists experience high yet unstable self-esteem, which drives their self-enhancing and narcissistic tendencies; however, these tendencies may be maladaptive in the long term. While high self-esteem is often theorized and measured as stable, narcissism is a variant of unstable self-esteem, the general category of which is believed to explain many of the maladaptive reactions exhibited by individuals with high self-esteem (Treadway et al., 2017).

Barry and Kauten (2014) found in a sample of at-risk adolescents that pathological narcissism was associated with reactive and proactive aggression, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, social stress, and high contingent self-worth, even when controlling for nonpathological narcissism and exploitativeness. Pathological narcissism was also associated with negative perceptions regarding the quality of one's interpersonal relationships. Their findings showed that pathological and nonpathological factors were associated in opposite directions with self-esteem, anxiety, social stress, and the perceived quality of interpersonal relationships. Nonpathological

narcissism was also associated with perceived positive relationships, self-reliance, and low social pressure. They concluded that neither of the two forms of narcissism stood out as clearly adaptive or advantageous, although nonpathological narcissism suggested fewer emotional difficulties. Barry and Kauten (2014) suggested that perhaps the two forms capture different underlying characteristics that influence a more personally insecure form of narcissism versus a more outwardly boastful and exploitative form of narcissism, which would be consistent with emerging research on adults.

1.1.2 Psychopathy

In common usage, a psychopath is a person with a personality disorder characterized by extreme callousness, liable to behave antisocially or violently to get their own way (Davidson et al., 1994). Psychologists define psychopathy as a particular constellation of antisocial behaviors and emotions, including shallow affect, low remorse, low fear, low empathy, egocentrism, exploitativeness, manipulativeness, impulsivity, aggression, and criminality (Wu & Lebreton, 2011; Jonason et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2013; Aplin-Houtz et al., 2023). Board and Fritzon (2005) contended that psychopathy, initially described by Cleckley (1941/1988), is a form of personality disorder. With a three-to-one ratio of men to women, psychopathy impacts 1–4% of the population, about 25% of the incarcerated population, and about 30% of domestic abusers (Dow, 2023).

Many researchers believe psychopathy includes two factors (Dow, 2023). The first is called primary or instrumental psychopathy (Lykken, 1995). This factor contains facets of psychopathy, such as shallow affect, low empathy, and interpersonal coldness. Individuals with profound levels of these traits are sometimes called "emotionally stable" psychopaths. Broadly corresponding to primary psychopathy are interpersonal and affective domains. Interpersonally, individuals are superficial, grandiose, and deceitful. Affectively, they lack remorse or empathy and do not accept responsibility. Lifestyle and antisocial domains equate with secondary psychopathy. In the first, individuals are impulsive and lack goals; in the other, they exhibit poor self-control and antisocial behavior. Babiak and Hare (2006) call attention to a predatory stare and empty eyes in the psychopath that can unsettle observers, indicative of a primitive, autonomic, and scary response to a predator (Hanson & Baker, 2017).

The second factor is secondary or hostile/reactive psychopathy. It comprises the socially manipulative and deviant facets of psychopathy and has been variously referred to as aggressive, impulsive, and neurotic

psychopathy (Lykken, 1995; Jonason et al., 2012; Blickle & Schütte, 2017). Individuals with high levels of this factor tend to "act impulsively, 'without thinking', without giving themselves time to assess the situation, to appreciate the dangers, to foresee the consequences, or even to anticipate how they will feel about their actions when they have time to consider it" (Lykken, 1995). This self-centered impulsivity factor indicates that such individuals seek thrills, lack diligence, and are unconcerned with deadlines or responsibilities. Others have applied a four-factor model of psychopathy, consisting of interpersonal, affective, lifestyle, and antisocial factors (Williams, Paulhus, & Hare, 2007).

Researchers argue that the construct of the psychopathic personality should not be contaminated with the factors of criminality and socially deviant behavior because these elements are correlates of psychopathy rather than its core characteristics (Boddy, 2011). This fits with the view of psychopathy held by leading researchers in the field, such as Hare (1999), who have stressed that there are psychopaths who do not engage in criminal behavior and can function well in society. Other researchers distinguish between unsuccessful psychopaths, those who have criminal convictions, and successful psychopaths, those who have no criminal convictions or engage in no illegal, antisocial behavior. There is some empirical support for this viewpoint, especially from recent investigations of the concept of "successful" psychopaths (Board & Fritzon, 2005). "Successful" or "Corporate" psychopaths are said to be people with psychopathic personality disorder patterns but without the characteristic history of arrest and incarceration. Corporate psychopaths are thus opportunistic corporate careerists who lack any concern for the consequences of their actions and are ruthless in pursuing their aims and ambition (Board & Fritzon, 2005; Boddy, 2011; Fennimore & Sementelli, 2016; Cleckley, 1941/1988).

Wu and Lebreton (2011) cited Cooke and Michie (2001), who presented a three-factor model conceptualizing the multidimensionality of psychopathy. The latter authors argued that psychopathy is comprised of (1) an arrogant and deceitful interpersonal style, (2) a deficient affective experience, and (3) an impulsive and irresponsible behavioral style. In accordance with the first factor, highly psychopathic individuals believe they are superior to others and constantly engage in self-promoting behaviors. In addition, they are egocentric and put their interests before those of others. Such people believe that rules do not apply to them and that they deserve special treatment and are often critical of those they think pose a potential

threat to them. The second characteristic is the psychopath's unique experience of affect. According to Wu and Lebreton (2011), researchers have suggested that a lack of guilt and conscience are the telltale signs of a psychopath. In addition, psychopaths do not experience anxiety or fear to the same extent as others, tend to be malicious toward others, are unlikely to experience embarrassment, and reside at the end of the dishonesty and manipulativeness spectrum. The final factor highlights that psychopaths are impulsive and irresponsible. As such, they are described as thrill seekers who often struggle to maintain long-term romantic, platonic, and work-related relationships. In particular, these individuals are ego-driven and seek immediate gratification for their needs.

1.1.3 Machiavellianism

The third component of the Dark Triad is Machiavellianism. Although somewhat related to narcissism and psychopathy, Machiavellianism is a trait in its own right (Jonason et al., 2012). Its name was inspired by the writings of Niccolo Machiavelli, a sixteenth-century Italian political theorist who outlined the strategies a new prince could use to establish and maintain political power (Lee et al., 2013). Jones and Paulhus (2009, 2014) drew attention to a neglected predecessor, the first-century military strategist Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu added planning, coalition formation, and reputation building to themes that resemble Machiavelli's. The strategies, highly pragmatic and devoid of traditional social virtues, eventually became associated with an opportunistic and deceptive "Machiavellian" personality (Jonason et al., 2012). Wu and Lebreton (2011) cited in their review Wilson, Near, and Miller's (1996) definition of Machiavellianism: "A strategy of social conduct that involves manipulating others for personal gain, often against others' self-interest (p. 285)."

Machiavellianism describes a personality construct characterized by a cynical view of human nature and a deceitful and calculated interpersonal style (Christie & Geis, 1970). A person not concerned with conventional morality has no interpersonal affect and gross psychopathology, has a low ideological commitment, and is willing and able to manipulate others by any means, including deceit, is called Machiavellian. Machiavellianism has also been described as socially manipulating others for personal gain (Boddy, 2011; Aplin-Houtz et al., 2023). The main characteristics of the Machiavellian personality are also demonstrated in the Mach-IV scale, developed by Christie and Geis (1970), which has been widely used to assess this construct. The MACH–IV scale is comprised of 20 items that

are phrased as recommendations, quasi-facts, or statements (e.g., "Anyone who completely trusts anyone is asking for trouble"). People who endorse such items have been found to (a) think in a cold, strategic, and pragmatic way, (b) have cynical, misanthropic, and negativistic views, (c) be emotionally detached and callous, (d) be agentically (e.g., for money, power, status) rather than communally (e.g., for love, family, harmony) motivated, and (e) use duplicity, exploitation, and manipulation tactics to push through their self-beneficial goals (Rauthmann, 2013).

Machiavellians were characterized as people who, in general, negatively perceive others as weak and untrustworthy. At the same time, their pragmatic morality enables them to follow the rule that "the end justifies the means." The dominant symptom is coldness, implying emotional detachment, lack of empathy, and disregard for the needs and aims of a partner. Research showed that Machiavellians not only have a common perception system but also eagerly try to manipulate their partners and use lies, deception, and cheating in situations where it is profitable for them to do so and when it increases the chances of reaching their goals. It could be said that the Machiavellian can act unethically whenever it pays off (Bańka & Orłowski, 2012; Dow, 2023).

Wu and Lebreton cited Christie and Geis (1970), who argued that individuals high in Machiavellianism could be identified using four key characteristics. First, these individuals lack empathy for others and are instead suspicious of them. This tendency toward suspiciousness may make these individuals less likely to be swayed by social influence, as they anticipate exploitation and selfishness during interpersonal interactions. Furthermore, high Machiavellians perceive others as less cooperative and generous than those low in Machiavellianism. Second, high Machiavellians have lower levels of affect when interacting with others. They not only experience difficulties in identifying their own emotions but also lack basic interpersonal skills. High Machiavellians approach others with a sense of detachment and lack of emotional involvement. Thus, these individuals can approach problems logically without interfering with affective states. Because they are prone to emotional detachment, it has been suggested that high Machiavellians are less cooperative and compliant than low Machiavellians. Third, high Machiavellians possess an aberrant view of morality and are willing to engage in immoral and unethical acts that go against convention, including manipulating, deceiving, and exploiting others.

Research has suggested that high Machiavellians are less likely to help others in emergencies. Fourth, high Machiavellians focus on their agendas

with no regard for others. Machiavellians are willing to do whatever is necessary to achieve their own goals and are goal- rather than people-oriented. These individuals are not motivated by concern for others but by their purposes; as such, they are willing to manipulate others for personal gain. High Machiavellians are also more ambitious, adept at lying, seek to dominate others, and are more likely to assume control over situations than low Machiavellians (Wu & Lebreton, 2011; Dow, 2023).

1.1.4 Sadism

In their review of the literature on psychopathy and aggression, Porter and Woodworth (2006) have proposed an affective motive that may mediate the relationship between psychopathy and unprovoked aggression. According to them, sadism may explain acts of unprovoked aggression and violence. O'Meara, Davies, and Hammond (2011), after an extensive review of the literature, developed the following definition for sadistic personality: The term sadistic personality describes a person who humiliates others, shows a longstanding pattern of cruel or demeaning behavior to others or intentionally inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological pain or suffering on others to assert power and dominance or for pleasure and enjoyment.

The sadistic personality is unique among the Dark Tetrad, involving an appetite for cruelty instead of callous indifference. Only sadistic individuals are willing to pay the price (perform a tedious task) for the opportunity to harm others (Paulhus, Curtis, & Jones, 2018; Nocera et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023). Therefore, the expanded model of the dark traits with sadism will deepen our understanding of amoral and antisocial personality dispositions, which could result in practical implementations (Međedović & Petrović, 2015). Conceptually, sadism is associated with deriving enjoyment from hurting others and seeking opportunities to do so (Lauder & March, 2023; Liu et al., 2023). Although psychopathy is also associated with hurting others, aggressive behavior may result from boredom or occur for instrumental gain, as opposed to the enjoyment of cruelty. Individuals high in psychopathy will only hurt others when it is easy and convenient, consistent with the tendency of high-psychopathy individuals to be impulsive and seek out short-term thrills despite long-term consequences (Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013).

Smith (2021) mentioned that criteria for the condition were listed in the DSM 3-R as a pervasive pattern of at least four of the following, which had emerged by adolescence: