Treatment of VIP Patients

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VIPs & Narcissism

- Mirror transferences are common, i.e., VIP patients may need to believe their clinicians are special.

- Mirror countertransferences are common, i.e., clinicians often feel they are special because of their VIP patient.
VIPs: “Important” Patients

(because they flatter your narcissism, all will tempt you to change your usual practices, e.g. meeting outside office, unusual hours, neglecting unpaid bills)

Famous or Beautiful – the association enhances your esteem (e.g., being seen with – from office to social events, endorsements)

Wealthy – the association could bring gifts/income (e.g., gifts, benefactors, endorsements, privileges)

Power – being helpful could advance your career/status (e.g., influence, connections, benefactors, consulting role, privileged information)
Narcissism

(an elevated sense of self-worth, sustained across time in a variety of situations manifest as entitlements, expectations of deference, dismissive or arrogant attitudes)

Primary – independent of achievements
(grandiosity – I deserve …)

Secondary – attained via exceptional achievement (I earned …)
Useful Guidelines for Treating VIP’s

• Accept that you and the patient know s/he is exceptional
• Accommodations are frequently necessary. Too much is harmful
• VIP’s often lack trustworthy confidants
• Others are watching for signs of progress or failure
  - communication with the payer is essential.
  - communications with the media are complicated
• Having a VIP patient will effect your colleagues