

## Deficits in Belongingness and Elevated Perceptions of Burdensomeness: How Dark Traits Drive Problematic Drinking

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**Abstract :** The impact of problematic drinking (PD) on the health of U.S. adults continues to be a concerning issue. Additionally, the U.S. Surgeon General recently highlighted the isolation epidemic, bringing attention to the significant and detrimental impact of loneliness. Research has found PD to be associated with deficits in feeling connection towards others. This suggests that one consequence of the isolation epidemic is the greater severity of PD. Further, PD has long been associated with three dark personality traits (i.e., narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy), which may be explained by interpersonal factors but has yet to be examined. Therefore, the present study assessed the extent to which thwarted belongingness (TB) and perceived burdensomeness (PB) explain the relationship between dark personality traits and PD. Data was collected from 606 US adults reporting alcohol consumption. The participants completed the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire, the Short Dark Triad scale, and the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. Results from a path analysis supported the hypothesis that dark traits are associated with more severe PD through both PB and TB. The present results underscore the role of connection to others, as defined by TB and PB, in facilitating the relationship between dark personality traits and PD. Future research is needed in this area to develop preventative strategies and policies as well as clinical interventions. In sum, the findings offer a novel perspective on the intersection of personality traits, PB and TB, and PD.

**Keywords :** problem drinking, personality, dark traits, dark triad, thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness

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