

Defense Mechanisms

Denial – (ignoring the unpleasant) Sometimes we manage to avoid disagreeable realities by ignoring or refusing to acknowledge them.

Reaction Formation – (feeling on way, behaving in another) a fact or feeling is denied, then transformed into its opposite: "I detest you" becomes "I love you".

Projection – (blaming the other person) a means by which people (1) relegate the blame for their own shortcomings, mistakes, and transgressions to others, and (2) attribute to others their own unacceptable impulses, feelings, thoughts, and desires.

Displacement – (shifting negative feelings to someone safer) The shift of emotion or fantasy away from the person or object toward which it was originally directed to a more neutral or less dangerous person or object.

Emotional Displacement (putting up a wall of armor) An emotionally insulated person is basically an individual who has put up a wall between him/herself and the outside world and stands passively behind it.

Fantasy - (imagining something better) Not only do we frequently deny unpleasant reality, but we are also inclined to "embellish" our perceptions so that the world is seen more as we would like it to be.

Humor - (looking at the lighter side) the capacity to see something lighter in the darker moments.

Rationalization – (inventing excuses) Thinking up logical, socially acceptable reasons for our past, present and future behavior. It has two primary defense objectives: (1) it helps us invent excuses for doing what we don't think we should do but want to do anyway, and (2) it helps us soften the disappointment connected to not reaching a goal we had set for ourselves.

Sublimation – (substituting one goal for another) the acceptance of a socially approved goal for a drive whose normal channel of expression is blocked.

Suppression - (conscious exclusion of unpleasant thoughts) differs from repression in that it is largely a conscious process of deliberately excluding certain thoughts from immediate awareness because they are disturbing or painful.

Regression – (returning to younger behaviors) a retreat, in the face of stress, to the use of behavioral patterns appropriate at earlier levels of development.

Repression - (forgetting the unpleasant) a defensive reaction through which painful or dangerous thoughts and desires are excluded from consciousness.

Introjection – Taking in others values, more specifically introjection means incorporating attributes, attitudes or qualities of an absent person of high significance (for example, an absent working mother or a recently deceased relative) into oneself for the sake of anxiety relief and a sense of safety.

Identification – Identify with others in order to feel better about self. Children incorporate their parents values into their developing superegos.

Compensation – (making up for perceived deficiencies) An attempt to disguise or overcome the existence of what is perceived as a weak or undesirable characteristic by emphasizing a particular strength or by becoming unusually adept in one or two other areas.

Undoing - (counteracting unacceptable desires or acts) involves behavior that is designed to negate or atone for some disapproved act or thought.

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