

Defence Mechanisms

People utilize defense, or coping, techniques to ease worry. The following definitions will assist you in determining whether your patient is employing one or many of these processes.

Acting Out

Acting out involves the repetitive execution of particular behaviors as a means of alleviating anxiety, without considering the potential repercussions of those actions.

Illustration: A spouse becomes enraged with their partner and thus extends their working hours.

Compensation

This process is also referred to as substitution.

It entails attempting to compensate for feelings of inadequacy or frustration in one domain by excelling or excessively indulging in another.

An adolescent adopts the practice of jogging as a result of not being selected for the swimming squad.

Denial

An individual in a state of denial shields themselves from reality, particularly the unfavorable parts of existence, by deliberately avoiding perceiving, acknowledging, or confronting it.

Example: A recently diagnosed woman with advanced-stage cancer states, "I will be fine, it is not a significant matter".

Displacement

Displacement refers to the distance and direction of an object's change in position from its starting point.

Displacement refers to the act of redirecting one's impulses, typically anger, from the actual target, which is seen too hazardous, towards a safer someone who is innocent.

Illustration: A patient vociferates at a nurse following an outburst of anger towards his mother for neglecting to contact him.

Fantasy

Fantasy entails the formation of implausible or unlikely mental images as a means of evading the demands and obligations of everyday life or alleviating monotony.

For instance, a someone might engage in excessive daydreaming, spend prolonged periods of time watching television, or envision achieving great success while they feel unsuccessful. Participating in such things provides him with temporary relief.

Identification

Identification refers to the unconscious process in which an individual assimilates the personality traits, attitudes, values, and conduct of another person, typically a revered hero, in order to alleviate anxiety. He may align himself with a group in order to gain acceptance from them.

An adolescent girl imitates the attire and behavior of her favorite pop artist.

Intellectualization

Termed as isolation.

Intellectualization entails the act of concealing one's emotional reactions or difficulties by employing complex language and feigning the absence of any issue.

After being unsuccessful in securing a job promotion, an employee clarifies that the position did not match his expectations for advancing in the corporate hierarchy.

Introjection

Introjection occurs when an individual uncritically adopts another person's ideals and standards without assessing their compatibility with their own.

Example: An individual adopts a rigorous vegetarian diet without any discernible cause.

Projection

In projection, the person projects to others his own unwanted thoughts, feelings, and impulses.

Illustration: A student who does not achieve a satisfactory result in a test attributes his failure to his parents, claiming that their loud television hindered his studying efforts.

Rationalization

Rationalization is the act of replacing the true or underlying causes that drive one's conduct with more socially acceptable justifications.

The rationalizing individual engages in the act of providing justifications for their own failures and actively avoids self-blame, displacing responsibility onto others, and refraining from engaging in critical self-evaluation.

An individual asserts that her lack of a restful night's sleep was the reason for her failure to win the marathon.

Reaction Formation

Reaction formation refers to a psychological defense mechanism when an individual displays behavior that is contrary to their true feelings.

Illustration: Affection transforms into animosity, while animosity evolves into affection.

Regression

During periods of stress, individuals may exhibit regression by reverting to behaviors that they previously engaged in during a more comfortable phase of their lives.

Example: A previously toilet-trained preschool child begins to wet his bed every night once his baby sibling is born.

Repression

Repression is the psychological process of involuntarily suppressing distressing or unpleasant ideas and emotions, causing them to remain in the subconscious mind.

Illustration: An adult female who endured sexual assault during her early childhood lacks explicit recollection of the incident, yet encounters discomforting sensations when she approaches the location where the abuse took place.

Sublimation

In sublimation, a person transforms unacceptable needs in acceptable ambitions and actions.

He may redirect his sexual energy onto his sports or pastimes.

Undoing

During the process of undoing, an individual endeavors to rectify the damage they believe they have caused to others.

Illustration: If a patient speaks negatively about a buddy, they may attempt to rectify the damage by expressing positive sentiments towards the person, displaying kindness, and offering an apology.