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4 Defence mechanism by Sigmund Freud
4 and Karen Horney. 4

* Freud Defence Mechanism

* Defence Mechanism :- in psychoanalytic theory, and of a group of mental process that enables the mind to reach compromise solution to conflicts that it is unable to resolve. The Process is usually unconscious, and the compromise generally involves concealing from oneself internal at drive of feelings that threaten to lower self-esteem or provoke anxiety. The concept derives from the psychoanalytic hypothesis that there are forces in the mind that oppose and battle against each other. The term was first used in Sigmund Freud's paper.

"The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence" (1894).

* The Unconscious Mind

Freud (1900, 1905) developed a topographical model of the mind, whereby he described the feature of the mind's structure and function. Freud used the analogy of an iceberg to describe the three levels of the mind.

Sigmund Freud emphasized the importance of the unconscious mind, and a primary assumption of Freudian theory is that the unconscious mind governs behaviours to a greater degree than people suspect. Indeed, the goal of psychoanalysis is to make the unconscious conscious.

* The id houses basic needs, impulses and desires. Simply, the id acts as a hedonistic pleasure center whose primary goal is to satisfy basic needs and drives.

* The ego is responsible for how we react to, function in, and makes sense of the external world. The ego controls the demands of impulses of the id and is home to our consciousness.

* The superego houses all the rules that we have learned throughout our life and uses these to control the ego. The superego is also home to the expectations of the ego: the way we should behave and think. Freud later refine his theory by shifting the focus forward self-esteem preservation.

Specifically, he posited that when the patient's self-esteem and self-image were challenged or threatened they would rely on certain cognitive or mental strategies to protect their self-esteem.

DEFENCE MECHANISM CAN INCLUDE:-

1. Denial

Denial is a defence mechanism proposed by Anna Freud which involves a refusal to accept reality, thus blocking external events from awareness. If a situation is personal just too much to handle, the person may respond by refusing to perceive it or by denying that it exist.

As you might imagine, this is a primitive and dangerous defence - no one disregards reality and gets away with it for long! It can operate by itself or, more commonly, in combination with other, more subtle mechanism that support it.

Many people use denial in their everyday lives to avoid dealing with painful feelings or areas of their life they don't wish to admit.

* For example, a husband may refuse to recognise obvious signs of his wife's infidelity - A student may refuse to recognise their obvious lack of preparedness for an exam!

2. Repression

Repression is an unconscious defence mechanism employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious. Repression, which Anna Freud also called 'motivated forgetting', is just that: not being able to recall a threatening situation, person, or event. Thoughts that are often repressed are those that would result in feeling of guilt from the superego.

This is not a very successful defence in the long term since it involves forcing disturbing wishes, ideas or memories into the unconscious, where, although hidden, they will create anxiety.

Repressed memories may appear through subconscious means and in altered forms, such as dreams or slips of the tongue ('Freudian slips').

For example $\Rightarrow$ in the oedipus complex, aggressive thoughts about the same sex parents are repressed and pushed down into the unconscious.

Projection $\Rightarrow$

Projection is a psychological defence mechanism proposed by Anna Freud in which an individual attributes unwanted thoughts, feelings and motives onto another person.

Projection, which Anna Freud also called displacement outward, is almost the complete opposite of turning against the self. It involves the tendency to see your own unacceptable desires in other people.

In other words, the desires are still there, but they're not your desires anymore.

* For example; Thoughts most commonly projected onto another are the ones that would cause guilt such as aggressive and sexual fantasies or thoughts. For instance, you might hate someone, but your superego tells you that such hatred is unacceptable. You can 'solve' the problem by believing that they hate you.

4. Displacement

Displacement is the redirection of an impulse (usually aggression) onto a powerless substitute target. The target can be a person or an object that can serve as a symbolic substitute.

Displacement occurs when the Id wants to do something of which the super ego does not permit. The ego thus find some other way of releasing the psychic energy of the Id. Thus, there is a transfer of energy from a repressed object cathexis to a more acceptable object.

Turning against the self is a very special form of displacement, where the person becomes their own substitute target. It is normally used in reference to hatred, anger, and aggression, rather than more positive impulses, and it is the Freudian explanation for

many of our feelings of inferiority
guilt and depression.

The idea that depression is often
the result of the anger we
refer to acknowledge is accepted
by many people, Freudians
and non Freudians alike.

For example;

Someone who feels
uncomfortable with their sexual
desire for a real person may
substitute a fetish.

Someone who is frustrated by
his or her superiors may go
home and kick the dog, beat
up a family member, or engage
in cross-burnings.

5. Regression

Regression is a defence mechanism proposed by Anna Freud whereby the ego reverts to an earlier stage of development usually in response to stressful situation.

Regression functions as form of retreat, enabling a person to psychologically go back in time to a period when the person felt safer.

* For example;

When we are troubled or frightened our behaviours often become more childish or Primitive.

A child may begin to suck their thumb again or wet the bed when they need to spend some time in the hospital. Teenagers may giggle uncontrol and when introduced into a social situation involving the opposite sex.

6. Sublimation

Sublimation is similar to displacement, but takes place when we manage to displace our unacceptable emotion into behaviours which are constructive and socially acceptable, rather than destructive activities. Sublimation is one of Anna Freud's original defense mechanisms.

Sublimation for Freud was the cornerstone of civilized life, as arts and science are all the sublimated sexuality. (NB. this is a value-laden concept, based on the aspiration of a European society at the end of the 1800 century.)

Many great artists and musicians have had unhappy lives and have used the medium of arts or music to express themselves. Sport is another example of

putting our emotions (eg; aggression)
into something constructive.

For example, Fixation at the oral stage of development may later lead to seeking oral pleasure as an adult through sucking one's thumb, pen or cigarette. Also, fixation during the anal stage may cause a person to sublimate their desire to handle faces with an enjoyment of pottery.

7. Rationalization

Rationalization is a defence mechanism proposed by Anna Freud involving a cognitive distortion of 'the facts' to make an event or an impulse less threatening. We do it often enough on a fairly conscious level when we provide ourselves with excuses.

But for many people, with sensitive egos, making excuses comes so easy that they never are truly aware of it. In other words, many of us are quite prepared to believe our lies.

* **For Example;** When a person finds a situation difficult to accept, they will make up a logical reason why it has happened. For example, a person may explain a natural disaster as 'God's'.