

## Ten Major Defense Mechanisms



### Projection:

Attributing one's unacceptable feelings or desires to someone else. For example, if a bully constantly ridicules a peer about insecurities, the bully might be projecting his own struggle with self-esteem onto the other person.

### Denial:

Refusing to recognize or acknowledge real facts or experiences that would lead to anxiety. For instance, someone with substance use disorder might not be able to clearly see his problem.

### Repression:

Blocking difficult thoughts from entering into consciousness, such as a trauma survivor shutting out a tragic experience.

### Regression:

Reverting to the behavior or emotions of an earlier developmental stage.

### Rationalization:

Justifying a mistake or problematic feeling with seemingly logical reasons or explanations.

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## Displacement:

Redirecting an emotional reaction from the rightful recipient to another person altogether. For example, if a manager screams at an employee, the employee doesn't scream back—but the employee may yell at her partner later that night.

## Reaction Formation:

Behaving or expressing the opposite of one's true feelings. For instance, a man who feels insecure about his masculinity might act overly aggressive.

## Sublimation:

Channeling sexual or unacceptable urges into a productive outlet, such as work or a hobby.

## Intellectualization:

Focusing on the intellectual rather than emotional consequences of a situation. For example, if a roommate unexpectedly moved out, the other person might conduct a detailed financial analysis rather than discussing their hurt feelings.

## Compartmentalization:

Separating components of one's life into different categories to prevent conflicting emotions

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/defense-mechanisms>