

Defense mechanism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Denial: Example 1. An alcoholic tells himself and the others that he can quit any time he wants to. He doesn't quit, though, and doesn't recognize the impact of his drinking on himself and his family (O'Connor). Example 2. Mark doesn't deal with his habit of smoking three packs of cigarettes a day and claims that he will probably die from an accident before cancer gets him. He refuses to acknowledge the long-term consequences of his heavy smoking (Defense Mechanisms).

Rationalization: Example 1. Jack states that he was fired because he didn't butter up the boss, when the real reason was his poor performance (Ego Defense Mechanisms). Example 2. John explains his failure on the final by the fact that he had a long phone call from his parents the night before the exam. His apparently rational explanation doesn't really explain why he failed the exam (Defense Mechanisms).

Fixation: Example 1. Andrew was weaned too early, thus deprived of pleasure during the oral stage of personality development. As an adult, he is a heavy smoker, talks quite a bit, and loves to eat. Example 2. Bill was toilet trained at a very young age and is fixated at the anal stage. As an adult, he is very neat, orderly, and organized, talks quite a bit, is a heavy smoker, and loves to eat (Bernstein).

Displacement: Example 1. After an argument with his father Ted leaves the room slamming the door (Ego Defense Mechanisms). Example 2. George, who is angered by his superior, suppresses his anger; but on return to his home, he punishes his son for insignificant misbehavior that would usually be tolerated (Defense Mechanism).

Intellectualization: Example 1. Helen learns that her husband is dying from cancer and tries to learn all she can about the disease, prognosis, treatment options. In this way she represses her feelings of loss and anger which can accompany the death of her husband (Anxiety and Ego-Defense Mechanisms). Example 2. Jessica, who has gone through her parents' divorce, tells her friend about deeply hurtful situations but shows no sadness or anger; she gives a superficial behavioral description of what happened; she even analyzes her parents' underlying motives without showing her own emotions (Theories Explaining Stress and Anxiety).

Projection: Example 1. Greg often complains that it is his wife's fault that he is unhappy, unsuccessful, etc (O'Connor). Example 2. Alice feels dislike for Bob, but instead of admitting this to herself she thinks that it is Bob who doesn't like her (Psychological Projection).