

People behaviorally cope with stress in a variety of maladaptive ways. as noted b...

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Freud's Defense Mechanism All animals have the ability to defend themselves against immediate threats. Human beings are no exception. When faced with an unforeseen force, humans tend to protect themselves in a manner to suggest they are coping with the situation. Sigmund Freud called them defense mechanisms that assist in coping with stress from the external environment. In one of his defense mechanism theories, Freud suggested that individuals often deny they are faced with problems in their everyday life (Weiten 179). He referred to this as denial, which many people opt for when in situations that may be stressful. This paper will examine denial as a defense mechanism, and an example of an individual who did not know they were using it to cope with the situation in the life.

Denial often pushes individuals to refuse to accept facts, or reality. They usually do this trying to block out the existence of a painful event in their life. It is a primitive mechanism that evolves through a person's childhood, and the development stages of early adulthood. If an individual does not want to admit they are having a problem, and it is right in front of them, it is said they are in denial. By not facing reality, the stress factors evolve making the individual more stressful (Weiten 187). This causes the individual to fall into serious depression, which brings health complications into the equation. Alcoholism is one reason why an individual may focus on denial as a defense mechanism. One relative in my family found it hard to accept the fact that he had a drinking problem. The problem affected his immediate surrounding because he lost his family because of drinking. His wife left him and took their children with her because the situation at home was not conducive. He chose not to address these situations. Sadly, before anyone knew what was

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happening, he got further into the problem. He indicated that he performed well at work and in his relationship with the wife and children. When they left, he did not know what hit him because he did not see it coming.

One alternate response he might have taken could have been the difference between watching his marriage fall apart, and saving it. If he had learnt a different mechanism as a child, say addressing issues at the time of their occurrence, he may be better placed to handle issues as an adult. As adults, folks can learn new mechanisms that are beneficial to their lives. If one identifies denial as their defense mechanism, they can choose not to use this primitive defense mechanism (Weiten 198). This is so as to associate better with people. By getting them to realise their problems, individuals in denial can open up and accept their problems. Professional help can assist them in finding alternate mechanisms to cope better with stressful situations.

In conclusion, defense mechanisms range from primitive to mature mechanisms. Everyone has their way of dealing with issues that come into their lives. Problems arise if these mechanisms affect the individual in a negative manner, and their immediate environment. Whenever people use these defense mechanisms, it is often in an unconscious state. They, therefore, have no control over how it manages their situations. Getting individuals the assistance they need may prevent people from having long term effects of their problems (Weiten 216). This may make them better individuals with control over their emotions and situations.

Work Cited

Weiten, Wayne. *Psychology: Themes and Variations*. 9th ed. New York: Wadsworth Publishers, 2012. Print.

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