

Ego psychology



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Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy – Defense mechanisms and Ego Aaaaaa

Bbbbbbb of so&so Defense Mechanisms and Ego Psychoanalysis and its

application in therapy involve extensive use of Freudian principles and methods (Sigmund Freud is considered to be the Father of Psychoanalysis).

Hypnosis, the power of suggestion and identifying one's precipitating symptoms of a psychological disorder play important roles in psychotherapy

(www.alliant.edu). According to Freud's initial concepts, hysterical

symptoms can disappear once they are described to the sufferer, as their

origin is psychogenic. Traumatic memories tend to get buried in the sub

conscious mind and result in psychological aberration. Expert counseling and

bringing these memories to the fore from the sub conscious by hypnosis can

make the disorder disappear in such patients. Freud developed his ideas

about the unconscious and psychoanalysis on the basis of these ideas and

concluded that interpretation leads to change and healing. Initially Freud

theorized about a physiological basis for psychogenic processes (www.alliant.edu)

but eventually abandoned that theory keeping the belief that

psychological activity was based on biological drives. These drives are “

instinctive processes that energize the mind and impel it to activity”.

The psychodynamic theories evolved with early presumptions which were

later rejected and modified by Freud ultimately to give certain accepted

models of psychoanalytical theories (www.alliant.edu). One such model, the

‘Topographic Model’ is divided into three categories viz. ‘Affect Trauma,

Topographical and Structural Models’. The Structural Model was proposed by

Freud in 1923 (www.alliant.edu). According to this model, there are three

processes involved in the mind i. e. the id, ego and the superego. ID is the

entire psychic apparatus at the time of birth of an individual. Eventually ID is

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replaced by the ego and the superego with the chronological development of the individual. The ID still remains after the development of ego/superego, as the psychic representative of the 'drives' which operate by the 'pleasure principle' and have no connection to the world outside. ID is driven by the feeling of receiving total and immediate gratification and avoiding pain. The infant, according to Freud is the prime example of ID as its prime focus is gratification of immediate needs such as hunger and defecation. ID is further sub divided into two processes; 'reflex actions' such as blinking and 'primary process thought' such as the 'baby imagining the mother's nipple' (www.alliant.edu). As early as at the age of one year in one's life ego starts intervening and its primary purpose is to satisfy the needs of the ID. The 'ego' enables an individual to deal with actual and real situations. Ego thus acts as a 'mediator between the needs of the ID and the constraints of the environment'. The superego develops with advancing age and is influenced by parental role, morals and childhood learning.

The ego 'defense mechanisms' come into operation when the reality of the world is faced and anxieties start developing (www.alliant.edu). The external impulses are unconsciously blocked or distorted in order to make them more acceptable. These techniques are known as 'ego defense mechanisms'. 'Identification with the aggressor' is one of the primitive defense mechanisms. It involves the incorporation of negative or feared traits rather than the more general and positive traits in order to be more acceptable in a negative situation. It involves taking up the negative features of the offensive person and incorporating them into one's own personality in order to solve the emotional disturbance one encounters in a particular situation. 'Internalization' of the personality of the aggressor within oneself

offers emotional solace. Anxiety is the result of the conflict between the needs of the ID and the constraints that the outside world imposes (www.alliant.edu). Anxiety signals to a person that there is danger, if the ego of a person is overwhelmed by any external events. ' Altruism and identification with the aggressor are autoplasic defense mechanisms of adaptation to change in the environment. Instead of conflict they incorporate acceptance and adaptation approaches to overcome external threats. Such solutions are generally more efficient in allaying anxiety and the associated depression, than any attempt to change the external environmental factors (alloplastic means). Hence such autoplasic defense mechanisms are used more often by the anxious person to allay fears and anxieties.

References

Theories of Personality and Psychopathology, Knowledge Competency Exam Review Packet, Available at: [www.alliant.edu/.../COMP%20PACKET-%20Theories%20of%20Personality%20and%20Psychopathology.doc? MOD=AJPERES](http://www.alliant.edu/.../COMP%20PACKET-%20Theories%20of%20Personality%20and%20Psychopathology.doc?MOD=AJPERES)