Psychodynamic Approach

Psychodynamic: An approach that regards personality as formed by needs, strivings and desires largely operating outside of awareness—motives that can also produce emotional disorders.

For example, forgetting to set the alarm clock to wake up in time for the test in the morning may reflect unconscious test anxiety, dislike for the course, etc (but doesn’t rule out laziness, bad habits, lack of consciousness).
Psychodynamic Approach

- Psychodynamic theories emphasize unconscious and dynamic processes

“Good morning, beheaded—uh, I mean beloved.”

Lindsay Fünke        Tobias Fünke
### Freud’s Structure of Personality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of personality</th>
<th>Level of Consciousness</th>
<th>Description or Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ego</td>
<td>Mostly conscious such as thoughts and perceptions</td>
<td>Mediates between id impulses and superego inhibitions; deals with reality (reality principle); the rational part of personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superego</td>
<td>All levels, but mostly preconscious such as memories and stored knowledge</td>
<td>Ideals and morals; conscience; incorporated from parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Id</td>
<td>Unconscious such as: Fears, Unacceptable sexual desires, Violent motives, Irrational wishes, Immoral urges, Selfish needs</td>
<td>Basic impulses such as sexual urges and aggression; operates on the pleasure principle; seeks immediate gratification; the irrational part of the personality that is impulsive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Shameful experiences
What would I say?

- How would the id respond?
- How would the superego respond?

**How would the ego respond?**
According to Freud, the **ego** can usually deal with the demands of the **superego** and the **id**. To keep unconscious desires (sexual and aggressive) unconscious, we need to expend a lot of psychological energy to do this.

- Neurosis occurs when we are required to expend an excessive amount of energy to repress these desires.
- Anxiety occurs when the demand of the idealized self (superego) and the impulsive self (id) overwhelm the rational self (ego).

When the ego is overwhelmed, one way for the rational self (ego) to temporarily reduce this anxiety is to distort your thoughts and perception of reality.
These deceptions can help you maintain an integrated self while searching for a realistic and acceptable solution for the conflict between the superego and id that produces anxiety (also you also might think of it in terms of humanist theory when your experiences are inconsistent with your self-concept).

Although most psychologists don’t think that there is literally an id, ego and superego, most would agree that anxiety and that people use ego defense mechanisms to reduce anxiety to deal with traumatic events, past failures, or embarrassments. The use of defense mechanisms is very common. Many psychologically healthy individuals temporarily use defense mechanisms to deal with stressful events (Chapter 16: Stress and Health).

However, when defense mechanism delay continually distort “reality” or interfere with our use of more constructive coping strategies, they can be counterproductive and keep us from learning from experience. Why?
### Major Ego Defense Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of anxiety</th>
<th>Defense mechanism to reduce anxiety</th>
<th>Name of the defense mechanism</th>
<th>How the defense mechanism works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A young girl was sexually abused by her uncle.</td>
<td>As an adult, she can’t remember anything about the traumatic experience.</td>
<td>Repression</td>
<td>The master defense mechanism; the ego pushes unacceptable impulses out of awareness, back into the unconscious mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A college student does not get into the fraternity of his choice.</td>
<td>He says that isn’t wasn’t that good of a fraternity anyway.</td>
<td>Rationalization</td>
<td>The ego replaces a less acceptable motive with a more acceptable one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman who fears her sexual urges</td>
<td>becomes a religious zealot</td>
<td>Reaction formation</td>
<td>The ego transforms an unacceptable motive into its opposite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A man who has a strong desire to have an extramarital affair</td>
<td>accuses his wife of flirting with other men.</td>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>The ego attributes personal shortcomings, problems, and faults to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every time she and her husband have a big argument</td>
<td>A woman returns home to her mother</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>The ego seeks the security of an earlier developmental period in the face of stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman can’t take her anger out on her boss.</td>
<td>so she goes home and takes it out on her husband</td>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>The ego shifts feelings toward an unacceptable object to another more acceptable object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman with strong sexual urges</td>
<td>becomes an artist who paints nudes.</td>
<td>Sublimation</td>
<td>The ego replaces an unacceptable impulse with a socially acceptable one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A team of doctors has diagnosed a man with cancer.</td>
<td>but he won’t acknowledge that he has cancer</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>The ego refuses to acknowledge anxiety producing realities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identify the defense mechanism

- Repression
- Rationalization
- Displacement
- Sublimation

- Projection
- Reaction formation
- Denial
- Regression
Identify the Ego Defense Mechanisms

• Denial
• Regression
• Displacement
• Repression

• Reaction Formation
• Projection
• Rationalization

FIGURE 13.7
The ego—the rational I—has numerous ways of defending itself against anxiety, that apprehensive state named for the Latin word meaning "to strangle." These defense mechanisms try to ignore or avoid facing unpleasant reality, and they are part of an internal battle in that you fight against yourself.
Identify the following Ego Defense Mechanisms

1. Anne’s car broke down. Since she does not have enough money for repairs, she must leave an hour earlier to ride her bicycle or walk to work. Anne commented that she enjoys the exercise and saving the gas and oil money.

2. Chad had stopped sucking his thumb by the time he was four. At age seven he was told that his parents were divorcing and he would be living with his mother and a “new father.” Chad began sucking his thumb again.

3. Martin was cutting wood and injured his hand with his chain saw. While driving to the emergency room of a local hospital, he recalled the painful shots he received during his last visit. He missed the turn to the hospital and had to ask for directions to find it.

4. Eric is a big spender. He tips heavily, buys extravagant gifts, and often gambles. When his thrifty wife bought materials to make new kitchen curtains, he accused her of squandering money needlessly. He claimed the old worn curtains were adequate and said she was wasting our money.

5. Little Suzi was upset when her mother spanked her. She ran to her toy crib and smacked her doll.

6. Jeremy has always been a problem to his mother. He never keeps rules and argues with her constantly. In choosing a tattoo, he selected a large heart with “Mom” in the center to show his affection for her.

7. Whenever Elizabeth is angry she heads for her piano. She has composed several outstanding jazz tunes.
Is homophobia an indicator of latent homosexuality?

Homophobia consists of feelings of fear, discomfort and aversion that some people experience in interacting with gay individuals. Psychoanalytic theorists have argued that homophobia among men may be rooted in anxiety about the possibility of being homosexual. Psychoanalysts argue that homophobia results from repression of one’s latent homosexuality and reaction formation, which leads some men to accentuate their masculinity and to be especially hostile towards gays.

The following two groups (heterosexual, highly homophobic men compared with heterosexual, low homophobic men) watched three types of explicit sexually erotic videos and measured their sexual arousal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences in Sexual Arousal to Erotic Videos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>heterosexual activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High homophobic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low homophobic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the highly homophobic men were physiologically more aroused by video of male homosexual activity, their self-report of sexual arousal was similar to those low in homophobia.