Psychoanalytic Perspective

Psychoanalytic perspective emphasizes the importance of unconscious processes and the influence of early childhood experiences (page 407).

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).

Even though most of Freud’s specific ideas are wrong and not supported by the data, we study it so what we don’t make the mistake of coming back to it and endorsing ideas based on it. When the language of Freud is so pervasive in society, it gives credibility to the theory and belief.
Psychoanalytic Perspective

Psychoanalytic perspective emphasizes the importance of unconscious processes and the influence of early childhood experiences (page 407).

“Good morning, beheaded—uh, I mean beloved.”
**Freud’s Structure of Personality**

| Ego: Rational, planful, mediating dimension of personality | In Freud’s theory, the partly conscious rational component of personality that regulates thoughts and behavior, and is in touch with the demands of the external world (page 409). | Mostly conscious such as:  
- thoughts and perceptions |
| Superego: Moralistic, judgmental, perfectionist dimension of personality | In Freud’s theory, the partly conscious, self-evaluative, moralistic component of personality that is formed through the internalizations of parental and societal rules (page 409). | All levels, but mostly preconscious such as:  
- memories and stored knowledge |
| Preconscious: Information that can easily be made conscious | In Freud’s theory, the completely unconscious, irrational component of personality that seeks immediate satisfaction of instinctual urges and drives; ruled by the pleasure principle (page 409). | Unconscious such as:  
- Fears  
- Unacceptable sexual desires  
- Violent motives  
- Irrational wishes  
- Immoral urges  
- Selfish needs  
- Shameful experiences |
| Unconscious: Thoughts, feelings, urges, and wishes that are difficult to bring to conscious awareness | | |
Id, Superego and Ego
• How would the id respond?
• How would the superego respond?
• How would the ego respond?
When there is anxiety (Freud proposed that it is between the id and superego, but we don’t need these concepts to understand anxiety), we reduced this anxiety through ego defense mechanisms that protect our sense of reality.

Many psychologically healthy individuals temporarily use defense mechanisms to deal with stressful events (Chapter 13: Stress, Health and Coping).

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>Example</th>
<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>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Sheen had problems that led to the temporary production delay of 2 ½ Men</td>
<td>Accused everyone else of creating delays in the show.</td>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>The ego attributes personal shortcomings, problems, and faults to others.</td>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman who gets a tax refund by cheating on her taxes following Sunday</td>
<td>makes a larger than usual donation to the church collection on the</td>
<td>Undoing</td>
<td>A form of unconscious repentance that involves neutralizing or atoning for an unacceptable action or thought with a second action or thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Ego Defense Mechanisms

The use of defense mechanisms is can be helpful in the short-term to protect your sense of self from reality. However the use of defense mechanism distorts reality and maintaining distortions of reality require lots of “psychological energy” that can drain your reservoir of “psychological energy” that helps you deal with reality.
## Identify the defense mechanism

- Repression
- Displacement
- Sublimation
- Rationalization
- Projection
- Reaction formation
- Denial
- Regression
- Undoing

> "On the other hand, the daily rate is a lot cheaper than at the ski lodge."
Rationalization

Inconsistencies are difficult to spot unless they are adjacent to each other. I would guess that this person really is upset about those in poverty. It is probably socially unacceptable to dislike those in poverty, so we rationalize our feelings.

**SNAP Recipient:** *buys healthy foods like chicken breast, salads, and fresh produce*

**Some asshole:** “People on food stamps shouldn’t be eating better than me.”

**SNAP Recipient:** *buys cheap food like hot pockets, kraft mac and cheese, and hot dogs*

**The same asshole:** “People on food stamps shouldn’t be allowed to buy junk food.”

Source: peachsss

5,758 notes
Identify the Ego Defense Mechanisms

- Denial
- Projection
- Rationalization
- Regression
- Repression
- Reaction Formation
- Displacement

*Image source: Psychology 5th edition, Myers*
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 is 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.
Is homophobia an indicator of latent homosexuality?

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.

### Differences in Sexual Arousal to Erotic Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heterosexual men</th>
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<th>Male Homosexual activity</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Heterosexual men</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• High homophobic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No aroused</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low homophobic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not arousal</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Difference in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>arousal</td>
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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.