

Psychoanalytic Hierarchy of Defenses

- Psychotic defenses
 - denial or distortion of the external
- Immature defenses
 - Passive aggression (e.g., do nothing, while you say you'll do it)
 - Acting out (e.g., impulsive behavior)
 - Dissociation (e.g., feeling everything is distorted or not real)
 - Projection (e.g., saying it's not me, it's you)
 - Autistic fantasy (e.g., making things up, but believing it)
- Neurotic defenses
 - Intellectualization / Rationalization (trying to justify behavior or attitudes that are not appropriate with intellectual reasons)
 - Repression (trying to not think of something distressing)
 - Reaction formation (acting the opposite of how you feel, like being overly aggressive when you feel insecure).
 - Identification with the aggressor (An individual identifies with the threatening person and begins to act or talk just like them.)
 - Displacement (e.g., taking out your anger at your boss on your family)
 - Undoing (attempt to erase some disturbing feeling by performing opposite behaviors, like being mean to someone you really like to avoid the chance of rejection)
- Mature defenses
 - Suppression (e.g., I refuse to think about that now)
 - Altruism (e.g., sacrificing something you want to help another)
 - Humor (capacity to see a light side of anything)
 - Sublimation (e.g., staying busy or letting off steam through exercise)