

Name of Defense Mechanism	Description	Example
Repression	Burying a painful feeling or thought from your awareness though it may resurface in symbolic form. Sometimes considered a basis of other defense mechanisms.	You can't remember your father's funeral.
Denial	Not accepting reality because it is too painful.	You are arrested for drunk driving several times but don't believe you have a problem with alcohol.
Regression	Reverting to an older, less mature way of handling stresses and feelings	You and your roommate have get into an argument so you stomp off into another room and pout
Projection	Attributing your own unacceptable thoughts or feelings to someone or something else	You get really mad at your husband but scream that he's the one mad at you.
Splitting	Everything in the world is seen as all good or all bad with nothing in between.	You think your best friend is absolutely worthless because he forgot a lunch date with you.
Isolation of affect	Attempting to avoid a painful thought or feeling by objectifying and emotionally detaching oneself from the feeling	Acting aloof and indifferent toward someone when you really dislike that person
Displacement	Channeling a feeling or thought from its actual source to something or someone else.	When you get mad at your sister, you break your drinking glass by throwing it against the wall.
Reaction Formation	Adopting beliefs, attitudes, and feelings contrary to what you really believe	When you say you're not angry when you really are.
Rationalization	Justifying one's behaviors and motivations by substituting "good", acceptable reasons for these real motivations	I always study hard for tests and I know a lot of people who cheat so it's not a big deal I cheated this time.
Altruism	Handling your own pain by helping others.	After your wife dies, you keep yourself busy by volunteering at your church.
Humor	Focusing on funny aspects of a painful situation.	A person's treatment for cancer makes him lose his hair so he makes jokes about being bald.
Sublimation	Redirecting unacceptable, instinctual drives into personally and socially acceptable channels	Intense rage redirected in the form of participation in sports such as boxing or football
Suppression	The effort to hide and control unacceptable thoughts or feelings	You are attracted to someone but say that you really don't like the person at all
Undoing	Trying to reverse or "undo" a thought or feeling by performing an action that signifies an opposite feeling than your original thought or feeling	You have feelings of dislike for someone so you buy them a gift