

Defense Worksheet

Please label the following defense mechanisms and state if they are mature or immature.

1. Protecting one's self from unpleasant reality by refusing to perceive it.
Denial - Immature
2. Thinking up logical, socially approved reasons for our past, present, or proposed behavior
Rationalization - Immature
3. Diverting basic drives or impulses into socially appropriate channels
Sublimation - Mature
4. Is a defense in which one preserves good feelings and avoids bad feelings by separating them into different people.
Splitting - Immature
5. The use of scientific or abstract thinking as a means of avoiding affectively painful realities or thoughts
Intellectualization - Immature
6. Taking a negative experience and turning it into a socially positive one
Altruism - Mature
7. A deliberate conscious effort to control and conceal disturbing thoughts, feelings, or acts.
Suppression - Mature
8. Hides thoughts and feelings from consciousness, leading to forgetting and denial.
Repression - Immature
9. One protects oneself by perceiving unacceptable thoughts, feelings, and fantasies as originating outside of the self.
Projection - Immature
10. Separating emotional components from a thought, resulting in repression of either the emotion or idea.
Isolation - Immature
11. Emotions, ideas, or wishes are transferred from their original object and directed to a more acceptable substitute
Displacement - Immature
12. Seeing the comic side of situations as a means of diffusing negative affects such as anxiety
Humor - Mature
13. Directing overt behavior and attitude in precisely the opposite direction of one's underlying, unacceptable impulses.
Reaction Formation - Immature

Defense Worksheet

Please identify the defense mechanisms used in the following examples. Answers may be used more than once.

1. A resident returns to her medical school's main auditorium to give a lecture on the Match process. Out of nowhere she experiences feelings of panic and anxiety without recognizing the cognitive component of the memory.

- isolation

2. A mother who learns that her sister was rushed to the hospital is able to stay calm and call a friend to look after her child before leaving for the hospital and bursting into tears.

- suppression

3. Rather than caring for herself, Karen spends all of her time caring for wounded animals.

- Altruism

4. Mr. Silva's coworkers were shocked when he arrived to work the day after his son died in a car accident. They asked if he would like to go home and Mr. Silva informed them that he was fine and would like to finish his grant proposal.

- Isolation

5. An office worker who is embezzling money from his firm explains his behavior by thinking, "they won't even miss the money and I need it more than they do!"

- Rationalization

6. Ludwig has homosexual thoughts which are against his religion, so he bullies and mocks an openly homosexual classmate

- Reaction formation

7. Samantha presents to her PCP's office to discuss a rash on her breast. On exam, she has a massive tumor with surface necrosis on her left breast. (Samantha does not acknowledge the obvious deformity, simply describes it as a "rash")

- Denial

8. A patient screams at his therapist, "I AM NOT ANGRY! YOU'RE ANGRY!" as the therapist sits quietly and nods her head.

- Projection

9. A medical student jokes about how he no longer has 6-pack abs, but instead has a keg as a way to relieve his insecurity and anxiety.

- Humor

10. Mr. W tells the medical student that the covering attending, Dr. O, is incredibly rude and yelled at them for staying in bed until noon. He then goes on to explain that Dr. Z is a great doctor who would never do that because they know he is not a morning person.

- Splitting

11. Travis is afraid of his mom's new boyfriend since they moved in together. When asked what's wrong he states that he is fearful of his new science teacher.

- Displacement

12. After getting fired from his job, John was so anxious about paying rent that he completely forgot about paying his other bills.

- Repression

13. Jeremy has become increasingly unsatisfied with his job at the bank due to a new manager, instead of yelling at the manager he has been writing poetry to calm his thoughts.

- Sublimation

14. Ben's father was an abusive alcoholic who would often criticize his shortcomings. Nevertheless, Ben idealizes his father and vilifies his mother for demanding full custody during their divorce. As an adult, Ben is unable to see women as having any good qualities seeking out a heterosexual relationship.

- Splitting

15. Unable to process the anxiety associated with finding a new counselor, Javier reads up on psychotherapy and begins their first conversation by discussing the neurobiological theories behind psychodynamic psychotherapy.

- Intellectualization

16. When Gilly found out her husband was having an affair, she did not become angry. Instead, she became paranoid that he was sharing inappropriate photographs of her over the internet.

- Projection

17. Daisy complains that her husband is unable to talk seriously about anything regarding their relationship and makes jokes of everything.

- Humor

18. Pedro was fired from job due to budget cuts. He tells his girlfriend that he was happy to be let go because for the last few months parking has become a nightmare and the cafeteria was too expensive.

- Rationalization

19. A wealthy drug dealer takes some of his money and donates it to a local community center

- Altruism

20. Edwin has a long history of schizophrenia. He voluntarily presents to the psychiatric emergency department complaining of disturbing auditory hallucinations. When asked if he is on any medications for schizophrenia, Edwin gets frustrated and says "I don't need medications, I might hear voices but I don't have schizophrenia because I am not 'crazy' like those other people".

- Denial

21. Jeremy cannot recall any abuse from his violent alcoholic father from the ages of 10-14. Despite having excellent recall of other events during this time period.

- Repression

22. A bullied student channels his frustration into running and eventually breaks the state record for the 3200 meter run.

- Sublimation

23. Mrs. Wilson is overprotective of her infant son in an effort to protect herself from her rage at his inability to sleep through the night.

- Reaction formation

24. Mr. N was worried about his mother's breast cancer diagnosis, but he was able to put this out of his mind while enjoying time with his friends.

- Suppression

25. A medical student tells her boyfriend that she has a rare form of cervical cancer. She goes on to explain the epidemiology of said cancer and the newest advances in immunotherapy.

- Intellectualization

26. Dr. P is a surgical resident who is angry with her attending, she chastises and humiliates her medical students calling them "difficult and helpless".

- Displacement