

Defenses – their character and use

Notes and quotes from various authors – selected and arranged by DF

1. What are defenses?

Bateman and Holmes: defences– psychological configurations operating outside the realm of consciousness, which minimise conflict, reduce tension, maintain intrapsychic equilibrium, regulate self- esteem, and play a central role in dealing with anxiety, whether it arises from internal or external sources.

DSM-IV: Defense mechanisms (or coping styles) are automatic psychological processes that protect the individual against anxiety and from the awareness of internal or external dangers or stressors. Individuals are often unaware of these processes as they operate. Defense mechanisms mediate the individual's reaction to emotional conflicts and to internal and external stressors.

PDM2: The term “defenses” refers to the characteristic ways in which we protect ourselves from psychological threats and aversive affect states, and attempt to maintain psychological equilibrium and homeostasis in the face of challenges and hardships.

abwehr, more accurately translated as a “warding off” or “fending off”

Auchincloss: Defense is any unconscious psychological maneuver used to guard against the experience of a painful inner state.

Auchincloss: Summary of Freud, 1926: Freud delineated the core of contemporary conflict theory, whereby the ego, in response to an anxiety signal, initiates a defensive process that serves to avoid a danger situation associated with an instinctual demand. When defense is mobilized, the resulting compromise is in the form of a symptom, an inhibition, or a wide variety of character traits, both pathological and normal. Failure of defense leads to the direct expression of anxiety.

Brenner: Despite their diverse nature, however, there is something that all modes of defense have in common, namely, opposition to one or more drive derivatives or superego trends which are associated with unpleasure. To say this is to do no more than to restate the definition of defense, but reiteration in this form calls attention to something that is often overlooked, which is that there is an element of denial or negation-in the colloquial meaning of those words-in defense by definition. Every defense against a drive derivative arousing unpleasure is a way of saying "no" to some aspect of it. The same is true of defense against a superego demand or prohibition that gives rise to unpleasure. ... Whatever example of defense one may choose will illustrate and support the correctness of the generalization that to defend against a drive derivative or a superego manifestation is to deny or negate it in some way. In

defense, a person's ego is saying "no" to whatever is the target of defense, i.e., to whatever is being defended against. Denial, in the colloquial sense, is intrinsic to all defense.

Cramer: Defense mechanisms are cognitive processes that function to protect the individual from excessive anxiety or other negative emotions. They also protect the person from loss of self-esteem and, in the extreme, the loss of self-integration.

Burgo: Donald Meltzer who, throughout his work, holds that all defense mechanisms are essentially lies we tell ourselves to evade pain.

Freud: A general designation for all the techniques which the ego makes use of in conflicts which may lead to neurosis.

Freud: The ego makes use of various procedures for fulfilling its task, which, to put it in general terms, is to avoid danger, anxiety and unpleasure. We call these procedures "mechanisms of defence".

Burgo: Our defense mechanisms are invisible methods by which we exclude unacceptable thoughts and feelings from awareness.

PDM2: "defenses" are automatic psychological responses to internal or external stressors and emotional conflicts. They protect an individual against excessive anxiety, manage conflictual wishes, affects, ideas, memories, and other inner experiences, and adapt to the external world. They occur partly or wholly out of awareness.

Rycroft: The concept of defence is usually stated in terms which imply that the human ego is beset by threats to its survival emanating from the id, the super-ego, and the outside world, and that it is, therefore, perpetually on the defensive. But the concept is better regarded less negatively and taken to include all techniques used by the ego to master, control, canalize, and use forces 'which may lead to a neurosis'.

Vaillant: efforts of the brain to cope with sudden changes in its internal or external environment without too much anxiety and depression.

Anna Freud: the ways and means by which the ego wards off unpleasure and anxiety, and exercises control over impulsive behavior, affects, and instinctive urges.

2. In what ways are they a necessary and healthy part of human functioning?

Bateman and Holmes: defences are adaptive, organisers of self-experience and perception of others, and necessary for effective regulation of emotions, both pleasurable and unpleasurable.

Bateman and Holmes: First, they are adaptive and part of the system regulating anxiety and other emotions, and contribute to resilience, and need to be respected as such by clinicians. Psychological defences are just as necessary as the defences against infection and cancer provided by the immune system. Second, they are central to self-experience and the ways in which others are experienced and related to, and coalesce to form stable and recognisable personality characteristics.

Gay: In fact, one of the most momentous things to be said about the defenses is that, from having been the assiduous servants of adaptation, they may turn into intransigent obstacles to it.

Vaillant: Pus, cough, and fever are certainly unpleasant, and sometimes dangerous. But they can also be lifesaving; it is these superficially pathological homeostatic responses to physiological stress that in many cases permit us to survive it.

McWilliams: The phenomena that we refer to as defenses have many benign functions. They begin as healthy, creative adaptations, and they continue to work adaptively throughout life. When they are operating to protect the self against threat, they are discernible as “defenses,” a label that seems under those circumstances to fit.

3. What is the anxiety which defenses ward off?

Gay: anxiety ... as a signal guiding humans to navigate through the perils of life.

Gay: If anxiety is the sentinel on the tower sounding the alarm, the defenses are the troops mobilized to check the invader. Defensive maneuvers may be far harder to track down than anxiety, for they work almost entirely under the protective, scarcely penetrable cover of the unconscious. But like anxiety, the defenses are lodged in the ego; like anxiety, they are indispensable, all too human and all too fallible ways of managing.

Coughlin: In particular, defenses cannot be understood without addressing the anxiety that calls them into action. ... Freud 1926 - It is the ego that perceives anxiety and then mobilizes forces to defend against the anticipated danger presented by the uprising of impulses.

Gay: To recapitulate, Freud's weightiest formulation was this: anxiety is a monitory report that there is danger ahead. Whether that danger is real or imagined, rationally appraised or hysterically overestimated, is irrelevant to the feeling itself; its sources vary enormously, its physiological and psychological effects are much the same.

4. What are the main types of threat which generate that anxiety?

Burgo on needs:

- Needing or desiring contact with other people and depending upon them for what we need; bearing frustration, disappointment or helplessness in those relationships. Because of our lengthy, vulnerable childhood – where for so many years we rely upon our parents to meet our needs and protect us from the dangers of the world – the issue of dependency lies at the core of the human experience. If our needs aren't met during infancy when we're utterly vulnerable and helpless, if our parents make us feel unsafe in the world from early on, it will shape our ability to trust and depend upon other people for the rest of our lives. --- bearing need and dependency as an inevitable part of relationships;
- Coping with difficult, often painful emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger, hatred, envy and jealousy. ... Beginning at birth, babies have powerful feelings and fears about the world in which they live. A big part of their parents' job is to help them manage those feelings –to calm and make them feel safe, for example, or to soothe them when they hurt. If we grow up with caretakers who let us down, who don't provide the emotional support we need, we will always have a hard time managing our own feelings. ... managing intense emotions;
- Feeling good about ourselves and confident of our personal worth in relation to others ... Each of us needs to feel that we matter and have a place in the world; we need a sense of internal worth and to feel that the other people in our lives (our "pack") value and respect us. When our early environment doesn't instill us with this sense of individual worth and value, we'll struggle with issues of shame and low self-esteem throughout our lives. developing a sense of self-esteem (as opposed to a sense of shame and a feeling that you are damaged).

Auchincloss: A. Freud showed how defense can be directed not only against instinctual aims, but also against any mental activity that might give rise to unpleasurable affect, including thoughts, memories, actions, and affects themselves.

Bateman and Holmes: Relational models in psychoanalysis emphasise defence mechanisms as a protective shield within which the authentic self is held: defences form part of the attempt to facilitate the development of a "true" (Winnicott, 1965) or "nuclear" (Kohut, 1977) self in the face of a defective relational environment.

Becker:

The ego, then, not only organizes perception and bodily control, it also fulfills a protective function for the organism: it is like an alert sentinel. Freud discovered that one of its main functions was to help the organism avoid anxiety.

Freud thought that these alien things were largely in the individual's own id, in the form of guilt and threatening desires that evolution had locked up in the organism. ...

Anxiety pervades the organism when it feels completely powerless to overcome a danger.

Kierkegaard was one of the greatest modern theorists of anxiety, and saw it as a basic response to man's condition – to his pitiful finitude, his impotence and his death.

Modern researchers understand anxiety as part of the alertness that characterizes all living beings; it derives from the protoplasmic irritability, from natural animal vigilance.

Fenichel: in the last analysis any defense is a defense against *affects*. "I do not want to feel any painful sensation" is the first and final motive of defense.

PDM2: In the historical context of psychoanalytic drive or conflict theory, defenses arise from inner or intrapsychic conflict: the interplay of needs, impulses, or desires on the one hand and prohibitions or painful realities that oppose them on the other.

McWilliams: The person using a defense is generally trying unconsciously to accomplish one or both of the following: (1) the avoidance or management of some powerful, threatening feeling, usually anxiety but sometimes overwhelming grief, shame, envy, and other disorganizing emotional experiences; and (2) the maintenance of self-esteem. The ego psychologists emphasized the function of defenses in dealing with anxiety; object relations theorists, who focus on attachment and separation, introduced the understanding that defenses operate against grief as well; and self psychologists have stressed the role of defenses in the effort to maintain a strong, consistent, positively valued sense of self.

Brenner: Properly speaking, a defense can be identified only by the purpose or function it serves in the psychic economy, i.e., the function of opposing (warding off) some psychic impulse or tendency. 565

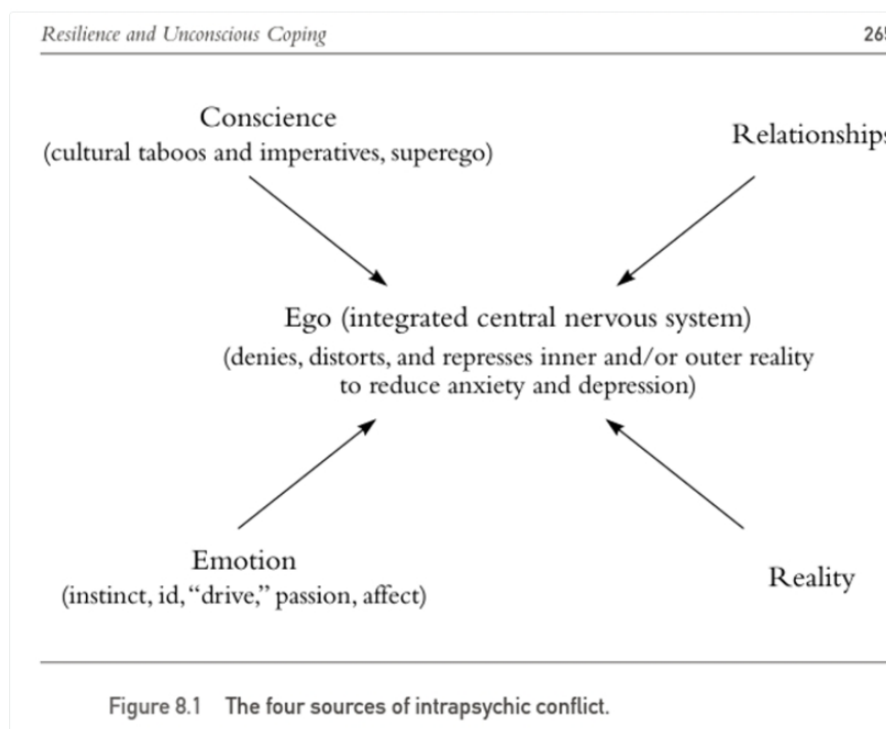
Zepf: Function of defenses: While in case of rationalization, the real motives are subjected to defense, with regard to intellectualizations, it is unpleasurable affects that are supposed to be warded off. Most of the papers that not only mention intellectualization as a mechanism of defense, but also question what is warded off by it, provide this as the answer. Intellectualization would cause a "distancing of affects" (Baker, 1995, p. 112), it would prevent "the emergence of affects" (Bellak & Myers, 1975, p. 422), would be "a means of controlling affects" (Benveniste, 2005, p. 403), and would replace "the function of affect and phantasy" (Deutsch, 1939, p. 81). It would also develop "in order to defend against anxiety attributable to an unacceptable impulse" (Bibring et al., 1961, p. 68) and to defend "affects and impulses" (Kestenbaum, 1983, p. 676; Lample-De Groot, 1976, p. 286), it would be used "to counteract

feeling and emotion” (Mollinger, 1980, p. 470), and it would keep “affect separate from the content that arouses it” (Nesse, 1990, p. 281; see also Moore & Fine, 1990, p. 102). Schafer (1954, p. 337) by intellectualization, one would attempt “to retreat from the world of impulse and emotionally toned interpersonal relationships to a world principally of words and abstractions.”

Brenner: Defense is an aspect of mental functioning that is definable only in terms of its consequence: the reduction of unpleasure associated with a drive derivative, i.e., with an instinctual wish, or with superego functioning.

Rycroft: The function of defence is to protect the ego, and defences may be instigated by
(a) anxiety due to increases in instinctual tension (see also instinct);
(b) anxiety due to a bad conscience (super-ego threats); or
(c) realistic dangers.

Vaillant:



Freud, 1926, DF: Danger situations:

- Loss of love object
- Loss of love of love object
- Castration
- Moral condemnation from within oneself

5. What thoughts and behaviours can serve as defenses?

Auchincloss: While it is generally agreed that any thought, feeling, or behavior may serve a defensive function, it is possible to describe some specific and commonly used defense mechanisms.

Brenner: As to the second point, the ego can use defensively whatever lies at hand that is useful for the purpose. It can use any ego attitude, any perception, or any alteration of attention or awareness. It can use the promotion of another drive derivative which arouses less displeasure than the derivative to be defended against, in which case the one drive derivative masks and supplants the other. It can use fantasy formation or identification. It can use a refusal to be serious, a lack of conviction, or an attitude of make-believe. In short, the ego can use for defense anything that comes under the heading of normal ego functioning or development. Modes of defense are as diverse as psychic life itself.

6. What are the costs of defenses?

Bateman and Holmes: DMs are then mobilised to alleviate the resulting inner conflict, reduce tension, and stabilise the personality. But all this occurs at the cost of distorting internal and external reality.

Burgo: If you block out the awareness of your own needs, you're unable to develop true intimacy. When you "swallow" your anger or unhappiness by compulsive over-eating, you're not motivated to do anything about the cause of those feelings, whether at home, with your friends or at work.

Becker:

If we combine these thoughts with the situation of the child, we can understand something of his proneness to anxiety. He is in a condition of utter helplessness and dependence, and his pains and irritabilities probably trigger the experience of animal anxiety. Anxiety thus comes naturally to be associated with the threat of abandonment or separation from the life-giving mother. As William James said long ago, solitude is the greatest terror of childhood. The infant has no way of knowing that he will not be abandoned to his helpless pain, except by continual contact and relief of that pain. ...

... the most overwhelming stimulus of all: the anxiety of object-loss....

The answer is that we cannot, and the reason lies in the development of the ego itself. Remember that Freud saw that the ego grows by putting anxiety under its control, as it finds out *what anxiety is* for the organism, and then *chooses to avoid it by building defenses* that handle it. The ego finds out what feelings, thoughts, and situations are dangerous, and then permits the organism to exist in a world in which there is no danger by steering clear of these feelings, thoughts, and situations. As Freud so well put it, the ego "vaccinates itself" with small

doses of anxiety; and the “antibodies” that the organism builds up by means of this “vaccination” become its defenses: the famous *mechanisms of defense* ...”

“*But now look what happens.* The freedom from anxiety that makes possible a sort of aloof action by the human animal is bought at a price. And this price is *the heaviest that an animal has to pay*: namely, *the restriction of experience*. The ego, the unique psychological organ of the higher primates, develops *by skewing perceptions and by limiting action*. As Freud so well put it: the ego staves off anxiety “only by putting restrictions on its own organization” (1936, 99-101).

The ego grows by *a dispossession of the child’s own inner world*. The mechanisms of defense are, after all, par excellence techniques of *self-deception*.”

We give up our expansive range of experience and intent. Freud puts this as “You no longer have to punish me, Father; I will punish myself now.” “The terrible conclusion that we draw from Freud’s work is that *the humanization process itself is the neurosis: the limitation of experience, the fragmentation of perception, the dispossession of genuine internal control.*”

7. How, then, are symptoms and defenses related to one another?

Vaillant: Early nineteenth-century medical phenomenologists viewed pus, fever, pain, and cough as evidence of disease, but less than a century later their colleagues had learned to recognize these “symptoms” as involuntary efforts of the body to cope with mechanical or infectious insult. Similarly, psychological defense mechanisms produce behaviors that may appear pathological to others (or even at times to us), but in fact reflect efforts of the brain to cope with sudden changes in its internal or external environment without too much anxiety and depression.

See also process – question 14 below

8. What are some of the everyday patterns of defense?

See exercises handbook

9. How aware of defenses can we be?

Burgo: When you think about some of the people you know, do you believe there are things you can observe and identify about them that they don’t see? Why do you think they don’t recognize this aspect of themselves? In what way would it be painful for them to admit the truth?

PDM2: In contrast to “coping” mechanisms, defenses operate in a mostly automatic manner, partially or wholly out of awareness.

DF: Anna Freud believed that we may “reconstruct them in retrospect” (1968:8). Brenner pointed out that there are “analogues ... that do exist in our conscious mental lives” (1974:85). Malan, in asserting that “defence should be interpreted before impulse” described defence as “what is manifest” (Malan 1979:78,92). And Vaillant declared that defences are “elusive, yes, but not like fairies, yetis and UFOs are elusive ... more like rainbows and mirages – they’re fleeting, but they can be photographed.” (Vaillant 2015:263-64).

Vaillant: We can’t see the spinach caught in our own teeth, and it’s difficult to identify our own defenses.

10. When, how, and why do they develop?

Becker (an example): Some households have a very low emotional tone: very soft talk, very careful and controlled movements, long periods of silence. The child comes to feel that self-celebration, loud expression of delight, brusque and jumping movement, are simply not the things one does; and he grows up with the same flat emotional tone, the same restriction of spontaneous expression and movement. The tone of the household is like a heavy cloud that suffocates talk and free experimentation; *the child’s bodily energies knuckle under to the priority of symbols*, subtle conventions, unspoken attitudes. [DF - denigration / denial of the body leads to intellectualization – prioritizing of the symbolic]

[Child has to switch modes of maintaining self-esteem]: The child learns painfully that he cannot earn parental approval, or self-esteem, by continuing to express himself with his body. He finds that he has to conduct himself according to symbolic codes of behaviour in order to be accepted and supported. In other words, his vital sentiment of self-value no longer derives from the mother’s milk, but from the mother’s mouth. *It comes to be derived from symbols*. Self-esteem no longer takes root in the biological, but in the internalized social rules for behavior. The change is momentous because of what is implicit in it: the child’s basic sense of self-value has been largely *artificialized*. His feeling of human worth has become largely a linguistic contrivance. ... Once this has been achieved the rest of the person’s entire life becomes animated by the artificial symbolism of self-worth; almost all his time is devoted to the protection, maintenance and aggrandizement of the symbolic edifice of his self-esteem.”

Rycroft: it is usually assumed that certain defences belong to specific stages of development, e.g. introjection, projection, denial, and splitting to the oral phase; reaction-formation, isolation, and undoing to the anal phase.

12. What are the distinguishing features of classes / types of defenses in the stricter sense?

Akhtar: Ten other points need emphasis:

- (1) all defences aim to reduce anxiety;
- (2) all defences operate unconsciously;
- (3) all defences have their roots in childhood;
- (4) some defences arise in association with specific developmental phases (e.g., reaction formation in anal phase);
- (5) some defences seem specific to certain psychopathologic syndromes (e.g., conversion to hysteria, undoing to obsessional neurosis);
- (6) some defences have more 'ego' in them (e.g., undoing) while others more 'id' (e.g., 'turning against the self');
- (7) some defences (e.g., 'repression' and 'reaction formation') are permanent, others (e.g., 'undoing') employed when needed, and still others (e.g., displacement) occupy an intermediate place in this continuum;
- (8) 'defences' are not only defences; they also play a role in normal psychic structure formation (e.g., introjection leading to enrichment of ego and especially superego);
- (9) while identifiable 'mechanisms of defence' (regardless of their number) do exist, it is also true that any activity can be used for defensive purposes. Anna Freud underscored this by saying that 'falling asleep is certainly not a defense mechanism but it can be used to defend against aggression' (Sandler & Freud, 1983, p. 43); and
- (10) there is some recognition that 'mature ego defences' can be distinguished from 'primitive ego defences'

Akhtar: classes of defence in dealing with mental pain:

- (1) *psychic retreat and self-holding*: if this is accompanied by a sense of futility and generalized inhibition of drive and ego functions, then the outcome is pathological. However, if the retreat is transient, focal, and is accompanied by an effort to sort out the ego weakening that has resulted from pain, then the outcome is not so bad after all.
- (2) *Denial and manic defence*: if this leads to 'psychic numbing' (Kogan, 1990), substance abuse, and promiscuity, then the knowledge of what is going on in the internal reality is diminished and the outcome is pathological. However, if the 'manic defence' (see separate entry) involves only the unaffected sector of the personality, then it can serve as an umbrella under which the pain-ridden part can carry out mourning in a piecemeal fashion.

(3) *Extrusion of pain and its induction into others*: to a limited extent, self-protective indignation, and even rage, in the face of mental pain can serve adaptive purposes.

(4) *Changing the form or function of pain*: such alterations can yield both pathological and healthy outcomes. Among the former are 'concretization' (Bergmann, 1982) through acting out; 'physicalization', that is, turning the mental pain into physical pain; and 'libidinization' (Fenichel, 1934). At the same time, some 'change of function' (see separate entry) vis-à-vis mental pain might prepare the ground for its creative sublimation.

Bateman and Holmes: Classical psychoanalysis views defences primarily from an intrapsychic perspective, placing conflict between wishes and external reality, and between the different agencies of the mind, at the heart of psychic life.

DF: Defences are "activated by therapy" (Howard 2010:114) and there "manifest themselves as resistance" (Lemma 2003:220). Howard gives eight distinctions of relevance in defence analysis (2010:115) and, reviewing recent literature, Petraglia et al. (2017) generate ten principles to guide technique.

DF: Everyone has a repertoire of defensive processes, which may be more or less adaptive versus costly. There are more "mature" or adaptive defenses (such as humor, altruism, sublimation, and suppression) that contribute to effective functioning, and less adaptive defenses (such as denial, acting out, projective identification, and splitting) that are psychologically costly and may significantly disrupt effective functioning. The less mature defenses involve conspicuous levels of distortion of self, others, or external reality (Cramer, 2015; Perry, 1990, 2014; Vaillant, 1992).

McWilliams: Primitive defenses operate in a global, undifferentiated way in a person's total sensorium, fusing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, whereas more advanced ones make specific transformations of thought, feeling, sensation, or behavior, or some combination of these.

McWilliams: To be considered primary, a defense typically has two qualities associated with the preverbal phase of development: a lack of attainment of the reality principle and a lack of appreciation of the separateness and constancy of those outside the self.

For example, denial is thought to be a manifestation of a more primitive process than repression. For something to be repressed, it has to have been known in some way and then consigned to unconsciousness. Denial is an instant, nonreflective process. "This is not happening" is a more magical way of dealing with something unpleasant than "This happened, but I'll forget about it because it's too painful."

Similarly, the defense mechanism known as "splitting," in which a person segregates experiences into all-good and all-bad categories, with no room for ambiguity and ambivalence,

is considered primitive because it is believed to derive from a time before the child has developed object constancy.

Many defensive processes have more primitive and more mature forms. For example, “idealization” can denote an unquestioning, worshipful conviction that another person is perfect, or it can refer to a subtle, subdued sense that someone is special or admirable despite some visible limitations. “Withdrawal” can refer to the full renunciation of reality in favor of a psychotic state of mind, or it can refer to a mild tendency to deal with stress by daydreaming. For this chapter on primitive defenses, I have called a defense “extreme” if it also has more mature manifestations.

The so-called primitive defenses are ways we believe the infant naturally perceives the world. These ways of experiencing live on in all of us, whether or not we have significant psychopathology; we all deny, we all split, we all have omnipotent strivings.

It is much harder to describe the primitive defenses than the more advanced ones. The fact that they are preverbal, prelogical, comprehensive, imaginal, and magical (part of primary process thought) make them extremely hard to represent in prose.

McWilliams: Mature vs immature In general, defenses that are referred to as “primary” or “immature” or “primitive” or “lower order” involve the boundary between the self and the outer world. Those conceived as “secondary” or “more mature” or “advanced” or “higher order” deal with internal boundaries, such as those between the ego or superego and the id, or between the observing and the experiencing parts of the ego.

Vaillant: (Wikipedia nicely worded summary):

- Level I – pathological defences (psychotic denial, delusional projection) rearrange external experiences to eliminate the need to cope with reality. Pathological users of these mechanisms frequently appear irrational or insane to others. These are the “pathological” defences, common in overt psychosis. However, they are normally found in dreams and throughout childhood as well.
- Level II – immature defences (fantasy, projection, passive aggression, acting out) lessen distress and anxiety produced by threatening people or by an uncomfortable reality
- Level III – neurotic defences (intellectualization, reaction formation, dissociation, displacement, repression) have short-term advantages in coping, but can often cause long-term problems in relationships, work and in enjoying life when used as one's primary style of coping with the world
- Level IV – mature defences (humour, sublimation, suppression, altruism, anticipation) They are conscious processes, adapted through the years in order to optimise success in human society and relationships. The use of these defences enhances pleasure and feelings of control. These defences help to integrate conflicting emotions and thoughts, whilst still remaining effective. Those who use these mechanisms are usually considered virtuous.

13. How do defenses relate to personality?

Burgo: Reich believed that one's personality or "character traits as a whole [are] a compact defense mechanism" with the same warding-off effect as any other psychological defense.

PDM2: "Defensive style" is intertwined with personality. Pervasive, rigid, and/or intense use of maladaptive defenses underlies both symptom formation and personality disturbances severe enough to be termed "disorders" (Hilsenroth, Callahan, & Eudell, 2003; Kramer et al., 2013; Lingiardi et al., 1999; Perry, 2001; Perry & Høglend, 1998; Perry & Presniak, 2013; Perry et al., 2013).

Auchincloss: Rigid defensive style contributes to character pathology, with specific defensive maneuvers associated with specific character types.

Burgo: So if people would describe you as an exceptionally nice person who never gets upset or angry, that description would likely tell us something about your characteristic defense mechanisms. If you're an assertive person who tends to dominate a situation, shouting down other people or badgering them until they agree with you –that would suggest an entirely different set of defenses. Your habitual ways of interacting with the important people in your life tell us a great deal about the defense mechanisms you typically use.

DF: The recognition of the distinction between dynamic or situational use of a defence and 'permanent' use which contributes to an individual's 'character' relates also to the observation that there is a (complex, multi-directional) connection between the preferred (over-)use of some defences and particular personality patterns or types.

Burgo: Such a defense shows up "in the way one typically behaves, in the manner in which one speaks, walks, and gestures; and in one's characteristic habits (how one smiles or sneers . . . how one is polite and how one is aggressive)."

See next page for Blackman: (GTDR) – Defense Constellations ...

Defense Constellations

Hysteria Clusters:

Inhibited subtype (DSM-IV 300.11)

Reticence Passivity
Somatization
Pathological altruism
Inhibition of ego function
Conversion Idealization
Ipsisexual object choice
Vagueness

Histrionic subtype (DSM-IV 301.5)

Socialization
Seduction of the aggressor
Passive to active
Identification with fantasy
Sexualization
Garrulousness
Dramatization
Exaggeration
Reaction-formation

Hyper-aestheticism

Phobic Subtype (ICD9 CM 300.2, DSM-IV 300.21)

Repression Symbolization,
Condensation
Projection
Passivity Avoidance
Counterphobic behavior
One affect versus another

Obsessional Clusters

(ICD9-CM 300.3 DSM-IV 300.4)

Reaction formation
Perfectionism,
Hyperpunctuality
Undoing, rituals
Isolation
Externalization
Compartmentalization
Rationalization
Rumination Intellectualization
Repression Symbolization

Depressive Clusters

Turning on the self
Identifications with
lost object,
introject
Passivity
Disidentification
Reaction-formation

Masochistic Clusters

Identification with aggressor
Identification with victim
Seduction of aggressor
Provocation of punishment
Passivity Passive to active
Identification with injured object
Frankness Intimidation of others
Paranoia Clusters (DSM-IV 301.0)

Introjection Projection
Projective identification
Projective blaming
Denial in deed
Splitting
Somatization
Externalization
Negativism
Hostile aggression,
Gaslighting
Hypervigilance

Narcissism Clusters (DSM-IV 301.81)

Identification with ideal image,
Idealization Devaluation
Concretization
Disidentification
Grandiosity
Garrulousness
Dramatization
Socialization,
Inauthenticity
Frankness

Schizoid Clusters (DSM-IV 301.2)

Asceticism Reticence
Avoidance Passivity,
Pseudoindependence

Impulse ridden (DSM-IV 312.39)

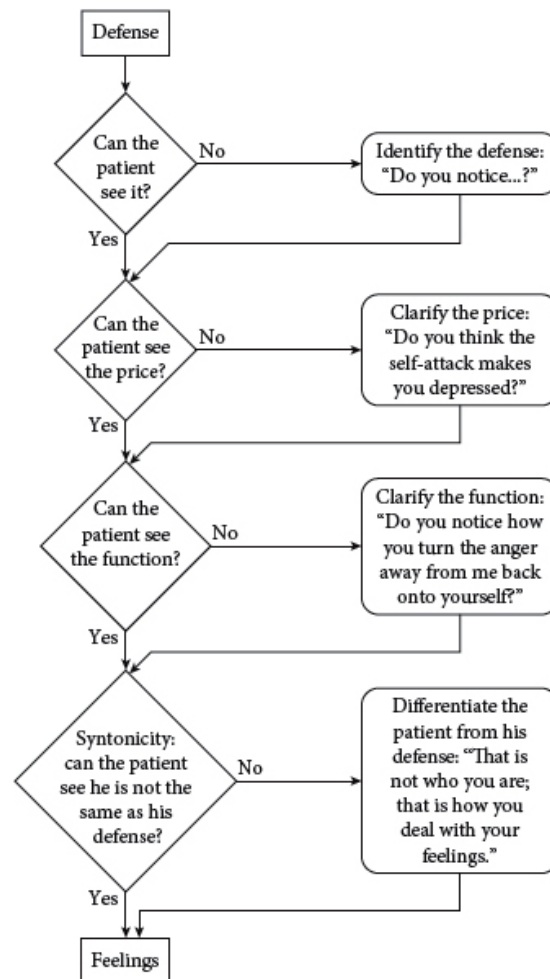
One affect versus another
Passive to active
Impulsivity
Substance abuse
Clinging
Whining
Identification with the aggressor

PDM2: [Our “character” / “personality” as our dominant / default defence constellation]. The capacity for defensive functioning highlights the way an individual attempts to manage motives, affects, urges, conflicts, memories, thoughts, and other potentially anxiety-related inner experiences, along with the individual’s response to anxiety resulting from external challenge or threat to the self. High functioning in this area means that the person uses defenses effectively, with minimal distortion in reality testing; lower functioning involves the use of less adaptive defenses with greater distortion. As discussed in Chapter 1, “defenses” are automatic psychological responses to internal or external stressors and emotional conflicts. They protect an individual against excessive anxiety, manage conflictual wishes, affects, ideas, memories, and other inner experiences, and adapt to the external world. They occur partly or wholly out of awareness. People vary in the degree to which they have insight about their defenses, with more psychologically minded people having greater insight.

14. What's the process for dealing with our defenses? What do we need to know about their origin, function?

Auchincloss: Defense plays a role in the phenomenon of resistance to analytic treatment. The systematic interpretation of this resistance is termed defense analysis.

Frederickson: Decision tree for defense work from *Co-Creating Change*, 145



Coughlin:

- Hence, he was not as concerned with what the patient was reporting (content) as with how he or she reported it (process). For example, if a patient is remembering a painful and humiliating scene from her schooldays but reporting it in a light and humorous way, the focus would be on the smile and what purpose that served in the current interaction with the therapist.
- According to Davanloo, defense work involves three separate but frequently overlapping parts:
 - Acquainting patients with their defenses.
 - Re-structuring the defenses and turning the patient's ego against them.
 - Eradicating defense and resistance through pressure and challenge.
- Acquainting: Identification, Clarification, Examining consequences

- Identification - 'do you notice that ...?' - helps see strength of observing ego and the level of ego-syntonicity
- Clarification - Once a defense has been identified, its function must be clarified and made explicit. "The smile and the joke are not your feelings toward your girlfriend but a way you avoid those feelings. Do you see that?" ... The therapist is assessing whether the patient is capable of distinguishing between the defense and impulse-feeling corners of the triangle of conflict.
- Goals of Defense Work
 - The goals of this phase of the treatment, whether achieved through clarification and interpretation, in highly responsive patients, or pressure and challenge in the case of more resistant patients, are threefold:
 - De-sensitization of the ego to previously toxic affects.
 - De-repression of memories and associations pertaining to the genesis of the patient's intrapsychic conflicts.
 - Use of this affective and cognitive information to make meaningful T-C-P interpretations and consolidate insight.
- The direct experience of anger toward the therapist did not result in feared death and destruction, but actually led to relief, a greater understanding of himself, and a genuine feeling of closeness with and gratitude toward the therapist. This is the essence of a corrective emotional experience.
- The Technique of Defense Restructuring
 - The technique of restructuring defenses involves the systematic and repetitive reworking of the triangle of conflict in both the transference and the patient's current relationships. Restructuring involves the following elements:
 - Clarification and differentiation within the triangle of conflict.
 - Gradual exposure to the direct experience of feelings and impulses.
 - Cognitive re-analysis of the process.
 - The goals of this phase of therapeutic intervention are directed toward an increase in the adaptability, flexibility, and strength of the ego. This is achieved by:
 - Increasing insight into the link between repressed impulses and anxiety or other symptoms.
 - Decreasing the patient's reliance on regressive defenses.
 - Reducing the intensity of anxiety that accompanies the direct experience of affect.
 - Working the triangle - During the phase of inquiry, special attention is devoted to the examination of recent episodes preceding depression, panic, or exacerbations of psychosomatic complaints. As these episodes are explored, slow and repetitive work on the triangle of conflict begins.
 - Here, the focus is on the gradual exposure to the internal experience of feeling. Such exposure is designed to reduce the anxiety that's been associated with these affects, thus reducing the tendency to automatically avoid or defend against them. Once the feared stimulus, in this case the experience of angry

feelings or impulses, is approached and experienced without the feared consequences coming to pass, the patient's perceptions change. In fact, the direct experience of feelings that had previously been avoided constitutes an experience of mastery. This is typically followed by a deep sense of relief, a new understanding of oneself, and a feeling of closeness with the therapist, all of which are profoundly reinforcing.

- Techniques to lower anxiety: There are three direct methods for lowering anxiety:
 - switch the focus to an exploration of the physiological manifestations of anxiety;
 - return to phenomenological inquiry; or
 - switch focus on the triangle of person; for example, from the transference to a figure in the patient's current life.

Petraglia and Frederickson for more on process.