

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM **(listed by Anna Freud, 1936)**

Regression: Returning from a [developmental point] already reached to an earlier one.

Repression: Strictly speaking, an operation whereby the subject attempts to repel, or to confine to the unconscious, representations (thoughts, images, memories) which are bound to an instinct. Repression occurs when to satisfy an instinct—though likely to be pleasurable in itself—would incur the risk of provoking unpleasure because of other requirements.

Reaction formation: Psychological attitude or habitus diametrically opposed to a repressed wish, and constituted as a reaction against it (e.g., bashfulness countering exhibitionistic tendencies)

Isolation: characteristic of obsessional neurosis, which consists in isolating thoughts or behaviour so that their link with other thoughts or with the remainder of the subject's life are broken. Ritual behavior, obsessive thoughts are examples as is intellectualizing about a emotionally charged subject without expressing any emotion. (The latter is called intellectualization)

Undoing: Psychological mechanism whereby the subject makes an attempt to cause past thoughts, words, gestures, or actions not to have occurred. “Magically thinking” and behavior meant to undo what has been done [like Lady Macbeth's hand washing], excessive atonement

Projection: Operation whereby qualities, feelings, wishes or even ‘objects,’ which the subject refuses to recognise or rejects in himself, are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing

Introjection: The subject mentally transposes objects and their inherent qualities from the “outside” to the “inside” of himself.

Turning against the self: Process whereby the instinct replaces an independent object by the subject’s own self. Masochism would be an example.

Reversal: Process whereby the aim of an instinct is transformed into its opposite in the transition from activity to passivity. Exhibitionism to voyeurism

Sublimation (or displacement of instinctual aims): Process to account for human activities which have no apparent connection with sexuality but which are assumed to be motivated by the force of the sexual instinct. Examples: Artistic creation and intellectual inquiry.

From Laplanche & Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 1967. Translated by Nicholson-Smith, 1973.