

Examrace

Psychology Study Material: Defense Mechanisms and Psychotherapy

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Defense Mechanisms

Ego Defense system, which may be distorting reality

- **Repression:** Blocking unpleasant/unacceptable thoughts by pushing them into the unconscious e. g. forgetting events of the painful childhood.
- **Regression:** Reverting back to a stage that was satisfying e. g. a boss showing temper tantrums like a child; or acting like a baby.
- **Displacement:** Redirecting the expression of unwanted desires or impulses to a substitute rather than the actual target e. g. beating children when a wife cannot express anger toward husband.
- **Rationalization:** In order to justify one's behaviour, one develops a socially acceptable explanation or reasoning e. g. going for a second marriage saying that the first wife was quarrelsome.
- **Denial:** Refusing to acknowledge or accept anxiety provoking thoughts or impulses e. g. being a heavy smoker but saying 'I am an occasional smoker'.
- **Projection:** Attributing unwanted thoughts and impulses to others e. g. a person takes bribe and blames the organization for paying him not enough salary.
- **Sublimation:** Converting unwanted impulses into socially approved thoughts, feelings and actions e. g. disliking the in-laws but behaving in a very friendly manner or becoming a stamp collector to overcome the impulse to steal.

Psychotherapy

Psychoanalysis

- An intensive, long-term psychotherapeutic procedure.
- Requires long sessions over extended periods ... may be years.
- Better suited to intelligent individuals.
- Involves a special relationship between the therapist and the patient.
- **Target:** To explore unconscious motivation, conflicts, desires.
- **Goal:** Establishing intra psychic harmony by developing awareness of the role of the id, reducing over compliance with super ego, and by strengthening the ego.

- Understanding of 'repression' : The therapy gives central importance to the understanding of the manner in which the person uses repression for handling conflict. Interventions used in Psychotherapy

Free Association

- Kept in a comfortable position, the patient is asked to talk aloud and say whatever comes to his mind without considering whether or not it is relevant, rational, or sensible.
- The patient is asked to reveal even the most undesirable and strong thoughts that have been repressed. This leads to emotional release, called 'catharsis' .

Analysis of Resistance

At times patient feels inhibitions and is unable or unwilling to express some thought or feeling i.e.. , barriers between conscious and unconscious. The psychoanalyst aims to break down such resistances so that the patient is enabled to face the unpleasant thoughts, impulses, events.

Dream Analysis

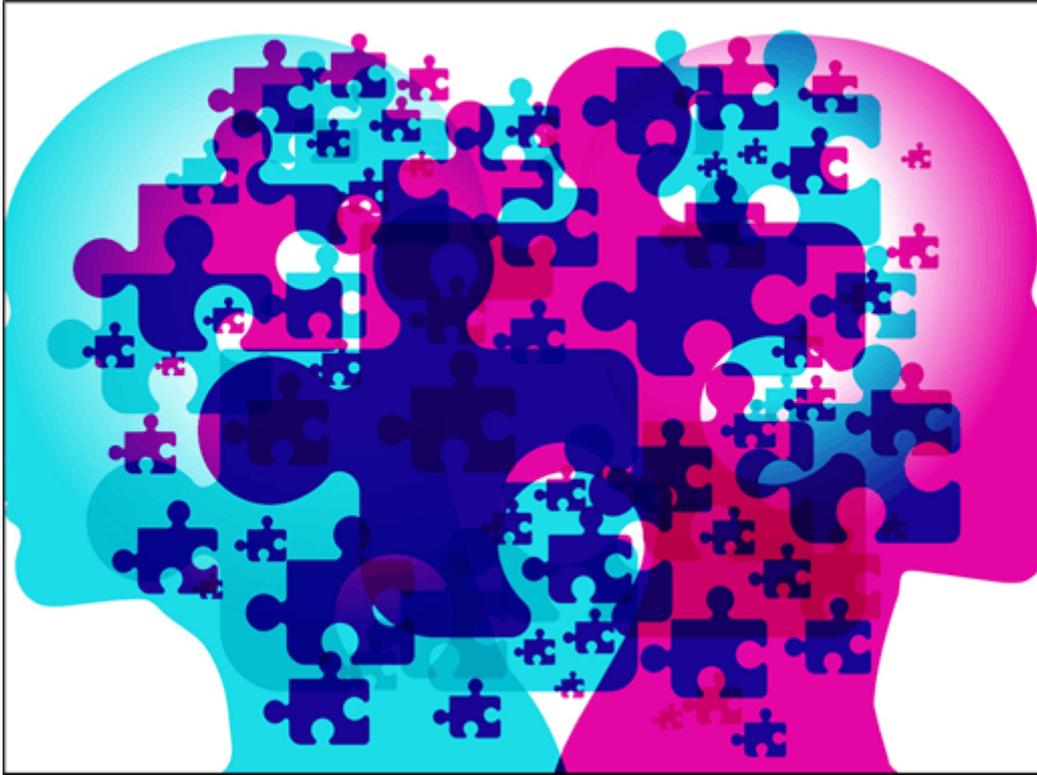
The therapist tries to uncover the latent content of dreams and decipher the symbolism involved.

Analysis of Transference and Counter Transference

- Transference: The patient's emotional response toward the therapist is often an indication of the patient's relationship with a person who had been the centre of the conflict. It may be negative or positive.
- Counter Transference: The therapists' emotional reaction toward the patient is also important. He may also start having positive or negative feelings for the patient.
- Transference is analysed and understood as part of the therapeutic process.

Criticism Against Freudian Psychodynamic Theory

There is no scientific proof that many psychodynamic constructs, e. g. unconscious, exist.



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- Psychic Determinism: Freudian approach is deterministic and leaves not much room for conscious, rational, decision making or personal will to act
- It ignores the external variables and the environment
- It emphasizes the early childhood experiences too much
- Mostly criticized for its interpretation of the relationship between the genders
- The therapy is too time consuming and therefore expensive.

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