

Module 8: Personality
Topic 1 Content: Defense Mechanisms

Introduction

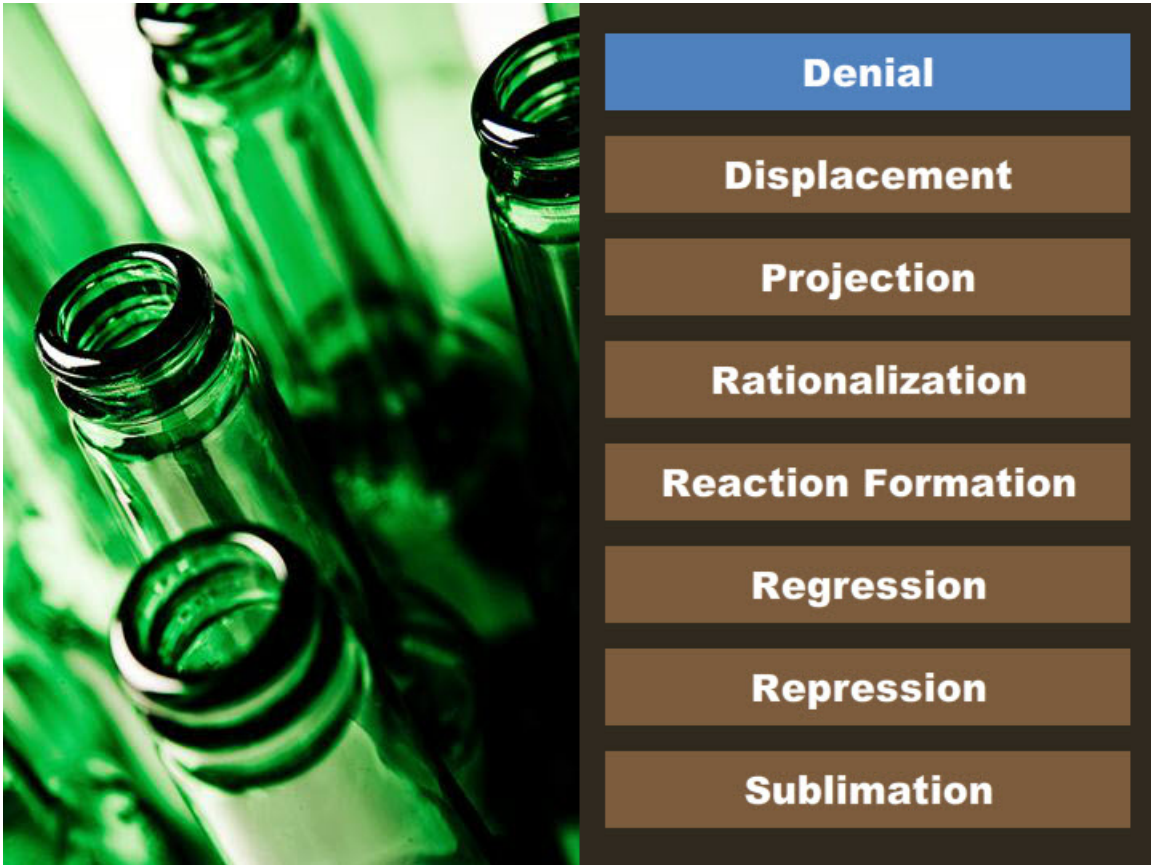


According to Freud, the ego unconsciously produces defense mechanisms that reduce anxiety when the id and superego are at odds. Click each of the terms on the right to learn about these defense mechanisms.

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Denial



Denial involves the refusal to admit something that is upsetting. For example, a college student who binge drinks alcohol most days of the week, and claims not to have a drinking problem.

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Displacement



Denial

Displacement

Projection

Rationalization

Reaction Formation

Regression

Repression

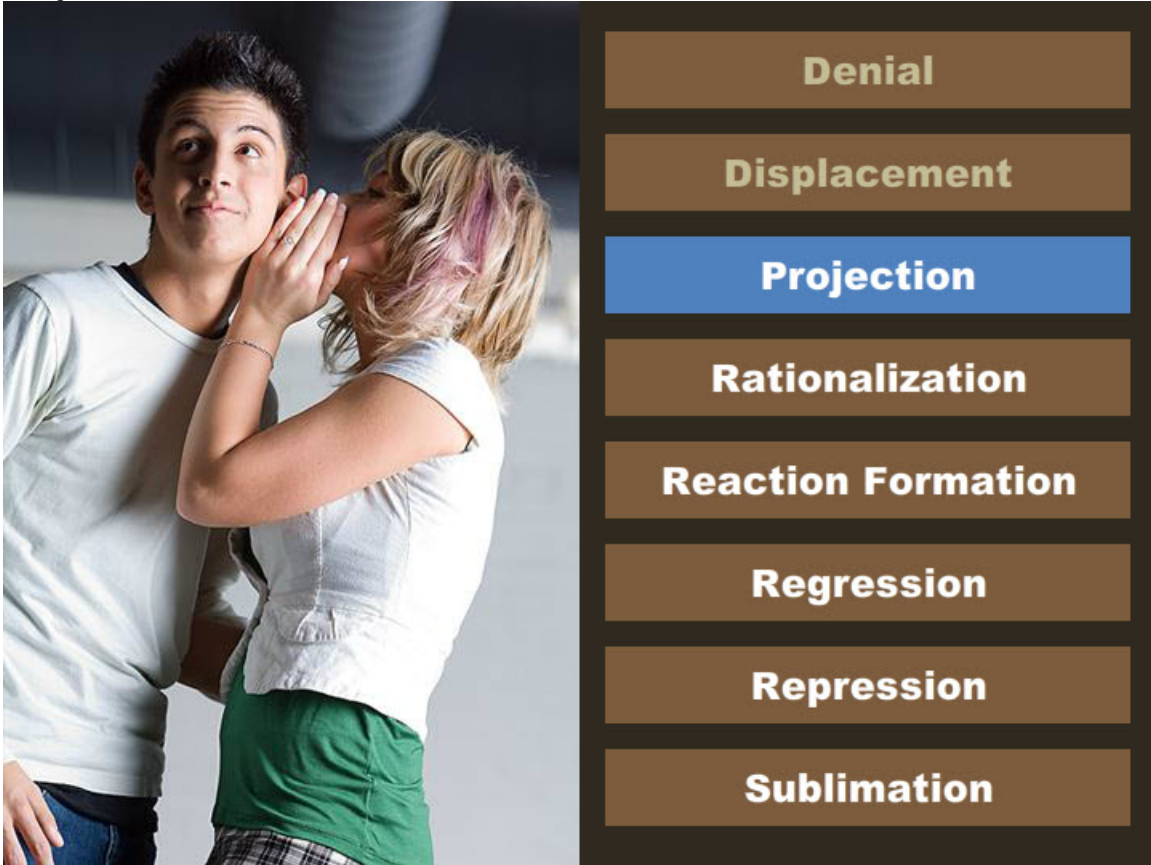
Sublimation

Displacement occurs when an individual shifts unacceptable impulses toward a less threatening and more acceptable object or person. For example, a man is yelled at by his boss at work, and the man remains quiet; however, when the man returns home, he yells at his kid about a messy room.

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Projection

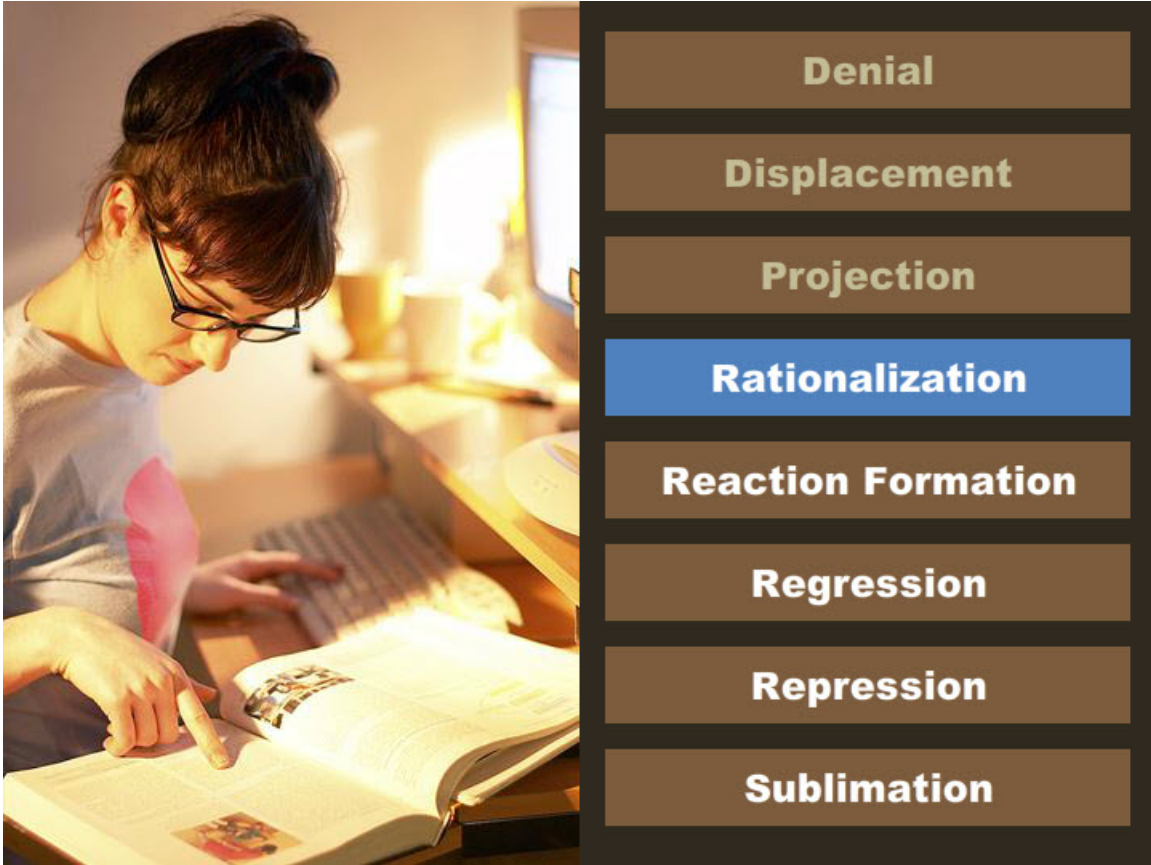


Projection occurs when you attribute threatening impulses to others, and reject that you have such impulses yourself. An example of projection is a classmate who frequently gossips about other students, yet tells you not to trust someone because he or she spreads rumors.

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Rationalization

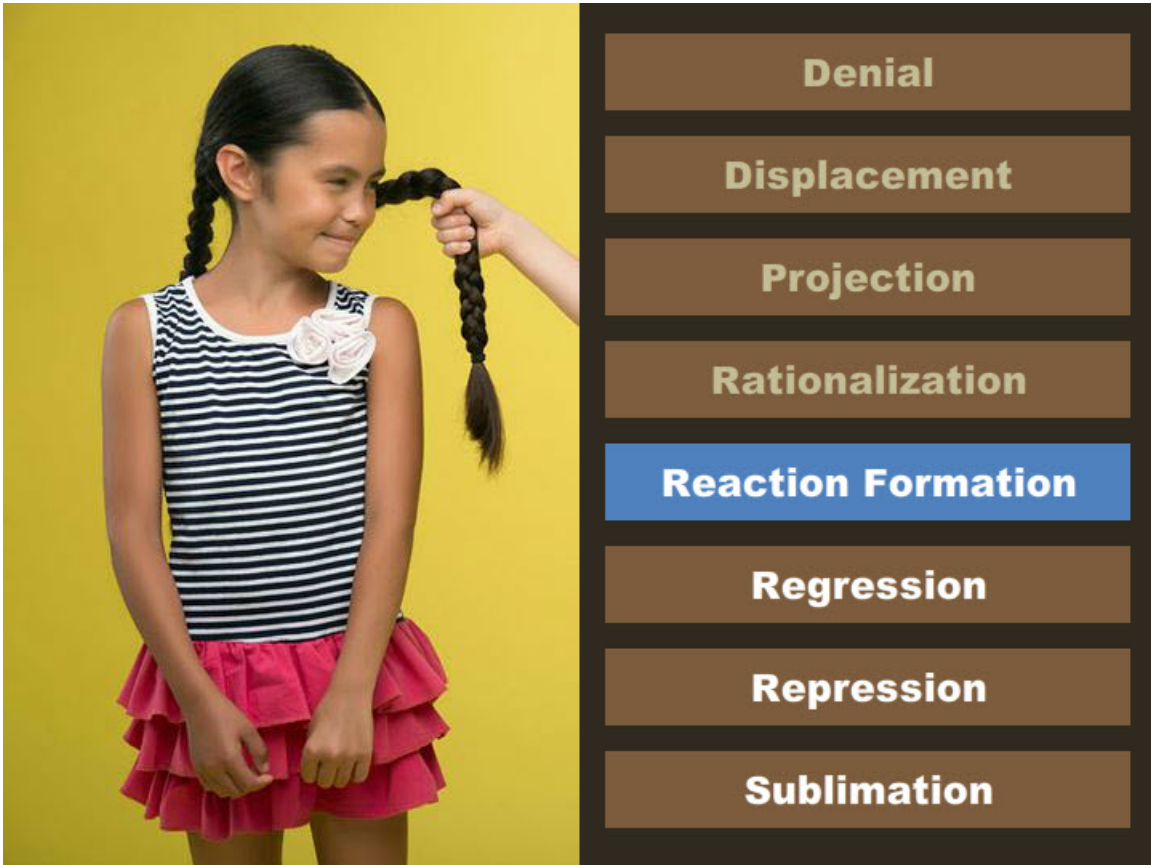


Rationalization involves making excuses or explaining something in a way that disguises your true reasoning. For example, a girl who was not asked to the prom tells her friends she does not want to go anyway, because she needs to study for a test that evening.

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Reaction Formation

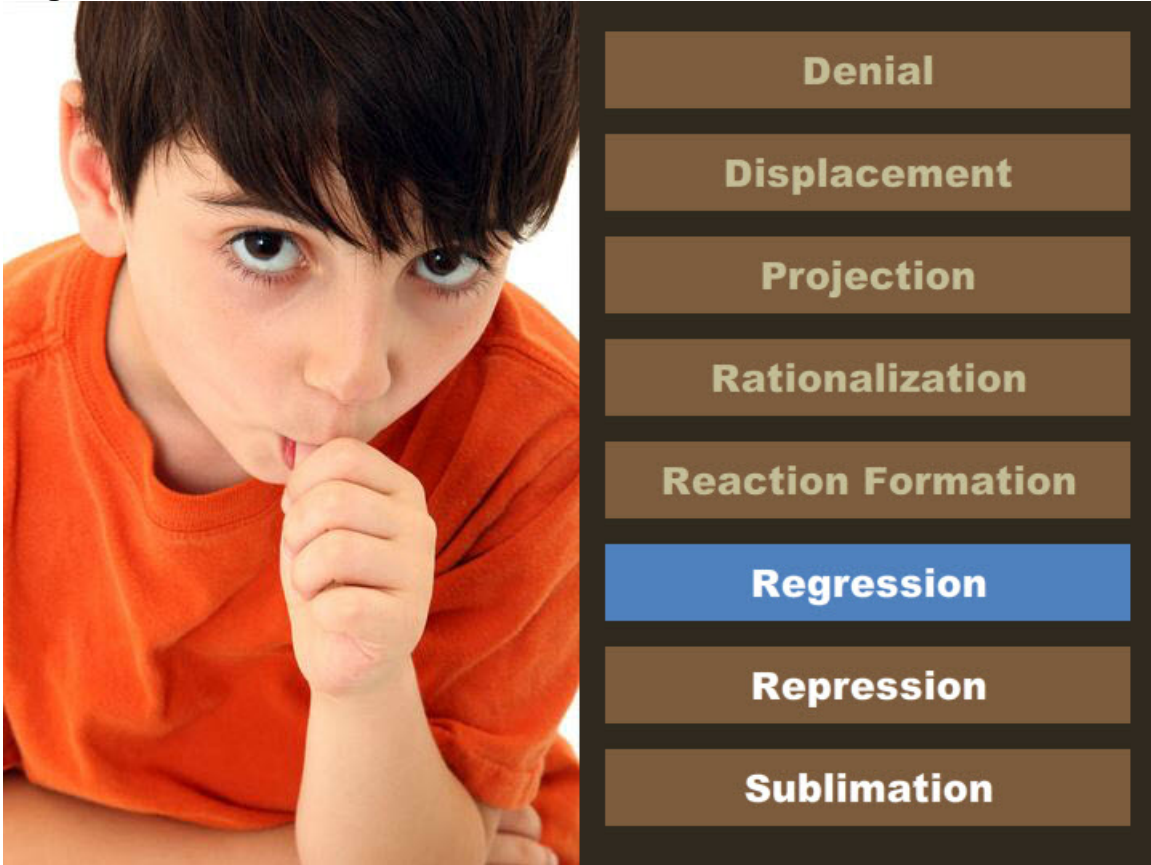


Reaction formation occurs when you express the impulse that is the opposite of the one you really think or feel. An example of this is a boy who pulls a classmate's hair because he actually has a crush on her.

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Regression

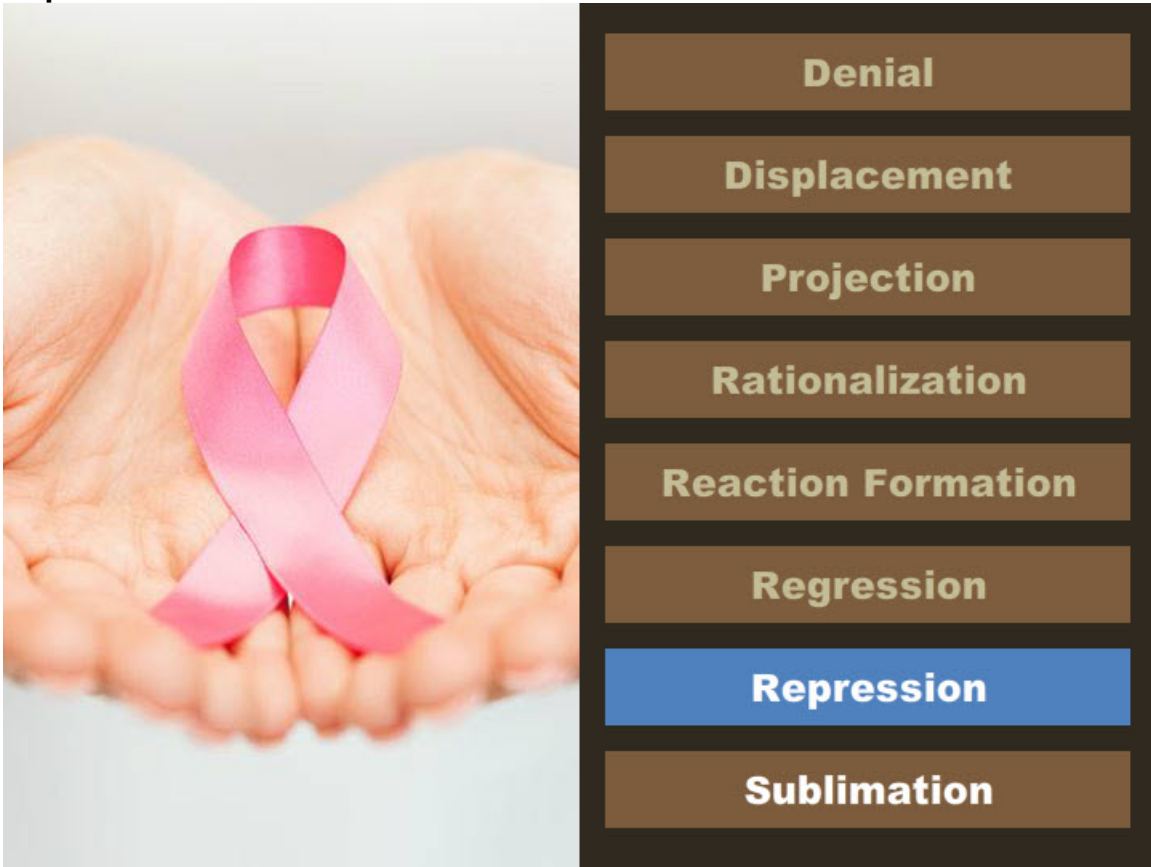


Regression refers to acting in a way characteristic of an earlier age. If a five-year-old begins sucking his thumb after his mother gives birth to his baby sister, this is a sign of regression.

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Repression

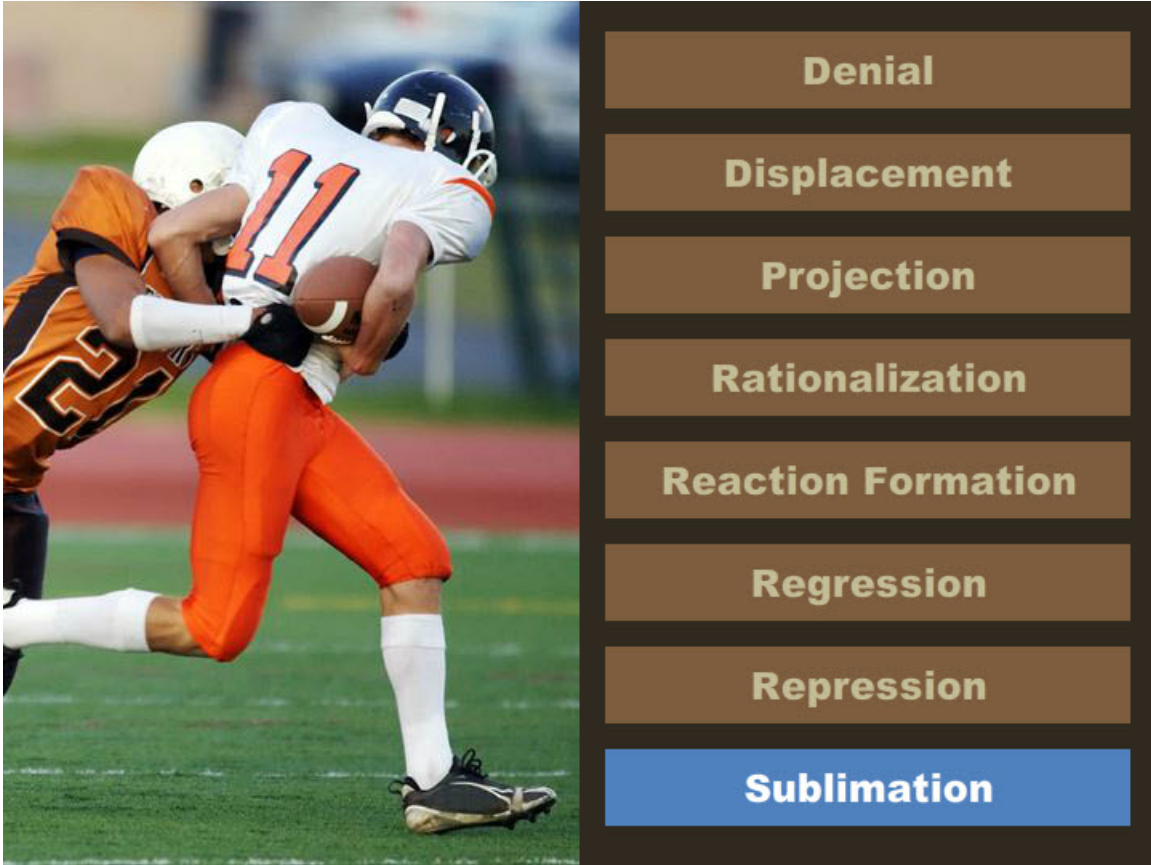


Repression occurs when people forget or eliminate thoughts, feelings, or memories that might cause anxiety. If a woman who lost her mother to breast cancer consistently forgets to schedule a yearly mammogram, she is showing signs of repression.

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Sublimation



Sublimation refers to the redirection of inappropriate impulses toward a more acceptable behavior. For example, a boy who often feels angry at his father becomes very aggressive toward his opponents when playing football.