

Defense Mechanisms by Type

1 **Reaction Formation** – feeling one thing and expressing another.

Ones use reaction formation to avoid direct anger and to control their emotions and instincts. This helps them maintain a self-image of being right. The relentless demand of the inner critic to be “good” often replaces personal needs and shuts down feelings.

2 **Repression** – suppressing unacceptable feelings and converting them into a more acceptable form of emotional energy.

Twos use repression of personal needs and feelings to avoid being needy and to maintain a helpful self-image. Their genuine need for connection takes the form of “you need me.” In seeking approval, *Twos* can miss authentic connection in relationships due to their tendency to “shape-shift” by being overly nice, superficially friendly and flattering. Often feeling indispensable, they also may display an attitude of entitlement.

3 **Identification** – taking on a role so completely that we lose contact with who we are inside.

Threes use identification to avoid failure and maintain a self-image of being successful. The pressure to keep up a winning image prevents access to personal feelings and needs, and blocks *Threes* from feeling appreciated and loved for who they are rather than what they do.

4 **Introjection** – unconsciously incorporating the characteristics of a person or object into one’s own psyche.

Fours use introjection to avoid ordinariness and maintain a self-image of being authentic. Positive introjection helps overcome feelings of deficiency by seeking value from an idealized relationship or experience. Using negative introjection, *Fours* tend to blame themselves for whatever goes wrong in personal connections.

5 **Isolation** – use of physical or emotional withdrawal from one’s own emotions.

Fives use isolation to avoid experiencing inner emptiness and to maintain a self-image of being knowledgeable. Gathering information becomes a way to create safety and self-worth, yet overemphasizing the intellect prevents *Fives* from connecting with the life force in their bodies and the support available in relationship with others.

6 **Protection** – attributing inner concerns and fears onto others and external situations.

Sixes use projection to avoid personal rejection and maintain a self-image of being loyal. To assure safety and justify loyalty, they project positive feelings onto a relationship or an external authority figure. To explain internal feelings of fear and distrust, *Sixes* project negative feelings onto others, and then look for evidence to support these projections.

7 **Rationalization** – staying in the head, or explaining away or justifying feelings and behaviors in order to avoid pain or accept responsibility.

Sevens use rationalization to avoid suffering and to maintain a self-image of being OK. They tend to see life through rose-colored glasses, reframing everything positively. Thinking of new options and possibilities allows *Sevens* to leave the present moment with its limitations and live in a seemingly boundless future.

8 **Denial** – the forceful redirecting of attention and feelings based on willfulness and control.

Eights use denial to avoid vulnerability and to maintain a self-image of being strong. They seek to impact the world and other people rather than be receptive. The pressure to deny vulnerability reduces their emotional energy and keeps them from receiving all of life’s gifts.

9 **Narcotization** – using food, drink, entertainment or repetitive patterns of thinking and doing to put oneself to sleep.

Nines use narcotization to avoid conflict, manage their anger and maintain a self-image of being comfortable or harmonious. Even productive activities can keep *Nines* sedated if they become too habitual. Avoiding conflict with others keeps *Nines* from being fully present in relationships. Avoiding internal conflict leads to inertia and becoming sidetracked from personal priorities.