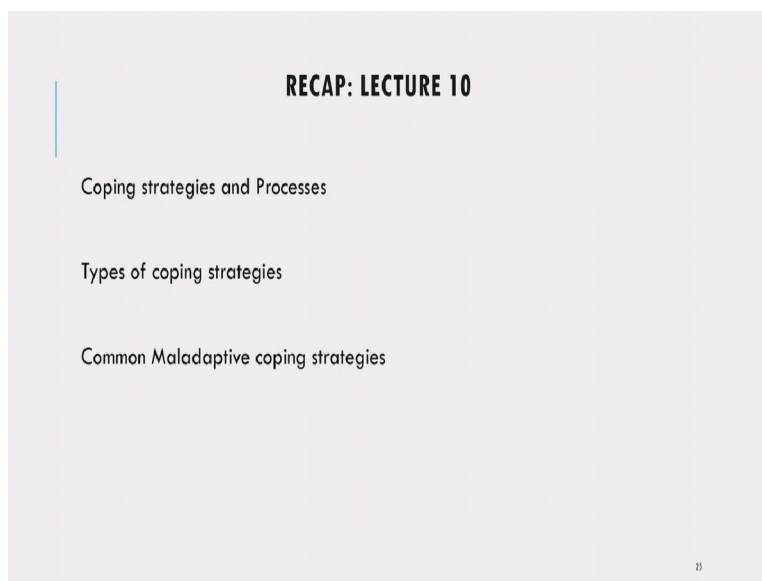


Psychology of Stress, Health, and Well-Being
Professor. Dilwar Hussain
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Lecture 11

Unconscious mind and defensive coping

I welcome you all to the eleventh lecture of NPTEL MOOCs course, titled Psychology of Stress, Health, and Well-Being. So, this is second lecture in module 4. So, before we talk about today's lecture, let us have a brief recap of the last lecture that is lecture 10.

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So, in the last lecture, we talked about the meaning of coping strategies and the process of coping. So, we discussed that coping strategies basically include all kinds of thoughts and behaviors that we do to manage the demands of stressful circumstances. So, all things that we do at the thought level and the action level to manage the demands of stressful circumstances or to deal with stressful circumstances are called as can be collectively called as coping strategies. So, it may have various strategies.

And we have discussed that understanding coping strategy is very important and very significant primarily because the use of maladaptive coping or unhealthy coping strategies or inability to cope with stressful circumstances may lead to various negative consequences of stress and its outcomes in terms of physical and mental diseases.

And therefore, to lead a productive and healthy life, one needs to understand how to cope with different stressful life circumstances. So, it is a very important topic that we have tried to understand. We have discussed that there are various categories of coping strategies or responses, where strategies can be divided into various types.

So, we have discussed three such categories. One is called problem focused-coping versus emotion-focused coping. So, the idea is we can deal with a situation by solving the problem that caused the stress or by reducing the stress associated with the stressful circumstances or emotional consequences of stressful circumstances, which is called emotion-focused coping strategies.

Coping strategies can also be divided into two types: engagement coping and disengagement coping. Engagement coping is when we cope with a situation by actively dealing with the circumstances, whereas disengagement is when we try to avoid the situation in order to deal with it, and the third category we've discussed is adaptive versus maladaptive coping. In adaptive coping strategies, we use various healthy strategies that adequately address the stressful stressors associated in the circumstances and we try to deal with the situations in a better healthy way, and in maladaptive coping strategies, we use various strategies that are of limited value and short term and may not really serve a purpose in the long term.

So, these are different perspectives on coping strategies, and we use a variety of coping strategies, many of which fall into one of these categories. Then we talked about some common maladaptive coping strategies that we use in our daily lives. In that context, we have discussed avoidance or giving up coping strategy, which is also very common and is used by many people. The idea of avoidance coping is basically a kind of disengagement coping, in which we try to escape or distance ourselves from stressful events or their associated emotions, negative emotions.

So, basically, people try to reduce stress in the short term, but such coping strategies are not healthy and adaptive in the long run, primarily because they do not solve the problem and, eventually, we have to deal with such situations again and again, and things may become more complicated and there may be a lack of time, etc.

Then, in the context of avoidance coping, we discussed another syndrome known as learned helplessness. So, we attempt to comprehend the concept of learned helplessness, which basically means that it occurs when someone experiences repeated negative, uncontrollable situations in their past, when someone experiences inescapable situations or negative situations over which they have no control. So, because of this previous learning or conditioning that occurred, in which one was unable to change or control the situation, this is kind of generalised to future events and many other similar events.

As a result, in the future, when things change and success and control are possible, such people do not try to change the circumstances because of past conditioning. As a result, they become more perceived and unmotivated, and we attempted to explain some of the experiments that led to the discovery of such syndrome, as well as how learned helplessness may contribute to various psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety, where it may be one of the contributing factors but is not the only factor.

Then we discussed another common maladaptive coping strategy, self indulgence, which basically means when people engage in excessive unrestraint or impulsive satisfaction of their desires, impulses, or urges, and this happens most prominently when we experience stressful circumstances, and research shows that when we experience stress and overwhelming emotions, our ability to control emotions and impulses decreases.

Again, self-indulgence is similar to avoidance in that it provides temporary relief. So you simply avoid the actual situation by diverting yourself into other temporarily pleasurable activities, but this may not solve the problem in the long run. As a result, this is also known as maladaptive coping in that sense, and it may have many health consequences, as well as economic consequences, because excessive drinking or excessive self-indulgence type of behaviour may have many health consequences, as well as economic consequences.

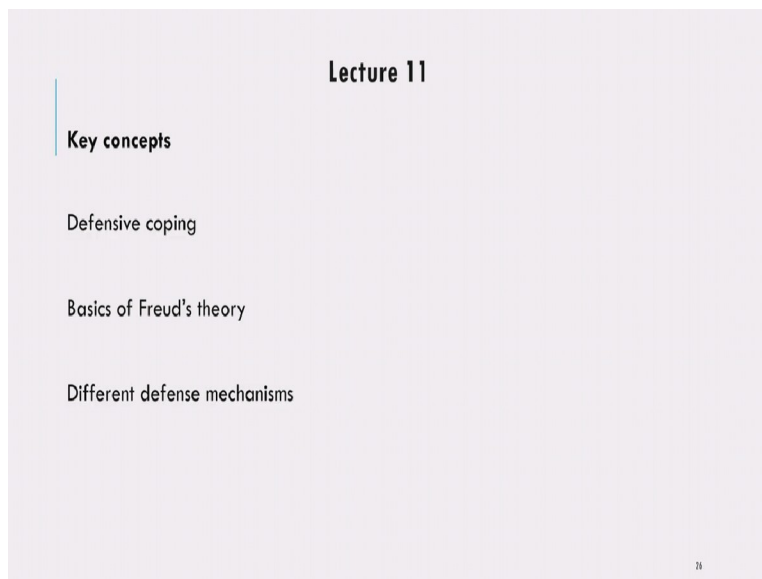
And we have also discussed another important recent type of addiction, which is known as Internet addiction, which is becoming more and more common in today's world as a result of too much reliance on technology, and which may also be one of the important

aspects of dealing with stressful situations, where you get kind of impulsively use Internet or other technology related addictions.

The last one we have discussed was kind of self-blame and excessive negative thoughts, which also sometimes stressful circumstances may stimulate many ruminative negative thoughts and intrusive thoughts and which are also called as catastrophic thoughts. So, dwelling on such thoughts is also maladaptive and counterproductive, simply because it does not help you get out of the situation.

And some people are more prone to using or dwelling on negative thoughts in excess. So, we've talked about some of these topics, and more will be covered in future lectures. So, these are some of the common maladaptive coping strategies discussed in the previous lecture.

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So today, we will talk about another coping strategies, which are called as defensive coping, which are also generally of limited value. But we also use them very frequently, and mostly unconsciously. So, we will talk about defensive coping, and we will talk about the basics of Sigmund Freud's theory. It is a part of Freud's theory and we will discuss different categories of defense mechanisms.

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Defensive Coping

Defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological responses that distort reality to protect people from being overwhelmed by the feelings of anxiety, painful emotions, ideas and drives.

These are unconscious ways of coping with anxiety. For example, sometimes people refuse to admit some aspects of reality by denying or blocking it from experiencing it as accepting it may cause anxiety. For example, a smoker may deny that smoking is bad causes cancer as accepting this fact and smoking may cause anxiety.

The idea of defense mechanisms is one of the original contributions of Sigmund Freud who proposed the theory of psychoanalysis. His daughter Anna Freud further developed and elaborated on these ideas.

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So, defensive coping is a particular type of coping strategy, which are also called defense mechanisms. These are basically unconscious psychological responses that distort reality to protect people from being overwhelmed by the feelings of anxiety, painful emotions, ideas, and drives.

So, basically, defensive coping or defense mechanism include various unconscious psychological response. So, unconsciously our mind does something on some mechanisms to distort reality so that an emotional or a stressful situation becomes less overwhelming, less stressful, less emotional. So, it is the kind of inner mechanism to protect ourselves by which we distort reality in such a way that it looks less stressful or overwhelming.

As a result, these are referred to as defence mechanisms or defensive coping strategies. These are unconscious coping mechanisms for anxiety. So, when we are anxious or stressed, we often employ many of the coping strategies that we have discussed. But, many times, we deal with such situations in an unconscious manner; I may not be consciously aware of it, but our mind does a lot of things unconsciously to protect us from overwhelming anxieties and stress.

For example, some people refuse to accept certain aspects of reality by denying or preventing themselves from experiencing them as acceptance may cause anxiety. In denial

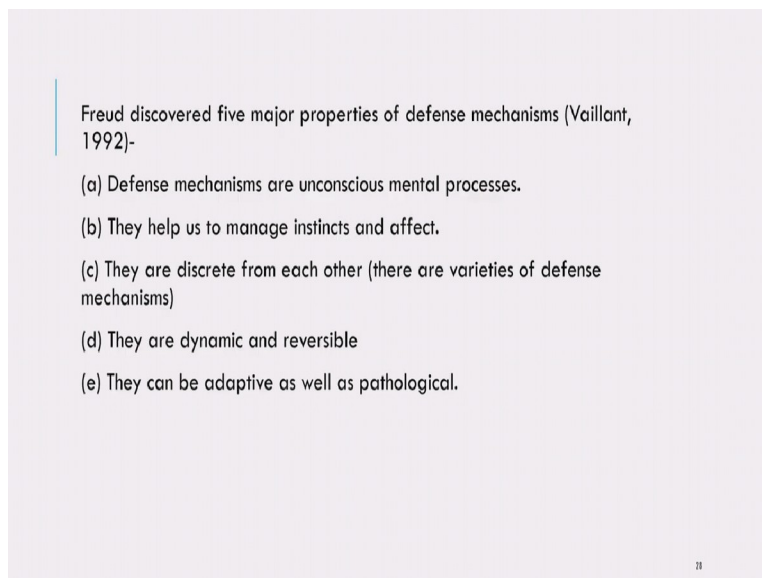
people frequently enter a state in which they refuse to accept some aspect of reality that exists and will simply refuse to accept it or may unconsciously believe in it in order to protect themselves.

For example, a smoker or chain smoker may deny that smoking causes cancer; you may simply deny it unconsciously, and he will say that it is not true. Simply because if he accepts that smoking causes cancer and continues to smoke, he will experience a great deal of anxiety. As a result, he will deny it subconsciously. As a result, this is an example of defensive coping; it may or may not be conscious, but it may occur at the unconscious level.

One of Sigmund Freud's original contributions was the concept of a defence mechanism. Sigmund Freud is a well-known psychologist whose theories have been widely adopted not only in psychology, but also in other fields such as literature, media, filmmaking, and so on, where his ideas have been reflected or used in a variety of contexts.

His daughter, Anna Freud, helped to further develop his psychoanalytic theory and, in particular, the concept of defence mechanism.

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Freud discovered five major properties of defense mechanisms (Vaillant, 1992)-

- (a) Defense mechanisms are unconscious mental processes.
- (b) They help us to manage instincts and affect.
- (c) They are discrete from each other (there are varieties of defense mechanisms)
- (d) They are dynamic and reversible
- (e) They can be adaptive as well as pathological.

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Freud discovered five major properties of defense mechanisms. One is defense mechanism are unconscious mental processes. One thing is it is mostly unconscious. We

may not be conscious about it. So, it may happen automatically. They help us to manage instincts and help us to manage our impulses or anxieties and overwhelming emotions. They are discrete from each other, so there are many defense mechanism, we will look into them. So, they are all different from each other. They are dynamic and reversible, in the sense that one may change defense mechanism and it could be reversed also. A defense mechanism can be adaptive as well as pathological. So, many defense mechanisms can be adaptive in some sense, but many of them are maladaptive also. So, these are kind of an example of defense mechanism with limited values. So, some defense mechanisms can be helpful to some extent. However, many of them are not healthy especially in the long run.

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Basics of Freud's theory

It is necessary to understand some of the basic ideas of Freud's theory to understand defense mechanisms.

Levels of mind

According to Freud, there are three levels of mind-Conscious, sub-conscious/pre-conscious, and unconscious. This division is made based on the level of awareness each part of the mind has. Each of these level plays their role in human behavior.

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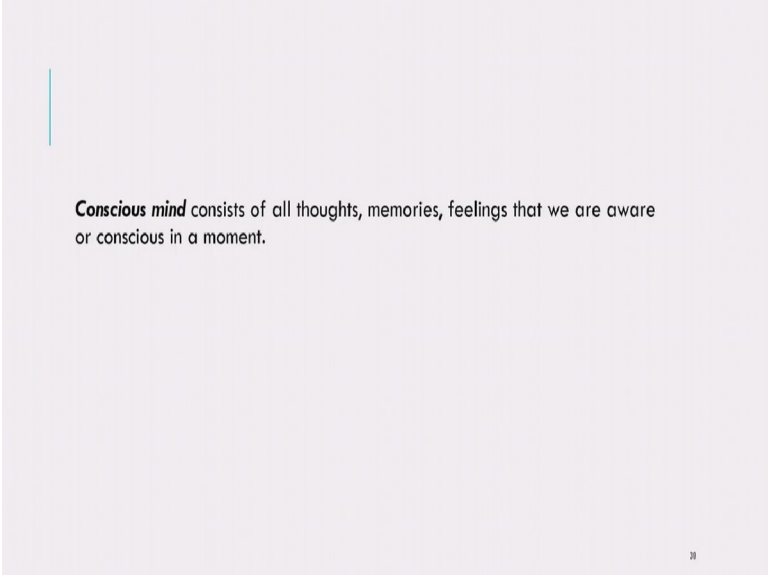
Now, before we talk about different defense mechanisms, it is important to understand some of the basic ideas of Sigmund Freud and his theory of psychoanalysis. Freud's theory is very complicated and beyond the scope of today's lecture. Here, we will not give all the details of the theory. We will just touch on the major ideas of Freud's theory.

So, one of Freud's most important contributions, or one of his initial ideas, is that he discussed various levels of the human mind. So, this concept was present in philosophy, but in psychology, he conducted an in-depth analysis of the human mind, concluding that the human mind is not just one thing, one conscious entity that we are aware of.

So, the conscious mind, the sub-conscious mind, also known as the pre-conscious mind, and the third part of the mind, the unconscious mind, are the three levels of the human mind. As a result, the divisions of mind are largely dependent on our levels of knowledge of those parts of mind.

So, if you are fully aware of a part of our mind, it is our conscious mind; if you are only partially aware of it, it is our subconscious mind; and if you are completely unaware of those parts of our mind, it is our unconscious mind. Each level of the mind has a significant impact on our behaviour.

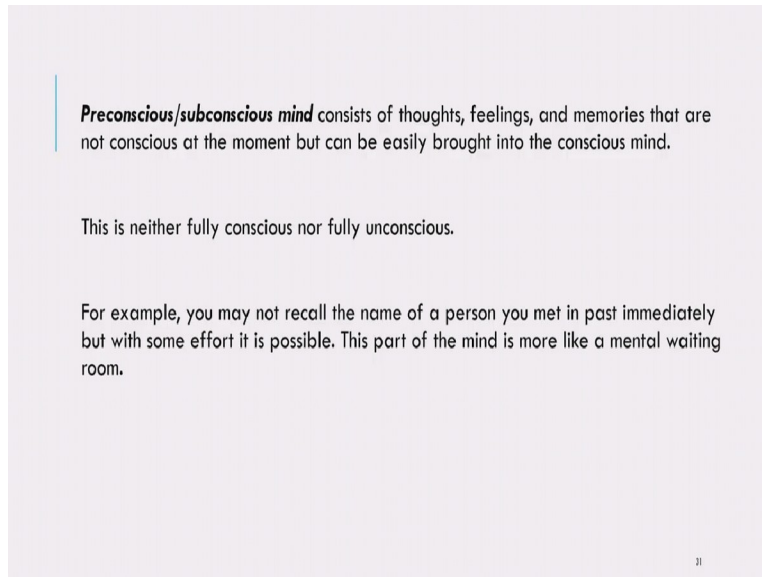
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Conscious mind consists of all thoughts, memories, feelings that we are aware or conscious in a moment.

So, as the name suggests, the conscious mind or conscious level of mind consists of all thoughts, memories, feelings that we are aware of or conscious of in a particular moment. So, for example, now you are listening to this lecture, and you were thinking about the concepts that are discussed and you are aware of it. So, this part of the mind, about which we are conscious, is called as conscious mind or conscious part of the mind.

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Preconscious/subconscious mind consists of thoughts, feelings, and memories that are not conscious at the moment but can be easily brought into the conscious mind.

This is neither fully conscious nor fully unconscious.

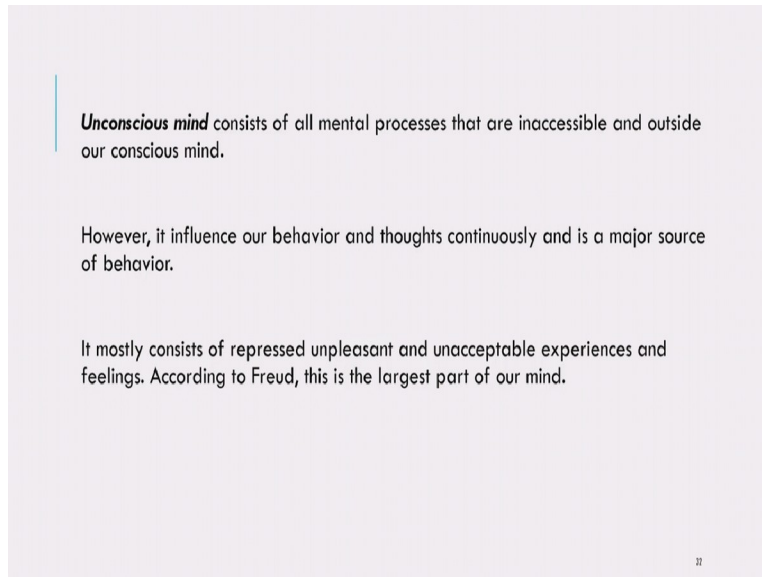
For example, you may not recall the name of a person you met in past immediately but with some effort it is possible. This part of the mind is more like a mental waiting room.

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The other part of the human mind is called the pre-conscious or subconscious mind, which consists of thoughts, feelings, and memories that are not conscious at the moment but can be easily brought into the conscious mind. So, these are more like not fully conscious, not fully unconscious. So, that is why it is called the subconscious, kind of half-conscious, half-unconscious contents of our mind.

So, many thoughts and feelings, which we are not really fully conscious about it, but if you dwell on them a little bit, it comes to our conscious mind. So, such contents are basically part of the sub-conscious mind or pre-conscious mind. For example, you may not recall the name of a person you met in the past immediately, but we know that with little effort, the name can be recollected. So, such contents are part of the subconscious mind. So, this part of the mind is more like a mental waiting room. So, contents are there kind of sitting in a waiting room, and you can extract them with a little bit of effort. So, that is called the pre-conscious or subconscious part of our mind.

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Unconscious mind consists of all mental processes that are inaccessible and outside our conscious mind.

However, it influence our behavior and thoughts continuously and is a major source of behavior.

It mostly consists of repressed unpleasant and unacceptable experiences and feelings. According to Freud, this is the largest part of our mind.

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Another part of our mind is known as the unconscious mind. As the name implies, it refers to all mental processes that are inaccessible and outside of our conscious awareness. So, this is the part of our mind that is completely unconscious, and we have no idea what is going on. As a result, we are completely unaware of it; it is completely below our conscious level, and thus our conscious mind is unaware of the contents of that part.

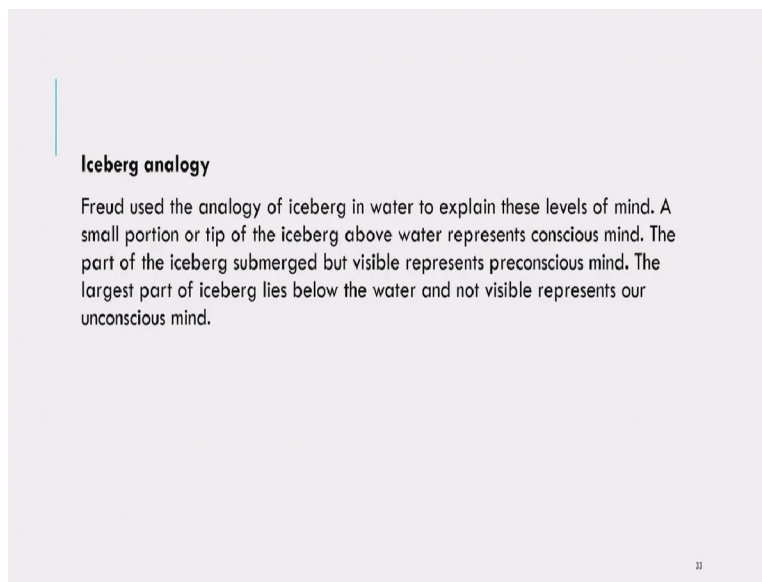
However, it has a constant impact on our thoughts and actions and is a major cause of behaviour. In reality, Freud placed a high value on this aspect of the mind because it is the part of mind that constantly affects our actions, even if we aren't conscious of it. Despite the fact that it is unconscious, it has a constant influence on our thought process and actions. As emotions, it often consists of repressed, negative, and unacceptable experiences.

So, let's say any overwhelming occurrences or events occur in our lives that our conscious mind is unable to cope with. As a result, there is a process by which those contents are repressed and sent to the unconscious mind. So, even though we don't remember anything, they remain in our unconscious mind and can affect us.

So, let's pretend something terrible happened to you when you were a child. As a result, those memories and incidents can still exist in your unconscious mind, influencing you throughout your life. This, according to Freud, is the most important aspect of our minds. So, this is a big part of his philosophy, and at the very least, this is the largest part of our mind, even though we are completely unaware of it.

As a result, it was a very radical idea, and as a result, his theory drew a lot of interest and a lot of criticism. The assertion that the largest part of our mind is unconscious was a radical idea and it drew a lot of attention and criticism to his theory. So, according to Freud, the human mind is not just one entity, one unit that we are aware of, but it has three levels: conscious, subconscious, and unconscious mind.

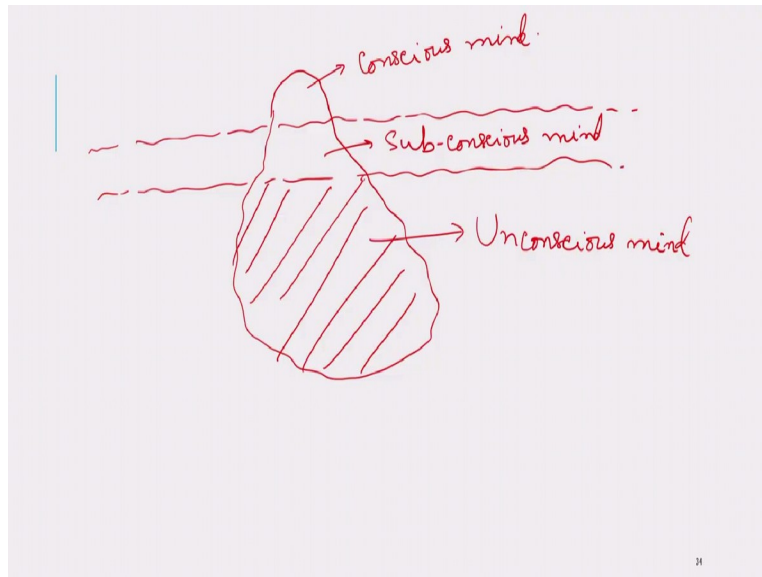
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When you place an iceberg in water, just a small portion or tip of the iceberg remains above the water, and Freud says our conscious mind is just that tip of the iceberg.

The part of the iceberg that is submerged but visible, a small part of the iceberg that is visible but below the water represents our sub-conscious mind, and the largest part of the iceberg that is below the water but unseen represents our unconscious mind. As a result, he used this analogy to help people understand the three layers or divisions of the human mind. So, in terms of the iceberg analogy, we can simply draw it like this.

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Let's pretend this is a chunk of ice or an iceberg floating in the sea. As a general rule, the only tip of the iceberg will be above the water. As he put it, this part is similar to the conscious mind. A small portion of the structure will be submerged but visible. He referred to this area as his sub-conscious mind. However, the majority of it would be unseen and under the water, which he refers to as the unconscious mind. So, this is the example he's using to try to describe his idea or theory.

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Structure of personality

Freud viewed human personality as energy system and the nature of personality is determined by the distribution of energy among ID, EGO, and SUPER-EGO.

ID

It is the reservoir of psychic energy and operates on pleasure principle, i.e. it motivate us seek pleasure and avoid pain. It is irrational, illogical, primitive and drives people to seek immediate gratification of desires.

It is instinctual and immature component of our personality.

This is the primary component of personality and only component present from birth. It is entirely unconscious. A baby after birth is entirely ruled by the ID component of the personality.

Freud also discussed the structure of human personality, how human personalities are structured, and what the architecture of human personality is like. What is the structure of it? What are the elements that make it up? So, how did Freud perceive human personality or what makes an individual the kind of person he or she is? He saw human personality as an energy system, with the essence of personality dictated by how that energy is distributed.

So, let us assume that we have a fixed amount of energy, that every individual has a certain level of energy, that this energy is distributed into the various parts of his personality, and that our personality is determined based on which part receives the most energy.

According to him, human personality is made up of three major structures or components. ID is one of them. Another part is known as EGO, and the third is known as SUPER-EGO. So, what exactly are these three parts? Our energy is divided into these three components, and our personality is formed as a result. our energy is divided into these three components, and our personality is formed as a result. So, let's take a look at each structure one by one.

The first is ID. So, this term is coined and adapted from Greek mythologies to describe those concepts. So, ID is the reservoir of psychic energy that motivates us to pursue pleasure and escape pain. It is irrational, illogical, primal, and pushes people to seek immediate gratification of desires.

As a result, it is the part of our personality that operates on the pleasure principle. As a result, it is just that part of our personality that is always seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, as well as wanting instant satisfaction of desires and urges, and is often unreasonable, illogical, and primitive. As a result, it does not consider what is right and what is wrong.

So, if I want anything pleasurable, it will try to fill it or get it as soon as possible. As a result, the only significant feature of this part of the human mind is gratification of pleasure. As a result, it is an immature, instinctual aspect of our personality. We mostly

engage in instinctive actions. So, if I need anything right now, I'll grab it without considering whether it's right or wrong. As a result, the ID part encourages such behaviour. This is the most important aspect of a person's personality and the only aspect that is present from birth. As a result, when a child is born, he or she is initially just ID. So, the child has no other personality or component; it only functions based on the ID principle or aspect.

So, if you notice an infant, it is continuously functioning based on pleasure principle. As a result, if a child is hungry, it will seek immediate satisfaction. So it will simply ask for food, and if you do not have it, it will begin to weep. As a result, it is unable to comprehend anything else.

So, if a child enjoys anything, it will want it right away, regardless of whether it is right or wrong, or whether it is possible to obtain. As a result, the child would want to get it as soon as possible, or else it will start crying. As a result, since no other part of the child has grown, the child usually operates on the ID aspect.

As a result, a baby's personality is fully ruled by the ID portion after birth. So, when a child is born, it is primarily an ID, which functions based on pleasure principle, fulfilment of desires, and is often illogical, irrational, as the child is unaware of rationality and rational aspects, and only functions based on pleasure aspects, pleasures, and pain avoidance.

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EGO

The ego starts to develop at around the age of 3 years from the ID.

EGO operates on the reality principle, i.e. it ensures socially acceptable ways of ID impulses.

It is the rational part of our personality that postpones the gratification of ID impulses to a later appropriate time. In order to deal with the reality, EGO resorts to defense mechanisms by distorting reality.

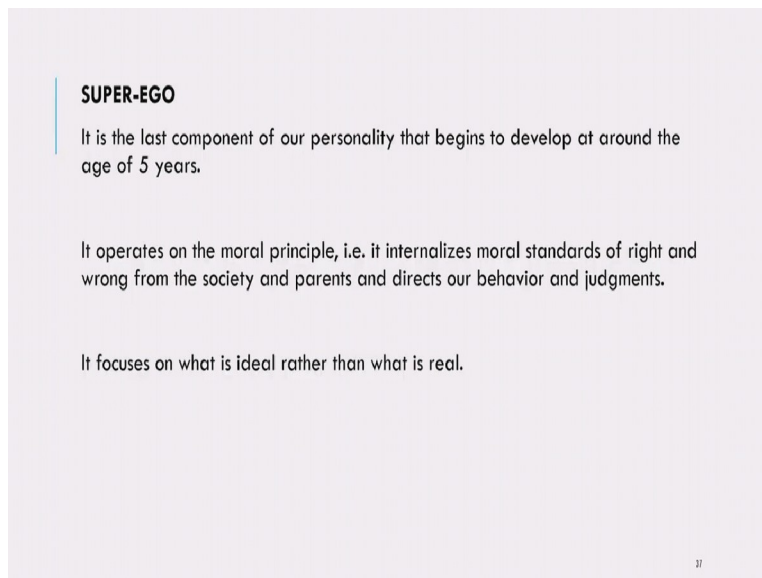
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Then, the second part of human personality is called EGO. Here EGO is used not in a typical sense of the word we use in our daily life. According to Freud, EGO starts to develop at around the age of 3 years from the ID. So, from the ID part of personality EGO starts to develop somewhere at around age 3. EGO operates on the reality principle.

So the child gradually knows, understands, and accepts that, okay, I can't always get what I want right away. So slowly, slowly child learns and understands that, okay, I cannot get everything that I always immediately want. So, there is a reality outside and based on that, you may get something you may not get something. So, slowly, this reality principles develop because of EGO, which ensures socially acceptable ways of expressing ID impulses. So, EGO works on the reality principle. ID is completely irrational, whereas EGO is rational. So, at around 3, that rational mind slowly starts to develop in a child and matures slowly. So, EGO is the rational part of our personality that postpones the gratification of ID impulses. So, for example, ID might want to eat something that is really pleasurable, but EGO might say don't eat it right now because of some circumstances, so it will postpone the fulfillment of ID desires to a later, more suitable time. So, if an appropriate circumstance occurs, EGO will say, "You satisfy certain needs at that moment." To cope with reality, EGO employs a defensive mechanism that distorts reality. So, the defense mechanism we're talking about, or defensive coping, is mainly carried out by the EGO component of the human personality in order to control ID urges and other anxiety. As a result, we'll look into it.

As a result, EGO is primarily rational and logical, and it will always lead you to the appropriate gratification moments. So, let's say a doctor tells you not to eat a lot of fatty food because you have a disease. Still, you like fatty foods, so if you go to a restaurant, your ID part will automatically say go get it and eat it because it is pleasurable. In contrast, your EGO may say no, maybe you can eat a little bit of it at a certain interval of time, or whatever suitable ways of doing things are.

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SUPER-EGO

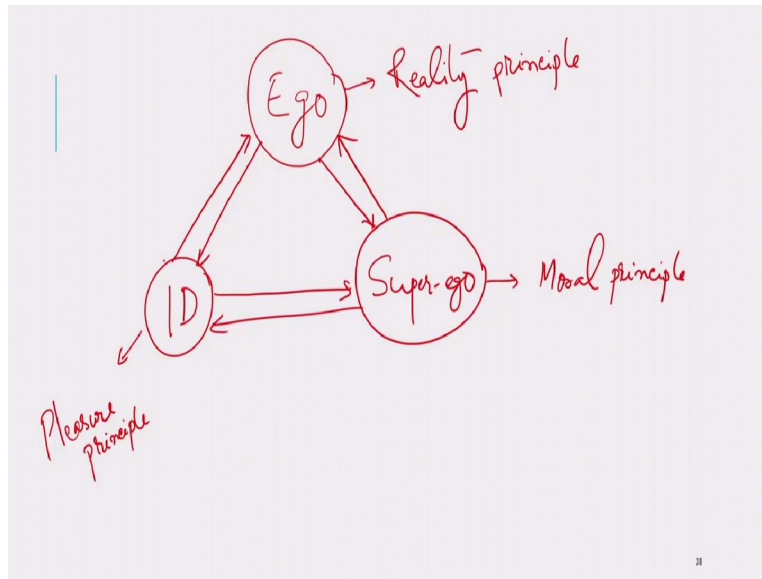
- It is the last component of our personality that begins to develop at around the age of 5 years.
- It operates on the moral principle, i.e. it internalizes moral standards of right and wrong from the society and parents and directs our behavior and judgments.
- It focuses on what is ideal rather than what is real.

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The third aspect of personality is known as SUPER-EGO, and it evolves steadily, gradually around the age of 5 years into the last component of personality, which is known as SUPER-EGO. According to Freud, SUPER-EGO essentially works on the moral principle.

So, as morality evolves, what is right and wrong, what should be done in a given situation, and what is morally right? What is the morally wrong thing to do? So, somewhere around the age of 5, certain ideas begin to evolve, and all of these moral values begin to form into the SUPER-EGO part of our personality. As a result, SUPER-EGO internalizes societal and parental moral principles of right and wrong, directs our behavior and affects our decisions and decision-making, among other things. As a result, SUPER-EGO is more concerned with what is ideal than with what is real. As a result, EGO is more concerned with what is real, what is truth outside, and it will act appropriately based on that. SUPER-EGO is more concerned with the ideal, with what is the best thing to do, as determined by philosophies or moral values. The distinction between EGO and SUPER-EGO is that EGO is rational while SUPER-EGO is idealistic. But that's the distinction. So, much of the lessons we learn, such as that it is not good to cheat or lie, are all part of our SUPER-EGO, which acts as a moral compass.

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So, let's just draw one more diagram to help us understand it a little better. As a result, we have the ego, which operates on the reality principle. After that, there's the ID which works on the pleasure principle. Then there's the super-ego, which works on the moral principle, and all three aspects of personality are constantly in contact with one another; they're not separate entities; they're constantly in contact.

Since the human mind is constantly dealing with a variety of situations, and each part of the mind needs to communicate with each other in some way, there is a constant interaction, which demonstrates the complex nature of our personalities. So, in terms of how things affect us, there is continuous interaction and dynamism.

So, while ego has the most difficult job in terms of navigating the reality that surrounds us, ID makes a lot of demands in terms of instincts and desires, and wants to gratify a lot of them. So, ID generates a lot of demands, the super-ego generates moral and other demands, and the ego balances all of these demands. According to Freud's theory, a healthy ego is essential for a healthy personality. Ego not in the sense of arrogance, but in the sense of making connections with the reality outside. As a result, it balances the demands of both the ID and the super-ego.

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ID, EGO, and SUPER-EGO continuously interacts with each other and a healthy personality will have a balanced interaction between them and imbalances will lead to maladaptive personality.

For example, a very dominant ID in a person may make him highly impulsive and may engage in behavior without any concerns for appropriateness such as a criminal. On the other hand a person with a very dominant SUPER-EGO may become overly idealistic, moralistic and judgmental.

The EGO has a tough duty to balance the demands of both ID and SUPER-EGO. Therefore, EGO sometimes resorts to various defense mechanisms to maintain this balance.

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As seen in the diagram, ID, EGO, and SUPER-EGO are constantly interacting with one another, and a stable personality will have a balanced relationship between them, while imbalances will lead to a maladaptive personality. As a result, a variety of psychological disorders can occur simply because the equilibrium between ID, EGO, and SUPER-EGO is disrupted for whatever reason. As a result, this mismatch can cause or contribute to a variety of psychological disorders. For instance, let us take an example of an individual with a strong ID component. So, although it begins at birth and progresses through EGO and SUPER-EGO development, some people may not grow their SUPER-EGO or EGO parts properly in adulthood. As a result, those imbalances can persist into adulthood. Based on how we are influenced in our lives, some parts may become more dominant, while others may become less dominant. As an example, a person with a very dominant ID is highly impulsive and can engage in criminal activity without regard for appropriateness. So, if ID becomes very dominant in a human, those people will become very impulsive and will try to gratify their own desires at any cost, without regard for the well-being of others. As a result, they may kill someone or steal something to satisfy their own desires. As a result, such an individual, for example, has a very dominant ID. So, from a Freudian viewpoint, one of the explanations is that they have a very strong ID and that their EGO and SUPER-EGO are not very mature.

A individual with a very dominant SUPER-EGO, or a person with a very powerful SUPER-EGO, on the other hand, becomes a very idealistic, moralistic, and judgmental

type of person. As a result, they can always consider what is morally acceptable, what is wrong, and what is right. As a result, very moralistic people have a highly developed SUPER-EGO. As I previously said, the EGO has a difficult task in balancing the demands of both ID and SUPER-EGO, because the EGO is the only part of the personality that is in contact with reality, and it must balance demands from both ID, which is irrational, and SUPER-EGO, which is idealistic but not always realistic. So it must strike a balance, and it faces a difficult task in meeting the demands of both ID and SUPER-EGO. As a consequence, in order to maintain this balance, EGO can use various defense mechanisms or defensive coping strategies. Unconsciously, EGO uses defensive mechanisms to maintain this equilibrium. So that's the context on how EGOs or defensive mechanisms or defense mechanisms function. According to Freud, it is the EGO component of human personality that uses various defense mechanisms to maintain equilibrium in our personality, especially in the face of demands from the ID and SUPER-EGO.

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Various defense mechanisms

Following are some of the most common defense mechanisms used by people-

Repression and suppression

Repression is unconscious removing/blocking/forgetting unpleasant thought, impulses or memories. For example, sometimes people are not able to remember traumatic memories that happened in childhood.

Suppression is very similar to repression. Only difference is that in suppression people consciously remove unpleasant feelings/thoughts/memories out of their awareness.

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Let's see if we can grasp defensive mechanisms now that we have this context. So, there are various defense mechanisms that Freud has discussed, and his daughter has also established some of the defense mechanisms that Freud has discussed. Human beings use

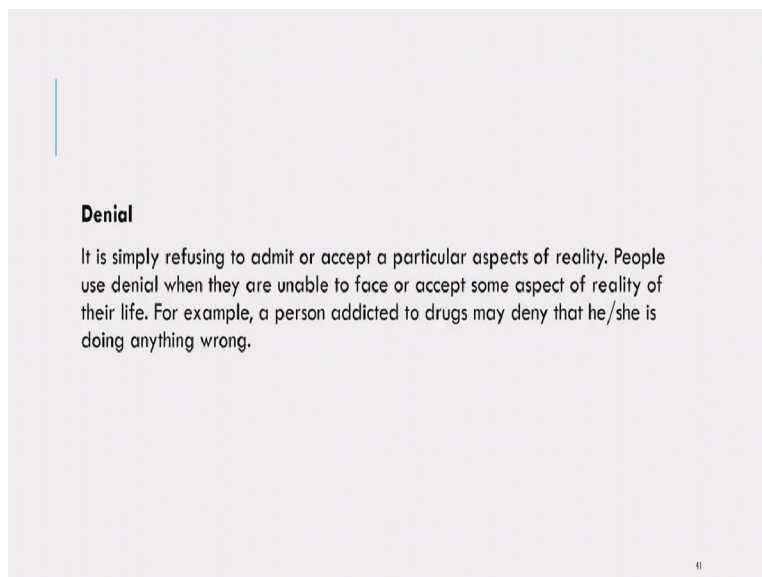
a variety of defensive mechanisms in their daily activities. As a result, we'll go over a few of these defense mechanisms.

So, repression is a defensive mechanism, and suppression is a defense mechanism associated with it, so repression and suppression. Repression is described as the unconscious removal, blocking, or forgetting of unwanted thoughts, desires, or memories.

Since, let us say, many people do not recall many details of a traumatic experience after it occurs, they actually forget about it. As a result, this is a case of repression. As a result of what our memory unconsciously protects us from, if any events are particularly distressing, you actually forget about them, and your unconscious mind represses these memories. So, for example, often people are unable to recall painful memories from their childhood, or we are unable to recall them even instantly. As a result, these are actually transferred to our unconscious. As a result, this is referred to as repression.

Suppression is similar to repression in that things are pushed back, but suppression is more conscious, a little more deliberate.

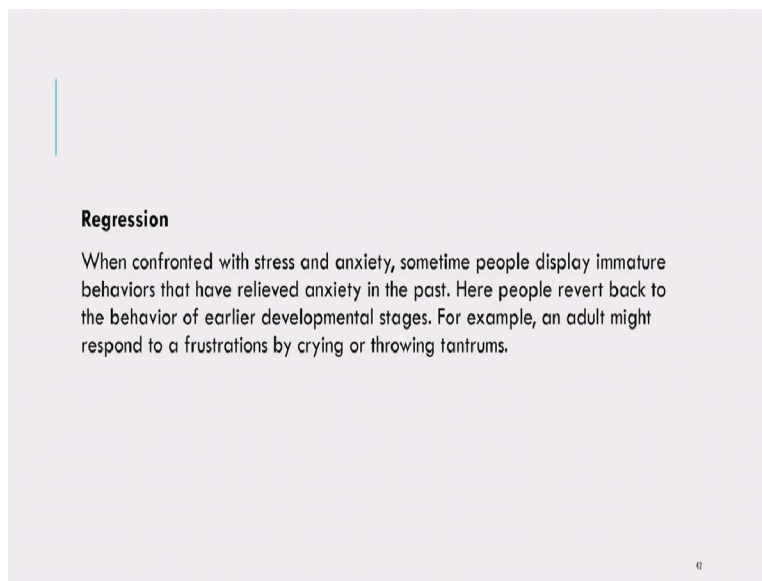
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Denial is another defense mechanism that people use, as we have already mentioned. Denial is actually refusing to acknowledge or recognize a certain aspect of reality. So, often, simply because the truth is upsetting, a person rejects or refuses to acknowledge it.

So, this is denial, which you might have noticed in a lot of people after the death of a loved one; people actually deny that it happened. As a result of their overpowering feelings, some people are unable to accept it. As a result, it can occur in the midst of extremely intense feelings, and it does so occasionally. People, for example, use denial when they are unable to face or acknowledge any part of their life's truth. So, for example, if a person is addicted to drugs, he or she might simply deny that he or she is doing anything wrong. So, if he accepts that taking drugs is the wrong thing to do, it would be really upsetting. As a result, he clearly denies it. As a result, people use certain strategies or defensive mechanisms to preserve their self-esteem or to protect themselves from intense feelings and negative aspects.

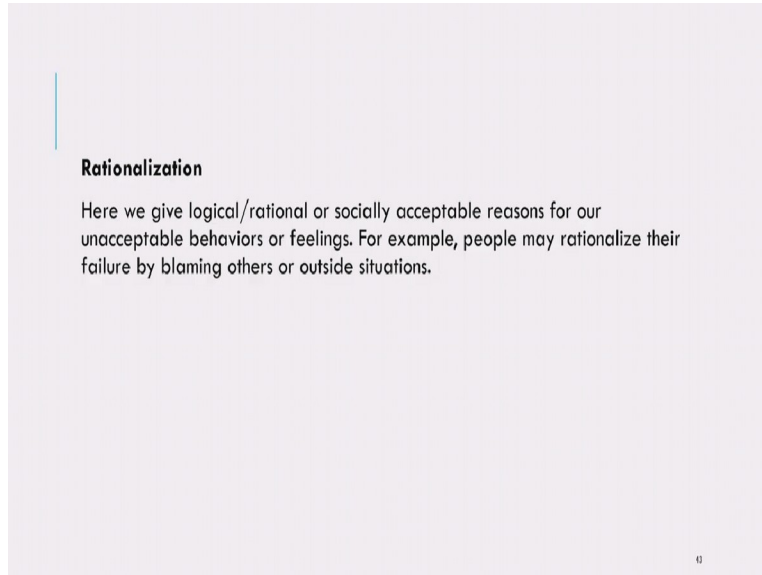
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Another defense mechanism is called as regression. So, regression basically means you regress back, so you just go backward in your developmental stage. Progress means you go forward, regress means you go backward. So, in regression, what happens when confronted with stress and anxiety? Sometimes people display immature behavior that have relieved anxiety in the past. So, for example, especially childhood behavior, whenever you experience stress and anxiety, what a child does? For example, it will start crying and throwing tantrums and things around the room. Many adults also regress back to such behavior when they experience stress or anxieties.

For example, an adult might respond to frustrations by crying or throwing tantrums, which was helpful during the childhoods, they just regress back to their childhood behavior, where they will start crying or throwing things around them. So, this is an example of regression as a defense mechanism.

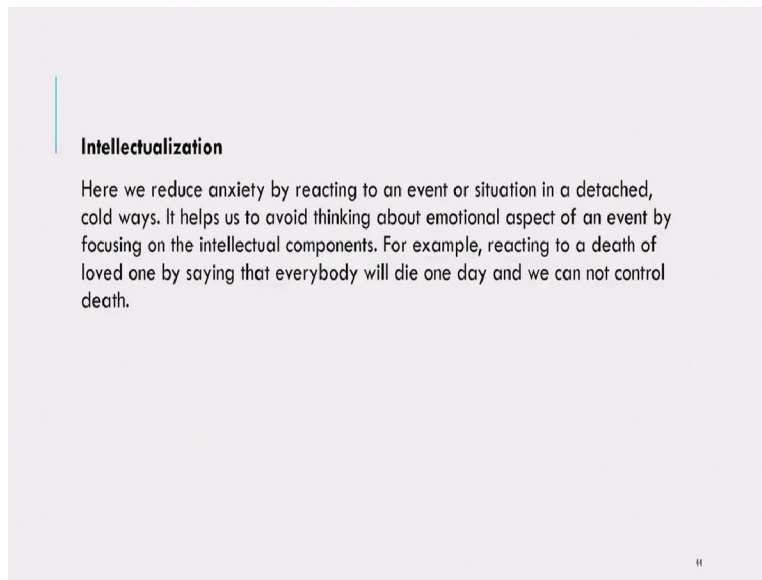
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The next defense mechanism is called as rationalization. What happens in rationalization is that here we give logical, rational or socially acceptable reasons for our unacceptable behaviors or feelings. Sometimes, we do something that is not socially acceptable or think people will not like it. So, you give more acceptable more, more rational and logical reasons. So, that whatever you have done looks less disturbing or at least it protects your EGO and self esteem. One may find a rationale or logical reasons for doing something which is unacceptable or some behavior where it is not very socially acceptable thing. For example, people may rationalize their failure by blaming others or outside situation. Let's take an example of where someone did not perform well in an examination. So, one may rationalize by saying that, I could not read because I was ill or the teacher was not good or the paper was very tough or something, some logical reason, socially acceptable reason people may give to kind of protect themselves, so that it does not look that bad or fault does not lie on you. So you will find some excuses. So that is the

meaning of rationalization and it is a defense mechanism which may be used unconsciously also.

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Intellectualization is another defensive mechanism. What happens here is that, we try to reduce anxiety by reacting to an event or a situation in a detached, cold ways. . So, when confronted with a highly emotional situation, we do not respond emotionally, but rather detached and coldly.

It allows one to focus on the analytical side of an incident rather than the emotional aspect. So you remove yourself from the emotional aspect of the event and concentrate on the intellectual, more thinking aspect.

For example, in response to the death of a loved one, saying that everybody will die one day and that death is beyond our control to cope with an emotional event. So, sometimes people use intellectualization as a defense mechanism by saying that everybody has to die one day and people, other people also kinds of many times in our society not tell these things, so that people can cope with the situation and that everybody will die one day and we cannot do anything about it and something like that. So, these are examples of intellectualization. This is a defense mechanism, that a lot of people use.

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Displacement

It involves taking out our frustrations/aggressions/impulses on people or objects that are less threatening. For example, displaced anger or aggression is very common where people express take out their anger on spouse that actually originated after a bad interaction with their boss.

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The next defense mechanism is called as displacement. So, displacement involves taking out our frustrations, aggressions, impulses on people or objects that are less threatening. So, you kind of displace your anger frustration from one person to another person, who is less threatening, because you cannot express your anger and frustration to someone because of some reason such as he/she is in a higher post or authority. In such cases, one may displace their anger to someone else who is less threatening.

So, for example, displaced anger or aggression is very common. It is a very common thing that a lot of people do, where people express and take out their anger on spouses or children that was actually originated in their office because of their boss or something. So, they were very frustrated or angry with their boss in the office, but they could not express that anger simply because the expression of anger on the boss could be very dangerous to their job. So, they come home and express all the frustration and anger on their spouse or children. So, this is an example of displaced anger. So it originated in somewhere else, but you were expressing it somewhere else. So, this is the example of displacement as a defense mechanism, which is also quite commonly used.

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Projection

Here people attribute their own unacceptable characteristics or qualities to another person. For example, a person with adulterous nature may blame his partner of cheating him.

The next defense mechanism is called as projection. People project their undesirable characteristics or attributes onto another individual in projection. So you project your own undesirable traits onto someone else, refusing to admit that they are in me but insisting that they are in that person. As a result, you blame someone else for your undesirable characteristics. So, this is referred to as projection because accepting it is in me will make you uncomfortable, so you don't consider it. As a result, you simply project it onto someone else. An individual with an adulterous disposition, for example, can accuse his partner of cheating. He has an extramarital wish. However, he can project and claim that his wife or spouse has the desire or is cheating on him. So, this is known as projection as a defensive mechanism, and many people use it at times.

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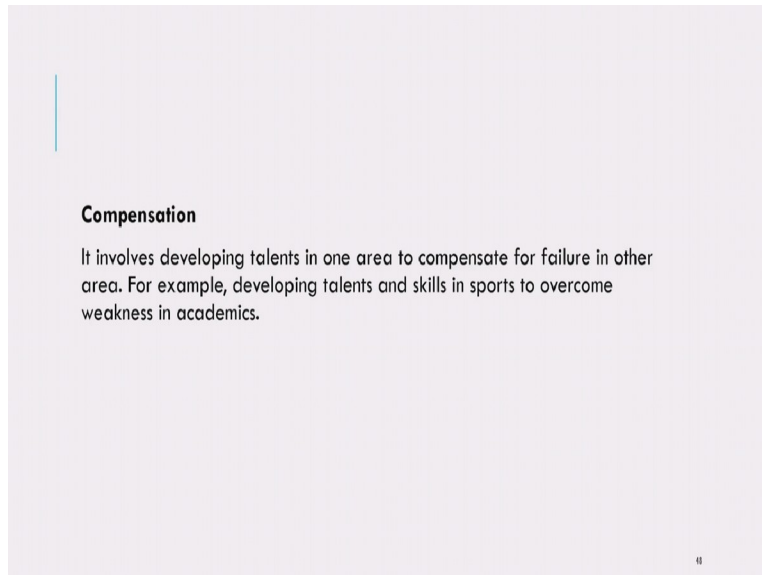
Reaction formation

Here the person tries to deal with anxiety by behaving in opposite ways of his actual feelings and thinking. By using this defense mechanisms people hide their true feelings about something by showing exaggerated opposite behavior. For example, a person expressing exaggerated sadness/crying on the death of a person who was disliked by him.

The next defense mechanism is called as reaction formation. Here, the person tries to deal with anxiety by behaving in opposite ways of the actual feeling and thinking. So, in reaction formation, what you do? Here, you just behave in opposite ways of what is the actual, your own actual feelings.

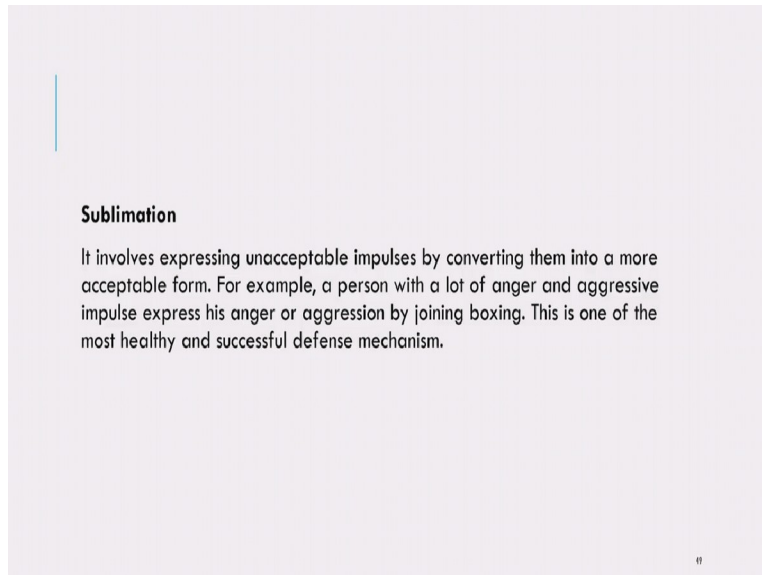
By using this defense mechanism, people hide their true feelings about something by showing exaggerated opposite behavior. So, they try to hide what is the actuality which because they may not feel comfortable in expressing it, or they themselves may not feel comfortable. So, they behave in just opposite ways, especially exaggerated ways. For instance, a person displaying exaggerated sorrow or weeping over the death of someone he despises. So, at times, you may not like that person at all, or you may strongly hate that person, and when that person dies, you may weep and be sad. As a defensive mechanism, you're displaying a reaction forming. So, those may not be true feelings, but rather an action used to protect something within yourself.

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The next one is called as compensation. So, it involves developing talents in one area to compensate for failure in another area. So, when someone fails in a particular area in life, they compensate for failure by developing talents in another area. To resolve academic weaknesses, you could grow talents and skills in sports, for example. So, if anyone is lacking in academics, he will try to compensate for that deficiency by cultivating talents and abilities in something else, such as athletics or extracurricular activities. As a result, it is a motivator for people to compensate for their loss in something. This could also be seen as a defense mechanism.

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Sublimation is another defensive mechanism. According to Sigmund Freud, this is one of the healthy defensive mechanisms. As a result, it entails expressing undesirable urges by transforming them into more acceptable forms. As a result, if you have any undesirable unwanted urges, you can turn them into something more suitable. Sublimation is the term for the process of transforming something into another form. An individual with a lot of anger and aggression, for example, can simply sublimate his anger by participating in sports like boxing, where he can express a lot of his anger. Now, if you display your anger and aggression in normal social settings, it will not be accepted by others, and they will judge you negatively.

But, let's say you take that rage and channel it into a discipline like boxing, where you can channel it into a more acceptable form, where you can build a career out of it, and people will respect you if you're good at it. As a result, it is a case of sublimation. As a result, it is one of the most effective and healthy defensive mechanisms.

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Are all defense mechanisms pathological?

Defense mechanisms vary in their adaptive functions and some are very commonly used by people. However, excessive use of defense mechanism can be detrimental to our mental health.

Vaillant (1986) proposed a hierarchical structure of defense mechanisms. He proposed that there can be four levels of defense mechanisms-

Level 1: Psychotic/pathological defenses (denial, extreme projection)

Level 2: Immature defenses (Fantasy, projection)

Level 3: Neurotic defenses (Displacement, intellectualization, reaction formation, repression)

Level 4: Mature defenses (Sublimation, humor, suppression)

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And there are likely many other defensive mechanisms. So, these are some of the common defense mechanisms that we all use in our daily activities, and are all of these defense mechanisms pathological? No, it's not true. Defense mechanisms differ in their adaptability; some are more maladaptive, while others are more adaptive.

Excessive use of defensive mechanisms, on the other hand, may be harmful to mental wellbeing because you are distorting reality, not being in contact with reality, and your EGO is distorting your reality to protect you. As a result, too much distortion is harmful. Some defense mechanisms are normal and acceptable; after all, people use them. However, if a person employs too many defense mechanisms, he will gradually lose contact with reality, which can be detrimental to mental health.

Vaillant is a researcher who suggested a hierarchical framework for defense mechanisms, claiming that there could be four levels of defense. Psychotic or pathological defenses, such as denial or extreme projection, are at level one. These could be psychotic or pathological defense mechanisms, and having too many of them could be harmful to one's mental health. Level 2 are immature defenses, such as fantasy, projection, which are very immature kind of defense mechanism.

Neurotic defences are at level three. So, there's a lot of emotional instability and stuff like that, which involves displacement, intellectualization, reaction formation repression, and

other things like that. They are all neurotic defenses. Number four is mature defenses, which are more mature in the sense that they are more healthy such as sublimation, humor, and suppression.

As a result, defense mechanisms differ in their functions and adaptiveness, and some defense mechanisms are more maladaptive than others. However, overuse of defense mechanisms can be harmful in the long run. But excess of anything is bad. So, it is same here also.

So, this is all about defensive coping. So, we have introduced the concept of coping strategies and we discussed some examples of maladaptive coping, including unconscious defensive coping strategies. So with this, we end today's lecture. In the next lecture, we will talk about constructive coping. Thank you.