

DEFENSIVE MECHANISMS ЗАЩИТНЫЕ МЕХАНИЗМЫ ЛИЧНОСТИ

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Abstracts

The article deals with psychological defense mechanisms and their beginnings.

Key words: *defense mechanism, a psychological mechanism, psychological defense.*

Аннотация

В данной статье освещается тема защитных механизмов личности и их истоки.

Ключевые слова: *защитные механизмы, психологические механизмы, психологические защиты.*

The relevance of this paper arises from the great changes that have touched every aspect of social life. Shifts in politics and socio-economics have, without a doubt, left their mark on the modern personality, manifested in tension, emotional discomfort, and stress. As complex as problems "in the world" tend to be, overcoming inner obstacles is even more difficult.

Here, the defensive mechanisms of a person's psyche are activated. Some try to forget or repress the traumatic memory, others attempt to regress and drain their problems of their significance.

Psychic defenses serve a variety of useful functions. Above all, they allow the personality to adapt to difficult or stressful life-situations. Only when the "I" is well protected from threats do these adaptive functions become truly "defensive." As a rule, people employ them in two cases: first, in times of great stress, worry, or grief; second, in order to maintain self-esteem.

The concept "psychological defense" is multifaceted and is one of the most complex objects of psychological study. Many researchers, both in Russia and abroad, note the dearth of empirical studies of this phenomenon, due primarily to the lack of proper research methods. Another complication is the variety of definitions of "psychological defense."

The term "psychological defense mechanism" was first used by Freud in 1894's *The Neuro-Psychoses of Defense*. For him, a psychological defense mechanism represented a solution of the conflict between an individual's inclinations and the demands of society[2].

His daughter, Anna Freud, expanded the notion of defense mechanisms, seeing in them not only inborn traits but also characteristics acquired by individuals in the course of development. Defense mechanisms represent the activity of consciousness that begins when the "I" is subjected to a dangerously excessive stimulus or to affects arising from it.

Karen Horney, a representative of socio-cultural theory, remarked that the desire of the personality for safety is generated by a feeling of "fundamental unease." Also relevant is the conflict between the tendency to satisfy one's desires and the tendency to seek safety.

Erich Fromm, a representative of humanist theory, studied intraspersonal and interpersonal aspects of psychological defense in the context of human aggression.

The concept "psychological defense mechanism" is defined as a system of mechanisms that minimize negative worries — those connected to conflicts that pose a threat to the integrity of the personality. Similar conflicts can arise because of contradictions within the personality itself as well as discord between new information and the image of the world and the "I" already formed by the personality.

Psychological defense is closely connected to the defense systems of the organism. Some patients come in for analysis not when they want to draw closer to their inner worlds, but when, to the contrary, they are in desperate need of refuge from it. Their primary goal in analysis is to set up or, more accurately, to reconstruct their defenses against internal and external objects that cause them almost unbearable anxiety.

Modern life is permeated by barely modified infantile worries. We observe today many patients with weak egos, who, in infancy, with an excessive feeling of persecution, approached a depressive position (in Klein's sense), which they found themselves unable to overcome. In response, they developed a system of defense. However, that system proves to be unreliable, since the combination of a weak ego and powerful anxiety, which makes it impossible to overcome the depressive position, also makes it impossible for patients to maintain their defenses. They vacillate between vulnerability and contraction of the personality; when their system of defense does not work properly, they are susceptible to intense anxiety arising from their objects.

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