Defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological strategies that individuals use to cope with anxiety, stress, or uncomfortable emotions. Sigmund Freud and later psychologists identified these mechanisms as ways in which the ego defends itself against feelings of guilt, shame, or conflicts between internal desires and societal expectations.

Here are some common defense mechanisms:

**1. Repression/Motivated Forgetting**

Explanation: Pushing away painful or uncomfortable memories so you don't have to think about them.

Example: Someone who experienced a bad event, like being bullied, might forget those memories to avoid feeling sad.

**2. Denial**

Explanation: Refusing to accept the truth about something.

Example: A person diagnosed with a serious illness might act like everything is fine and ignore the diagnosis.

**3. Projection**

Explanation: Blaming others for your own feelings.

Example: If you’re feeling angry, you might accuse someone else of being angry.

**4. Displacement**

Explanation: Taking out your feelings on someone or something less threatening.

Example: If you're mad at your boss, you might come home and yell at your dog.

**5. Rationalization**

Explanation: Making excuses to justify your behavior.

Example: A student who fails a test might say the test was unfair instead of admitting they didn’t study enough.

**6. Reaction Formation**

Explanation: Acting the opposite of how you really feel.

Example: If someone feels insecure, they might act overly confident to hide their insecurity.

**7. Sublimation**

Explanation: Turning unacceptable urges into acceptable actions.

Example: Someone with a lot of aggressive energy might take up boxing to channel it into something positive.

**8. Regression**

Explanation: Acting like a child when stressed.

Example: An adult having a temper tantrum when they don’t get their way.