Chapter 6 Personality Case Study

A group of girls get into a verbal argument after one of the girls is accused of ruining an art project which did not belong to her. Two of the girls start to yell obscenities at the girl who allegedly ruined the project. This girl retaliates by threatening violence. The two other girls follow suit. Eventually, the argument escalates further to more yelling and threats. When questioned later individually, it is learned that one of the girls had a rough phone call with her mother and found out her father would not be visiting her. Another of the girls had a similar experience, as her parents visited during the week and she did not "get along" with them. Finally, the girl accused of ruining the project was just admitted and angry at her parents for placing her in treatment. One of the behavioral techs redirected the girls to playing sports and painting. The girls seem to calm down and de-escalate.

Question: What defense mechanism (s) is the three girls utilizing and why? Explain. Are there any other defense mechanisms at work here? Explain.

Rubrics

All three of the girls are using repression and displacement as defense mechanisms. The first girl is upset and probably hurt because her father is not coming to see her so, she takes her anger and pain out on another girl. She has been hiding her hurt and anger but is now releasing it in the form of being aggressive towards another girl. The second girl is upset because her parents did come to visit her but things did not go well because she does not get along with her parents. She too has been holding in her anger and pain now to release it on someone else. The third girl is angry because her parents placed her in treatment and she is displacing that anger on someone’s project. While the first two girls are displacing their anger on another human, the third girl displaced her anger unto an object; nonetheless, they are all displacing their emotions they have towards their parents while maintaining positive relations with their parents. A possible third defense mechanism is occurring, introjection. The girl who is being accused threatens violence and the other two girls follow suit by threatening violence as well to keep them from feeling inferior.