

Interpersonal Communication

Defense Mechanisms

Avoidance occurs when one retreats from a problem in a relationship. Such retreat may be stimulated by low self esteem, fear of failure, embarrassment, insecurity I the relationship,

Psychological withdrawal occurs when we feel uncomfortable in a particular situation, yet feel forced to be physically present. Such discomfort can stem from being forced to be there or to contribute when that is not desired; when we are put in an unwanted spotlight; when other matters weigh heavily on one and those matters take priority over present gongs on.

Distancing occurs when we prevent others from getting close to us. Other than being socially incompetent, this can stem from negative stereotypes, biases, superiority complexes, arrogance, and fear of others' expectations. Sometimes, we shun others who are too different from us, those who might make demands on us, those with whom we have attributed negative qualities, and those whom we fear.

Reaction formation occur when we behave contrary to the way we really feel. Some of this might occur as a means of deception, a way to avoid owning up to our true feelings. Sometimes we act as we think others expect us to act; we might act as we have been accustomed to act event if n this situation hat is not consonant with our present feelings; or we might act as others are acting to be in tune with others = conformity.

Sarcasm is when we use a biting sense of humor to keep people at a distance and to maintain control in a situation. Sarcasm is often hurtful, demeaning, and places barriers to effective relational communication. Sarcasm is a verbal power ploy, placing the receiver in a one-down position.

Outdoing others occurs when we feel the need to top the achievements of others; it is also called "one upsmanhip." Low self esteem, inferiority complexes, low status, ad fear of negative social comparison can contribute to this defense mechanism.

Overly critical communication occurs when we judge or criticize the behavior of others. When criticism is meant to and is interpreted to suggest improvement in another, it is typically seen as positive; however, when judgment is either meant to or interpreted as a means of hurting another, it is a barrier to relational growth or stability.

Formula communication occurs when we engage in superficial dialogue as a means of self-protection.

