

Varona & Co Thought Leader Essay

Practical Example of Freud's Defense Mechanisms

Last time I talked about a logical fallacy, and I mentioned that there's actually quite a few of them out there. This time, I want to talk about Sigmund Freud's defense mechanisms.

Sigmund Freud was a psychologist and he came up with the "defense mechanisms" theory. Freud essentially said that whenever we find ourselves in situations that are very stressful or traumatic, our minds use defense mechanisms to protect us or to avoid dealing with the issue or situation that is causing us stress or anxiety.

The first defense mechanism I want to talk about is called displacement. I'm sure every single one of us has witnessed it at least once, and a lot of us may be guilty of using the displacement defense mechanism.

For example, you're at the office and your boss yells at you for no reason. This may cause you a lot of stress and anxiety, you may feel targeted and not understand why your boss is yelling at you. It's very possible that your boss is using the displacement defense mechanism.

Perhaps, your boss's boss yelled at him for something. Now your boss is stressed and anxious. He may not know how to cope with that stress in a healthy way, so he decides to yell at you for no reason. He displaces his stress onto you.

Next time you feel like someone is attacking you or targeting you, and you can't understand why. Be confident and know that maybe it has nothing to do with you. In my example, even

though your boss is yelling at you, it really has nothing to do with you.

Your boss's mind is using a defense mechanism to protect itself because it doesn't know any other ways to cope with stress. He is displacing the anxiety he feels from having been yelled at onto you.

It's important to remember that it's not okay for people to yell at you for no reason. But the reality is that sometimes these things happen. Know that if your boss is yelling at you, and the whole situation doesn't make sense, it's because it's probably not about you. In this example, unfortunately your boss doesn't have any better ways to cope with stress. But you shouldn't let his problems bother you.