**DEFINTIONS OF DEFENSE MECHANISMS**

Reaction Formation A defense against a threatening impulse involving actively expressing the opposite impulse

Repression The mechanism whereby threatening or painful thoughts or feelings are pushed out of awareness

Projection Attributing to others one’s own unacceptable desires and impulses

Displacement Discharging impulses by shifting from a threatening object or person to a “safer target”

Rationalization Explaining away failures or misdeeds with excuses

Sublimation A redirection of sexual or aggressive energy into creative behaviors

Regression Reverting to a form of behavior that one has outgrown, usually typical of an earlier phase of development where demands were not as great

Denial An extreme distortion of reality in response to trauma or unacceptable behaviors