

# Protective Mechanisms *And* Psychosocial Emotional Learning

*As tension rises and our ability to tolerate discomfort diminishes, the resulting stress grows our instinct to defend. Depending upon our early life experiences and what was modelled for us, we use different techniques to ward off more perceived than actual threats.*



## Denying

The most primitive instinct, often seen in young children who fear the reaction of their caregivers.



## Avoiding

An early instinct to put off or work around what we find difficult or unpleasant.



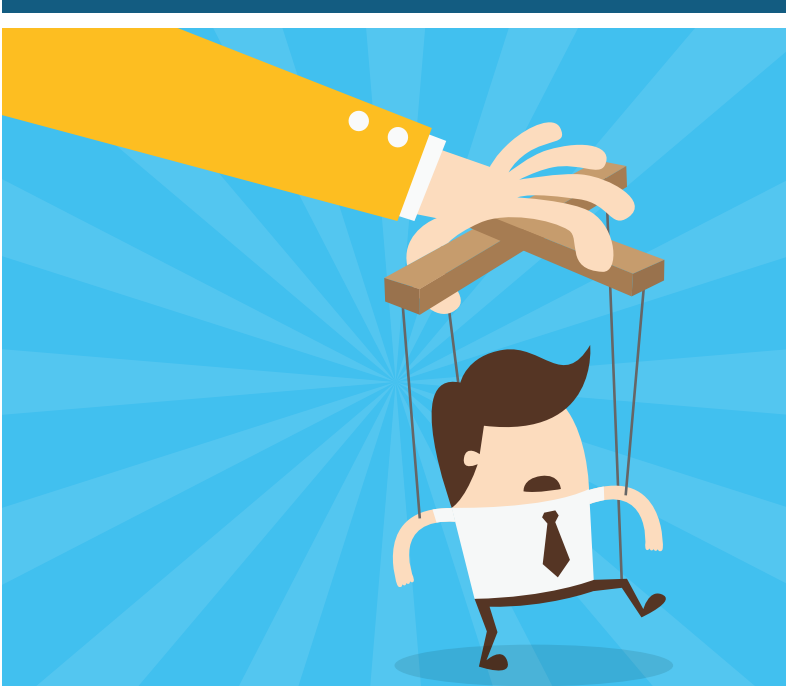
## Projecting

A general diversion by widespread attribution to distract or diffuse the intensity of focus.



## Blaming

Pointing the finger at somebody or something specific to take the focus off oneself.



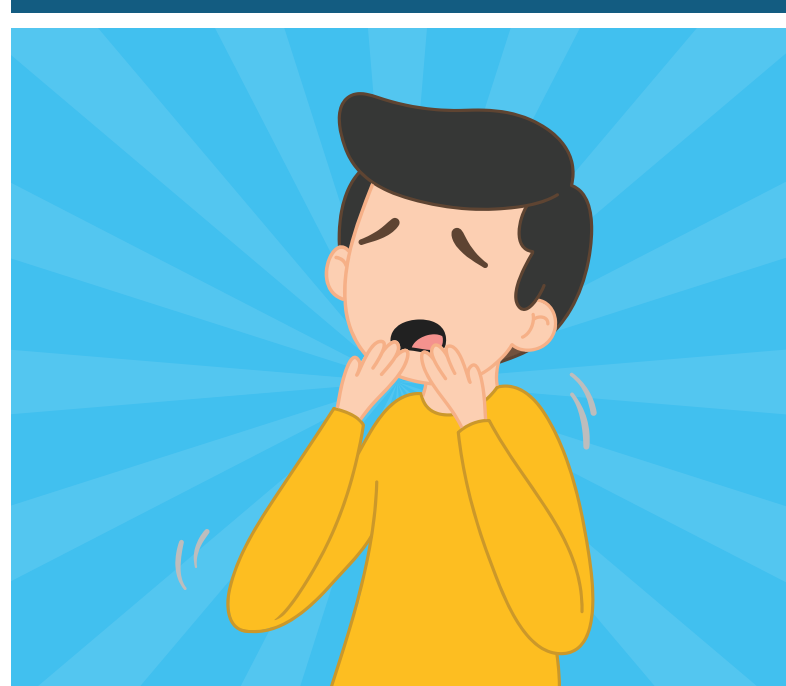
## Coercing

Influencing others to shift their focus or remediate their feeling to gain allegiance.



## Introjecting

Internalizing the feelings, thoughts and actions of others to diffuse tension or circumvent conflict.



## Submitting

Giving in to the will of others before tension arises or codifying others.



## Surfacing

Maintaining a topical focus to prevent depth that gives rise to conflict and intimacy.



## Overpowering

Forcing others to submit, using our status, authority or the implication of threat to generate fear.



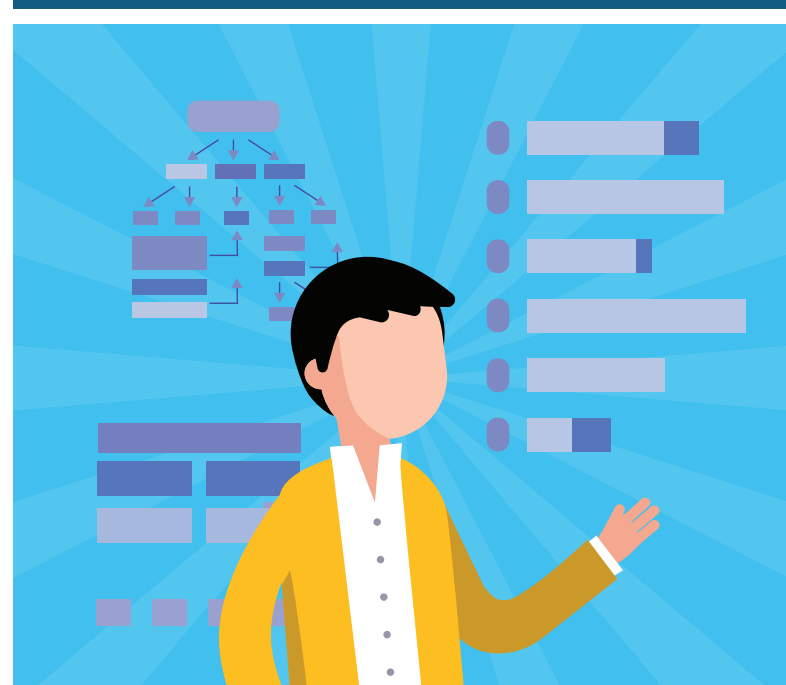
## Merging

Aligning with others who seem more powerful or a group, to imbue ourselves with authority.



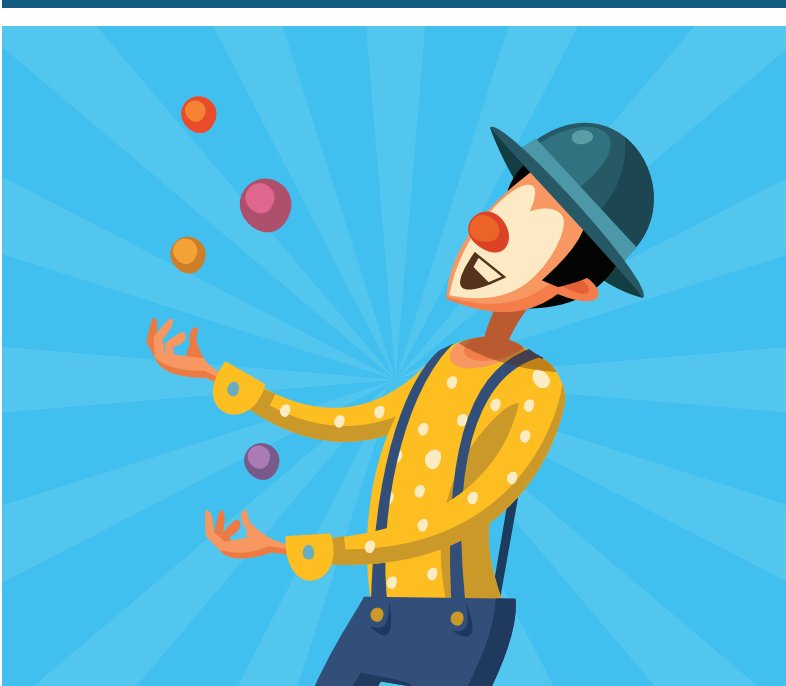
## Isolating

Perpetually insulating ourselves from the equation and sustaining a posture of independence.



## Intellectualizing

Using reasoning, analyzing, and interpreting to prevent any experience or expression of emotion.



## Humorizing

Lowering the temperature of perceived threats through sarcasm or wit, preventing depth of contact.



## Facilitating

Remaining on the periphery but giving the appearance of involvement, by brokering deals between others.



## Fixing

Remediating slights and repairing hurt feelings with less regard for our own needs.



## All or Nothing

The tendency to go to extremes is an instinct for risk management, limiting disappointment.