



DENVER WELLNESS COUNSELING

## CLIENT WORKBOOK | Defenses

Defenses (or defense mechanisms) are clever ways that our mind will aid us in avoiding painful or potentially overwhelming emotion. Defense mechanisms can be good or bad. For example, if your feelings are hurt at work, a defense can help you to not cry at an inappropriate time. On the other hand, spending too much time in defense-mode can prevent you from being your authentic Self and prevent you from expressing, learning from, and working through important emotion.

Look at the following list of common defenses and circle some that you are aware of:

- An “I don’t care” attitude about things/life
- Misplaced aggression (anger towards the wrong person)
- Being “glued to technology” (social media, game sites, gambling, news)
- Smiling, laughing, or joking
- Worrying, ruminating (being stuck on a worry)
- Being a perfectionist
- Procrastinating
- Being judgmental towards others, criticism, prejudice
- Feeling numb or spaced out
- Exhaustion or tiredness
- Arrogance, or acting better than others
- Over-indulging (food, alcohol, drugs)
- Obsessive exercising or restricting food
- Over-working or being “obsessed with work”
- Being overly productive with no down-time or time to relax
- Cutting or suicidal gestures/ideation
- Talking too much, or talking over people
- Changing the subject
- Isolating, not talking, or avoidance of a topic
- Self-criticism (judging ourselves)
- Secret keeping

Any that were not listed above? \_\_\_\_\_