

NO PROBLEM!

Denial is a coping mechanism for individuals and families that serve to protect a drug abuser and their family from the pain or embarrassment of feeling that they have a problem. A manipulative skill used to reorganize the facts about what is really going on, denial can perpetuate a problem. Using denial in an unconscious strategy to prevent change can lead to greater trouble at a time when a little change could help out in a big way. Recreating reality to protect the abuser and the family from the sad truth, denial can create even greater hurt in the long run. Denial has many forms:

Thinking that things are great when they are not, invoking the invincibility factor, imagining that they have magic powers, "Aren't we just awesome? We could take on the whole world tonight."

EXCUSING - Translating events and circumstances to indicate if something has gone wrong then it is certainly not our fault. "I really didn't have much to drink. I just hit a patch of black ice and the car slid sideways."

MINIMIZING - Oversimplifying an incident or series of incidents that have a negative impact on the lives of the people involved, understating a bad situation in an effort to prove that it wasn't really that bad, after all. "Relax! It was just a few beers. You make a big deal out of everything."

RATIONALIZING - Creating a detailed explanation of a disaster to reinforce an attitude that despite all the fuss, nothing is actually wrong. A complex reweaving of events to demonstrate that everything is just fine the way it is. "I went over to Bill's house to help him out. We needed to borrow some tools, so we went to Tom's garage. By the time we got to the lumber yard, it was closed. Then, we couldn't really get the job done right, so we watched the game on the big screen over at the bar."

JUSTIFYING- Designing a reason or excuse to explain why everything happened just the way it did. "It had to be that way - I had no other choice."

SILENCE - Refusing to acknowledge anyone who disagrees in a manner that ignores another's thoughts and feelings and prevents a dialogue.

BLAMING - Turning the situation around and pitching the responsibility for what has happened to someone else. "If you hadn't opened your big mouth, they never would have found out about it. It's all your fault."

HUMORING- Laughing it off, trying to make life appear to be one big joke as if nothing matters. "When we get wasted we have the best times!"

EVADING - Diverting attention through changing the subject, interrupting. "What about your bad habits, Mr. Perfect?"

INTELLECTUALIZING - Trying to explain an elaborate theory addressing the multitude of possible relationships between cause and effect of whatever is going on, a pseudo-scientific smoke screen borrowing imaginary data from a cloudy memory of research done in another time and another place. "I've heard that doctors say that alcohol is good for your circulation. so drinking can't be bad for your heart."

ATTACKING – Threatening or intimidating opposing views, really laying into someone who disagrees with their choices. "You would have to be pretty stupid to think something like that!"