

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. It involves an unwillingness to admit wrongdoing. 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. Re-creating reality to protect the drug user and the family from the sad truth, denial can create even greater hurt in the long run.

Denial has many forms:

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."*

DISTRACTION/ATTACKING: Avoiding by creating uproar or a diversion or distracting with humor; having angry outbursts meant to intimidate, threaten or frighten others with opposing views, hoping the explosion will draw attention away from the real issue at hand. *"Did I tell you what Johnny did the other night? It was so funny. You got to hear this story!" "You would have to be pretty stupid to think something like that!"*

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. Trying to make the behaviors or consequences seem smaller than they really are. *"Relax! It was just a few beers. You make a big deal out of everything." "I only do it once in a while."*

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." "I can go months without this so I don't really have a problem."*

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. I was the most sober so I had to drive. We all had to be at work in the morning."*

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

COMPARISON: This is shifting focus to someone else or another time to justify behaviors such as *"I don't smoke even half as much as I did back in college" or "I'm not as bad as _____."*

BLAMING - Turning the situation around and shifting the blame and responsibility for what has happened on 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!" "It was the funniest night!"*

EVADING/AVOIDING MY OMISSION: Diverting attention by attempting to change the subject, interrupting. *"What about your bad habits, Mr. Perfect?"* Ignoring the subject or manipulating the conversation to avoid talking about something. Leaving out important details of information such as how one drove home high with their friends little sister in the car or revealing enough information while holding back the most dangerous information that will get you in deeper trouble.

INTELLECTUALIZING: Trying to explain an elaborate theory addressing the multitude of possible relationships between cause and effect of whatever is going on, getting lost in details, 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."*

BEING ENTITLED/UNIQUE: Thinking one is different or special; *"Yeah but I'm different. That won't happen to me because I know what I'm doing when it comes to smoking pot"*

GLOBAL THINKING: This is attempting to justify something with absolute terms like "always" or "never." *"Everyone in college smokes pot!" "Everybody skips a few classes" "I've never heard of a girl going to a party and not expecting to be hit on. All guys hit on freshman girls." "I've never heard of parents calling other parents. Who does that!?"*

COMPARTMENTALIZING: This is something that almost every addict does on some level. This is separating your life into compartments in which you do things that you keep separate from other parts of your life. It's used to avoid cognitive dissonance, or the mental discomfort and anxiety caused by a person's having conflicting values, cognitions, emotions, beliefs, etc. within themselves. This is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde or a separation of public and private life to the point where it is unhealthily driven by thoughts of *"If they only knew, then..."*

PLAYING THE VICTIM: Playing hopeless or helpless to change anything. *"I can't do anything about it." "I'm just always going to be a loser – I'm a Hubbard. Hubbards always get in trouble." "I come from a long line of drinkers...it's just in my blood because I'm Irish."*

MANIPULATING: Distorting reality through the use of power, persuasion, lies, secrets or guilt to exploit others. Its' about managing the impression of others who might otherwise have you pegged. If the force of the denial is convincing enough, others will likely be successfully manipulated. Manipulators lie to themselves and others about their uncaring acts and intentions as a tactic to get others off their back.

CRAZYSMAKING: this occurs when we are confronted by others who do have a cracked perception... We simply tell them that they're totally wrong we act indignantly toward them attempting to make them feel crazy by simply positing that they cannot trust their own perceptions. *"You gotta be absolutely nuts. I wouldn't do that Mom. I think you got too much sun today."*