

Minimization and Rationalization

Resentment & Harm

Step-Working Guide · The Recovery Files

In this workbook

1. **Minimization and Rationalization** — key ideas, worksheet
Each topic's scored self-assessment and mind map are in the app.

TOPIC

Minimization and Rationalization

KEY IDEAS

Minimization and Rationalization

Defensive Barriers

These patterns involve reducing the severity of harm caused or justifying past actions instead of taking full responsibility. They are lingering defenses from addiction that block authentic accountability.

The Protective Function

Why We Do It

Originally developed to protect us from overwhelming shame, these defenses now prevent the complete honesty needed for amends. They maintain barriers between us and those we wish to heal.

Common Patterns

Identifying the Signs

We might downplay harm ('it wasn't that bad'), blame circumstances ('I was stressed'), focus on others' wrongs ('they did it too'), or claim our sobriety earns automatic forgiveness.

The Cost of Defense

Incomplete Healing

Minimization re-injures those we harmed by invalidating their experience. It prevents us from experiencing the profound relief that comes from complete, unconditional ownership of our past.

Developing Authentic Accountability

Complete Responsibility

We must learn to acknowledge harm fully without 'buts' or explanations. This means validating others' feelings and focusing solely on our role, regardless of circumstances.

The Freedom of Truth

Peace in Honesty

Sitting with the full reality of our actions allows us to find peace. Authentic accountability fosters genuine humility, service, and the deep healing of relationships.

WORKSHEET

Minimization and Rationalization Worksheet

MAPPING

Mapping Defenses**Severity Minimization**

Examples (e.g., 'It was just a small lie'):

Justification and Explanation

Examples (e.g., 'I did it because I was stressed'):

Blame Deflection

Examples (e.g., 'They started it'):

Victim Positioning

Examples (e.g., focusing on how guilty I feel):

REFLECTION

Understanding Patterns

What category of defensive patterns affects you most powerfully?

How have these patterns evolved in recovery?

What situations trigger your defensive patterns most intensely?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Developing Accountability

What strategies help you take complete responsibility?

How do you distinguish between context and justification?

What would finding peace in taking responsibility look like?

PLAN

Action Plan

Specific defensive pattern to address:

Goal for authentic accountability:

Concrete action steps:

Plan for potential defensive resistance:
