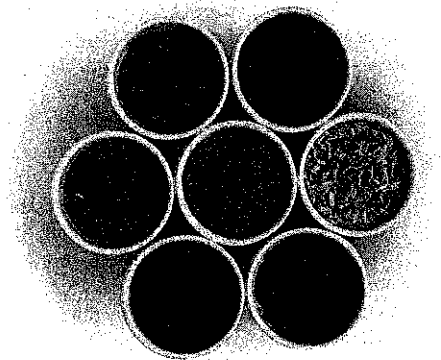


SEVENTH EDITION

# Counseling the Culturally Diverse

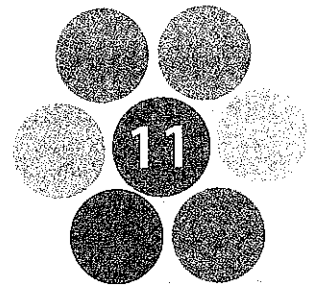
Theory and Practice



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2016

**WILEY**  
Hoboken, NJ



# Racial/Cultural Identity Development in People of Color

## Counseling Implications

### Chapter Objectives

1. Learn the important factors that are influential in the development of racial/cultural identity in people of color.
2. Become familiar with racial identity development in various groups of color.
3. Describe how sociopolitical forces influence the identity development of people of color.
4. Define the developmental levels of racial consciousness and describe how they affect the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward oneself, toward members of one's own group, and toward majority group members.
5. Become knowledgeable about how the racial consciousness of people of color impacts the counseling/therapy situation.
6. Describe the various common characteristics of clients at each of the following levels of identity formation: *conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and integrative awareness.*
7. Discuss the therapeutic challenges likely to confront a counselor or therapist working with clients at each of the five levels of identity development.

## SANSEI (THIRD-GENERATION) JAPANESE AMERICAN FEMALE

For nearly all my life I have never seriously attempted to dissect my feelings and attitudes about being a Japanese American woman. Aborted attempts were made, but they were never brought to fruition, because it was unbearably painful. Having been born and raised in Arizona, I had no Asian friends. I suspect that given an opportunity to make some, I would have avoided them anyway. That is because I didn't want to have anything to do with being Japanese American. Most of the Japanese images I saw were negative. Japanese women were ugly; they had "cucumber legs," flat yellow faces, small slanty eyes, flat chests, and were stunted in growth. The men were short and stocky, sneaky and slimy, clumsy, inept, "wimpy looking," and sexually emasculated. I wanted to be tall, slender, large eyes, full lips, and elegant looking; I wasn't going to be typical Oriental! . . .

At Cal [University of California, Berkeley], I've been forced to deal with my Yellow-White identity. There are so many "yellows" here that I can't believe it. I've come to realize that many White prejudices are deeply ingrained in me; so much so that they are unconscious. . . . To accept myself as a total person, I also have to accept my Asian identity as well. But what is it? I just don't know. Are they the images given me through the filter of White America, or are they the values and desires of my parents?

Yesterday, I had a rude awakening. For the first time in my life I went on a date with a Filipino boy. I guess I shouldn't call him a "boy," as my ethnic studies teacher says it is derogatory toward Asians and Blacks. I only agreed to go because he seemed different from the other "Orientals" on campus. (I guess I shouldn't use that word either.) He's president of his Asian fraternity, very athletic and outgoing. . . . When he asked me, I figured, "Why not?" It'll be a good experience to see what it's like to date an Asian boy. Will he be like White guys who will try to seduce me, or will he be too afraid to make any move when it comes to sex? . . . We went to San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf for lunch. We were seated and our orders were taken before two other White women. They were, however, served first. This was painfully apparent to us, but I wanted to pretend that it was just a mix-up. My friend, however, was less forgiving and made a public fuss with the waiter. Still, it took an inordinate amount of time for us to get our lunches, and the filets were overcooked (purposely?). My date made a very public scene by placing a tip on the table, and then returning to retrieve it. I was both embarrassed but proud of his actions.

This incident and others made me realize several things. For all my life I have attempted to fit into White society. I have tried to convince myself that I was different, that I was like all my other White classmates, and that prejudice and discrimination didn't exist for me. I wonder how I could have been so oblivious to prejudice and racism. I now realize that I cannot escape from my ethnic heritage and from the way people see me. Yet I



don't know how to go about resolving many of my feelings and conflicts. While I like my newly found Filipino "male" friend (he is sexy), I continue to have difficulty seeing myself married to anyone other than a White man. (Excerpts from a Sansei student class journal)

## RACIAL AWAKENING

### Oriental, Asian, or White?

This Sansei (third-generation) Japanese American female is experiencing a *racial awakening* that has strong implications for her racial/cultural identity development. Her previous belief systems concerning White Americans and Asian Americans are being challenged by social reality and the experiences of being a "visible racial/ethnic minority." First, a major theme involving societal portrayals of Asian Americans is clearly expressed in the student's beliefs about racial/cultural characteristics: She describes the Asian American male and female in highly unflattering terms. She seems to have internalized these beliefs and to be using White standards to judge Asian Americans as being desirable or undesirable. For this student, the process of incorporating these standards has not only attitudinal but behavioral consequences as well. In Arizona, she would not have considered making Asian American friends even if the opportunity presented itself. In her mind, she was not a "typical Oriental"; she disowned or felt ashamed of her ethnic heritage, and she even concludes that she would not consider marrying anyone but a White male.

### Denial Breakdown

Second, her denial that she is an Asian American is beginning to crumble. Being immersed in the student body on a campus in which there are many fellow Asian Americans in attendance forces her to explore ethnic identity issues—a process she has been able to avoid while living in a predominantly White area. In the past, when she encountered prejudice or discrimination, she had been able to deny it or to rationalize it away. The differential treatment she received at a restaurant and her male friend's labeling it as "discrimination" makes such a conclusion inescapable. The shattering of illusions is manifest in her realization that (a) despite her efforts to "fit in," it is not enough to gain social acceptance among many White Americans; (b) she cannot escape her racial/cultural heritage; and (c) she has been brainwashed into believing that one group is superior over another.

### The Internal Struggle for Identity

Third, the student's internal struggle to cast off the cultural conditioning of her past and the attempts to define her ethnic identity are both painful and conflicting. We have clear evidence of the internal turmoil she is undergoing when she (a) refers to her "Yellow-White" identity; (b) writes about the negative images of Asian American males but winds up dating one; (c) uses the terms "Oriental" and "boy" (in reference to her Asian male friend) but acknowledges their derogatory racist nature; (d) describes Asian men as "sexually emasculated" but sees her Filipino date as "athletic," "outgoing," and "sexy"; (e) expresses embarrassment at confronting the waiter about discrimination but feels proud of her Asian male friend for doing so; and (f) states that she finds him attractive but could never consider marrying anyone but a White man. Understanding the process by which racial/cultural identity develops in persons of color is crucial for effective multicultural counseling/therapy.

### Locus of the Problem

Fourth, it is clear that the Japanese American female is a victim of ethnocentric monoculturalism. As we mentioned previously, the problem being experienced by the student does not reside in her but in our society. It resides in a society that portrays racial/ethnic characteristics as inferior, primitive, deviant, pathological, or undesirable. The resulting damage strikes at the self-esteem and self/group identity of many culturally different individuals in our society; many, like this student, may come to believe that their racial/cultural heritage or characteristics are burdens to be changed or overcome. Understanding racial/cultural identity development and its relationship to therapeutic practice are the goals of this chapter.

## RACIAL/CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT MODELS

The historic work on racial/cultural identity development among minority groups has led to major breakthroughs in the field of multicultural counseling/therapy (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998; Cross, 1971, 1995; Cross, Smith, & Payne, 2002; Helms, 1984, 1995; Horse, 2001; J. Kim, 1981; Ruiz, 1990). Most would agree that Asian Americans, African Americans, Latino/Hispanic Americans, and American Indians have distinct cultural heritages that make each different from the other. Yet such cultural distinctions can lead to a monolithic view of minority group attitudes and behaviors. The erroneous belief that all Asians are the same

all Blacks are the same, all Latinas/os are the same, or all American Indians are the same has led to numerous therapeutic problems.

First, therapists may often respond to culturally diverse clients in a very stereotypic manner and fail to recognize within-group or individual differences. For example, research indicates that Asian American clients seem to prefer and benefit most from a highly structured and directive approach, rather than an insight/feeling-oriented one (Hong & Domokos-Cheng Ham, 2001; B.S.K. Kim, 2011; Sandhu, Leung, & Tang, 2003). Although such approaches may generally be effective, they are often blindly applied without regard for possible differences in client attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Likewise, conflicting findings in the literature regarding whether people of color prefer therapists of their own race seem to be a function of our failure to make such distinctions. Preference for a racially or ethnically similar therapist may really be a function of the cultural/racial identity of the individual (within-group differences) rather than of race or ethnicity per se.

Second, the strength of racial/cultural identity models lies in their potential diagnostic value. Premature termination rates among clients of color may be attributed to the inappropriateness of transactions that occur between the helping professionals and culturally diverse clients. Research suggests that reactions to counseling, the counseling process, and counselors are influenced by cultural/racial identity and are not simply linked to minority group membership. The high failure-to-return rate of many clients seems to be intimately connected to the mental health professional's inability to assess the cultural identity of clients accurately (Ivey, D'Andrea, & Ivey, 2011).

A third important contribution derived from racial identity models is their acknowledgment of sociopolitical influences in shaping identity (à la the Sansei student). Early models of racial identity development all incorporated the effects of racism and prejudice (oppression) upon the identity transformation of their victims. Vontress (1971), for instance, theorized that African Americans moved through decreasing levels of dependence on White society to emerging identification with Black culture and society (Colored, Negro, and Black). Other similar models for African Americans have been proposed (Cross, 1971; Jackson, 1975; Thomas, 1970, 1971). The fact that other marginalized groups, such as Asian Americans (J. Kim, 2012; S. Sue & Sue, 1971), Latinas/os (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2012), Native Americans (Horse, 2012), women (Downing & Roush, 1985; McNamara & Rickard, 1989), lesbians/gays (Cass, 1979), and individuals with disabilities (Olkin, 1999), have similar processes may indicate experiential validity for such models as they relate to various oppressed groups.

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### Black Identity Development Models

Early attempts to define a process of minority identity transformation came primarily through the works of Black social scientists and educators (Cross, 1971; Jackson, 1975; Thomas, 1971). Although there are several *Black identity development models*, the Cross model of psychological *nigrescence* (the process of becoming Black) is perhaps the most influential and well documented (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995). The original Cross model was developed during the civil rights movement and delineates a five-stage process in which Blacks in the United States move from a White frame of reference to a positive Black frame of reference: *preencounter*, *encounter*, *immersion-emersion*, *internalization*, and *internalization-commitment*.

- The *preencounter* stage is characterized by African Americans' consciously or unconsciously devaluing their own Blackness and concurrently valuing White values and ways. There is a strong desire to assimilate and acculturate into White society. Blacks at this stage evidence self-hate, low self-esteem, and poor mental health (Vandiver, 2001).
- In the *encounter* stage, a two-step process begins to occur. First, the individual encounters a profound crisis or event that challenges his or her previous mode of thinking and behaving; second, the Black person begins to reinterpret the world, resulting in a shift in worldviews. Cross points out how the slaying of Martin Luther King Jr. was such a significant experience for many African Americans. More recently, the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the choking death of Eric Gardner in New York in 2014 are examples of such events. The person experiences both guilt and anger over being brainwashed by White society.
- In the third stage, *immersion-emersion*, the person withdraws from the dominant culture and becomes immersed in African American culture. Black pride begins to develop, but *internalization* of positive attitudes toward one's own Blackness is minimal. In the emersion phase, feelings of guilt and anger begin to dissipate with an increasing sense of pride.
- The next stage, *internalization*, is characterized by inner security, as conflicts between the old and new identities are resolved. Global anti-White feelings subside as the person becomes more flexible, more tolerant, and more bicultural/multicultural.

- The last stage, *internalization-commitment*, speaks to the commitment that such individuals have toward social change, social justice, and civil rights. It is expressed not only in words but also in actions that reflect the essence of their lives.

Cross's original model makes a major assumption: The evolution from the *preencounter* stage to the *internalization* stage reflects a movement from psychological dysfunction to psychological health (Vandiver, 2001).

Confronted with evidence that these stages may mask multiple racial identities, questioning his original assumption that all Blacks at the *preencounter* stage possess self-hatred and low self-esteem, and aware of the complex issues related to *race salience*, Cross (1991) revised his theory of *nigrescence* in his book *Shades of Black*. His changes, which are based on a critical review of the literature on Black racial identity, have increased the model's explanatory powers and promise high predictive validity (Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, & Worrell, 2001; Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001). In essence, the revised model contains nearly all the features from the earlier formulation, but it differs in several significant ways.

First, Cross introduces the concept of *race salience*, the degree to which race is an important and integral part of a person's approach to life. The Black person may function with "race" consciousness playing either a large role in his or her identity or a minimal one. In addition, salience for Blackness can possess positive (pro-Black) or negative (anti-Black) valence. Instead of using the term "pro-White" in describing the *preencounter* stage, Cross now uses the term *race salience*. Originally, Cross believed that the rejection of Blackness and the acceptance of an American perspective were indicative of only one identity, characterized by self-hate and low self-esteem. His current model now describes two identities: (a) *preencounter* assimilation and (b) *preencounter* anti-Black. The former has low salience for race and a neutral valence toward Blackness, whereas the latter describes individuals who hate Blacks and hate being Black (high negative salience). In other words, it is possible for a Black person at the *preencounter* stage who experiences the salience of race as very minor and whose identity is oriented toward an "American" perspective not to be filled with self-hate or low self-esteem.

The sense of low self-esteem, however, is linked to the *preencounter* anti-Black orientation. According to Cross, such a psychological perspective is the result of miseducation and self-hatred. The miseducation is the result of the negative images of Blacks portrayed in the mass media; among neighbors, friends, and

relatives; and in the educational literature (Blacks are unintelligent, criminal, lazy, and prone to violence). The result is an incorporation of such negative images into the personal identity of the Black person. Interestingly, the female Sansei student described earlier in this chapter, though Japanese American, would seem to possess many of the features of Cross's *preencounter* anti-Black identity.

Second, the *immersion-emersion* stage once described one fused identity (anti-White/pro-Black) but is now divided into two additional ones: anti-White alone and anti-Black alone. While Cross speaks about two separate identities, it appears that there are three possible combinations: anti-White, pro-Black, and an anti-White/pro-Black combination.

Third, Cross has collapsed the fourth and fifth stages (*internalization* and *internalization-commitment*) into one: *internalization*. He observed that minimal differences existed between the two stages except in the characteristic of "sustained interest and commitment." This last stage is characterized by Black self-acceptance and can be manifested in three types of identity: (a) Black nationalist (high Black positive *race salience*), (b) biculturalist (Blackness and fused sense of American-ness), and (c) multiculturalist (multiple identity formation, including race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.).

Although Cross's model has been revised significantly and the newer version is more sophisticated, his original 1971 *nigrescence* theory continues to dominate the racial identity landscape. Unfortunately, this has created much confusion among researchers and practitioners. We encourage readers to familiarize themselves with his most recent formulation (Cross, 1991, 1995).

### Asian American Identity Development Models

*Asian American identity development models* have not advanced as far as those relating to Black identity. One of the earliest heuristic "type" models was developed by S. Sue and Sue (1971) to explain what they saw as clinical differences among Chinese American students treated at the University of California, Berkeley, Counseling Center: (a) *traditionalist*—a person who internalizes conventional Chinese customs and values, resists acculturation forces, and believes in the "old ways"; (b) *marginal person*—a person who attempts to assimilate and acculturate into White society, rejects traditional Chinese ways, internalizes society's negativism toward minority groups, and may develop racial self-hatred (à la the Sansei student); and (c) *Asian American*—a person who is in the process of forming a positive identity, who is ethnically and politically aware, and who becomes increasingly bicultural.

Other similar models have been proposed for other groups such as Japanese Americans (Kitano, 1982).

These early type models suffered from several shortcomings (Lee, 1991). First, they failed to provide a clear rationale for why an individual develops one ethnic identity type over another. Although they were useful in describing characteristics of the type, they represented static entities rather than a dynamic process of identity development. Second, the early proposals seem too simplistic to account for the complexity of racial identity development. Third, these models were too population specific, in that they described only one Asian American ethnic group (Chinese American or Japanese American), and one wonders whether they are equally applicable to Korean Americans, Filipino Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and so on. Last, with the exception of a few empirical studies (Lee, 1991; D. W. Sue & Frank, 1973), testing of these typologies is seriously lacking.

In response to these criticisms, theorists have begun to move toward the development of stage/process models of Asian American identity development (J. Kim, 1981; Lee, 1991; Sodowsky, Kwan, & Pannu, 1995). Such models view identity formation as occurring in stages, evolving from less healthy to more healthy identities. With each stage there exists a constellation of traits and characteristics associated with racial/ethnic identity. These models also attempt to explain the conditions or situations that might retard, enhance, or impel the individual forward.

After a thorough review of the literature, J. Kim (1981) used a qualitative narrative approach with third-generation Japanese American women to posit a progressive and sequential stage model of Asian American identity development: (a) ethnic awareness, (b) White identification, (c) awakening to social political consciousness, (d) redirection to Asian American consciousness, and (e) incorporation. Her model integrates the influence of acculturation, exposure to cultural differences, environmental negativism to racial differences, personal methods of handling race-related conflicts, and the effects of group or social movements on the Asian American individual.

1. The *ethnic awareness* stage begins around the age of three to four, when the child's family members serve as the significant ethnic group model. Positive or neutral attitudes toward one's own ethnic origin are formed, depending on the amount of ethnic exposure conveyed by the caretakers.
2. The *White identification* stage begins when children enter school, where peers and the surroundings become powerful forces in conveying racial prejudice

that negatively impacts their self-esteem and identity. The realization of "differentness" from such interactions leads to self-blame and a desire to escape racial heritage by identifying with White society.

3. The *awakening to social political consciousness* stage means the adoption of a new perspective, often correlated with increased political awareness. J. Kim (1981) believed that significant political events such as the civil rights and women's movements often precipitate this new awakening. The primary result is an abandoning of identification with White society and a consequent understanding of oppression and oppressed groups.
4. The *redirection* stage means a reconnection or renewed connection with one's Asian American heritage and culture. This is often followed by the realization that White oppression is the culprit for the negative experiences of youth. Anger against White racism may become a defining theme, with concomitant increases of Asian American self-pride and group pride.
5. The *incorporation* stage represents the highest form of identity evolution. It encompasses the development of a positive and comfortable identity as Asian American and consequent respect for other cultural/racial heritages. Identification with a stance for or against White culture is no longer an important issue.

### **Latino/ Hispanic American Identity Development Models**

Although a number of ethnic identity development models have been formulated to account for Latino/a identity (Bernal & Knight, 1993; Casas & Pytluk, 1995; Szapocznik, Santisteban, Kurtines, Hervis, & Spencer, 1982), the one most similar to those of African Americans and Asian Americans was proposed by Ruiz (1990). His model was formulated from a clinical perspective via case studies of Chicano/Latino subjects. Ruiz made several underlying assumptions. First, he believed in a culture-specific explanation of identity for Chicano, Mexican American, and Latina/o clients. Although models of the development of other ethnic groups or the more general models were helpful, they lacked the specificity of referring to Latina/o cultures. Second, the marginal status of Latinos is highly correlated with maladjustment. Third, negative experiences of forced assimilation are considered destructive to an individual. Fourth, having pride in one's cultural heritage and ethnic identity is positively correlated with mental health. Last, pride

in one's ethnicity affords the Hispanic greater freedom to choose freely. These beliefs underlie Ruiz's five-stage model.

1. *Causal stage*: During this period messages or injunctions from the environment or significant others ignore, negate, or denigrate the ethnic heritage of the person. Affirmation about one's ethnic identity is lacking, and the person may experience traumatic or humiliating experiences related to ethnicity. There is a failure to identify with Latina/o culture.
2. *Cognitive stage*: As a result of negative/distorted messages, three erroneous belief systems about Chicano/Latina/o heritage become incorporated into mental sets: (a) Ethnic group membership is associated with poverty and prejudice; (b) assimilation to White society is the only means of escape; and (c) assimilation is the only possible road to success.
3. *Consequence stage*: Fragmentation of ethnic identity becomes very noticeable and evident. The person feels ashamed and is embarrassed by ethnic markers, such as name, accent, skin color, cultural customs, and so on. The unwanted self-image leads to estrangement and rejection of one's Chicano/Latina/o heritage.
4. *Working-through stage*: Two major dynamics distinguish this stage. First, the person becomes increasingly unable to cope with the psychological distress of ethnic identity conflict. Second, the person can no longer be a "pretender" by identifying with an alien ethnic identity. The person is propelled to reclaim and reintegrate disowned ethnic identity fragments. Ethnic consciousness increases.
5. *Successful resolution stage*: This last stage is exemplified by greater acceptance of one's culture and ethnicity. There is an improvement in self-esteem and a sense that ethnic identity represents a positive and success-promoting resource.

The Ruiz model has a subjective reality that is missing in many of the empirically based models. This is expected, since it was formulated based on the study of a clinical population. It has the added advantage of suggesting intervention focus and direction for each of the stages. For example, the focus of counseling in the causal stage is disaffirming and restructuring of the injunctions; for the cognitive stage, it is the use of cognitive strategies attacking faulty beliefs; for the consequence stage, it is reintegration of ethnic identity fragments in a positive manner; for the working-through stage, ethnocultural identification issues

are important; and for the successful resolution stage, the promotion of a positive identity becomes important.

### A RACIAL/CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

In the past several decades, Asian Americans, Latinas/os, and American Indians have experienced sociopolitical identity transformations so that a *Third World consciousness* has emerged, with the awareness of cultural oppression as the common unifying force. As a result of studying these models and integrating them with their own clinical observations, Atkinson et al. (1998) proposed a five-stage Minority Identity Development model (MID) in an attempt to pull out common features that cut across the population-specific proposals. D. W. Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) later elaborated on the MID, renaming it the Racial/Cultural Identity Development model (R/CID), to (a) encompass a broader population, and (b) avoid the disempowering term "minority." As discussed shortly, this model may be applied to White identity development as well.

The *R/CID model* proposed here is not a comprehensive theory of personality, but rather a conceptual framework to aid therapists in understanding their culturally diverse clients' attitudes and behaviors. Five levels of development that oppressed people experience as they struggle to understand themselves in terms of their own culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship between the two cultures are described: *conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and integrative awareness*. At each level of identity there are four corresponding beliefs and attitudes, the understanding of which may help therapists better understand their clients. These attitudes/beliefs are an integral part of identity, and are manifest in how a person views (a) the self, (b) others of the same minority, (c) others of another minority, and (d) majority individuals. Table 11.1 outlines the *R/CID model* and the interaction of phases with the attitudes and beliefs.

#### Conformity Phase

Similar to individuals in the *preencounter* stage (Cross, 1991), persons of color are distinguished by their unequivocal preference for dominant cultural values over those of their own culture. White Americans in the United States represent their reference group, and the identification set is quite strong. Lifestyles, value systems, and cultural/physical characteristics that most resemble those of White society

**TABLE 11.1 The Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model**

Phases of Minority Development Model	Attitude Toward Self	Attitude Toward Others of the Same Group	Attitude Toward Others of a Different Marginalized Group	Attitude Toward Dominant Group
Stage 1—Conformity	Self-depreciating or neutral due to low race salience	Group-depreciating or neutral due to low race salience	Discriminatory or neutral	Group-appreciating
Stage 2—Dissonance	Conflict between self-depreciating and group-appreciating	Conflict between group-depreciating views of minority hierarchy and feelings of shared experience	Conflict between dominant-held and group-depreciating	Conflict between group-appreciating and group-depreciating
Stage 3—Resistance and Immersion	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating experiences and feelings of <i>culturocentrism</i>	Conflict between feelings of empathy for other minority	Group-depreciating
Stage 4—Introspection	Concern with basis of self-appreciation	Concern with nature of unequivocal appreciation	Concern with ethnocentric basis for judging others	Concern with the basis of group depreciation
Stage 5—Integrative awareness	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Selective appreciation

Source: From D. R. Atkinson, G. Morten, and D. W. Sue, *Counseling American minorities: A cross cultural perspective*, 5th ed. Copyright © 1998 McGraw-Hill, Boston, MA. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

are highly valued, whereas those most associated with their own group of color may be viewed with disdain or may hold low salience for the person. We agree with Cross that individuals at this stage can be oriented toward a pro-American identity without subsequent disdain or negativism toward their own group. Thus, it is possible for a Chinese American to feel positive about U.S. culture, values, and traditions without evidencing disdain for Chinese culture or feeling negatively about oneself (absence of self-hate). Nevertheless, we believe that such individuals represent a small proportion of persons of color at this stage. Research on their numbers, on how they have handled the social-psychological dynamics of majority-minority relations, on how they have dealt with their marginalized status, and on how they fit into the models (progression issues) needs to be conducted.

We believe that the *conformity* phase continues to be most characterized by individuals who have bought into majority societal definitions about their marginalized status in society. Because the *conformity* phase represents, perhaps, the most damning indictment of White racism and because it has such a profound negative impact on persons of color, understanding its sociopolitical dynamics is of utmost importance for the helping professional. Those in the *conformity* phase

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are really victims of larger social-psychological forces operating in our society. The key issue here is the dominant-subordinate relationship between two different cultures (Atkinson et al., 1998; Freire, 1970). It is reasonable to believe that members of one cultural group tend to adjust themselves to the group possessing the greater prestige and power in order to avoid feelings of inferiority. Yet it is exactly this act that creates ambivalence in the individual. The pressures for assimilation and acculturation (melting-pot theory) are strong, creating possible culture conflicts. These individuals are victims of *ethnocentric monoculturalism*: (a) belief in the superiority of one group's cultural heritage—its language, traditions, arts-crafts, and ways of behaving (White) over all others; (b) belief in the inferiority of all other lifestyles (non-White); and (c) the power to impose such standards onto the less powerful group.

*Internalized racism* has been the term used to describe the process by which persons of color absorb the racist messages that are omnipresent in our society and internalize them (Kohli, 2013; Pyke, 2010). Constantly bombarded on all sides by reminders that Whites and their way of life are superior and that all other lifestyles are inferior, many begin to wonder whether they themselves are somehow inadequate, whether members of their own group are not to blame, and whether subordination and segregation are not justified. Clark and Clark (1947) first brought this to the attention of social scientists by stating that racism may contribute to a sense of confused self-identity among Black children. In a study of racial awareness and preference among Black and White children, they found that (a) Black children preferred playing with a White doll over a Black one, (b) the Black doll was perceived as being "bad," and (c) approximately one-third, when asked to pick the doll that looked like them, picked the White one.

It is unfortunate that the inferior status of people of color is constantly reinforced and perpetuated by the mass media through television, movies, newspapers, radio, books, and magazines. This contributes to widespread stereotypes that tend to trap them: Blacks are superstitious, childlike, ignorant, fun loving, dangerous, and criminal; Hispanics are dirty, sneaky, and criminal; Asian Americans are sneaky, sly, cunning, and passive; Indians are primitive savages. Such portrayals cause widespread harm to the self-esteem of minorities who may incorporate them. The incorporation of the larger society's standards may lead group members to react negatively toward their own racial and cultural heritage. They may become ashamed of who they are, reject their own group identification, and attempt to identify with the desirable "good" White minority. In the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Haley, 1966), Malcolm X relates how he tried desperately

to appear as White as possible. He went to painful lengths to straighten and dye his hair so that he would appear more like White males. It is evident that many marginalized group members do come to accept White standards as a means of measuring physical attractiveness, attractiveness of personality, and social relationships. Such an orientation may lead to the phenomenon of *internalized racism* or racial self-hatred, in which people dislike themselves for being Asian, Black, Hispanic, or Native American. People at the *conformity* stage seem to possess the following characteristics:

1. *Attitudes and beliefs toward the self* (self-depreciating attitudes and beliefs): Physical and cultural characteristics identified with one's own racial/cultural group are perceived negatively, as something to be avoided, denied, or changed. Physical characteristics (black skin color, "slant-shaped eyes" of Asians), traditional modes of dress and appearance, and behavioral characteristics associated with the minority group are a source of shame. There may be attempts to mimic what is perceived as White mannerisms, speech patterns, dress, and goals. Low internal self-esteem is characteristic of the person.
2. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the same group* (group-depreciating attitudes and beliefs): Majority cultural beliefs and attitudes about the minority group are also held by the person in this stage. These individuals may have internalized the majority of White stereotypes about their group. In the case of Hispanics, for example, the person may believe that members of his or her own group have high rates of unemployment because "they are lazy, uneducated, and unintelligent." Little thought or validity is given to other viewpoints, such as unemployment's being a function of job discrimination, prejudice, racism, unequal opportunities, and inferior education. Because persons in the *conformity* stage find it psychologically painful to identify with these negative traits, they divorce themselves from their own group. The denial mechanism most commonly used is, "I'm not like them; I've made it on my own; I'm the exception."
3. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of different marginalized groups* (discriminatory): Because the conformity-stage person most likely strives for identification with White society, the individual shares similar dominant attitudes and beliefs not only toward his or her own group but toward other marginalized groups as well. Groups most similar to White cultural groups are viewed more favorably, whereas those most different are viewed less favorably.

For example, Asian Americans may be viewed more favorably than African Americans or Latino/Hispanic Americans in some situations. Although stratification probably exists, we caution readers that such a ranking is fraught with hazards and potential political consequences. Such distinctions often manifest themselves in debates over which group is more oppressed and which group has done better than the others. Such debates are counterproductive when used to (a) negate another group's experience of oppression, (b) foster an erroneous belief that hard work alone will result in success in a democratic society, (c) shortchange a marginalized group (i.e., Asian Americans) from receiving the necessary resources in our society, and (d) pit one marginalized group against another (divide and conquer) by holding up one group as an example to others.

4. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the dominant group* (group-appreciating attitude and beliefs): This stage is characterized by a belief that White cultural, social, and institutional standards are superior. Members of the dominant group are admired, respected, and emulated. White people are believed to possess superior intelligence. Some individuals may go to great lengths to appear White. Consider again the example from the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, in which the main character would straighten his hair and primarily date White women. Reports that Asian women have undergone surgery to reshape their eyes to conform to White female standards of beauty may typify this dynamic.

#### **Dissonance Phase**

No matter how much one attempts to deny his or her own racial/cultural heritage, an individual will encounter information or experiences that are inconsistent with culturally held beliefs, attitudes, and values. An Asian American who believes that Asians are inhibited, passive, inarticulate, and poor in people relationships may encounter an Asian person who seems to break all these stereotypes (e.g., the Sansei student). A Latina/o who feels ashamed of his or her cultural upbringing may encounter another Latina/o who seems proud of his or her cultural heritage. An African American who believes that race problems are due to laziness, untrustworthiness, or personal inadequacies of his or her own group may suddenly encounter racism on a personal level. Denial begins to break down, which leads to a questioning and challenging of the attitudes/beliefs of the *conformity* stage. This was clearly what happened when the Sansei student encountered discrimination at the restaurant.

In all probability, movement into the *dissonance* stage is a gradual process. Its very definition indicates that the individual is in conflict between disparate pieces of information or experiences that challenge his or her current self-concept. People generally move into this stage slowly, but a traumatic event may propel some individuals to move into *dissonance* at a much more rapid pace. Cross (1971) stated that a monumental event such as the assassination of a major leader like Martin Luther King Jr. can often push people quickly into the ensuing stage.

1. *Attitudes and beliefs toward the self* (conflict between self-depreciating and self-appreciating attitudes and beliefs): There is now a growing sense of personal awareness that racism does exist, that not all aspects of their own culture or majority culture are good or bad, and that one cannot escape one's cultural heritage. For the first time the person begins to entertain the possibility of positive attributes in their own group's culture and, with it, a sense of pride in self. Feelings of shame and pride are mixed in the individual, and a sense of conflict develops. This conflict is most likely to be brought to the forefront quickly when other members of the group may express positive feelings toward the person: "We like you because you are Asian [or Black, American Indian, or Latino]." At this stage, an important personal question is being asked: "Why should I feel ashamed of who and what I am?"
2. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the same group* (conflict between group-depreciating and group-appreciating attitudes and beliefs): Dominant-held views of their own group's strengths and weaknesses begin to be questioned as new, contradictory information is received. Certain aspects of their culture begin to have appeal. For example, a Latino who values individualism may marry, have children, and then suddenly realize how Latina/o cultural values that hold the family as the psychosocial unit possess positive features. Or a person may find certain members of his or her group to be very attractive as friends, colleagues, lovers, and so forth.
3. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of a different marginalized group* (conflict between dominant-held views of minority hierarchy and feelings of shared experience): Stereotypes associated with other marginalized groups are questioned, and a growing sense of comradeship with other oppressed groups is felt. It is important to keep in mind, however, that little psychic energy is associated with resolving conflicts with other marginalized groups. Almost all energies are expended toward resolving conflicts toward the self, one's own group, and the dominant group.

4. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the dominant group* (conflict between group-appreciating and group-depreciating attitudes): The person experiences a growing awareness that not all cultural values of the dominant group are beneficial. This is especially true when the person experiences personal discrimination. Growing suspicion and some distrust of certain members of the dominant group develop.

### Resistance and Immersion Phase

The primary orientation of individuals in this phase is the tendency to endorse minority-held views completely and to reject values of the dominant society and culture. Desire to eliminate oppression becomes an important motivation of the individual's behavior. During the *resistance and immersion* stage, the three most active types of affective feelings are *guilt, shame, and anger*. There are considerable feelings of guilt and shame that in the past the individual has sold out his or her own racial and cultural group. The feelings of guilt and shame extend to the perception that during this past "sellout," one has been a contributor to and participant in the oppression of one's own group and other marginalized groups. This is coupled with a strong sense of anger at the oppression, and feelings of having been brainwashed by forces in White society. Anger is directed outwardly in a very strong way toward oppression and racism. Movement into this stage seems to occur for two reasons. First, a resolution of the conflicts and confusions of the previous stage allows greater understanding of social forces (racism, oppression, and discrimination) and one's own role as a victim. Second, a personal questioning of why people should feel ashamed of themselves develops. The answer to this question evokes feelings of guilt, shame, and anger.

1. *Attitudes and beliefs toward the self* (self-appreciating attitudes and beliefs): The individual at this stage is oriented toward self-discovery of one's own history and culture. There is an active seeking out of information and artifacts that enhance that person's sense of identity and worth. Cultural and racial characteristics that once elicited feelings of shame and disgust become symbols of pride and honor. The individual moves into this stage primarily because he or she asks the question, "Why should I be ashamed of who and what I am?" The original low self-esteem engendered by widespread prejudice and racism that was most characteristic of the *conformity* stage is now actively challenged in order to raise self-esteem. Phrases such as "Black is beautiful" represent a symbolic relabeling of identity for many Blacks. Racial

self-hatred begins to be actively rejected in favor of the other extreme: unbridled racial pride.

2. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the same group* (group-appreciating attitudes and beliefs): The individual experiences a strong sense of identification with and commitment to his or her group as enhancing information about the group is acquired. There is a feeling of connectedness with other members of the racial and cultural group, and a strengthening of the new identity begins to occur. Members of one's group are admired, respected, and often viewed now as the new reference group or ideal. Cultural values of the group are accepted without question. As indicated, the pendulum swings drastically from original identification with White ways to identification in an unquestioning manner with the group's ways. Persons in this phase are likely to restrict their interactions as much as possible to members of their own group.
3. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of a different marginalized group* (conflict between feelings of empathy for other marginalized group experiences and feelings of culturocentrism): Although members at this stage experience a growing sense of comradeship with persons from other socially devalued groups, a strong culturocentrism develops as well. Alliances with other groups tend to be transitory and based on short-term goals or some global shared view of oppression. There is less of an attempt to reach out and understand other racial-cultural groups and their values and ways, and more of a superficial surface feeling of political need. Alliances generally are based on convenience factors or are formed for political reasons, such as combining together as a large group to confront an enemy perceived to be larger.
4. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the dominant group* (group depreciating attitudes and beliefs): The individual is likely to perceive the dominant society and culture as an oppressor and as the group most responsible for the current plight of minorities in the United States. Characterized by both withdrawal from the dominant culture and immersion in one's cultural heritage, this stage also gives rise to considerable anger and hostility directed toward White society. There is a feeling of distrust and dislike for all members of the dominant group in an almost global anti-White demonstration and feeling. White people, for example, are not to be trusted because they are the oppressors or enemies. In extreme form, members may advocate complete destruction of the institutions and structures that have been characteristic of White society.

### Introspection Phase

Several factors seem to work in unison to move the individual from the *resistance and immersion* phase into the *introspection* phase. First, the individual begins to discover that this level of intensity of feelings (anger directed toward White society) is psychologically draining and does not permit one to really devote more crucial energies to understanding oneself or one's own racial-cultural group. The *resistance and immersion* phase tends to be a reaction against the dominant culture and is not proactive in allowing the individual to use all energies to discover who or what he or she is. Self-definition in the previous stage tends to be reactive (against White racism), and now a need for positive self-definition in a proactive sense emerges.

Second, the individual experiences feelings of discontent and discomfort with group views that may be quite rigid in the *resistance and immersion* phase. Often, in order to please the group, the individual is asked to submerge individual autonomy and individual thought in favor of the group good. Many group views may now be seen as conflicting with individual ones. A Latina/o individual who may form a deep relationship with a White person may experience considerable pressure from his or her culturally similar peers to break off the relationship because that White person is the "enemy." However, the personal experiences of the individual may, in fact, not support this group view.

It is important to note that some clinicians often confuse certain characteristics of the introspective stage with parts of the *conformity* stage. A person in the introspective stage who speaks against the decisions of his or her group may often appear similar to the conformity-stage person. The dynamics are quite different, however. While the conformity-stage person is motivated by global racial self-hatred, the introspective person has no such global negativism directed at his or her own group.

1. *Attitudes and beliefs toward the self* (concern with basis of self-appreciating attitudes and beliefs): Although the person originally, in the *conformity* phase, held predominant majority group views and notions to the detriment of his or her own group, the person now feels that he or she has too rigidly held onto the group views and notions in order to submerge personal autonomy. The conflict now becomes quite great between responsibility and allegiance to one's own group and notions of personal independence and autonomy. The person begins to spend more and more time and energy trying to sort out these aspects of self-identity and begins increasingly to demand individual autonomy.

2. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the same group* (concern with the unequivocal nature of group appreciation): Although attitudes of identification are continued from the preceding *resistance and immersion* stage, concern begins to build up regarding the issue of group-usurped individuality. Increasingly, the individual may see his or her own group taking positions that might be considered quite extreme. In addition, there is now increasing resentment over how one's group may attempt to pressure or influence the individual into making decisions that may be inconsistent with the person's values, beliefs, and outlooks. Indeed, it is not unusual for a minority group to make it clear to individual members that if they do not agree with the group, they are against it. A common ploy used to hold members in line is exemplified in questions such as "How Asian are you?" and "How Black are you?"
3. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of a different marginalized group* (concern with the ethnocentric basis for judging others): There is now greater uneasiness with culturocentrism, and an attempt is made to reach out to other groups to find out what types of oppression they experience and how this has been handled. Although similarities are important, there is now a movement toward understanding potential differences in oppression that other groups might have experienced.
4. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the dominant group* (concern with the basis of group depreciation): The individual experiences conflict between attitudes of complete distrust for the dominant society and culture and attitudes of selective trust and distrust according to the dominant individual's demonstrated behaviors and attitudes. Conflict is most likely to occur here because the person begins to recognize that there are many elements in U.S. American culture that are highly functional and desirable, yet feels confusion about how to incorporate these elements into one's own culture. Would acceptance of certain White cultural values make the person a sellout to his or her own race? There is a lowering of intense feelings of anger and distrust toward the dominant group and a continued attempt to discern elements that are acceptable.

#### **Integrative Awareness Phase**

Persons in this stage have developed an inner sense of security and now can own and appreciate unique aspects of their culture as well as those of U.S. culture. One's own culture is not necessarily in conflict with White dominant cultural ways. Conflicts and discomforts experienced in the previous stage become

resolved, allowing greater individual control and flexibility. There is now the belief that there are acceptable and unacceptable aspects in all cultures and that it is very important for the person to be able to examine and to accept or reject those aspects of a culture that are not seen as desirable. At the *integrative awareness* stage, the person has a strong commitment and desire to eliminate all forms of oppression.

1. *Attitudes and beliefs toward the self* (self-appreciating attitudes and beliefs): The individual develops a positive self-image and experiences a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. Not only is there an integrated self-concept that involves racial pride in identity and culture, but the person develops a high sense of autonomy. Indeed, the client becomes bicultural or multicultural without a sense of having "sold out one's integrity." In other words, the person begins to perceive his or her self as an autonomous individual who is unique (individual level of identity), a member of one's own racial-cultural group (group level of identity), a member of a larger society, and a member of the human race (universal level of identity).
2. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of same group* (group-appreciating attitudes and beliefs): The individual experiences a strong sense of pride in the group without having to accept group values unequivocally. There is no longer the conflict over disagreeing with group goals and values. Strong feelings of empathy with the group experience are coupled with awareness that each member of the group is also an individual. In addition, tolerant and empathic attitudes are likely to be expressed toward members of one's own group who may be functioning in a less adaptive manner to racism and oppression.
3. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of a different marginalized group* (group-appreciating attitudes): There is now literally a reaching out toward different oppressed groups in order to understand their cultural values and ways of life. There is a strong belief that the more one understands other cultural values and beliefs, the greater is the likelihood of understanding among the various ethnic groups. Support for all oppressed people, regardless of similarity to the individual's minority group, tends to be emphasized.
4. *Attitudes and beliefs toward members of the dominant group* (attitudes and beliefs of selective appreciation): The individual experiences selective trust and liking for and from members of the dominant group who seek to eliminate oppressive activities of the group. The individual also experiences openness to the

constructive elements of the dominant culture. The emphasis here tends to be on the fact that White racism is a sickness in society and that White people are also victims who are in need of help.

### COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS OF THE R/CID MODEL

Let us first point out some broad general clinical implications of the *R/CID model* before discussing specific meanings within each of the phases. First, an understanding of cultural identity development should sensitize therapists and counselors to the role that oppression plays in an individual's development. In many respects, it should make us aware that our role as helping professionals should extend beyond the office and should include dealing with the many manifestations of racism. Although individual therapy is needed, combating the forces of racism means a proactive approach for both the therapist and the client. For the helping professional, social justice advocacy and systems intervention are often the answers. For culturally diverse clients, it means the need to understand, control, and direct those forces in society that negate the process of positive identity. Thus a wider sociocultural approach to therapy is mandatory.

Second, the model will aid counselors in recognizing differences between members of the same minority group with respect to their cultural identity. It serves as a useful assessment and diagnostic tool for therapists to gain a greater understanding of their culturally diverse clients. In many cases, an accurate delineation of the dynamics and characteristics of the phases may result in better prescriptive treatment. Counselors who are familiar with the sequence of identity development are better able to plan intervention strategies that are most effective for culturally diverse clients. For example, a client experiencing feelings of isolation and alienation in the *conformity* phase may require an approach different from the one he or she would require in the introspection phase.

Third, the model allows helping professionals to realize the potentially changing and developmental nature of cultural identity among clients. If the goal of multicultural counseling/therapy is to move a client toward the *integrative awareness* stage, then the therapist is able to anticipate the sequence of feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors likely to arise. Acting as a guide and providing an understandable end point will allow the client to understand more quickly and work through issues related to his or her own identity. We now turn our attention to the *R/CID model* and its implications for the counseling process.

### Conformity Phase: Counseling Implications

For the vast majority of those in the *conformity* phase, several therapeutic implications can be derived. First, persons of color are most likely to prefer a White counselor or therapist over those from other groups. This flows logically from the belief that Whites are more competent and capable than are members of their own race. Such a racial preference can be manifested in the client's reaction to a counselor of color via negativism, resistance, or open hostility. In some instances, the client may even request a change in counselor (preferably to someone White). Likewise, the *conformity* individual who is seen by a White therapist may be quite pleased about it. In many cases, the client, in identifying with White culture, may be overly dependent on the White therapist. Attempts to please, appease, and seek approval from the helping professional may be quite prevalent.

Second, most *conformity* individuals will find that attempts to explore issues of race, racism, or cultural identity or to focus upon feelings are very threatening. Clients in this stage generally prefer a task-oriented, problem-solving approach because an exploration of identity may eventually touch upon feelings of low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with personal appearance, vague anxieties, and racial self-hatred, and may challenge the client's self-deception that he or she is not like the other members of his or her own race.

Whether you are White or a counselor of color working with a *conformity* individual, the general goal may be the same. There is an obligation to help the client sort out conflicts related to racial/cultural identity through some process of reeducation. Somewhere in the course of counseling or therapy, issues of cultural racism, majority-minority group relations, racial self-hatred, and racial cultural identity need to be dealt with in an integrated fashion. We are not suggesting a lecture or a solely cognitive approach, to which clients at this stage may be quite intellectually receptive, but exercising good clinical skills that take into account the client's socioemotional state and readiness to deal with feelings. Only in this manner will the client be able to distinguish the difference between positive attempts to adopt certain values of the dominant society and a negative rejection of one's own cultural value (an ability characteristic of the *integrative awareness* stage).

Although the goals for the White and counselor of color are the same, the way a therapist works toward them may be different. For example, a counselor of color will likely have to deal with hostility from the racially and culturally similar client. As we saw in Chapter 3, a therapist of color working with a client of his or her own race or any person of color may symbolize all that the client is trying to reject. Because therapy stresses the building of a coalition, establishment of rapport, and

to some degree a mutual identification, the process may be especially threatening. The opposite may be true of work with a White counselor. The client of color may be overeager to identify with the White professional in order to seek approval.

Rather than being detrimental to multicultural counseling/therapy, these two processes can be used quite effectively and productively. If the therapist of color can aid the client in working through his or her feelings of antagonism and if the majority therapist can aid the client in working through his or her need to overidentify, then the client will be moved closer to awareness and away from self-deception. In the former case, the therapist can take a nonjudgmental stance toward the client and provide a positive person of color role model. In the latter, the White therapist needs to model positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Both need to guard against unknowingly reinforcing the client's self-denial and rejection.

### Dissonance Phase: Counseling Implications

As individuals become more aware of inconsistencies between dominant-held views and those of their own group, a sense of *dissonance* develops. Preoccupation and questions concerning self, identity, and self-esteem are most likely brought in for therapy. More culturally aware than their *conformity* counterparts, *dissonance* clients may prefer a counselor or therapist who possesses good knowledge of the client's cultural group, although there may still be a preference for a White helper. However, the fact that minority helping professionals are generally more knowledgeable of the client's cultural group may serve to heighten the conflicting beliefs and feelings of this stage. Since the client is so receptive toward self-exploration, the therapist can capitalize on this orientation in helping the client come to grips with his or her identity conflicts.

### Resistance and Immersion Phase: Counseling Implications

Clients at this stage are likely to view their psychological problems as products of oppression and racism. They may believe that only issues of racism are legitimate areas to explore in therapy. Furthermore, openness or self-disclosure to therapists not of one's own group is dangerous because White counselors or therapists are "enemies" and members of the oppressing group.

Clients in the *resistance and immersion* stage believe that society is to blame for their present dilemma and actively challenge the establishment. They are openly suspicious of institutions such as mental health services because they view them

as agents of the establishment. Very few of the more ethnically conscious and militant minorities will use mental health services because of its identification with the status quo. When they do, they are usually suspicious and hostile toward the helping professional. A therapist working with a client at this stage of development needs to realize several important things.

First, he or she will be viewed by the client as a symbol of the oppressive society. If you become defensive and personalize the attacks, you will lose effectiveness in working with the client. It is important not to be intimidated or afraid of the anger that is likely to be expressed; often, it is not personal and is quite legitimate. White guilt and defensiveness can serve only to hinder effective multicultural counseling/therapy. It is not unusual for clients at this stage to make sweeping negative generalizations about White Americans. The White therapist who takes a nondefensive posture will be better able to help the client explore the basis of his or her racial tirades.

In general, clients at this stage prefer a therapist of their own race. However, the fact that you share the same race or culture as your client will not insulate you from the attacks. Again, as outlined in Chapter 3, therapists of color working with a same-race client at the stage of resistance can encounter unique challenges. For example, an African American client may perceive the Black counselor as a sellout of his or her own race, or as an Uncle Tom. Indeed, the anger and hostility directed at the therapist may be even more intense than that directed at a White one.

Second, realize that clients in this stage will constantly test you. In earlier chapters we described how minority clients will pose challenges to therapists in order to test their trustworthiness (sincerity, openness, and nondefensiveness) and expertise (competencies). Because of the active nature of client challenges, therapy sessions may become quite dynamic. Many therapists find that this stage is frequently the most difficult to deal with because counselor self-disclosure is often necessary for establishing credibility.

Third, individuals at this phase are especially receptive to approaches that are more action-oriented and aimed at external change (challenging racism). Also, group approaches with persons experiencing similar racial/cultural issues are well received. It is important that the therapist be willing to help the culturally different client explore new ways of relating to both minority and White persons.

### **Introspection Phase: Counseling Implications**

Clients at the *introspection* phase may continue to prefer a counselor of their own race, but they are also receptive to help from therapists of other cultures as long as

the therapists understand their clients' worldview. Ironically, clients at this stage may, on the surface, appear similar to *conformity* persons. *Introspection* clients are in conflict between their need to identify with their own group and their need to exercise greater personal freedom. Exercising personal autonomy may occasionally mean going against the wishes or desires of their own group. This is often perceived by marginalized members and their group as a rejection of their own cultural heritage. This is not unlike *conformity* persons, who also reject their racial/cultural heritage. The dynamics within the two groups, however, are quite dissimilar. It is very important for therapists to distinguish the differences. The *conformity* person moves away from his or her own group because of perceived negative qualities associated with it. The *introspection* person wants to move away on certain issues but perceives the group positively. Again, self-exploration approaches aimed at helping the client integrate and incorporate a new sense of identity are important. Believing in the functional values of White American society does not necessarily mean that a person is selling out or going against his or her own group.

#### **Integrative Awareness Phase: Counseling Implications**

Clients at this stage have acquired an inner sense of security around their self-identity. They have pride in their racial/cultural heritage but can exercise a desired level of personal freedom and autonomy. Other cultures and races are appreciated, and there is a development toward becoming more multicultural in perspective. Although discrimination and oppression remain a powerful part of their existence, persons at the *integrative awareness* phase possess greater psychological resources to deal with these problems. Being action- or systems-oriented, clients respond positively to the designing and implementation of strategies aimed at community and societal change. Preferences for therapists are based not on race, but on the ability to share, understand, and accept their worldviews. In other words, attitudinal similarity between therapist and client is a more important dimension than membership-group similarity.

#### **VALUE OF R/CID FRAMEWORK**

The R/CID framework is a useful heuristic tool for counselors who work with culturally diverse populations. The model reminds therapists of several important clinical imperatives: (a) Within-group differences are very important to acknowledge in clients of color because not all members of a racial/cultural group are the same. Depending on their levels of racial consciousness, the attitudes, beliefs, and

orientations of clients of color may be quite different from one another. (b) A culturally competent counselor needs to be cognizant of and to understand how sociopolitical factors influence and shape identity. Identity development is not solely due to cultural differences but to how the differences are perceived in our society. (c) The model alerts clinicians working with clients of color to certain likely challenges associated with each stage or level of racial/cultural consciousness. Not only may it serve as a useful diagnostic tool, but it provides suggestions of what may be the most appropriate treatment intervention. (d) Other socially marginalized or devalued groups undergo similar identity processes. For example, formulations for women, LGBT groups, those with disabilities, and so forth, can now be found in the psychological literature. Mental health professionals hoping to work with these specific populations would be well served to become familiar with these models as well.

One important aspect relatively untouched in the clinical and research literature is the racial identity development of helping professionals. We have spent considerable time describing the identity development of people of color from the perspective of clients. We have, however, in Chapter 3 indicated that the level of racial consciousness of the minority therapist may impact that of the client of color. In the next chapter we address the issue of White identity development and discuss how it may impact clients of color. But it is equally important for counselors of color to consider their own racial consciousness and how it may interact with a client from their own group. We present several questions for you to consider in the following reflection and discussion questions.

### REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What types of conflict and/or challenge confront a therapist of color at the *conformity* stage when working with a client of color at the *resistance and immersion* stage? How would they perceive one another? How may they respond to one another? What therapeutic issues are likely to arise? What needs to be done in order for the therapist to be helpful?
2. Can you discuss other stage combinations and their implications for therapists and clients of color working with one another?
3. Does a counselor of color have to be at the *integrative awareness* stage to be helpful to clients of color?

Research on racial/cultural identity development has slowed considerably since the 1990s (Ponterotto & Mallinckrodt, 2007; Yoon, 2011), and little change in the models presented in this chapter has occurred. In some respects, this reflects the widespread acceptance of the importance of identity development and how much it has become a part of the social-psychological and mental health landscape (Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2012). On the other hand, this slowing of research also reflects the considerable confusion about the theory and measurement of racial/cultural identity. Indeed, a special issue of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* in 2007 (Cokley, 2007; Helms, 2007) discussed in detail the conceptual and methodological challenges confronting the field. Although many measures have been developed in an attempt to assess and/or test the conceptual models, most have proven limited because of the sometimes nuanced aspects of measurement. It is clear that we have encountered an impasse that can be broken only through the development of more sophisticated and better measures of racial and ethnic identity.



### IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

1. Be aware that the *R/CID model* should not be viewed as a global personality theory with specific identifiable phases that serve as fixed categories. The process of cultural identity development is dynamic, not static.
2. Do not fall victim to stereotyping in using these models. Most clients of color may evidence a dominant characteristic, but there are mixtures from other stages as well.
3. Know that identity development models are conceptual aids and that human development is much more complex.
4. Know that a number of issues and questions still exist. Is cultural identity development primarily a linear process? Do individuals always start at the beginning of these stages? Is it possible to skip stages? Can people regress?
5. Be careful of the implied value judgments given in almost all development models. They assume that some cultural resolutions are healthier than others. For example, the *R/CID model* obviously does hold the *integrative awareness* stage as a higher form of healthy functioning.

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6. Be aware that racial/cultural identity development models seriously lack an adequate integration of gender, class, sexual orientation, and other sociodemographic group identities.
7. Know that a great deal of evidence is mounting that suggests that although identity may sequentially move through identifiable stages, affective, attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral components of identity may not move in a uniform manner. It is entirely possible that the emotions and affective elements associated with certain stages do not have a corresponding one-to-one behavioral impact.
8. Begin to look more closely at the possible therapist and client stage combinations. As mentioned earlier, therapeutic processes and outcomes are often the function of the identity stage of both therapist and client. White identity development of the therapist can either enhance or retard effective therapy.

### SUMMARY

In the past several decades, work on racial/cultural identity development among marginalized groups has led to major breakthroughs in the field of multicultural counseling/therapy. Racial identity development models have proven helpful in many respects. First, they reveal major within-group differences that occur depending on one's level of identity. Second, research suggests that reactions to counseling, the counseling process, and counselors are influenced by cultural/racial identity and are not simply linked to minority group membership. Third, they clarify the impact of sociopolitical forces in shaping racial identity. And fourth, identity development models that discuss the oppressor-oppressed relationship seem equally applicable to other marginalized groups, such as women, lesbians/gays, and individuals with disabilities.

The *R/CID model* proposed is a conceptual framework to aid therapists in understanding their culturally diverse clients' attitudes and behaviors. Five levels of development that oppressed people experience as they struggle to understand themselves in terms of their own culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship between the two cultures are described: *conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and integrative awareness*. At each level of

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identity, four corresponding beliefs and attitudes, the understanding of which may help therapists better understand their clients, are discussed. These attitudes/beliefs are an integral part of identity, and are manifest in how a person views (a) the self, (b) others of the same minority, (c) others of another minority, and (d) majority individuals.

Each specific level of racial identity offers unique challenges for the counselor. Clients in the *conformity* phase are dealing with *internalized racism* and may not respond well to therapists of color; dissonance clients are dealing with racial inconsistencies in their previous belief systems; *resistance and immersion* clients are likely to reveal strong anger about racism; *introspection* clients struggle with group loyalties and self-autonomy; and *integrative awareness* clients are self-secure and motivated toward multicultural integration. A culturally competent counselor needs to be cognizant of and to understand how sociopolitical factors influence and shape identity. Identity development is not solely due to cultural differences but to how the differences are perceived in our society.

### GLOSSARY TERMS

Active commitment	Introspection
Asian American identity development models	Latino/Hispanic American identity development models
Black identity development models	Marginal person
Conformity	Nigrescence
Dissonance	Preencounter
Encounter	R/CID model
Identity synthesis	Race salience
Immersion-emersion	Racial awakening
Integrative awareness	Redirection
Internalization	Resistance and immersion
Internalization-commitment	Traditionalist
Internalized racism	

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## Chapter 08

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