Section III

Multiple Applications of DCT for Counseling and Psychotherapy Practice

Developmental counseling and therapy, with its wellness orientation, offers many possibilities for direct action. In this section, you will see how DCT is applied and coordinated with multicultural counseling and therapy. This is followed by a chapter that shows how to use DCT to engage and treat clients who have been diagnosed through the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.* In addition, you will find new information on Adlerian theory and how to use DCT with families and with early recollections and bibliotherapy. The use of DCT with issues of spirituality is the subject of the concluding applications chapter.

The final chapter of this book will enable you to examine your progress through this book and assess your ability to take theory into your own practice of counseling and psychotherapy.

Chapter 8. Multicultural Counseling and Therapy. Cultural identity theory is presented in detail and parallels with consciousness development in Plato’s Allegory of the Cave are described. DCT questioning strategies are used to facilitate understanding of one’s cultural identity. Multicultural counseling and therapy (MCT) is noteworthy for its emphasis on context and how environment and history affect individual development. Psychotherapy as liberation, an adaptation of the work of the Brazilian, Paulo Freire, is presented as a specific way to help clients discover how external factors affect their very being.

Chapter 9. Reframing the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Positive Strategies from Developmental Counseling and Therapy. Traditionally, mental health care has focused more on individual problems and less on society’s responsibility for those problems. Thus, responsibility for the illness and for change is placed on the individual. The field of social work, however, has continued to emphasize that the individual lives in a social context and that change in the environment is of equal or more importance than change in the individual. The mental health of individuals living in oppressive situations may be better addressed by making changes in society. This chapter will enable you to reframe severe distress as a logical biological and psychological response to environmental conditions. You will be able to develop comprehensive treatment plans, using multiple theoretical orientations and strategies, to work with issues such as depression, personality style (“disorder”), and posttraumatic stress.

Chapter 10. Early Recollections: Using DCT with Early Memories to Facilitate Second Order Change.This chapter builds on the Adlerian and wellness theory presented in Chapter 2. You will find that clients can better understand their present circumstances after connecting their early life experiences with the attitudes, emotions, and behaviors associated with the presenting issues for counseling. This offers them alternatives to a better future through the positive uses of early recollections, current developmental issues, and new rules, choices, and behaviors. DCT provides specific strategies that can enable an in-depth analysis and discovery of what one’s developmental past means for the future. You will learn to use early recollections in your practice as a way to understand and mobilize a client’s wellness strengths. You will then be shown how to use early recollections as a way to help clients understand the past as a source of present rules, self-talk, emotional responses, and choices. Used in conjunction with DCT, early recollections help clients move toward the future by creating new expectations and solutions to previously unsatisfactory outcomes through new perspectives, choices, and results.

Chapter 11. Developmental Counseling and Therapy with Families.As people-in-relation, we learn our concepts of self and of culture through our families of origin. This chapter focuses on the family life cycle and the manner in which family members relate to one another as they move through stages and phases from birth through old age. This chapter will enable you to understand and work with families at various stages of the life cycle and apply DCT questioning strategies to facilitate couples and family development.

Chapter 12. Bibliotherapy, Metaphors, and Narratives.Drawing out client narratives and life stories is central to DCT. The use of media (art, articles, books, television, movies) is explored as a way to help clients understand and rewrite their stories. Metaphor is presented as a creative process and as a way to help clients understand and reframe their stories. Mastery of the concepts of this chapter will enable you to bring more creative and artistic processes into the counseling and psychotherapy interview. You will be able to use DCT facilitative strategies to encourage clients to become more fully creative themselves.

Chapter 13. Spirituality, Wellness, and Development: Applying DCT to Core Values in Clients’ Lives.Spirituality is first presented as a cultural phenomenon through contrasting the Judeo-Christian creation narrative with that of Aboriginal Australians. Discernment of life’s meaning and goals through DCT questioning strategies is central to the chapter. A holistic lifespan view of spiritual development is presented and specifics for introducing spiritual issues into the counseling process are considered. Mastery of the concepts of this chapter will enable you to conceptualize the place of spiritual and religious issues in the interview. You will be able to use DCT discernment processes to help clients find and make meaning in their lives and help them examine their faith development; in addition, you will be able to use spiritually-oriented strategies in the here and now of the therapeutic session.

Chapter 14: Epilogue: Your Future Development. The concluding chapter focuses on you and your personal understanding and integration of the developmental, wellness, and lifespan models. You will be challenged to examine yourself and your mastery and competence in the practice of developmentally-oriented counseling and psychotherapy.

Chapter 8

Multicultural Counseling   
and Therapy

Central

Practice

Objective

Mastery and practice of concepts in this chapter will enable you to assess and to facilitate client’s expansion of cultural identity and multicultural consciousness. You will also be able to use   
the specific steps of psychotherapy to help clients discover, name, ­reflect, and act on issues related to multicultures and to oppression.

Multicultural counseling and therapy (MCT) has been termed the fourth force of counseling and psychotherapy theory, a major addition to the traditional three theoretical forces of psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, and existential-humanistic. MCT is not in opposition to traditional theory; rather, it brings three major ideas to the counseling and therapy process:

1. MCT is a metatheory, a theory about theory. With MCT, culture is the underlying defining issue in counseling and therapy. It provides a different way to examine traditional theory and to bring it into greater accord with a broader contextual view of the process of helping. A therapist using MCT is working with a client in a social context rather than with an autonomous “self.”

2. MCT uses all major theories and strategies, but seeks culturally appropriate use of these theories and may, at times, supplement traditional theory with multicultural strategies.

3. MCT also brings new theory and strategies to the therapeutic encounter, thus increasing alternatives for action.

This chapter, however, is not a comprehensive summary of MCT. The focus here is on how the theory relates to the evolution of consciousness, that major dimension of both Platonic thought and DCT. Some sources for a more complete view of multicultural counseling and therapy will be found in Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, and Alexander (2001) and Sue, Ivey, and Pedersen (1996).

Knowledge of and skill in the concepts of this chapter can enable you to:

1. Examine culture and multicultures as core constructs underlying all counseling and therapy.

2. Consider yourself as a multicultural being with special attention to issues of privilege, power, and oppression.

3. Understand some central concepts of cultural identity theory and their relationship to DCT.

4. Utilize specific skills and strategies to facilitate client liberation of consciousness.

This chapter is based on material presented in Allen E. Ivey and Mary Bradford Ivey, “Developmental Counseling and Therapy and Multicultural Counseling and Therapy: Metatheory, Contextual Consciousness, and Action,” in Don C. Locke, Jane E. Myers, and Edwin L. Herr, *The Handbook of Counseling,* pp. 219–236. Copyright © 2000 by Sage Publications. Reprinted by permission of Sage Publications.

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING CULTURE AND MULTICULTURALISM

Both counselor and client identities are formed and embedded in multiple levels of experience (individual, group, and universal) and contexts (individual, family, and cultural milieu). The totality of interrelationship of experiences and contexts must be the focus of treatment. (Sue, et al., 1996, p. 15)

As we begin to explore multicultural counseling and therapy, it is important to define culture and multicultures more precisely.The word *culture* in this book is interpreted broadly. Culture can be associated with a racial group (African American, Asian) or an ethnic group (Polish, French, Cuban, Mexican) as well as with gender, religion, economic status, nationality, physical capacity or handicap, or sexual orientation. These larger categories also have subcategories. For instance, African American culture in the United States can be further subdivided into Caribbean, Mississippi, Harlem, or African culture.

There may be even more variability in individuals than in cultures. Class and economic differences, religion, and family experiences contribute to each individual’s unique personal history—a distinctive personal culture. It is dangerous to use multicultural approaches to stereotype individuals. Justice must serve both the community and the individual.

Thus, culture consists of two sometimes conflicting components, each group has a distinctly different culture, and each individual has a distinctive personal culture. If we become accustomed to thinking in a cultural framework, we may fail to see the unique individual before us. If we focus too much on the individual, we may fail to see how this individual is affected by cultural history.

Culture, then, is both an abstraction and a concrete particular. In its abstract form, culture cannot be seen, heard, or felt. It is a way of being—the norms and customs of a group. Culture becomes a concrete particular in the specific individual and his or her family. But no one individual or single family totally represents the culture.

You as a Multicultural Being

*Multiculture* is a way to talk of the many cultures within each of us. We are not solely ethnic/racial beings. We also are men and women; we have a sexual orientation, and religious and spiritual beliefs. Gender, sexuality, and spiritual orientations are all the basis of cultural groups. The Respectful Cube is shown in Figure 8-1. Here you see that any one individual participates in multiple cultural groups. At one point, ethnic/racial issues may be most important, but at another point, one’s physical ability or economic class may be the central issue related to the counseling and therapy process. All White people or People of Color are more than just their race: we are all multicultural beings and all of us are deeply affected by our multicultural status.

Figure 8-1  The RESPECTFUL Cube

Source: The RESPECTFUL Cube is reprinted by permission of Allen E. Ivey, 1992, 1995, 2001, 2004.

For the practice of counseling and therapy, especially from a DCT perspective, we need to be aware of culture and multicultures and their many and changing manifestations. The sensorimotor and concrete experience of each individual is deeply affected by abstract formal and dialectic/systemic dimensions. Each individual, family, and culture represents a different way of being.

Figure 8-1 also speaks to the locus within which culture exists and is meaningful. Not only do individuals have multicultures, but also so do their families, their groups, and communities. The individual may or may not be in synchrony with the culture of the family (e.g., the adolescent who is gay in a heterosexually oriented family). Similarly, one may be Jewish in a predominantly Christian community. Older persons may find themselves surrounded by a culture oriented to youth. The locus within the multicultural cube helps remind us even more that client context is vital to our understanding of any one individual.

The cultural identity portions of the cube are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The degree to which an individual is aware of culture and multicultures varies. Cultural identity development, becoming aware of one’s multicultural being (racial, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) is a major goal of multicultural counseling and therapy. This chapter offers ideas for assessing a person’s cultural identity level while simultaneously suggesting specific ways to facilitate growth of contextual and multicultural awareness.

Privilege and power issues are also found in the RESPECTFUL cube. The work of McIntosh (1989) has been central in this area; she coined the term “White privilege,” indicating that in North America, it is European Americans who have the vast majority of power. Along with that power over others come privileges, such as not worrying about how others will respond to the color of one’s skin, finding bank loans more easily, and being in the company of people “like oneself” most of the time. This privilege and power brings a basic comfort level that may be described simply as an easier lifestyle. (You can visit http://www.utoronto.ca/acc/events/peggy1.htm for the full text of this influential paper.) According to the 2000 census, the White majority no longer exists in the state of California. Thus, in this microcosm of what will later be representative of the United States as a whole, new definitions of privilege and power are emerging and merit further study. Cultures and multicultures are constantly in flux in our global society, and lifelong study of changing cultural issues and definitions is essential for all persons in helping professions.

Each area of the cube raises issues of power and privilege. Male privilege is obvious to women whereas gays and lesbians see clearly that heterosexual culture has the advantage of privilege, power, and—of course—law. Those who survive the trauma of cancer learn that power rests in hands other than theirs, although it obviously helps if one has a privileged economic status. In another example, Christians in predominantly Christian countries can be sure their major holy days are considered in establishing school holidays and retail closings, whereas Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims see their holidays given less attention. Similarly, when Christians are nondominant—as in portion of Africa, the Middle East or Asia—they will be aware of their pronounced lack of power and privilege.

Out of privilege and power often comes oppression. Locke (1992) has defined some key terms related to cultural oppression:

*Prejudice* is defined as judging before fully examining the object of evaluation. *Racial prejudice* refers to making a judgment based on racial/ethnic/cultural group membership before getting to know the person being judged. *Racism* combines prejudice with power—power to do something based on prejudiced beliefs.

Expanding on Locke, oppression is another word for sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, or any other form of systemic prejudice plus power. Reflect on the place of older people in society. Because of cultural beliefs, vast numbers of these individuals experience oppressive events simply because of their chronological age. Virtually all of us will experience this prejudice and oppression at some point in our lives; and as we grow older this prejudice will express the arbitrary criterion of youth as a more privileged status. On the other hand, if we choose to develop positive attitudes toward older persons and persons of all ages, we can help change societal attitudes as we ourselves experience the universal processes of aging.

Power and privilege, then, are not just issues affecting People of Color. You will find that your clients vary widely in their access to privilege and power and that multiculturally sensitive counseling and therapy requires you to be alert to the ways oppression related to these factors may appear in and affect the lives of your clients.

As a first step in this direction, review the RESPECTFUL cube and indicate which areas you are in that give you more or less privilege and power. Check the items below where you believe that you are in the more privileged group. Privilege, in truth does not mean that one is “better than another”; rather, it means that one has more access to power and resources.

\_\_\_ R Religion

\_\_\_ E Economic Status

\_\_\_ S Sexual identity

\_\_\_ P Psychological maturity (cognitive/developmental style)

\_\_\_ E Ethnic/racial identity

\_\_\_ C Chronological Challenges (age)

\_\_\_ T Trauma

\_\_\_ F Family history

\_\_\_ U Unique physical characteristics

\_\_\_ L Language and location of residence

This brief exercise can be thought provoking, particularly as you think of personal experiences of prejudice and power in relation to your own developmental past and present. Please note your reflections and observations in regard to the RESPECTFUL cube in the exercise at the end of this chapter.

When we review the three dimensions of the multicultural cube, it becomes apparent that almost all counseling and therapy sessions in some way touch on multicultural issues. And any time we start viewing the individual as a self-in-relation or person-in-context, we are considering contextual multicultural issues. In short, the MCT view is that *virtually all counseling and psychotherapy are multicultural.*

Cultural Identity Development and  
the Evolution of Consciousness

Cultural identity development is a major determinant of counselor and client attitudes toward the self, others of the same group, and the dominant group. These attitudes, which may be manifested in affective and behavioral dimensions, are strongly influenced not only by cultural variables, but also by the dynamics of dominant-subordinate relationships among culturally different groups. The level or stage of racial/cultural identity development will both influence how clients and counselors define the problem and dictate what they believe to be appropriate counseling/therapy goals and processes. (Sue et al., 1996, p. 17)

Cognitive/emotional development is a major goal of much of counseling and it is perhaps even more central to DCT and MCT. Both theories recognize that people over time develop increased awareness of self and others, self and context, and the role of cultural factors in their lives. As DCT and MCT are both integrative theories, each embraces others within its framework and includes many interlacing concepts.

Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, presented briefly in Chapter 1 and again in more detail in Chapter 4, perhaps should be reviewed and read again at this point. The journey toward multicultural consciousness and cultural identity is much like the experience of the individual moving from the cave to the light. Steele (2003, p. 16) comments, “We are like Plato’s cave dwellers, staring robotically at the wall marked “oppression,” when in fact our true problem is something outside the cave. . . . This new 21st-century racial problem might be called the problem of emergence.” The person who is not aware of how culture affects the nature of personal being has not been shown the light of culture/environment context. For people to be truly unique, autonomous, and free, they must become aware of their multicultural roots, which so deeply affect anyone’s humanity.

The MCT developmental framework rests in cultural identity theory (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995; Cross & Vandiver, 2002; Fischer & Moradi, 2002; Helms, 1985, 1990, 2003; Thomas, 1971). Cross and Thomas independently generated cultural identity theory as they observed cognitive/emotional development among African Americans who experienced the Black identity movement of the 1960s. During this time, *Black awareness* developed and matured. Cross and Thomas noted that when African Americans moved from denial and naiveté about the color of their skin to *Black pride*, a major change in consciousness had occurred. Much like Plato‘s cave dwellers, they became aware of the light—the racist surroundings that has limited their awareness of their own dignity.

Women, gays and lesbians, the disabled, and many other groups have experienced expansion of their consciousness just as African Americans did earlier. Each of these groups has moved from denial of their worth as human beings to a state of pride. This evolution of consciousness has resulted in major changes in society over the last 50 years and a vast improvement in opportunity and mental health for many. But we must remain aware that social justice and full equality still has not been reached.

The most influential model of cultural or racial identity was developed by Cross (1971) and is summarized below:

 *Preencounter.* The individual (or group) may be locked into a White perspective and may devalue and/or deny the vitality and importance of an African American worldview. The goal of some African Americans who take this perspective may be to be as “White” as possible.

 *Encounter.* The African American meets the realities of racism in an often emotionally jarring experience. This perturbs one’s consciousness and often leads to significant change.

 *Immersion/emersion.* Discovering what it means to be African American and to value Blackness becomes important; often, one simultaneously denigrates Whites. Emotions can run strong with pride in one’s culture and anger at others. This is often a stage of action for African American rights.

 *Internalization.* An internalized reflective sense of self-confidence develops and emotional experience is more calm and secure. This is often characterized by “psychological openness, ideological flexibility, and a general decline in strong anti-White feelings” (Parham, White, & Ajamu, 1999, p. 49). However, the strength of commitment to the African American world may even be stronger. In addition, Cross (1995) suggests a fifth style, very similar to internalization with the addition of a commitment to action and social change.

Cross and Vandiver (2002) have added important new dimensions of complexity to the basic four-stage cultural identity model. Preencounter individuals, for example, can represent three types. The first preencounter African American individual thinks of herself or himself solely as an “American” with little or no attention to Black culture and may even actively support White interpretations of Blackness. Individuals of another type may be more aware of the issues, but may compartmentalize and think of themselves as “better than” other African Americans. The third preencounter group may engage in self-hatred and self-blame. At the immersion/emersion level, one may find African Americans who are angry and mistrustful of all things White as well as African Americans who ignore White society as much as possible and base their lives totally in a Black cultural framework. The “internalization nationalist” focuses on African American issues and the surrounding world and may be a realistic advocate for change while the “internalization biculturalist” seeks the strengths of both African American and White cultures. Cross and Vandiver describe the “internalization multiculturalist” who moves within multiple areas as focusing on oppression wherever it is found and regardless of to whom it may be directed.”

For purposes of this book, we remain focused on the four major types of cultural identity consciousness that have direct parallels to developmental counseling and therapy’s four cognitive/emotional styles. Nonetheless, regardless of the race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, spirituality, or other multicultural factor, expect variations in the individual’s approach to each cultural identity level.

Cultural identity is often described sequentially, but Parham (in Parham et al., 1999) also sees cultural identity holistically and speaks of recycling. Individuals may achieve internalization, for example, on certain concepts, but then they may encounter a new form of racism. They then find that while they may be thinking primarily from an internalization frame of reference, the new experience helps them realize that parts of them are still using the encounter style. Life is a constant state of development and change. There is no one “right” or final stage or style. Cross (1995) makes the same point when he comments that each style or stage has value in certain situations. There is danger in thinking of one way of being as “best” at all times.

Parham has made two additional important contributions to cultural identity theory. He points out that for a child or adolescent who is “exposed to and indoctrinated with parental and societal messages that are very pro-Black in orientation . . . the personal identity and reference group orientation initially developed by that youngster might be pro-Black as well” (Parham et al., 1999, p. 50). In short, from Parham’s frame of reference, a circle rather than a linear chart might be a more useful way to present identity development.

Parham’s third point is that “identity resolution can occur in at least three ways: stagnation (failure to move beyond one’s initial identity state), stagewise linear progression (movement from one identity stage to another in a sequential linear fashion), and recycling (movement back through the styles once a cycle has been completed)” (Parham et al., 1999, p. 53).

Cultural identity theory, then, is moving toward a broad developmental framework that allows it to be related to traditional life span ego development theory (e.g., Erikson, 1963). However, developing a perspective of one’s being not in isolation from others and one’s culture, but rather as self-in-context, person-in-community, and/or being-in-relation (to others) will result in a far more culturally centered view of development than presently exists. Cultural identity theory, in short, suggests specific ideas for updating and modernizing traditional theory.

A large number of theorists and researchers have validated the sequential stages of cultural identity development in many cultural settings and extended them to other groups. Important among these have been Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1993; general theory of cultural identity development), Hardiman (1995; White identity development), and Helms (1990; African American and White identity development). While the language varies, the general sequence identified by Cross holds for these theorists. Cultural identity theory need not apply only to racial and ethnic issues; rather, it is a broad-based approach that has significant importance for the counseling and therapy process.

DCT and cultural identity theory are compared in Table 8-1. Despite some similarities, they are not the same. DCT involves *developmental styles* and validates the importance of all styles. More styles and style flexibility is the goal. Cultural identity theory also recognizes the value of all stages or levels, particularly depending on the situations in which individuals live or find themselves. Both theories encourage awareness of self-in-system, and development of dialectic/systemic intelligence. They emphasize the importance of direct action to attack social oppression that may exist within the social context.

Cultural identity theory is centered on expanding awareness of one’s racial/ethnic identity. Increasingly we are finding identity theories focused on other multicultural issues. Cass (1979, 1984, 1990) has been influential in applying cultural identity theory to gay issues. Marszalek and Cashwell (1998) and Marszalek, Cashwell, Dunn, and Heard (in press) have presented a DCT-based theory of gay and lesbian identity development. Ivey, D’Andrea, Ivey, and Simek-Morgan (2002) suggest that many groups (e.g., women, cancer survivors, persons with disabilities, Vietnam veterans) go through parallel issues of identity as they discover the power of context in their individual lives.

The cultural identity movement will continue to grow in influence and can be expected to change with further research and as new populations deal with privilege and power. For example, Degges-White, Rice, and Myers (2000) used a sample of adult lesbians in a qualitative study of Cass’s sexual minority identity development theory and found that definitions of the integrative or dialectic/systemic aspects of development were no longer valid; rather, a new stage appears to be evolving, the nature of which remains unclear. Important in this change, perhaps, is that societal awareness and acceptance of alternative lifestyles have increased over time. Simultaneously, the challenges to gay and lesbians individuals from some portions of society have become more intense. As culture changes, we can expect further issues in the developmental process to appear among many groups. Important among these will be increasing awareness that we all have many multicultural identities, rather than just one. The RESPECTFUL cube should be considered a useful beginning.

DCT: Multiple Narratives of Consciousness

Ivey and Payton (1994) have related cultural identity to early Platonic roots:

Meaning-making has been identified as a central aspect in the development of a cultural identity. . . . The essence of this framework is Plato’s observation in *The Republic* that the transition to enlightenment involves four levels of consciousness and that each level builds on previous perceptions of reality, preparing the way for the next higher level. Ivey points out that the progressions of knowledge portrayed in the “Allegory of the Cave” may be construed as a useful framework for the generation of cultural consciousness.

In connecting Plato to cultural consciousness, it may be helpful to recall that the prisoners in the Cave thought that the flickering shadows in front of them [were] “reality.” As one prisoner was removed from his chains and taken out of the cave, he would eventually realize that what he saw in the cave was not reality, but only a perspective. However, as Plato soberly notes . . . if the former prisoner were returned to his fellows with news of the new truth, “they would kill him.” The birth of consciousness is lonely and often fraught with real pain.

Cultural identity theory moves people from the cave of naive consciousness about self to awareness of self in relation to system. The parallels to the Platonic journey are not perfect, but do suggest that coming to a new view of reality may involve some difficulty. As Cornford notes, “One moral of the allegory is drawn from the distress caused by too sudden passage from dark to light.” (1981,   
p. 227)

Developmental counseling and therapy emerged from a reference point different from that of MCT’s cultural identity theory, but the two have considerable congruence around the concept of consciousness development. DCT offers a different but complementary theoretical base plus narrative specifics leading toward action to enhance identity development.

Whereas cultural identity theories tend to focus on specific groups, DCT’s approach takes a narrative approach to the evolution of consciousness. Individuals (and families and groups) have life stories that they tell about themselves, guiding the way they think and behave.

Specifically, DCT theory asserts that clients come to counseling with varying levels of consciousness or meaning-making systems that they use to understand their world. These consciousness orientations lead to different stages or styles of thinking and behaving. The task of the counselor is to assess and understand the cognitive/emotional stages clients use to make sense of what they are experiencing. Then the counselor joins the client where the individual is in her or his cognitive/emotional understanding and assists expansion of development both vertically and horizontally. No one type of consciousness is best, although more styles and stages permit more possibilities for thought and action.

The parallels between Cross’s cultural identity development and DCT meaning-making orientations may be seen in Table 8-1, “Two Models of Holistic Consciousness Compared.” The holistic model notes that development can occur within multiple states/stages or levels/orientations/styles simultaneously. We should recall that individuals or groups could be expected to move at any time from one consciousness model to another. Types of thought, feeling, and action vary within each consciousness model.

Comparisons between DCT and cultural identity theory are interesting and useful. For example, preencounter and sensorimotor thought and emotion can be limited and constraining when a client is dealing with a complex issue. At the same time, preencounter and sensorimotor experience can be more open to here and now experience and thus provide an opportunity for the client to grow and change. Parham points out that many individuals may be caught in denial and stagnation and use preencounter cognitions to prevent change. Yet the concrete and specific encounter with a racist incident can perturb individuals and help them move out of sensorimotor magical thinking patterns, characteristic of the preencounter stage.

Encounter is so important to the change process that Cross and others usually present it as a separate stage. In DCT this process would be termed *late sensorimotor* and be considered necessary for a full concrete consciousness.

Immersion/emersion concepts relate to concrete and formal consciousness. The most likely result of consciousness during the encounter stage is concrete and specific awareness of racism and prejudice, accompanied with anger—and often concrete and specific action to fight the situation. At a later time, during this stage, the reflective consciousness becomes prominent. The ability to reflect is essential if one is to operate at the internalization or dialectic/systemic level.

The formal/reflective consciousness—thinking about thinking—is characteristic of DCT clients who think about self. It is also typical of reflective individuals in cultural identity theory who think about cultural identity. As clients think about cultural identity, they have moved back and taken a new perspective on themselves as cultural beings.

A requirement of internalization is systemic thinking and the ability to take multiple perspectives. Thinking of the self-in-relation or person-as-community requires dialectical/systemic thought. Developmentally, some African American or other minority individuals may actually be operating at this seemingly more sophisticated level and they may be fully aware of how oppression operates at a systemic level. Many who see themselves as oppressed or treated unfairly may be especially able to think at this level. But, as Parham notes, they may not yet be able to see the perspective of the dominant group, whom they often regard as oppressors.

Thus, linear models of consciousness development do not really describe the complexity; a holistic model may be more realistic than linear stage frameworks. Developmentally, some young African American, Asian American, or Native American youth may experience post-formal thought and dialectic/systemic awareness much earlier than their majority-culture peers as a result of life experiences, which include personal experience with prejudice.

Both the DCT model and Parham’s addition to cultural identity theory suggest that “higher is not necessarily better.” There is value in the embeddedness of preencounter and sensorimotor approaches to reality. The ability of an individual at the encounter or concrete stage to act on the world and tell clear stories is important. No one can deny that the formal reflective consciousness of immersion/emersion is important. And from both the counseling/therapeutic model of DCT and the multicultural framework, it is patently clear that the ability to take multiple perspectives on reality is important. Consciousness may at times work in a linear fashion, but ultimately it is holistic and moving, perhaps ultimately existential and spiritual in nature. Is not our consciousness our spirit?

The Liberation of Consciousness

The effectiveness of MCT is most likely enhanced when the counselor uses modalities and defines goals consistent with the life experience and cultural ­values of the client. No single approach is equally effective across all populations and life situations. The ultimate goal of multicultural counselor/therapist training is to expand the repertoire of helping responses available to the professional regardless of theoretical orientation. (Sue et al., 1996, p. 19)

This assumption of MCT is a culturally appropriate restatement of traditional counseling theory and practice—*join the client where he or she is.* Counselors and therapists are, for the most part, deeply committed to empathy and understanding the client’s frame of reference. What has been missing in traditional empathic, relationship, and therapeutic alliance writing is cultural context and awareness of the self-in-relation.

DCT is committed to a co-constructed counseling and therapy with an emphasis on equality between counselor and client, therapist and patient. This commitment includes awareness of the social context of both counselor/therapist and the *client consultant.* The term *client consultant* emphasizes that the client can and often does have a significant impact on the helper.

Joining clients where they are involves diagnosing stages and levels of consciousness development, respecting that person where he or she *is,* and facilitating expansion of consciousness in consultation with the client.

The first task of a therapist focused on consciousness is to assess the client’s stage and style of meaning making. This will show most clearly in the person’s verbal behavior in the interview, but it also may be manifested in behavior in her or his daily life. Both cultural identity theory and DCT suggest ways to assess the client’s consciousness development.

Liberation of Consciousness as a Theory and Practice

The liberation of consciousness is a basic goal of MCT theory. Whereas self-actualization, discovery of the role of the past in the present, or behavior change have been traditional goals of Western psychotherapy and counseling, MCT emphasizes the importance of expanding personal, family, group, and organizational consciousness of the place of self-in-relation, family-in-relation, and organization-in-relation. This results in therapy that is not only ultimately contextual in orientation, but that also draws on traditional methods of healing from many cultures. (Sue et al., 1996, p. 22)

Liberation of consciousness is a goal of both MCT and DCT. We seek to encourage clients to find new ways of examining their lives and eventually of acting on these insights.

Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) is valuable in showing ways to liberate consciousness. In a liberation orientation, the word *level* is preferred over *style* in the belief that the more complete versions of consciousness do require one to become more cognitively complex. In this case, “higher is generally considered better.” Nonetheless, presenting oneself as being at a different level of consciousness than where one “really is” can be wise. For example, it would not always be wise for an oppressed group of peasants in South America to challenge the plantation owner openly. An individual migrant worker in South Florida, California, or Texas should also be careful in expressing her or his beliefs around unionization.

Freire discusses some specifics of consciousness raising in Chapter 3 of his book. He tells of meeting with a group of peasants over a campfire. The shared objective would be literacy training in which the peasants were to select and name the words they wished to learn. Freire worked out of their life experience, so reading education would naturally focus on the life of the peasant. In this way, he was as much a learner as were his “students.”

Freire and his students would identify objects in their natural environment and daily life. He stressed the importance of *codification* in which themes of the culture were identified. He used visual, tactile, and auditory channels as the peasants identified things in their environment. Counselors and therapists using the developmental counseling and therapy model would recognize this as sensorimotor questioning (“What are you seeing? Hearing? Feeling?”) in which direct experience is accessed as most fundamental. Neurolinguistic programming (Andreas & Faulkner, 1996) uses this type of questioning to help the client colleague anchor present and past life experiences. However, note that Freire was using specifics of neurolinguistic programming long before this psychotherapeutic mode became popular. Freire was key to the inclusion of these concepts in the methodology of developmental counseling and therapy, particularly as related to contextual issues.

Freire followed codification of experience with naming. His groups would describe the events of their lives and name what they saw, heard, and felt. The named words of lived experience would serve as the foundation of their reading. In psychotherapeutic terms, we want to know the nature of direct experience and how the client names this experience.

It is here that cultural identity theory can be helpful in understanding what Freire was doing. The peasants and Freire were operating in a state of naiveté and were passively accepting conditions of life on a plantation (see Table 8-2). In Platonic terms, they were “imagining” life rather than truly experiencing it. The act of naming experiences enabled the peasants to first know what was happening and later to reflect on their condition.

For a concrete example, Freire might ask the peasants to describe what they saw, heard, and felt during a typical day. Important would be specific sensorimotor images of events. Then, he might ask them to describe the daily life of the plantation owner as they saw, heard, and felt it, thus helping them identify contradictions and make them concrete. The words used in these descriptions would be the foundation for literacy training. The concrete *names* they used to describe their own lives and that of the plantation owner often brought them to new and complex forms of cognition and emotion about their previously lived experience, cognitions and feelings that had been impossible before. In short, the act of naming and identifying contradictions is fundamental to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral growth.

In the above example, the names given to life experiences are primarily those of the client colleague. The names are not taken from a previously agreed-on theory developed by remote experts. The names also help the leader or counselor identify new ways to conceptualize experience.

To bring and extend these concepts to cultural identity theory and counseling practice, the task for varying cultural groups is to first identify experience as lived (what they see, hear, and feel), then to name the experience and sometimes to act on it as a result of naming. As part of this type of examination, clients naturally reflect and redefine the meaning of their experience. These therapeutic and educational processes relate cultural identity theory, the Platonic epistemology, and Freire’s original thought. These comparable dimensions are outlined in Table 8-2.

Table 8-2 points out that specific actions can be employed within each level of consciousness to facilitate movement to the next level. Freire used many techniques similar to those used daily in counseling and psychotherapy, but his goal was achieving equality and action in the system, not leading individuals to conform to the status quo. Institutional or environmental change as a result of naming was also often engaged in by joint action of the leader and the group.

As one current example, DCT and the liberation model have been used in a Native American context (Cameron, Chavez, King, & turtle-song, 2001). The authors present a case example of their treatment method with a student who commented, “People sometimes stare at me, but they’re looking at the Indian, not me.” DCT questioning sequences helped the student to discover strengths in him self and the culture—and to become more aware of how issues of prejudice and racism were impacting him. The liberation model was considered most successful when the client decided to join in critical action against oppression in the community. But perhaps most important here is that the authors took the basic model and reframed it to address issues within the Native American Indian culture.

The goal of *conscientizacào* is critical consciousness—the client colleague who experiences self, perhaps for the first time, and then begins to see how self was constructed in a sociocultural relationship. Freire and the cultural identity theorists provide a diagnostic frame that can serve as a place to design helping interventions and assess their effectiveness. And moving beyond awareness, there is a call to action—almost a demand that one act to work issues of oppression and unfairness that brought about the oppressive thought patterns. Many of these interventions will follow a social justice model and require direct action in the community (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Helms, 2003).

Skills and Strategies for Liberation of Consciousness

“Psychotherapy as liberation” is a specific attempt to apply the concepts of Freire to the counseling and therapy progress (Ivey, 1995). The goal is to help clients see their issues in social context. Client narratives are particularly useful for assessment. This section presents specific questions designed to achieve the critical consciousness described above in relation to Paulo Freire.

Questions such as the following typically stimulate sufficient information:

 Could you tell me a story that occurs to you when you think about yourself (as African American, Korean American, Mexican American, Jewish American, Polish American, woman, gay male, person-with-AIDS, etc.)?

 Could you tell me about a situation in which you may have experienced or seen prejudice (racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, etc.)?

 What does it mean to you to be (insert term here)?

DCT has generated a set of questions designed to extend narratives at each stage of consciousness. Specific applications of these questions for each level of *cultural* identity theory might be as follows:

Expansion of Preencounter or Sensorimotor Consciousness

These questions are designed to encourage experiencing what it is like to be at a specific consciousness level or orientation. They can help those at the preencounter level expand their awareness of where they are (and thus perhaps prepare them to move on to other levels of consciousness). They are also useful for people at immersion/emersion states who may not be fully in touch with their emotions and here and now experience.

The focus in the following questions is on here and now sensory experience related to the story. The client might be asked to generate an image of the general situation just described.

 Could you think of one visual image that occurs to you as most important in that story? (Or auditory, kinesthetic, or other depending on preferred sense modality of the client or group.)

Visual perceptions

 What are you seeing?

 Describe in detail the scene where it happened.

Auditory perceptions

 What are you hearing?

 How are people sounding?

 Describe the sound in detail.

Kinesthetic perceptions

 What are you feeling in your body at this moment?

 How are you feeling?

 What are you feeling as this is going on?

Encouraging Movement to Another Consciousness Level

In-depth generation of sensorimotor experience in itself may bring about the spontaneous emergence of a new way of thinking about old ways of being. Oppression in all its forms affects the body and is ultimately a sensorimotor experience. Often, just getting fully in touch with that experience is enough to jar consciousness.

Helping move to new states of consciousness often is facilitated by supportive but challenging confrontation. Pointing out discrepancies and incongruities in the story or situation, particularly when the story is supported by emotionally based here and now experience, is often helpful in moving consciousness.

Essential to the following types of supportive confrontations is first hearing the client carefully and listening to her or his situation and unique perceptions and feelings. In presenting what you have heard, seen, or felt yourself, use the client’s key words so that it is she or he who develops the resolution, not you. Hearing the client’s story and narrative accurately and fully is vital in multiculturally oriented therapy, just as in any other model (Semmier & Williams, 2000).

The story is summarized with accurate paraphrasing and reflection of feeling. Important keywords of the client or group are used.

 On one hand, I hear that you said . . . , but on the other hand, they said . . .

 I hear you saying you felt . . . , but then . . .

 Could you point out to me the contradictions in the story and how you felt about it? (This type of lead may encourage more self-discovery.)

Similar questions can help people at other levels of consciousness consider alternative perspectives. For example, the person at the immersion/emersion stage of consciousness might benefit by returning to the emotional dimensions of preencounter or by being challenged to move toward more reflective consciousness at the later stages of immersion/emersion. The person whose consciousness is at the internalization level can profit by experiencing other, more direct ways of being.

Expanding Immersion/Emersion, Concrete, and Formal Consciousness

The goals at the early stages of immersion relate most closely to DCT’s concrete orientation to consciousness whereas later, formal/reflection questions may be useful. Note that these questions are useful in consciousness-raising groups and may help individuals relate their experience to others in the group.

Concrete examples useful for the earlier stages of immersion/emersion:

 Could you share a story of what happened? I’d like to hear it from beginning to end.

 What happened first, and then what happened; what was the consequence?

 What did he/she say? What did you say? Then what was said?

 What did you feel?

 What do you think the other(s) felt?

 Reflect feelings—“You felt XXX because XXX.”

 Particularly helpful in moving to reflective thought is the summarization of two or more individual or group stories (which will often contain similar key words) and asking the individual or group how the stories are similar.

Formal reflective examples to facilitate later stages of the immersion/emersion stage:

 How is your story similar to stories you have told me in the past?

 How is your story similar to (and different from) stories of other members of the group?

 How are your feelings similar?

 Is that a pattern? (in the individual or the group)

 What does this story say about you as a person?

 What do these stories say about us all? (identify group—for example, a women’s or gay liberation session)

 Useful in moving to internalization and dialectic/systemic thought are questions that focus on the relationship of the individual to the social context.

Expanding Internalization and Dialectic/Systemic Consciousness

Critical here is encouraging people to see themselves and their group in relation to broader systemic issues, often through multiperspective thought. This level of consciousness can become heavily embedded in intellectual thought and abstraction. Thus, focusing on action and generalizing learning to the real world through concrete action may be essential. This is also an important place to identify client metaphors (see bibliotherapy chapter) and underscore client strengths for coping with life challenges.

Summarization. It is often useful to summarize major portions of an individual or group conversation. This is followed by asking people to reflect on the conversation and asking them questions such as these:

 How do you put together/organize all that you have told me (or the group)? What one thing stands out for you?

Often this question or a variation will result in a broadened point of view toward the issue discussed.

Other questions:

 How many different ways could you describe the situation? How would it look from another perspective different from your own (different ethnic group, sexual orientation, etc.)?

 How would external conditions (e.g., trauma, racism, sexism, heterosexism) affect what is occurring with you (or the group)?

 What rule(s) were you operating under in this situation? What rule(s) are in the other person’s mind?

 Where did those rules come from? (family, culture, etc.)

 Can you see some flaws in your own reasoning that the others might think of? What do you see as flaws in the others’ reasoning?

 Do your feelings and emotions change as you look at the situation from a new perspective?

Internalization and dialectic/systemic consciousness may lead some clients to become enmeshed in thought and fail to act. “Some Blacks fail to sustain a long-term interest in Black affairs. Others devote an extended period of time, if not a lifetime, to finding ways to translate their personal sense of Blackness in a plan of action or general sense of commitment” (Cross, 1995, p. 121). Both MCT and DCT would agree that thought without action is empty.

Below are some potentially useful questions to encourage following up on these issues:

 We’ve heard the “what” and the “why.” Now what are you/we going to do about it?

 What one thing might you want to do tomorrow/next week to act on what you’ve learned and said?

 How can we take these thoughts into action?

 How might we behave differently?

 Let us develop an individual/group action plan

 This is what I am going to do about it! (In some cases—for example, a schoolteacher oppressing a student or a manager harassing a woman—the client may not have sufficient power and the therapist is then faced with the decision of how to act in the client’s best interests. Needless to say, this is not a traditional view of the helping relationship.)

It is important for the counselor or group leader to note that these are all concrete action plans and may also be typical of what we might expect to find in the often highly motivated early stages of the concrete immersion/emersion consciousness. At this point we move consciously into social action promoting change in the systems that often are at the root of client problems. Increasingly, issues of social justice are coming to the fore in the counseling and therapy fields (Ivey & Collins, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003).It is important to extend this idea beyond racism to other areas of oppression. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is a personal and group statement about the effect of alcohol abuse in our society. Women who march for their rights are directly attacking what many describe as an oppressive rape culture. Cancer survivors often meet in groups and take action to work with insensitive physicians or to support others in the struggle against the disease. The search for gay rights is a clear indication of taking internalization consciousness into action against heterosexism and oppression.

Action against the oppressive conditions of life can lead toward better mental health and increased holistic wellness. Passively sitting and discussing oppression is not enough. Action seeking to address oppressive external conditions is essential.

The Value of Each Level of Consciousness

Each style, stage, level, or orientation to consciousness has its value. The ability to experience life directly, associated with the sensorimotor and preencounter style, can be useful in both survival and heightened awareness of what is happening. We need concrete narratives to describe our experience and we need to reflect on the meaning of the narratives. Finally, dialectic/systemic internalization thought tends to help us see problems and issues in social context and, if balanced with action, can lead to significant change. So-called higher stages are not necessarily better. More useful is the ability to work with multiple levels of consciousness. Both Thomas Parham and William Cross endorse the wisdom of all states of being and they also imply “more is better.” The ability to take multiple positions seems to offer the most intentionality and perhaps the most flexibility to deal with the ultimate complexity and pervasiveness of oppressive experience.

SUMMARY

*The multicultural counseling and therapy metatheoretical framework places cultural issues at the core of all helping theories while simultaneously endorsing traditional theories, assuming that they are adapted to meet individual and group needs.* MCT is not an either-or absolutist frame of reference. Rather, it builds on traditional approaches, adding new dimensions to enrich the uniqueness of each person. If we fail to see the context in which the individual develops, we miss the richness that each individual has to offer.

*We are all cultural beings participating in many multicultural dimensions.* The RESPECTFUL multicultural cube was presented to remind us that vital to our being are many identities ranging from religion and spirituality to ethnic/racial identity to language and location issues. Privilege and power (and sometimes oppression) can occur in the dominant group in each multiculture.

*Cultural identity theory points out that awareness of oneself as a cultural being is a developmental issue in which a person moves from lack of awareness to multiperspective understanding.* William Cross’s theory was presented with its focus on ethnic/racial issues. However, the cultural identity model can be used to describe the growth process of any multicultural group.

*Evolution of consciousness is a broad goal, not only for cultural identity, but also for all clients, almost regardless of the issue on which they are working.* Parallels were presented between and among DCT, cultural identity theory, the work of Paulo Freire, and the writing of Plato. All are concerned with multiple narratives of consciousness in which clients learn to examine their issues from many perspectives. An important part of the wellness perspective is becoming aware of self-in-context and self-in-relation in most concerns presented by clients.

*Paulo Freire’s concept of education as liberation strategies provides both a value structure and a methodology for helping clients discover how they are selves-in-systems.* The Brazilian educator’s methods have had powerful impact in Latin America and can be adapted for facilitating client awareness in the counseling and therapy field.

*Skills and strategies adapted from DCT provide specifics for implementing a counseling and psychotherapy of liberation in the here and now of interview.* The chapter closed with many suggestions for how the interviewer could take the ideas of this chapter into direct and immediate practice.

*Challenges:* The concepts of multiculturalism are not easily accepted by all, although more and more people are becoming aware of the necessity to build increased understanding. The state of California by 2005 will have more residents that are People of Color than of White European background, with other Southwestern states soon to follow. By mid-century, the United States will be a true multicultural nation with no one group in the majority. These facts are perhaps the best argument to those who are resistant to multicultural issues.

*Research issues:* The research on cultural identity theory has become extensive*.* See Cross and Vandiver (2002) and Fisher and Morardi (2002) for useful presentations. One important study of ethnic/racial identity is by Utsey, Chae, Brown, and Kelly (2002) who examined stress and quality of life. Studying three ethnic groups (African American, Asian American, and Latina/o), these researchers found that African Americans had the greatest amount of race-related stress. The African Americans also had a higher level of racial identity, perhaps because of being forced to develop this awareness through living in a racist society. In addition, on quality of life issues, African Americans reported having poorer health, less satisfaction with relationships and social networks, and less satisfaction with lifestyle than other groups. All of these issues can appear in the counseling or therapy office and we may expect that many Asian Americans and Latina/o clients will present with parallel difficulties. Nonetheless, in a society that pays particular attention to color, we can anticipate continued challenges for African Americans.

THEORY INTO PRACTICE: DEVELOPING YOUR PORTFOLIO OF COMPETENCE

Self-Assessment Exercises

Exercise 1: Your RESPECTFUL awareness of your own multicultural self

At the beginning of this chapter, you were asked to place yourself in the multicultural cube as you might experience power and dominance, either as a person of privilege or a person who deals with privileged others. We’d like you to return to the ­RESPECTFUL Cube and use the four-level cultural identity theory model to rate your level of awareness in each category. For example, how aware are you of yourself as a spiritual being, the importance of your language, or your racial/ethnic heritage?

Based on your own subjective impressions, where do you see yourself in terms of your awareness of the importance of your multicultural identities? Please revisit Table 8-1 to help you make your decisions. Place 1 for preencounter, 2 for encounter, 3 for immersion/emersion, and 4 for internalization. (Note: It may help if you think first of the effect of the category on your life and then about its affect on you. You may find, for example, that you never thought of it before, which is a clear indication of level 1 preencounter. For example, many people never think of their economic status, but it deeply affects who they are and their opportunity.)

1 2 3 4 R Religion

1 2 3 4 E Economic Status

1 2 3 4 S Sexual identity

1 2 3 4 P Psychological maturity (cognitive/developmental style)

1 2 3 4 E Ethnic/racial identity

1 2 3 4 C Chronological Challenges (age)

1 2 3 4 T Trauma

1 2 3 4 F Family history

1 2 3 4 U Unique physical characteristics

1 2 3 4 L Language and location of residence

Exercise 2: Your personal reflections on multicultural identity

As you think of the above indicators of your personal awareness plus your earlier ratings on power and privilege, what implications do you find for your own self-awareness and for the counseling and therapy process?

Exercise 3: Using DCT strategies to explore personal thoughts about oppression

It is helpful to become aware of your own experiences with discrimination. Most of us, whether we are in a majority or a minority, have experienced discrimination of some type. This discrimination may have manifested as actual racism, jokes about your ethnic heritage, not being allowed to do something because of your sex, religious bigotry, not having enough money to do something necessary for you or your family. If you are gay or lesbian or have close friends who are, you undoubtedly know the personal pain that comes from discrimination. Other topics can help you get in touch with your own history of discrimination. For example, many athletes find themselves stereotyped as “dumb jocks.” Good students are seen as “nerds.” You’re considered “out of it” if you don’t wear the right clothes. Perhaps you were teased unmercifully as a child. Or you may be the child of alcoholic parents. Individuals who won’t go along with the prevailing majority often suffer forms of discrimination not unlike racism and sexism. Being different is often a handicap in itself.

Review the discussion above and select a discriminatory issue that is relevant to you. The exercise will be more profitable if you can identify a specific issue you have experienced personally, but you may wish to work through the exercise focusing on a friend or family member. What area of multicultural awareness did you select, and why is it important to you personally?

Give a specific instance when you or a friend suffered from some type of discrimination? Get a visual image of that situation. What do you see/ hear/ feel? Can you locate a specific feeling in your body? Where in your body? Focus particularly on your emotions and kinesthetic feelings. Can you recreate the past situation in the present?

Describe the concrete events surrounding the situation. What happened before? What happened afterward? Who was there? How did they act? What did they say and do? How did you feel before the event, and how did you feel afterward?

Did things similar to that event happen in other situations? Was it a pattern? How did that pattern affect you and your sense of self? How did you feel about other people, perhaps in your family, who suffered from the same pattern of discrimination?

Look back at your responses above. What sense do you make of the incident now? Note particularly your responses using the sensorimotor and concrete-operational style. At what level of multicultural identity theory were you operating? Given what you have observed, what are you going to do?

The following exercise is more difficult. Select one of the suggested areas of discrimination above with which you are less familiar. It is important to choose a topic you know is difficult for you to understand and encounter. What topic did you select? Why?

Imagine that you are an individual of that cultural group. Generate a visual image of a type of discrimination you might encounter. What would you see/ hear/ and feel? Where was the feeling located in your body?

What sense would you make out of this discriminatory situation? What would it mean to you if you experienced that event?

Imagine a series of concrete events, such as the one above, that repeat again and again. What would life be like? What would it mean to you if you experienced repeated discrimination? What would it mean to your family?

How do you integrate this brief exercise with the previous exercise in which you examined your own personal experience with discrimination? What was similar? What was different?

Identifying, Classifying, and Fostering White Awareness

Exercise 4: Classifying cultural identity stages

Each of the following clients represents a different cultural identity level. While we all must recall that many clients will present different cultural identity levels in the interview, we still should be able to classify the *predominant cultural identity level* at that time. Refer to page 252 for definitions of the five stages.

Rate each of these from 1 through 4:

1 2 3 4 1. (Cambodian) The United States is best. I just want to be an American like everyone else.

1 2 3 4 2. (Cambodian) I’ve been ripped off. America doesn’t care about me. White people are just plain racist and Blacks aren’t much better.

1 2 3 4 3. (Cambodian) I need to get back to my roots and think about my homeland. Its too much hassle dealing with this culture. I need time to think.

1 2 3 4 4. (Cambodian) As I look at it now, the United States does have much to offer, although I know I must fight racism. I’m glad I took time to recapture my Cambodian identity.

1 2 3 4 5. (woman) I’ve just come back from the picket line. The affirmative action program at the plant just isn’t working. I’m going to do something about it. It really makes me angry.

1 2 3 4 6. (woman) I don’t see why people are picketing the plant. I’m doing fine. Sure, I work hard as a secretary and I’d like more pay, but I sure don’t want to handle lumber in the yard.

1 2 3 4 7. (woman) I’m tired of the hassle. I’m supporting the strike, but I need time to think for awhile. I just want to be with women and think it through. Men just seem irrelevant to me.

1 2 3 4 8. (woman) Well, I’m going to work on the picket line, but I also know that we’ve got to work with those men in the plant who understand our point of view. We’ve got to work together to change a lot of people’s minds.

1 2 3 4 9. (blind) I’ve learned a lot about life by listening and touching. I know I’ve missed a lot in terms of seeing. I’ve been angry at the discrimination I’ve faced, but I’m excited to see all the improvements for the blind that have come in recent years. It’s been worth it.

1 2 3 4 10. (Chinese) I’m fed up with this university. Everywhere I turn, I find more and more racism. The history texts distort my background; the housing office ignores the discrimination. We’ve got to get organized.

1 2 3 4 11. (Jewish) There’s no discrimination in this country. I’ve gotten along fine. I do have to watch things a bit, but things are OK.

1 2 3 4 12. (Nigerian foreign student) Discrimination is certainly an issue for me in this country. But I’ve learned to sit back and live and play with other Nigerians. We have our own agenda anyway.

1 2 3 4 13. (Lesbian teen) What is “wrong” with me? I find that I’m attracted to women and men don’t interest me. I feel so alone.

1 2 3 4 14. (Lesbian, two years later) I understand now. I’m glad I came out, but I am really angry at the way I was treated

1 2 3 4 15. (Muslim) I can understand the discrimination that occurs toward our people, but I’m glad for the understanding and support that I get from some of my Christian and Jewish friends. Nonetheless, I have decided that I am going to act more carefully in the future to protect my family. It is a difficult balance I face.

1 2 3 4 16. (Cancer trauma survivor) I shouldn’t have ignored that lump in my breast. I’m going to go out and educate others and help them understand the disease more fully. We have to act to take care of ourselves.

1 2 3 4 17. (counseling student) People are people. Why all this fuss about racism and sexism? We’re all struggling.

1 2 3 4 18 . (counseling student) I now see what I’ve been missing. It really ticks me off. The therapy theory course doesn’t mention issues of racial or sexual discrimination. I’m going to see that something is done about it.

1 2 3 4 19. (counseling student) I can certainly understand why people get upset about racism, but as I think about it, there isn’t a lot I can do. I need to go off and think about it some more.

1 2 3 4 20. (counseling student) Developing full multicultural understanding may take some time. My own goal is to work more on where I come from ethnically. As I understand my background, I should be better able to understand others. At the same time, I can’t let that be enough. I’ll take some action as well.

Exercise 5: Fostering White awareness: The frontier of multicultural training

In U.S., Canadian, and European society, the dominant White Euro-American cultural group is in particular need of self-awareness. Efforts at multicultural awareness will be fruitless unless Whites begin to examine and know themselves.

Cultural identity theory provides a four-stage model for evaluating racial consciousness of White counselor trainees (Ponterotto, 1988). The framework can also   
be applied to White identity development in general. Four stages of thinking and behavior of counselors in training are identified, namely, (1) preexposure, (2) exposure, (3) zealotry or defensiveness, and (4) integration. These stages are roughly comparable to the four styles of DCT.

Where are you personally in terms of your awareness of White culture? If you are of White European ancestry, classify yourself as a counselor, according to the suggestions of Ponterotto. If you are non-White, identify one or two White people you may work with and classify them. Each person will require differing types of counseling when issues that relate to racial awareness come up.

Interviewing Practice Exercises

Exercise 6: Practice in a role-played session   
using multicultural awareness questions

The format for this exercise is similar to that of other role-plays, the exception being that the client is asked to play his or her real self and to honestly explore how he or she has personally experienced issues of prejudice and racism. The specific questions used in Exercise 3 of this chapter can serve as the framework for the practice session. Follow usual ethical guidelines with your group.

**Step 1: Divide into Practice Groups**

**Step 2: Select a Group Leader**

**Step 3: Assign Roles for the Practice Session**

 Role-played client. The role-played client will discuss a real past issue in which he or she experienced discrimination and/or prejudice. The client should share only what he or she feels comfortable sharing.

 Interviewer. The interviewer will ask the specific DCT/Freire five-style questions (pages xxx-xxx), as outlined in this chapter. The questions are adapted to meet the specific needs of this client. The interviewer will not be intrusive and will especially try to understand the client’s frame of reference.

 Observers 1 and 2. The observers will observe the session but will not take notes. They will be available after the role-play for discussion and mutual support.

**Step 4: Plan the Session**

The interviewer and client need first to agree on the specific topic to be reviewed.

**Step 5: Conduct a 15-Minute Interviewing Session**

You will find it helpful to videotape or audiotape practice sessions.

**Step 6: Provide Immediate Feedback (15 to 20 Minutes)**

Allow the client and interviewer time to provide immediate personal reactions to the practice session. After this has been done, the observers and the role-played client can focus on the thoughts and feelings of all members of the group. An open sharing of issues may be beneficial. Avoid judgmental feedback.

**Step 7: Generate a Fantasy About Another Cultural Group (20 Minutes)**

In the groups, generate a fantasy about how a member of an oppressed multicultural group might experience the same DCT four-style questions. Do this as a group rather than an individual discussion.

Exercise 7: Counseling and psychotherapy as liberation

Before starting this exercise, please review the specific questions based on Paulo Freire’s thought on page XXX. Your task in this session is to explore the specifics of the systematic questioning procedure in a practice session. For this practice session, we strongly recommend that you have the actual questions before you and that you share them with the client. Work through them carefully together.

**Step 1: Divide into Practice Groups**

**Step 2: Select a Group Leader**

**Step 3: Assign Roles for the Practice Session**

 Role-played client. The role-played client will talk freely about a topic of discrimination or oppression, perhaps selected from the topics presented in Exercise 3.

 Interviewer. The interviewer will share the questions to be asked of the client and work with the client carefully through each style. Be sure to use reflective listening to encourage openness and depth of expression.

 Due to the length of the session, it will not ordinarily be possible to have observers. If possible, audiotape or videotape and session and, following ethical procedures with appropriate permissions, have classmates review the session and provide feedback. Ideally, your client will be present during the feedback session.

**Step 4: Conduct an Hour or More Interviewing Session**

Again it is helpful to videotape or audiotape practice sessions.

**Step 5: Review Practice Session and Provide Feedback**

The interviewer should ask for feedback rather than getting it without being asked.The observers and the client can share their observations of the session. Avoid judgmental feedback.

Portfolio Reflections

Exercise 8: Your reflections on multicultural and counseling   
and therapy as liberation

What stood out for you from this chapter? What sense did you make of what you have read and experienced? What are your key points form this chapter? Write you thoughts here and add to them to your Portfolio Folder in your computer.

Generalization: Taking Multicultural Concepts Home

Exercise 9: Observe individuals in daily life

Listen to friends and colleagues when they talk about various groups and note these individuals’ levels of consciousness. You may ask close friends or family, in a nonjudgmental fashion, “How do you see or think about (the particular group)?” Note their responses and then assess their level or levels of consciousness. Many, perhaps most, people you listen to will be at preencounter (sensorimotor) consciousness. You may wish to perturb or confront them gently with new or additional data.

Exercise 10: The interview

The basic helping model to apply in your sessions, either with individuals or families, is as follows: (1) Join the client’s construction of the problem where the client is. How does the individual or family understand the problem? (It is useful to follow the classification systems of cultural identity theory, which will help you understand the level of consciousness). (2) Perturb the client’s current level of thinking by using confrontation skills that focus on discrepancies between the individual and the environment. (3) Help the client struggle with that understanding and realize that anger (common in stage 2) may result from your confrontation. Understand and join the client struggling to incorporate this new perspective.

To consolidate this new level of understanding, expand awareness through sensorimotor, concrete, formal, and dialectic/systemic interventions. An angry client or family may need relaxation training to temper high emotion, or concrete skills training for specifics on coping with the environment, or a formal understanding of patterns that they can expect to repeat in the society.

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Answers to Chapter Exercises

Answers to Chapter Exercises Group Identity Stage (p. XX)

1. 1 5. 2 9. 4 13. 1 17. 1

2. 2 6. 1 10. 2 14. 2 18. 2

3. 3 7. 3 11. 1 15. 4 19. 3

4. 4 8. 4 12. 3 16. 4 20. 4

Table 8-1  Two Models of Holistic Consciousness Compared

Cultural Identity Theory DCT

Preencounter Sensorimotor

Encounter (with elements of immersion) Concrete

Immersion/Emersion Formal

Internalization Dialectic/Systemic

Table 8-2  Cognitive/Emotional Developmental Change: Five Theoretical Perspectives

Actions Needed to  
Cultural Identity Produce Change to  
Theory DCT Plato Freire the Next Level/Stage

Preencounter Sensorimotor Imagining Magical consciousness Ask for clients to describe   
(Naiveté with acceptance (conforming)\* life experiences through  
of status quo) stories of oppression.

Encounter Concrete/situational Belief Beginning of critical Name and confront   
(Naming and consciousness contractions between  
resistance with anger (reforming) self and contextual  
a common emotion) systems.

Immersion/emersion Formal/reflective Thinking Reflective consciousness Support pattern   
(Redefinition and sees patterns of recognition and  
reflection) oppression self-in-system reflections.

Internalization Dialectic/systemic Dialectic Critical consciousness Continue emphasis on  
(Multiperspective (transforming) dialogic thought and  
integration) conscientizacào co-investigation of reality.  
 Joint action to  
 transform reality.

\*Conforming, reforming, and transforming are terms coined by Alschuler (1986) that are helpful in defining the changes that occur with critical consciousness.