

Adolescent identity development based on race and sexuality



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Culture is becoming one of the major issue challenging social services today. Current literature is emphasizing the need to understand its significance to individuals, groups and society as a whole. The rate of growing multiculturalism and diversity is challenging health, social and personal services where understanding is critical in creating sensitive and timely services that in turn are important in promoting personal well-being and social progress (Gitterman & Shulman, 2005). Because counselors and therapists have their own cultural influences, understanding the significance of culture is necessary not only to deliver treatment but also to be able to develop for themselves skills that transcend cultural barriers to treatment. The urgency of these needs has been highlighted in several researches. Sue and Sue (2002) emphasize that one of the primary steps to be taken is the study and recognition of culture in therapy. Counseling methods should reflect this and program methods to help cultural assimilation without sacrificing appreciation for cultural heritage (Vontress et al, 19999). McGuire-Snieckus and associates at the same time have also highlighted that standards for care should reflect these changes: that therapy should have a greater social and personal value to be able to effectively address care needs. The need for intercultural communication and understanding in therapy is an indication of greater social empowerment amongst cultural groups and is critical in developing tolerance and cooperation among various groups (Neuliep, 2006). The selected populations of the study, Hispanics, have a distinct cultural heritage that greatly influences the manner by which they perceive, acquire and respond to therapy. Johnson (2006) reflects that as a subject group they show how the sensitivity to cultural factors can contribute to the success of programs. Cox and Ephross (1998) cite that <https://assignbuster.com/adolescent-identity-development-based-on-race-and-sexuality/>

ethnicity should be considered not only for their value in the development of identity or perceptions but also in the manner of response that subjects have to new cultures.

From the interviews done for the purpose of this research, it is apparent that there are many misconceptions within and outside the Hispanic community that actively influence perceptions regarding therapy. There is great attachment among the population for family and cultural heritage that emphasizes religion and traits that are considered to be trademarks. There are many taboos developed from these beliefs that may deter counseling particularly those related to issues such as gender, sexuality, cultural and national identity such as standards of beauty, family loyalty, machismo and the concept of being a Latino. The respondents of the interview have all acknowledged these beliefs and have expressed their consensus that though many of these beliefs are changing, the change is more because of simply coping rather than a cultural movement to distance from beliefs that do not encourage counseling or the referring “family matters” outside the family. Considering the issue of neglect and abuse among the Hispanic families, there is a general consensus that it is wrong but respondents also acknowledge the reluctance to involve one’s self or to seek authorities. The development of treatment and counseling that recognizes the characteristics and needs of cultural communities such as Hispanics is not to emphasize differences but rather is to recognize that culture, whether that of the majority or that of minorities, affects an individual’s state, response and receptiveness to programs. People are diverse and since counseling addresses them, there should be recognition of this diversity if programs are to become sensitive and responsive. In conclusion, the programs that should

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be developed should consider the barriers apparent in delivering services to Hispanics which include language, cultural conceptions and social perception by and for the group and at the same time be able to consider the existing cultural interaction involved in the everyday lives of the clients. This entails not only an understanding of culture by counselors operationally in clients but also in them and in the programs they are developing. Most of all, there should be a realization that culture is one of the most powerful forces in society and that it must be addressed by research and services accordingly.

References

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