Unit 4: Adolescence

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT ADOLESCENTS & THEIR FAMILIES

SPCL 7804
Identity

The search for identity is considered the primary developmental task of adolescence.

This is very much influenced by the social world:
- peers, parents, schools, and neighborhoods.
  - all of these are influenced by the cultural and historical context in which the adolescent’s identity is formed.
Application

According to Erikson, what are the processes involved in the development of identity?

A. Foreclosure and achievement
B. Exploration and commitment
C. Exploration and moratorium
D. Diffusion and commitment
Rasheed is a 19-year-old college student whose family is making financial sacrifices to pay for his education. So far, his grade point average is not high enough to allow him entrance into the pre-med program, the course of study he intends to pursue. He also works part time as a youth counselor, a job he really likes. He is considering changing his major to education. According to Marcia’s categories of identity status, which category would you assign to Rasheed with regard to his vocational identity?

A. Diffusion
B. Moratorium
C. Foreclosed
D. Achieved
Application

Rafia is Rasheed’s twin sister. Since she was little, her parents have told both of them that they would become doctors, thereby living up to the American Dream that many immigrant parents wish for their children. Rafia’s grade point average is high and STEM courses come easy to her. She is majoring in Biology and makes sure that she registers for pre-med courses each semester. According to Marcia’s categories of identity status, which category would you assign to Rafia with regard to her vocational identity?

A. Diffusion
B. Moratorium
C. Foreclosed
D. Achieved
Identity Development

James Marcia expanded on Erikson’s theory of identity development

Each identity status category can be defined by the presence or absence of exploration and commitment
James Marcia’s Identity Statuses

Crisis as exploration within the context of: political, religious, occupational, and sexual roles and life plans

Commitment as ownership of choices, values, and goals

4 Identity Statuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Identity Diffusion</th>
<th>Identity Foreclosure</th>
<th>Identity Moratorium</th>
<th>Identity Achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Absent</td>
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Open and Closed Identity Domains

According to Meeus and colleagues, adolescents tended toward foreclosure in areas over which they had little control (e.g., school; religion) – closed identity domains.

Crises in more open identity domains (involving personal relationships) were found to be shorter, under personal control, and more likely to result in achieving commitments.
Application

Hannah is described as having a bicultural identity. This would suggest that she:

A. is confused about whether to identify with her ethnic group or with the majority culture.

B. identifies in some way with her own ethnic group and in other ways with the majority culture.

C. feels pressured to adopt the values of the majority culture over those of her own ethnic group.

D. has split off from her ethnic group so she can fit more comfortably with the majority culture.
Ethnic Identity Development

Phinney’s Three Stage Model

- **Stage 1:** Unexamined ethnic identity - Lack of exploration of ethnicity
- **Stage 2:** Ethnic Identity Search - Individuals become interested in learning about and understanding their own ethnic identity
- **Stage 3:** Ethnic Achievement - Individuals have a clear and confident understanding of their own cultural identity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification with Majority Culture</th>
<th>Identification with Ethnic Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Separated</td>
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<td>Marginal</td>
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Ethnic Identity & Resilience

When minority group membership is central to the adolescent’s identity, that ethnic identity appears to both increase sensitivity to discrimination and protect psychological well-being in the face of discrimination.

Because having a strong ethnic identity is beneficial to children, parents can engage in racial/ethnic socialization practices

- Teaching about culture
- Preparing children for the possible experience of discrimination
- Providing them with opportunities for mainstream cultural experiences and egalitarian relationships with others from different groups
Discussion

Consider your identity development.

During adolescence, which areas did you explore and undergo a moratorium?

Which areas did you foreclose during adolescence?

In adulthood, have you gone through a moratorium in areas that you previously foreclosed?

What about your ethnic identity development?
Frameworklessness

Caused by the tremendous level of changes that adolescents experience

Adolescents have outgrown childhood and they are not yet adults

Adolescents undergo the second process of individuation, as they separate from their parents

But with this comes a loss in feelings of security, and their sense of frameworklessness can increase
Peers become important because they share in common the unique state of frameworklessness.

As children seek autonomy from their parents in early adolescence (between 11 and 14), they seem to become more dependent on their peers.
Peers

Source of support

Social comparison during identity formation

Attribute substitution
  ◦ imitated and identified with

Increasing susceptibility to peer influence is greatest for antisocial or risky behaviors, and more likely for boys than for girls

Resistance to peer influence begins to increase in middle adolescence, increasing most between 14 and 18 years, with continuing, shallower gains in young adulthood
The Peer Network

Close Friends ↔ Clique ↔ Crowd
Adolescent Crowds

20% of students belong to popularity-conscious crowds (the populars and jocks)

About 20% belong to alienated crowds (“druggies”)

30% belong to “Average” crowds

Less than 5% of high schoolers belong to crowds characterized by high achievement

In majority White high schools, crowds (10-15%) can be characterized by ethnicity, with achievement differences between these crowds
Parents

Conflicts with parents occur most frequently in early adolescence.

By middle adolescence conflicts tend to decline in frequency but increase in intensity.

Across cultures, both parents and adolescents view some aspects of parental control to be very legitimate:
  ◦ Moral issues
  ◦ Social manners

Conflicts arise when parents try to exert control over what teens perceive as personal issues:
  ◦ These conflicts are stressful to both adolescents and parents.

Adolescents lie more often to parents whom they perceive as controlling, cold, or rejecting.
Parenting Style

Linked to four aspects of teens’ adjustment:
- psychosocial development
- school achievement
- internalized distress
- problem behavior

The children of authoritative parents score best on the majority of these indicators, and they showed increases in self-reliance over time.

Those of neglectful parents scored worst, and they showed a decline in self-reliance over time.
Parental Responsiveness

Beneficial to teens; associated with adolescents’ self-confidence and social competence.

ACCEPTANCE (affectionate, involved, accepting)

DEMOCRACY (encouraging psychological autonomy)

Responsiveness
Parental Demandingness

Beneficial to teens

More closely associated with “good” behavior and self-control

Authoritative parenting is a good predictor of academic success
Ethnic Differences in Parenting

Authoritative parenting is not as good a predictor of academic success for teens from Asian American, African American, and Hispanic families as it is for White teens.

Nevertheless, hard work is linked to academic success regardless of ethnicity.

Teens across all ethnic groups were equally likely to believe that getting a good education pays off.

When parents are not particularly warm or democratic, high levels of monitoring can help protect teens from high-risk behavior.
Immigrant Students

Challenges

◦ Process of acculturation
◦ Racism and discrimination
◦ Difficulties related to immigration status
◦ Linguistic barriers
◦ Limited financial resources and school accessibility

Adolescents have the added social pressures of trying to fit into the complex social systems in middle and high school.
Best Practices: Multicultural Competence & Culturally Responsive Support Services
Case Example: Huy, 16-year-old

Team Work:

◦ List Huy’s needs
◦ Looking at this case from a cultural perspective, what are some of the considerations to take into account?
A Further Look at Huy

One year later, Huy comes to speak with you. His favorite subject is art – he has won numerous awards in painting and sculpture. His art teacher has approached Huy about applying to colleges with art programs. His parents insist that Huy has to devote himself to the family business. They are pushing him to study business or finance. Huy is feeling depressed and torn.

How would you respond to Huy?
Application

How do the concepts of individualism and collectivism apply to the case of Huy?
Posture of Cultural Reciprocity

**Step 1:** The school counselor identifies the cultural values embedded in his/her professional practices.

**Step 2:** The school counselor finds out whether the family being served recognizes and values these assumptions and, if not, how their view differs from that of the school counselor.

**Step 3:** The school counselor recognizes and respects any cultural differences identified, and fully explains the cultural basis of his/her assumptions.

**Step 4:** Through two-way communication, the school counselor determines the most effective way to adapt his/her professional interpretation or recommendations to the family’s cultural value system.

Discuss how the posture of cultural reciprocity would be applied to Huy.
Posture of Cultural Reciprocity

**Step 1:** What were the counselor’s recommendations? Which values underlie these recommendations?

**Step 2:** What is the family’s perspective? And does it differ from that of the school counselor?

**Consider:** 1) Huy’s family culture as it relates to making major life decisions. 2) What is Huy learning at school? 3) What is the school counselor’s perspective?

**Step 3:** Huy’s parents’ parenting style can be validated within the context of their culture. They can also come to understand that Huy is acculturating to U.S. mainstream values as he attends school.

**Step 4:** The school counselor, together with Huy and his parents, can develop a plan that makes sense to everyone involved.

What would such a plan look like?