Addressing the Complexities of Culture and Gender in Counseling

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*The purpose of this article is to describe a model for organizing and systematically considering 9 complex and overlapping cultural influences that counselors need to be addressing in their work: **A**ge and generational influences, **D**isability, **R**eligion, **E**thnicity, **S**ocial status, **S**exual orientation, **I**ndigenous heritage, **N**ational origin, and **G**ender (which together form the slightly misspelled acronym ADRESSING). The ADRESSING model is particularly useful in helping counselors and educators to (a) examine their own biases and areas of inexperience regarding minority cultures and (b) consider the salience of multiple cultural influences and identities with their clients.*

Making generalizations about the world around us seems to be a necessary human tendency. The cognitive processes of generalization and categorization together allow a person to organize and process vast amounts of information that might otherwise overload her or his cognitive capacities (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986). Unfortunately, such normal cognitive processes also bias a person toward developing stereotypes about people (Stephan, 1989). Furthermore, when differences in power between two cultures exist, stereotypes become a means for reinforcing the marginalization and exclusion of the less powerful group (Fiske, 1993). In the United States, Euro-American culture has traditionally held the power to create and define stereotypes in relation to its own values, norms, and ideals. Arturo Madrid (1990) eloquently described the personal impact of these stereotypes and this power:

> I am a citizen of the United States, as are my parents and as were my grandparents and my great-grandparents. My ancestors' presence in what is now the United States antedates Plymouth Rock, even without taking into account any American Indian heritage I might have.
>
> I do not, however, fit those mental sets that define America and Americans. My physical appearance, my speech patterns, my name, my profession (a professor of Spanish) create a text that confuses the reader. My normal experience is to be asked, "And where are you from?"
>
> Overcoming my resentment I try to educate, knowing that nine times out of ten my words fall on inattentive ears. I have spent most of my adult life explaining who I am not. I am exotic, but . . . not exotic enough . . . not Peruvian, or Pakistani, or whatever. I am however, very clearly the other, if only your everyday, garden-variety, domestic other. (p. 15)

The marginalization and exclusion of whole cultures of people has a long and ubiquitous history in the United States. The field of counseling has been no less influenced by those Euro-American norms that have excluded and discriminated against cultural minorities. Until the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s, only a relative handful of people were permitted to become counselors or counseling psychologists, and only rarely were these individuals neither White nor male. Although the number of women in the field has increased at a relatively rapid pace during the past three decades (Goodheart & Markham, 1992; Russo, Olmedo, Stapp, & Fulcher, 1981), it is no coincidence that this increase has involved primarily White women, whose cultural values and worldviews are more similar to those of the dominant culture.

Although counseling's inclusion of ethnic minority perspectives has also increased in recent years, the integration of these perspectives into mainstream research, practice, and training curricula has yet to be accomplished (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Clark, 1987; Hills & Strozier, 1992; Ibrahim & Arredondo, 1986). Concomitantly, information about nonethnic minority cultures (e.g., women, older people, people with disabilities, and sexual minorities) tends to be quite separate from the multicultural counseling literature and from one another (Hays, 1995). For example, the area known as multicultural counseling and therapy focuses on ethnic minority cultures but pays little attention to gender-related issues (Davenport & Yurich, 1991), whereas feminist therapy has concerned itself primarily with the situations of White women and tended to exclude ethnic minority perspectives (Espin & Gawelek, 1992).

The purpose of this article is to describe a model for organizing and systematically considering complex cultural influences in counseling. It is referred to as the ADRESSING model because it addresses nine main cultural influences that counselors need to consider in their work with clients, namely, **A**ge and generational influences, **D**isability, **R**eligion, **E**thnicity (which may include race), **S**ocial status, **S**exual orientation, **I**ndigenous heritage, **N**ational origin, and **G**ender. The model is particularly useful in helping counselors and educators to (a) examine their own biases and areas of inexperience regarding cultural minority groups and (b) consider the salience of multiple cultural influences on clients (Hays & LeVine, in press). The ADRESSING model is intended for use by counselors and clients of both majority and minority cultures; however, because the field's exclusion of people of color has been so enduring and widespread, the emphasis here is on people of ethnic minority and indigenous cultures. Although examples refer primarily to U.S. minority groups,

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the model is applicable to the multicultural societies of Canada and Australia, where Anglo-European culture is dominant.[1]

KEY CONCEPTS IN THE CONSIDERATION OF DIVERSE CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Despite distinct differences in their meanings, the terms *race, ethnicity,* and *culture* continue to be used interchangeably and in ways that reinforce Eurocentric assumptions. The first term, *race,* originated in an 18th century attempt to classify people on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin color and hair texture (Thomas & Sillen, 1972). However, as social scientists subsequently recognized the convergence of gene pools around the world, and the greater within-group (than between-group) variation of supposedly race-specific characteristics (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993), the concept of a pure race became relatively meaningless. Because race is still a powerful sociopolitical construct and an important aspect of identity for many people (Helms, 1990; Spickard, 1992), it continues to require consideration in the social sciences, particularly with regard to understanding social attitudes, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination (Fairchild, Yee, Wyatt, & Weizmann, 1995). However, its use as an explanatory factor in behavior is quite problematic (Dobbins & Skillings, 1991). For example, as Jones (1987) noted, knowing that a client is Black (or for that matter, White) does not adequately inform the therapist about the client's views of psychotherapy, personality, psychological conflict, aspirations, or goals in therapy, "let alone about educational level, social background, or environmental context" (p. 175).

In terms of understanding a person's unique heritage and value system, ethnic identity is usually more informative than race (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Johnson, 1990). *Ethnicity* refers to the "sense of commonality transmitted over generations by the family and reinforced by the surrounding community" (McGoldrick, 1982, p. 4). The concept of ethnicity is related to the Greek terms *ethnos,* which refers to a nation or tribe, and *ethnikos,* meaning nationality (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). While these roots imply the idea of a shared biological heritage, the most commonly understood definition of ethnicity refers to its socially constructed elements (e.g., language, beliefs, norms, values, behaviors, and institutions), which are shared by members of the ethnic group.

It is important to note that the use of an ethnic identification is often more complicated than it appears, particularly to outsiders. For social and political reasons, broad ethnic categories are commonly used to describe individuals and even groups of people who are culturally quite distinct from one another. For example, the identity "Latino" or "Latina" may be used by people who trace their cultural heritage to Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, South America, or Central America (Ruiz & Padilla, 1979). This is not to say that the broader, politically recognized ethnic groupings are meaningless but to point out the dangers in assuming similarities between individuals who identify themselves similarly in an initial encounter. For the counselor, it will always be important to understand the *meaning* of ethnic identity for the individual. Furthermore, even if a client does not consider ethnicity to be a significant influence in her or his life, the counselor is still obligated to understand the dominant and minority cultural meanings and context of the client's identity.

Of the three terms (race, ethnicity, and culture), *culture* is the most inclusive and thus the most difficult to define. For the purposes of multicultural counseling, I use the following definition: all of the learned behaviors, beliefs, norms, and values that are held by a group of people and passed on from older members to newer members, at least in part to preserve the group. Note that this definition focuses on the interpersonal and socially constructed aspects of culture, rather than on physical similarities between members (as does race). As a consequence, it is specific enough to include groups with some common biological heritage but general enough for groups that do not share a common ancestry.

There are advantages and disadvantages to such an inclusive definition of culture. The primary advantage is that it allows for the consideration of overlapping and integrated cultural influences in the lives of individual clients. Such attention is particularly important for people who hold bicultural or multicultural identities (e.g., an individual who immigrated as an adult and identifies with two national cultures, a young man whose father is African American and whose mother is Vietnamese, or a woman who identifies herself as both Latina and lesbian).

Concomitantly, the broader definition draws attention to cultures that have received little recognition in multicultural counseling because they do not fit within the definition of an ethnic or a racial group. For example, Muslim Americans constitute one of the most rapidly growing minorities in the United States, with 4 to 6 million adherents currently, and as is the case with ethnic minority cultures, Muslim Americans as a group have been the target of systematic prejudice and discrimination from this country's dominant Judeo-Christian culture (Mooney, 1995; Said, 1981). Many Muslims identify themselves primarily by their religion, but because Muslim American communities include people of diverse ethnicities and nationalities (e.g., Pakistanis, Africans, Arabs, Indonesians, Cambodians, East Indians, and African Americans), they do not fit the definition of an ethnic minority group. Thus, when multicultural counseling defines culture solely in terms of ethnicity, Muslim Americans are left out.

At the same time, an important argument against the broader definition of culture is that it includes virtually any group of people and thus allows individuals in the dominant culture to study and consider culture without attending to the painful topic of oppression (Locke, 1990). Traditionally in counseling, the lack of attention to power differentials has reinforced the dominance of Euro-American assumptions and perspectives (because these are the most powerful) and worked to exclude individuals of ethnic minority cultures; it has only been through the focused attention on ethnic minorities and power that this inequity is beginning to be addressed.

The broad and narrow definitions of culture correspond to the transcultural and culture-specific perspectives in multicultural counseling research. The *transcultural* (or etic) perspective emphasizes the study of topics and issues that apply to many cultures (i.e., which transcend culture; Fukuyama, 1990). Given the shortage of ethnic

[1]In the United States, the term *ethnic minority* is used in reference to (and by) several ethnic groups including American Indians and Native Alaskans. However, in Australia, the term is used primarily to describe non-Anglo *immigrants* (e.g., of Greek, Italian, Arab, Latino, Asian, East Indian, and African heritage); thus, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are considered *aboriginal* cultures rather than ethnic minority cultures in the Australian sense of the term. In Canada, where aboriginal peoples preceded the British, the French, and subsequent immigrant groups, the former refer to themselves as the First Nations. To accommodate these different perspectives and allow for connections between the issues of indigenous people, the ADRESSING model highlights the influences of indigenous heritage in addition to those of ethnicity.

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minority counselors, this approach is practical, but it tends to perpetuate the status quo by emphasizing the cultural sensitivity training of Euro-American counselors rather than the recruitment and training of ethnic minority counselors, researchers, and educators. In contrast, the *culture-specific* (or emic) approach emphasizes the need for an intimate awareness and knowledge of the culture of every minority client; while ideal, this requirement is an extremely difficult one to meet for counselors working with culturally diverse clients.

The solution to this definitional dilemma lies somewhere in the middle ground, a synthesis which might be called *transcultural-specific*. The transcultural-specific perspective places a high value on culture-specific expertise regarding minority groups, but it also considers a range of issues that crosses many cultures (although with an emphasis on minority cultures because they have been so neglected in research and education).

THE ADRESSING MODEL

The ADRESSING model in multicultural counseling emanates from the transcultural-specific perspective. It focuses on ethnic minority cultures that have traditionally been marginalized by the counseling field but incorporates research on a number of nonethnic minority groups to increase the understanding of people of color. (The term *minority* is used herein to refer to groups that have experienced systematic marginalization and oppression by the dominant culture, regardless of numerical size.)

The ADRESSING model draws attention to nine cultural factors (and the corresponding minority groups) that counseling and psychological research have shown to be in need of special attention: Ethnicity (including race), National origin, and Indigenous cultural heritage (American Psychological Association, 1993; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Sue et al., 1982); Gender (American Psychological Association, 1978; Brown, 1990); Age and generational influences (Butler, Lewis, & Sunderland, 1991; Hays, in press; Steuer, 1982; Storandt, 1983); Social status, including socioeconomic status, formal education, urban-rural origins, family name, and other factors (Acosta, Yamamoto, Evans, & Wilcox, 1982; Jones, 1974); Sexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 1991; Garnets, Hancock, Cochran, Goodchilds, & Peplau, 1991; Pope, 1995); Religion (Koltko, 1990; Miller, 1992; Quackenbos, Privette, & Klentz, 1986); and Disability (Helwig & Holicky, 1994; Lombana, 1989). These factors or influences can be rearranged to create the slightly misspelled acronym ADRESSING (see Table 1).

The ADRESSING factors do not represent all possible cultural influences, but rather, focus on those named important by the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association's Division of Multicultural Counseling and Development, and a growing number of culture-specific researchers (in the guidelines and studies cited above). With the exception of social status, specializations have developed concerning the minority groups associated with each of the ADRESSING factors (namely, multicultural counseling and psychotherapy, feminist therapy, geropsychology, sexual minorities counseling, counseling and religion, and rehabilitation counseling). These specializations share a number of characteristics, including their attention to the following: (a) the biases in the larger society, in research, and in counselors themselves toward the respective minority group; (b) the impact of exclusion and oppression on clients of that group; (c) the meanings of group identity; (d) the within-group diversity that is often ignored by outsiders; and (e) the strengths of individuals and groups who have been seen in largely negative terms by the dominant culture.

TABLE 1

The "ADRESSING" Model: Nine Cultural Factors, Related Minority Groups, and Forms of Oppression

Cultural Factor	Minority Group	Biases With Power
Age/generational	Older adults	Ageism
Disability	People with disabilities	—[a]
Religion	Religious minorities	—[b]
Ethnicity/race	Ethnic minorities	Racism
Social status	People of lower status	Classism
Sexual orientation	Sexual minorities	Heterosexism
Indigenous heritage	Native peoples	Racism
National origin	Refugees, immigrants, and international students	Racism and colonialism
Gender	Women	Sexism

[a]Prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities. [b]Religious intolerance includes anti-Semitism (i.e., against both Jewish and Muslim people) and oppression of other religious minorities (e.g., Buddhists, Hindus, Mormons).

The goal of all the minority specializations is to educate practitioners of counseling and psychotherapy about the need to consider cultural influences in a more integrated way. However, somewhat paradoxically, researchers in each area have paid little attention to work going on in the other areas. Thus, for example, the multicultural counseling literature contains few studies or considerations of people of color who are members of more than one minority culture (e.g., women of color; or people of color who are lesbian or gay, older, religiously committed, and/or who have disabilities, although there are some good exceptions—see Brown & Root, 1990; Comas-Díaz & Greene, 1994; Dworkin & Gutiérrez, 1992; Marshall, Martin, Thomason, & Johnson, 1991; Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Saravanabhavan & Marshall, 1994).

The ADRESSING model highlights the similarities between these areas and calls attention to the diversity within ethnic minority cultures. It can be used by counselors and counselor educators in the following ways: (a) to raise awareness of and challenge one's own biases and areas of inexperience and (b) to consider the salience of multiple cultural influences on clients of minority cultures.

ADRESSING Counselor Bias

The first step in multicultural training is always that of considering one's own biases and areas of inexperience; the ADRESSING model can be used as a framework for this ongoing work. In a classroom setting, the challenge can begin as simply as asking students to think about their own identities in relation to the ADRESSING factors. A key question is, "How do my age and generation-specific experiences, my disability (or lack of experience with disability), my religion or religious upbringing (and so on) affect my view of people, my beliefs about the world, where I live, who my friends are, and the kind of work I do?" Answering even one part of this question can be an eye-opening experience. For example, students who see their own lives as multiculturally integrated are often quite surprised to realize, on considering the cultural identities of their family members

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and close friends, that their intimate relationships are limited to people of their own ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, social status, and experience with disability.

The second way in which the ADRESSING model can be used in raising awareness is to broaden and deepen counselors' understanding of racism, ethnocentrism, and other forms of oppression that affect people of color. As the introductory paragraph of this article mentioned, normal cognitive processes predispose all humans toward the formation of biases and stereotypes (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986; Stephan, 1989). When these biases are held by a dominant group and thus reinforced by political, social, and economic power, the results are the "-isms." That is, Racial Bias + Power = Racism; Gender Bias + Power = Sexism; Age Bias + Power = Ageism. This equation is useful in explaining why isolated acts of discrimination against majority members (against Whites, for example) cannot be considered racism (i.e., as people of color in the United States do not hold the power to systematically enforce their biases in the way that Euro-American culture can and does). Furthermore, this conceptualization helps counselors to see the connections between racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression (most of which have been socially recognized by a specific label; see Table 1).

However, the ADRESSING model does not assume that membership in or awareness regarding one minority culture automatically leads to awareness with other minority groups. For example, a Euro-American lesbian counselor may be very aware of the subtle sexist and heterosexist biases against lesbian and gay clients but relatively unaware of her own ethnocentric attitudes toward (heterosexual and gay) ethnic minority men. Similarly, a young, urban, bicultural counselor may be very skilled in working with ethnic minority youths but hold stereotypical and derogatory attitudes toward older people of color. The ADRESSING model can be used to counteract the compartmentalization of awareness by reminding counselors that everyone has biases and areas of inexperience and ignorance. That is, no one individual can possibly have an insider's knowledge of all the ethnic and nonethnic minority groups included in the ADRESSING model. Framing the task of challenging one's own biases in this way helps to decrease defensiveness among members of dominant cultural groups but also emphasizes the life-long commitment and hard work needed (whatever one's cultural identity) to become a culturally responsive counselor.

A third way in which the ADRESSING model can be used to challenge one's biases is through the consideration of a particular ethnic identity in relation to all of the other ADRESSING influences. By looking at the within-group differences corresponding to each of the ADRESSING factors, the tendency to make inaccurate generalizations is reduced.

For example, on meeting an Asian American client, the counselor could remind herself or himself to consider the influence of and differences related to the client's Age, including a range of historical events and contexts, generational influences, cultural norms about aging, and developmental experiences; Disability, if applicable, and its meaning for the individual depending on her or his gender, environment, socioeconomic status, and so on; Religion (e.g., Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Islam) and the client's degree of religious commitment, including a secular orientation; Ethnicity and the meaning, context, language, and experiences related to a specific ethnic and/or racial identity (which will vary among Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Filipino, East Indian, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and the many other Asian American cultures); Social status, including the client's education, income, occupation, rural or urban origin, and (if applicable) the client's family name and status in the community; Sexual orientation and its meaning for the individual depending on her or his culture-specific context, generation, gender, and rural or urban location; Indigenous heritage and its associated status in the client's country of origin; National origin, which overlaps with ethnic identity but draws particular attention to the situations of immigrants, refugees, and international students; and finally, Gender, with its culture-specific meanings and roles.

Assessing the Salience of the ADRESSING Factors

A central task for counselors working with clients of ethnic minority cultures is to determine what cultural factors are important in each client's life. In addition, once key cultural influences have been identified, the relative salience of these influences needs to be assessed. The ADRESSING model can help counselors with these tasks by increasing counselors' awareness of specific cultural influences and minority identities that they might otherwise overlook (as, for example, in the case of a heterosexual counselor who fails to consider the possibility that a client is lesbian, gay, or bisexual; Martin, 1982). In addition, the model provides counselors with an organizational framework for considering diverse influences and identities; in this way, it decreases the likelihood of missing one or more important aspects of a client's cultural identity.

Unfortunately, the ADRESSING model says nothing in itself about the weight of one cultural factor over another. It cannot (nor could any multicultural model) say how important each factor is in relation to the others, because the salience of each cultural factor is specific to the individual, the counseling situation, and the larger cultural context. Figuring out the salience of diverse influences and possible identities requires culture-specific knowledge and skills, for which the ADRESSING model is not a substitute. However, given such knowledge and skill, the model can still be helpful in assessing the importance of diverse cultural influences on clients; the following example illustrates how.

The Client's Self-Identification

The starting point in many counseling situations will be some sort of self-description by the client. This information may be elicited by as simple a question as "Would you describe yourself for me—both how you see yourself and how you think others see you?" Of course, the response to this question will be context-specific, that is, it will reflect not solely what the client considers important about herself or himself but also the demand characteristics of the therapeutic setting. Because the chief demand characteristics in counseling are the counselor's identity and the counseling setting, it is essential that the counselor have a solid understanding of her or his own cultural heritage and identity and a high level of comfort in discussing cultural issues.

Consider, for example, the hypothetical situation of an Algerian woman (I'll call Mejda) who has lived in the United States for 2 years and comes to her university's counseling center with the complaint that she is unhappy, having difficulty concentrating, and worried about her academic performance. In response to a request to describe herself—from a counselor whom she knows is an Arab American woman—Mejda might say that she is "a young woman, originally from Algiers, married with no children, a university student, and the first child in a family of two girls and one boy." Note that in this situation, Mejda does not explicitly state that she is Algerian or Arab or Muslim; she assumes that an Arab American counselor would recognize that she is all of these, from her appearance, her accent in English, her surname, and the statement that she is from Algiers.

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However, if the counselor has no apparent connection to Arab cultures (either by heritage or personal experience), Mejda would no doubt adapt her description to the perceived knowledge level of the counselor. Based on her repeated experiences with Americans who know almost nothing about her home country and/or hold stereotypical ideas about Algerian families and women's roles, she would probably explain to the counselor that she is from Algiers, the capital of Algeria, which is an Arab country in North Africa; that her family is Muslim but not very religious; that she speaks French and English better than she speaks Arabic; that her mother works as a teacher; that she herself is a married woman; and that her husband, who is also Algerian, treats her well.

It is at this point that the ADRESSING model could help the non-Arab counselor (in particular) to figure out what are the salient cultural influences for Mejda. By reviewing silently to herself which of the ADRESSING factors Mejda included in her self-description (either directly or implied), the counselor could organize in her own mind those factors that Mejda considered important enough to mention. These included Mejda's ethnic and religious identity, her nationality, her gender, and her social status.

Using both transcultural and culture-specific knowledge, the counselor could then begin to form hypotheses about the meanings of these factors. For example, the counselor would notice that Mejda stated that her family is urban and not very religious, that she speaks French (the language of the middle and upper middle class in Algeria), and that her mother works in a professional position. These pieces of information, along with the contextual information that Mejda is a graduate student in the United States, would lead the counselor to hypothesize that Mejda is (and sees herself as) upper middle class. In addition, this information suggests questions for further exploration. For example, what were/are the values upheld by Mejda's family and community? (her comments suggest that education, family relationships, professional status, and fair treatment of women are important). Also, how has her secular upbringing, in a Muslim context, affected her worldview? (her comments suggest that religion is a part of her identity but that she also identifies with secular urban culture).

With a focus on gender, Brown (1990) recommended inquiring actively into the meaning of gender membership in the client's family, culture of origin, and current cultural context, including any changes in this meaning over the client's life span. In practice, this approach would lead Mejda's counselor to ask what it meant for Mejda to grow up as a girl in her family; what the expectations were for her in her culture of origin (i.e., in upper-middle-class Algerian culture); and what it means for her now to be a well-educated Algerian woman living in the United States. By focusing on the meaning of cultural influences and identities, the counselor gains an understanding of the person-specific as well as the culture-specific aspects of the client's identity. In addition, this approach (i.e., reflecting back to the client those identifications which she has mentioned) validates multicultural influences without presuming an identity that the client has not stated.

Considering Information the Client Omits

Another purpose in reviewing the ADRESSING factors is to call the counselor's attention to those cultural influences that the client has omitted and the counselor might not usually consider. There are many reasons why a client mentions particular cultural influences or identities and omits others; the degree to which a counselor should ask directly about a cultural identity depends on the particular situation. If the counselor senses that omissions represent a lack of awareness on the client's part, caution is advised, especially when the counselor is identified with a dominant group and the client is not. Once rapport and trust are established, however, the counselor may then encourage the client to consider unacknowledged cultural influences, assuming that this fits with the client's presenting problem and goals.

In Mejda's case, the counselor considered but did not ask about the "missing factors" of disability, sexual orientation, or indigenous heritage. There were no cues that disability or indigenous heritage were relevant, and questioning Mejda about her sexual orientation would have been too sensitive a topic for this initial meeting. The counselor did ask Mejda about her age and considered (to herself) the possible influence of events specific to Mejda's generation (particularly, the continuing impact of French colonization, which lasted until 1962, and the current war between the government and religious conservatives). If the counselor had not known about important influences such as these, it would have been her responsibility to educate herself outside the counseling session through consultation, reading, and new experiences.

Clients may also omit cultural information out of a reluctance to bring up topics that they think might offend or embarrass the counselor. In working with African American women, Greene (1994) suggested asking the client if she feels a White or African American therapist (depending on the counselor's identity) can understand her and then exploring the reasons why or why not. However, in order for such directness to work, the counselor must have carefully thought through this question and honestly considered her own biases and areas of ignorance prior to the counseling session. Greene added that "therapists who do not feel that race is an important area of scrutiny should utilize peer and other forms of supervision to explore racial issues before raising them with the client" (p. 25).

Finally, a client may include or omit certain types of culture-specific information because she or he assumes that the counselor shares the prejudices of the dominant culture. Such assumptions may occur even when the therapist is culturally similar, because the counseling agency is seen as representing the dominant culture and the counselor as representing the agency. Clients may exclude information that they assume the counselor will not understand or include details designed to counteract the counselor's presumed prejudices. For example, based on her experiences with non-Arabs in the United States, Mejda believed that the non-Arab counselor would assume that all Arab women are terribly oppressed by their fathers and husbands. Mejda's comments about her mother's professional status and her husband's good treatment of her were intended to correct these prejudices in an indirect and polite way.

The potential biases and areas of inexperience that require the counselor's most careful consideration are those that correspond to the client's salient identities. Recognizing the intention of Mejda's comments and the larger social meanings of her own identity, the counselor would want to honestly discuss with Mejda the extent of her experience with Arab/Muslim/Algerian women (i.e., the most salient identifications for Mejda, in her current context in the United States). Moreover, the counselor ought to seriously consider the possibility that she holds those dominant cultural biases highlighted by Mejda's comments. In summary, the decision to work with a client must be based on an honest appraisal of one's own abilities (as influenced by one's experiences and identities) in relation to the client's individual and cultural identities, context, and needs.

CONCLUSION

The effective and ethical practice of counseling demands that counselors of diverse cultural identities think critically about their own

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perspectives and work continually to overcome their own biases, particularly in relation to those minority cultures of which they are not members. Becoming a culturally sensitive and responsive counselor is best conceptualized as a process. The ADRESSING model facilitates this process by providing a framework for addressing one's personal biases and for organizing information on diverse cultural influences and specific minority cultures. The model draws attention to cultural influences and groups that have traditionally been ignored, discounted, or dismissed by the dominant Euro-American culture and by the counseling field. It also highlights the complex, overlapping nature of cultural influences and identities. In summary, it works toward the inclusion of diverse perspectives and the elimination of the oppressive category of "the other."

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