MANUEL RAMIREZ III

# FEELING DIFFERENT

## A Major Mental Health Problem in a Diverse Society

Multicultural Psychotherapy

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**Manuel Ramirez III**

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## CASE STUDIES

The people described here have one thing in common: They are in crisis because they feel different from those around them. The feeling of being different is accompanied by feelings of alienation and loneliness, depression, and anxiety. People who feel different feel misunderstood and undervalued. The feeling of being different is typical among members of minority groups.

### Imelda M.

Imelda is a sixteen-year-old Latina high school student who attempted suicide. She was despondent because of the breakup of a three-year relationship with her boyfriend. During an interview in the hospital, she said, "I wanted to die because I am alone and I'm different. I've lost the only person who accepted me as I really am. I have always been

different from my parents, from my teachers, and from the other students. My boyfriend was the only one who understood me. No one will accept me as I am. They are always trying to change me."

## Raul B.

Raul is a thirty-five-year-old multiracial man (Latino, African American and Native American). He sought therapy because of depression and anxiety. Raul was also suffering from flashbacks and nightmares related to his experiences as a serviceman in Vietnam. His sense of failure in his relationships with women added to his crisis. He said, "I fall in love with women who cannot love me as much as I love them."

## Tara W.

Tara, a twenty-six-year-old African American college student, is a single mother. She presented for therapy feeling depressed and suffering from insomnia. She sought counseling because of her ambivalent relationship to her parents (particularly her mother) and her live-in boyfriend. She said, "I am confused about the way my life is going. I love my mother, but I also resent her telling me how I should

be. Like my boyfriend, she tries to control me."

## Alex S.

Alex is a twenty-one-year-old college student of Vietnamese descent. Born in Vietnam, he immigrated to the United States with his parents and siblings when he was six. At the time he sought counseling, Alex was feeling guilty and distraught. He was lying to his parents about his major in college and his future plans—they wanted him to attend medical school, but he was planning to pursue graduate studies in social work. He had also withheld the fact that he is gay and has a live-in partner. Alex said, "I feel like I am living two different lives. When I go home, I am the good Vietnamese son; I date my old girlfriends from high school; I talk about my plans to attend medical school and to get married and have a family. It makes me feel terrible to have to do this, but they just would not accept me as I am."

## Rose A.

Rose, a thirty-five-year-old Latina with impaired vision, is married and has three children. She is a survivor of a tornado that struck the small

town where she lived and worked as a Head Start teacher. The storm hit when she was at the Head Start center, killing several of Rose's colleagues, members of the community, and children in her class. Rose suffered injuries that resulted in her loss of vision. She said, "I feel bad about being alive when many of my friends and children whom I loved are dead. I'm angry with God, but my family and friends don't understand my feelings. They keep telling me how lucky I am to be alive. I'm not. I wish I were dead."

## Harold H.

Harold, a thirty-five-year-old Anglo engineer and co-owner of a computer software company, came to therapy in distress. He explained, "I don't feel I'm as effective and capable as I used to be. I don't really belong anywhere— not with my family, not with my partners, not even with my own parents." During the initial psychotherapy session, he talked about how he had always tried to win his father's love and admiration: "Dad always preferred my older brother; nothing I did changed that. I tried to show him that I could be successful in business, because that is what I thought he wanted. And to be a success, I had to ignore my wife and kids. Well, I'm a success

now, and this hasn't changed anything with my father. Now I'm in danger of losing my family while my partners are complaining that I don't seem to have my heart in my work anymore. I honestly don't know what's happening. My entire world is falling apart, and I can't do anything about it. I just don't feel like I belong anywhere anymore. I'm so alone."

## Wanda and Javier J.

A mixed-race couple, Wanda is Anglo and Javier is Latino. They have been married for eight years and have two children. Their marital problems began two years before they sought couples counseling. Wanda said, "I feel that Javier does not support me in what I am trying to do in my career. He is also too strict with the children." Javier's perspective was different: "Wanda is too wrapped up in her world to care about what is going on in our family. The children don't have enough direction from us, and they are having problems in school because of the prejudice they feel from the Anglo kids. Wanda doesn't seem to care."

## The Rosales

The Rosales are a Latino family consisting of the parents—forty-five-year-old Anna and forty-six-year-old Jesse—and two children—Nancy, fourteen, and Tati, twelve. The Rosales have been married for seventeen years. They sought therapy because Anna and Jesse had been threatening to separate. The children are having adjustment problems: Tati is not doing well in school and he wants to drop out; Nancy took one of the family cars without permission and was involved in an accident. Anna reported, "Nancy and I are like two peas in a pod. We get along very well and understand each other. Jesse and Tati seem to be from another world." Jesse, on the other hand, observed, "Anna is always criticizing Tati and me. She feels that we don't do anything right."

## Tony C.

Tony is a sixty-five-year-old Latino who has a physical disability. Born in Mexico, he immigrated to a city in the southwestern United States when he was forty-one years old. He was holding down three different jobs when he was injured in an automobile accident that incapacitated him, forcing him to retire. The accident left him with limited use of his right arm and leg. He also suffers from severe muscle spasms in his

neck, many lasting for several minutes at a time. The spasms are triggered by stress and fatigue. He is divorced and has four children. He lives alone. Tony told the therapist, "I feel useless now because I can no longer work. People see me and think I'm exaggerating my problems. Not even my family understands the pain I feel or my unhappiness and feelings of uselessness."

## Camilla and Her Two Daughters

Camilla, Lavis, and Tracy are members of a single-parent family. Camilla, a thirty-three-year-old Latina, has been divorced from Robert, who is white, for two years. Their two daughters, Lavis, six years old, and Tracy, eight, are biracial. Camilla and Robert have been having conflicts and their differences are exacerbated when Tracy and Lavis visit with Robert.

## FEELING DIFFERENT

The feeling of "differentness" is familiar to anyone who has felt pressured by society to conform. The common dynamic in the "differentness syndrome" is mismatch. Those who suffer mismatch

feel alienated from individuals, groups, family, cultures, and institutions that play important parts in their lives. What are the causes of mismatch? The cultural and individual differences that make each of us unique are also responsible for making us feel mismatched to others and/or to our environment. The majority of society imposes pressures on us to conform, to abandon our individuality, and to force ourselves into the fictional ideal molds and patterns created by those who have power and influence (Katz and Taylor, 1988; A. Ramirez, 1988).

Because few of us fit these patterns in every way, we feel different and inferior, as if there were something wrong with us. The end result is that we reject ourselves, or at least part of our true selves, in order to "fit in" and to appear less different.

## The Mismatch Syndrome

The clients described earlier in this chapter felt mismatched to the important people and institutions in their lives. They felt alone, hopeless, angry, and misunderstood. They exhibited a number of common traits: self-rejection, depression, anxiety, emphasis on the

negative, and rigidity of thinking and problem solving. All of these are symptoms of mismatch syndrome. Let us examine the cases in more detail to see how pressures to conform are related to the syndrome.

**Imelda**. Imelda was reared in a traditional society, typical of rural communities in the U.S.-Mexico border region. Atypical of the traditional pattern, however, were her parents' divorce and her interest in sports. She was a member of the varsity basketball and volleyball teams. Imelda felt mismatched to the important authority figures in her life—her father, stepmother, grandparents, and teachers. Her parents and grandparents pressured her to abandon her involvement in sports because it was not consistent with their perception of how a proper young woman should behave. Her teachers did not like Imelda's attempts to make classes more relevant to herself and to her fellow students. When she asked her teachers to relate what they were teaching to her own experiences and to those of her classmates, they interpreted her behavior as rebellious and lacking in respect. Although Imelda's peers admired her feats on the basketball and volleyball courts, they saw her as an oddball, as not being feminine enough, and rarely included her in their social activities. Thus, Imelda was often lonely, isolated, and misunderstood. Only with

her boyfriend did she feel comfortable and accepted. When he broke up with her, she felt her life had come to an end.

**Raul**. Raul grew up in a predominantly Caucasian city. His parents were both biracial—his mother was African American and Latino and his father was Native American and African American. During his childhood and adolescence, his family lived in subsidized government housing in the inner city. In late adolescence he lived with relatives in a rural community in the U.S.-Mexico border region of the state in which he lived. When he left home, he joined the armed forces and traveled widely throughout Europe and Asia, particularly in Vietnam.

Raul felt different from his peers in the housing development where his family lived; almost all were either Latino or African American and none were multiracial like his family. Since the time he was twelve, his mother had to work full time; because he was the oldest, he had to take over the role of supervisor to his younger siblings. Additional feelings of differentness emerged when Raul had to attend a middle school in which whites were in the majority. At that time he was not only diagnosed as being dyslexic and placed in special

classes, but he also experienced rejection when he approached white girls.

Feelings of differentness were exacerbated in the year that he lived in a border community; his Latino relatives and peers criticized him for his accent, for his inability to speak Spanish fluently, and for his lack of familiarity with traditional Latino culture. Raul felt pressured to conform from the institutions of a segregated community in which Caucasian people were in the majority and mixed-race dating and friendship were discouraged. He also felt pressured to be a traditional Latino when he later went to live in a border community while he was in high school.

When Raul returned to his home community after his military service, he again encountered prejudice and lack of acceptance. His siblings were resentful of him because they felt he had been a harsh disciplinarian when he had been left in charge of them. He felt sexually attracted to white women, yet he felt that they could not love him as much as he loved them.

**Tara**. Tara, an African American, grew up in a small semi-rural

town, which was predominantly Caucasian and Latino. Tara had two older brothers. Her father was a farmer and her mother a nurse. She had a difficult time being accepted by her older brothers and her father because they were very involved in the work of the farm. She remembered feelings of abandonment when she was young and her mother worked long hours at the hospital. Tara's feelings of differentness began when she attempted to gain the acceptance of her father and brothers. Her attempts at doing farm work, such as driving a tractor, only amused them. Her feelings of differentness were exacerbated by her appearance as an adolescent—she was tall and thin. She was uncoordinated, and her peers made fun of her awkwardness when she tried to participate in sports. It was also difficult for Tara because African Americans were in the minority in her home community. She didn't date in high school.

Her feelings of differentness continued when she attended college in a segregated town close to her home community. Caucasians predominated, and she felt prejudice against African Americans. By this time she had become an attractive woman, successful at volleyball and basketball. She started to date an African American basketball player and became pregnant. She dropped out of college to return

home. Her parents were angry with her, feeling that she had caused them to lose face in their small community. Tara faced strong conformity pressures to be the perfect mother, and her parents wanted her to marry.

She started therapy after she moved to a city two hours away from her hometown to complete her college education. She was confused about a relationship in which she was involved. Her mother was pressuring her to marry her boyfriend so her child would have a father. Tara was having a difficult time juggling the many responsibilities that went along with being a single mother, a student, and an employee.

**Alex**. Alex was born in Vietnam and spent the first few years of his life there. He was the youngest of five children. Before immigrating to the United States with his family at age six, Alex had been reared largely by his grandparents because his father was an officer in the South Vietnamese Army and his mother was a businesswoman in Saigon. When South Vietnam fell, his family immigrated to a large U.S. city with a substantial Asian population. He had many members of his extended family, including uncles, aunts, and grandparents living in his

neighborhood.

Alex first began to feel different when he entered school. His dominant language was Vietnamese, and he was confused about the behaviors, values, and attitudes of his teachers and classmates. His feelings of differentness increased during his high school years when he became aware that he was sexually attracted to men rather than to women. He felt guilty and confused about these feelings. Although some uncles and aunts in his family were not married, the predominant emphasis in his home culture was to marry and to have a family.

Feelings of differentness became more acute when Alex went to college and discovered that he felt mismatched to the course of study his parents had encouraged him to choose—premed. He found his real interest was in social work. In college he developed some important homosexual relationships and had a live-in partner. Alex felt that he was living a double life and was uncomfortable about this. He was a junior and preparing to apply to graduate school in social work, yet his parents thought that he was applying to medical school and did not know about his sexual orientation.

**Rose**. Rose grew up in a small predominantly Latino town in a rural area. She had always been the most independent child in her family of six, and she had been closer to her father than to her mother. Although Rose aspired to attend a university away from home, she gave in to family pressure and attended the community college in her hometown to get her associate's degree in child development. She worked as a teacher and assistant director of the local Head Start center. She had three children, but was not happy in her marriage. She was often physically and emotionally abused by her husband, a heavy drinker.

Rose's feelings of differentness began when she discovered that, unlike her siblings, she was independent and her ambitions extended to completing a four-year degree and law school. These feelings of differentness became even more intense when she started considering getting a divorce— something no one else in her family had done. These feelings intensified when she survived a tornado, which resulted in the loss of her vision. The Head Start center she worked for was holding a graduation ceremony when a tornado struck the town and leveled the school gymnasium. Several of her colleagues and children in her class and their parents died in the disaster. Rose was struck in

the back of the head by a steel beam and lost her vision. She suffered a severe depression following the disaster. She felt guilty for surviving while others had died. With her loss of vision, she lost her job and her identity. She had to endure the anger of her husband, who told her she was now useless. It took great determination for her to make the decision to leave her children with relatives and to travel hundreds of miles to go to a rehabilitation center.

**Harold**. Harold grew up in the suburban-modernistic world of the San Francisco Bay Area. His feelings of being different began when he started to compare himself to his older brother and when he tried to win his father's love and approval. His father and brother were well matched to each other; they were both competitive and interested in electronics. Harold, on the other hand, was cooperative in orientation, with interests in art and music.

Pressures to conform increased for Harold after his brother's death. To please and comfort his father, he changed his academic focus. His own personality prevailed, however, with his choice of a wife and with his attempts to establish a sense of community and leadership in his place of work. At home, however, he became more

like his father—distant and uninvolved with his children.

Because he felt pressured by his wife and children to become more involved with them and more sensitive to their needs, Harold began to feel increasingly uncomfortable about neglecting his partners. When he came to therapy, he was confused, believing it was impossible to please all of the important people in his life. He also felt like a failure because, despite making what he considered to be superhuman efforts to please his father, he had not succeeded: The relationship between father and son was fraught with conflict and misunderstanding.

**Tony**. Tony was born in Mexico and settled in a city in the southwestern United States when he was forty-one years old; he sought and was granted U.S. citizenship. He became disabled and had to retire at the age of sixty- two when the injuries he suffered in an automobile accident left him incapacitated and with severe muscle spasms resembling epileptic seizures. This is when his feelings of differentness and mismatch began. These feelings were exacerbated when his wife left him and when he was forced to deal with government agencies, institutions, and insurance companies to get the

medical help and financial aid he needed to survive from day to day.

**Wanda and Javier**. Wanda and Javier, an interracial couple, grew up in families and communities that were quite different from each other. Wanda had been reared in an urban, modernistic sociocultural environment. Her feelings of mismatch and differentness had begun in adolescence when she first realized that her father was an alcoholic. She did not feel that she could invite her friends over to her house, because she never knew when her father would be drunk. There was always tension between her parents, and she came to resent her mother for not leaving her father. Her friends didn't understand her father's varying moods—he would be friendly to the point of being intrusive when he had been drinking but irritable and distant when he was sober.

Javier grew up in a traditional, urban Latino cultural environment with emotional closeness in his extended family. Most of his relatives lived in his neighborhood, so there were frequent family get-togethers. Feelings of differentness and experiences with mismatch first began for Javier when he was bussed to a predominantly Caucasian middle school. He had done well academically and had been socially active in

elementary school; in the new school, however, his grades suffered and he became withdrawn. There were few members of minority groups at the new school, and he was the only Latino in college-bound classes.

**The Rosales**. In the Rosales family, feelings of mismatch for the individual members were related to different life circumstances. When Jesse was growing up in a medium-sized, semi-urban community with a very traditional Latino orientation, he felt different because he was emotionally closer to his mother than to his father. He was teased by his peers because he would prefer to stay at home rather than play in the neighborhood or hang out at the mall. Anna, on the other hand, felt mismatched because she was closer to her father than to her mother. She was good at sports and preferred playing traditional male games in the multiracial, bicultural neighborhood where she grew up. She preferred male to female friends and was ostracized by the girls in her neighborhood, who called her a tomboy.

Tati's experience with mismatch began when he started experiencing academic difficulties because of learning disabilities that surfaced in the second grade. He was also taller and more

uncoordinated than most of his peers, so he did not do well at sports. When teams were chosen for sports on the school grounds or in his neighborhood, he was the last one chosen.

Nancy's mismatch surfaced when she was first made aware of her phenotype by her classmates. Her skin was darker than that of her brother, her parents, and most of her classmates. She became painfully aware of this difference when one of her friends asked her, "Are you adopted? You don't look like the others in your family."

**Camilla and Her Daughters**. Camilla, a Latina woman, felt most different starting in about the fourth year of her marriage to Robert, an Anglo. She began to feel guilty about abandoning her goal of completing college. Robert felt different when Camilla became involved in community projects and social events in the Latino community where he was practically the only non-Latino in the group. Tracy and Lavis felt different when their parents divorced and the family's income dropped. They were no longer able to keep up with schoolmates in dress and extracurricular activities. They would also feel alienated at school events when parents were asked to participate and their friends would ask about their father.

## SUMMARY

The mismatch syndrome—feelings of differentness, of depression, of not belonging or being accepted—is common in societies that stress conformity to certain ideals. Although women and members of minority groups have been the most frequent victims of this syndrome, in one way or another almost everyone has had this experience. How can therapists help the victims of conformity pressures? Developments in the psychology of differentness have introduced a new paradigm and models of personality and counseling based on the realities of adjustment to a pluralistic society. These new developments encourage multicultural development in an atmosphere of peace and cooperation.

# GLOSSARY

**Attitude of Acceptance** a nonjudgmental, positive, accepting atmosphere devoid of conformity or assimilation pressures. In therapy this enables the client to express his unique, or true, self.

**Bicognitive Orientation to Life Scale (BOLS)** a personality inventory composed of items that reflect the degree of preference for field sensitive or field independent cognitive styles in different life domains. Assesses cognitive flex by determining the degree of agreement with items that reflect preference for either field independent or field sensitive cognitive styles. A balance or bicognitive score is also attained.

**Bicognitive Style** a cognitive style characterized by an ability to shuttle between the field sensitive and field independent styles. Choice of style at any given time is dependent on task demands or situational characteristics. For example, if a situation demands competition, the bicognitive person usually responds in a field independent manner. On the other hand, if the situation demands cooperation, the bicognitive individual behaves in a field sensitive manner. People with a bicognitive orientation also may use elements of both the field sensitive and field independent styles to develop new composite or combination styles.

**Bicultural/Multicultural Style** a cultural style characterized by an ability to shuttle between the traditional and modern cultural styles. Choice of style at any given time is dependent on task demands or

situational characteristics.

**Change Agent** a person who actively seeks to encourage changes in the social environment in order to ensure acceptance and sensitivity to all cultural and cognitive styles.

**Cognitive and Cultural Flex Theory (or Theory of Multicultural Development)** the theory that people who are exposed to socialization agents with positive attitudes toward diversity, participate in diversity challenges, interact with members of diverse cultures, maintain an openness and commitment to learning from others, and are more likely to develop multicultural patterns of behavior and a multicultural identity. People who have developed a multicultural identity have a strong, lifelong commitment to their groups of origin as well as to other cultures and groups.

**Cognitive Style** a style of personality defined by the ways in which people communicate and relate to others; the rewards that motivate them; their problem-solving approaches; and the manner in which they teach, socialize with, supervise, and counsel others. There are three types of cognitive styles: field sensitive, field independent, and bicognitive.

**Cultural and Cognitive Flex (Personality Flex)** the ability to shuttle between field sensitive and field independent cognitive styles and modern and traditional cultural styles.

**Cultural Democracy** (1) a philosophy that recognizes that the way a person communicates, relates to others, seeks support and recognition from his environment, and thinks and learns are products of the

value system of his home and community; (2) refers to the moral rights of an individual to be different while at the same time be a responsible member of a larger society.

**Cultural Style** an orientation to life related to or based on traditional and modern values or a combination of these values. Assessed by the Traditionalism- Modernism Inventory and the Family Attitude Scale.

**Diversity Challenges** a catalyst for multicultural development such as cultural and linguistic immersion experiences, new tasks, and activities that encourage the process of synthesis and amalgamation of personality building blocks learned from different cultures, institutions, and peoples.

**Empathy Projection** the process whereby a person tries to understand the point of view and feelings of others whose cognitive styles and values are different from his own.

**False Self** the identity developed as a result of attempts to conform to cultural and cognitive styles of authority figures, institutions, and majority cultures.

**Family Attitude Scale** a personality inventory to assess a person's degree of agreement with traditional and modern family values.

**Field Independent** a cognitive style characterized by independent, abstract, discovery-oriented learning preferences, an introverted lifestyle, a preference for verbal communication styles, and an emphasis on personal achievement and material gain. People with a preferred field independent orientation are likely to be analytical and

inductive and focus on detail. They also tend to be nondirective and discovery-oriented in childrearing, and in teaching, supervising, and counseling others.

**Field Sensitive** a cognitive style characterized by interactive personalized learning preferences, an extroverted lifestyle, a preference for nonverbal communication styles, a need to help others. People with a preferred field sensitive orientation tend to be more global, integrative, and deductive in their thinking and problem-solving styles, and they tend to be directive in childrearing, and in teaching, supervising, and counseling others.

**Life History Interview** focuses on the development and expressions of cultural flex during different periods of life: infancy and early childhood, early school and elementary school years, middle school years, high school years, and post- high school period. The life history interview also focuses on the extent of an individual's actual participation in both traditional and modern families, cultures, groups, and institutions. The life history identifies the type of cultural flex by examining the degree to which a person has been able to combine modern and traditional values and belief systems to arrive at multicultural values and worldviews.

**Match and/or Mismatch** refers to person-environment fit with respect to the degree of harmony or lack of harmony between cultural/cognitive styles and environmental demands. Two types are cognitive mismatch and cultural mismatch.

**Mismatch Shock** an extreme case of the mismatch syndrome.

**Mismatch Syndrome** a lack of harmony between a person's preferred

cultural and/or cognitive styles and environmental demands. This occurs when people feel at odds to the important people and institutions in their lives. They feel alone, hopeless, and misunderstood; they may exhibit a number of symptoms, including self-rejection, depression, negativity, rigidity, and attempts to escape reality.

**Model** a person whom the client admires and who is dominant in the cultural/ cognitive styles the client wants to learn.

**Modeling** the process whereby people learn unfamiliar cognitive and cultural styles through imitation and observation of others, through reading and through travel.

**Modern** a value orientation that emphasizes and encourages separation from family and community early in life. It is typical of urban communities, liberal religions, and of North American and Western European cultures. People who are identified as having a modern value orientation tend to emphasize science when explaining the mysteries of life; they have a strong individualistic orientation; they tend to deemphasize differences in gender and age roles; and they emphasize egalitarianism in childrearing practices.

**Multicultural Ambassador** a multicultural person who promotes the development of multicultural environments which encourage understanding (multicultural education) and cooperation among different people and groups.

**Multicultural Educator** a multicultural person who educates others about the advantages of cultural and cognitive diversity and

multicultural orientations to life.

**Multicultural Experience Inventory (MEI)** an inventory that assesses historical and current experiences. It focuses on personal history and behavior in three areas: demographic and linguistic, socialization history, and degree of multicultural participation in the past as well as the present. The MEI consists of two types of items: historical (reflecting historical development pattern—HDP) and contemporary functioning (reflecting contemporary multicultural identity—CMI). Includes items that deal with degree of comfort and acceptance.

**Multicultural Model of Psychotherapy** a model of therapy that emphasizes multicultural development by maximizing the client's ability to flex between cultural and cognitive styles when faced with different environmental demands and development of a multicultural orientation to life characterized by serving as a multicultural educator, ambassador, and peer counselor.

**Multicultural Peer Counselor** a multicultural person who provides emotional support and facilitates change and development of empowerment in those of his or her peers who are suffering from mismatch.

**Multicultural Person-Environment Fit Worldview** a worldview that is based on the following assumptions: (1) There are no inferior people, cultures, or groups in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, economics, religion, physical disabilities, region, sexual orientation, or language; (2) problems of maladjustment are the result of mismatch between people, or between people and their

environments rather than of inferior people or groups; (3) every individual, group, or culture has positive contributions to make to personality development and to a healthy adjustment to life; (4) people who are willing to learn from others and from groups and cultures different from their own acquire multicultural building blocks (coping techniques and perspectives), which are the basis of multicultural personality development and multicultural identity; (5) synthesis and amalgamation of personality building blocks acquired from different people, groups, and cultures occur when the person with multicultural potential works toward the goals of understanding and cooperation among diverse groups and peoples in a pluralistic society; and (6) synthesis and amalgamation of personality building blocks from diverse origins contribute to the development of multicultural personality development and psychological adjustment in a pluralistic society.

**Preferred Cultural and Cognitive Styles Observation Checklists** observational rating scales that list field sensitive and field independent behaviors in five domains: communications; interpersonal relationships; motivation; teaching, parenting, supervising, and counseling; learning and problem solving. The checklists can be used to assess modern and traditional cultural styles and values.

**Preferred Styles** the dominant cultural and cognitive styles of a person.

**Scriptwriting** a therapy strategy used, along with role-playing, to promote cultural and cognitive flex development by matching the cultural or cognitive styles of a person or institution.

**Theory of Multicultural Development** see Cognitive and Cultural Flex Theory.

**Traditional** a value orientation that emphasizes close ties to family and community throughout life. It is typical of rural communities, conservative religions, and of minority and developing cultures. People identified as having traditional value orientations tend to have a spiritual orientation toward life, are strongly identified with their families and communities of origin, usually believe in separation of gender and age roles; and typically endorse strict approaches to child- rearing.

**Traditionalism-Modernism Inventory (TMI)** a personality inventory that assesses the degree of identification with traditional and modern values and belief systems. The instrument yields scores indicating the degree of agreement with items reflecting traditionalism or modernism. The degree of flex can be determined by examining the differences between the total traditionalism and total modernism scores (balance score) as well as by looking at the degree of agreement with the traditional and modern items across the different domains of life: gender-role definition; family identity; sense of community; family identification; time orientation; age status; importance of tradition; subservience to convention and authority; spirituality and religion; attitudes toward issues such as sexual orientation, the death penalty, the role of federal government in education, benefits to single mothers and noncitizens, and abortion. Type of flex can be determined by examining the degree of flex within each domain.

**Tyranny of the Shoulds** an individual's perception of the self based on what

she believes others expect the person to be like. The pressure to conform could contribute to psychological maladjustment—the individual develops a false self based on the "shoulds" of parents, important others, and societal institutions.

**Unique Self** a person's preferred cultural and cognitive styles before he has been subjected to the pressures of conformity.

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