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THE SECOND STAGE OF MULTICULTURAL THERAPY AND COUNSELING

Multicultural Psychotherapy

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Acceptance of the Unique Self and Development of Cultural and Cognitive Flex

Manuel Ramirez III

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Acceptance of the Unique Self and Development of Cultural and Cognitive Flex

The previous chapter presented the principal goals of the first and second sessions of multicultural psychotherapy and counseling. This chapter focuses on two major objectives: encouraging clients to accept their unique selves and encouraging them to develop an orientation to life that reflects cultural and cognitive flexibility. Both client and therapist have important roles to play in this phase of multicultural therapy.

SESSIONS 3 THROUGH 5: ENCOURAGING ACCEPTANCE OF THE UNIQUE SELF

The degree of difficulty of this phase of counseling for both the client and the therapist can vary, depending on the degree to which the client has suppressed and/or denied his or her unique self. Imelda, Harold, Tara, and Alex are representative cases.

Imelda had continued to develop her preferred style with respect to a modern orientation in gender role despite pressures to conform from parents

and grandparents, but fear of alienating her grandparents and her boyfriend's parents had caused her to downplay her interest in sports and had kept her from establishing close friendships with her coaches and with other players on her teams. Imelda had not denied her unique self with respect to the other domains of her preferred cultural and cognitive styles.

Harold, on the other hand, had undergone a more extensive suppression of both his preferred cultural and cognitive styles. After the death of his brother, he had abandoned his preferred styles in an attempt to please his father. Nevertheless, he did occasionally make use of his preferred styles in certain domains of life—his traditionalism and field sensitivity were reflected in the fact that he was the charismatic leader of his company, establishing a sense of community for his employees and in his interest in developing an extensive graphics software product line.

Tara had forced herself into a traditional cultural style orientation when she lived with her boyfriend. He believed in strict separation of gender roles, and she found herself in the role she had played when she lived in the home of her parents, something she deeply resented. Since she had broken up with her boyfriend, she had expressed her modern views regarding egalitarian relationships with the men she dated, but this had led to conflict. She still felt she had to conform to her parent's traditional expectations of her when she visited them or talked with them on the telephone. She had begun to exert her

field independence at work; an older close friend had encouraged Tara to mimic her approach to problem solving in the workplace. Tara decided to refuse her friend's offer for help by finding her own way to solve work tasks.

Alex had developed a mixed cultural style in changing his major without seeking the permission of his parents, but he still maintained his need for advice from family members by informing his favorite aunt and uncle about his decision. Alex had forced himself to try to adapt to a field independent orientation with respect to personal interests and to his study focus in college. His change in major to sociology and social work allowed him to express his preferred field sensitive style in the learning/problem-solving domain.

The Role of the Client

Clients learn to recognize pressures to conform to which they have been most vulnerable. They also learn to understand how these pressures are related to the development of the false self and the suppression of the unique self. To identify the sources of pressures to conform, clients have to do thorough and careful assessments of their social environments. The sources of pressures to conform can include people and/or institutions with important roles in the clients' life. In the case of Imelda, these include her grandparents, parents, boyfriend's parents, and teachers, as well as the traditional community in

which she lives. For Harold, sources of pressure to conform include his father, partners, colleagues, and his company. For Tara the tyranny of the shoulds had its origins in the behavior and expectations of her parents, her ex-boyfriend, and her older coworker. For Alex it was his grandparents (early in his life), his parents (after the family immigrated to the United States), his heterosexual friends, and the strict views of the Catholic Church regarding homosexuality.

With the direction of the therapist, clients ask themselves where the conformity pressures originate, how these pressures are making themselves felt, what responses these pressures have provoked in the past, and how they can recognize when they are falling back into using the cultural and cognitive styles of their false selves in response to these pressures. Another important task for clients during Sessions 3 through 5 is learning how to come to terms with the discomfort of being different.

The Role of the Therapist

In this phase of multicultural counseling, the therapist focuses on establishing an atmosphere to enable the client to begin exploring and developing the unique self, which may have been suppressed by pressures to conform. The therapist facilitates the process of expression and acceptance of the unique self by projecting respect and acceptance of the client's preferred styles.

Additionally the professional gives the client the opportunity to accomplish the matching goals identified in the previous session. These cultural and cognitive match goals have three objectives:

1. To help the client to feel comfortable with the unique self

2. To encourage the client to feel pride in that uniqueness

3. To initiate the process of developing the unique self to its maximum potential

Strategies for Matching Cultural Style Goals

Examples of the strategies used for achieving match goals have been taken from the counseling progress notes and therapeutic plans developed for Imelda, Harold, Tara, and Raul.

Imelda. The therapist asked Imelda to focus on the first of the cultural match goals established in the previous session: those of developing her modernistic orientation vis-à-vis equality in gender roles and developing her traditionalistic behaviors in such a way as to encourage her grandparents and parents to understand that her interest in sports is important to her well-being.

The therapist asked Imelda to think of people in her environment—teachers, coaches, friends of the family, authority figures, peers, or others—

who could help her become more modernistic. After discussing a number of people, Imelda and the therapist settled on one of her basketball coaches, a Latina, as the best possibility because, according to Imelda's description, this person seemed to have established a good balance in her identification with modern and traditional values.

The therapist encouraged empathy projection by asking Imelda to answer two questions: What is important to your coach? What does she want out of life? This set the stage for writing a script, based on the coach's preferred cultural and cognitive styles, which Imelda could use when she solicited help from her. While Imelda described what she knew about the coach's interests and personality characteristics, the therapist and Imelda used the concepts from the flex theory of personality to develop hypotheses regarding the coach's preferred cultural and cognitive styles.

The therapist then asked Imelda to outline the script she could use for approaching the coach. The therapist and Imelda discussed the script and developed it to fit the coach's unique style. They decided Imelda would begin as follows: "Some time ago you asked me to come to you if I needed any help with my hook shot. Do you have time to help me now?" If the coach were to agree to help Imelda, the script to be used when Imelda and her coach were alone was as follows: "I need your advice on something personal. My parents and grandparents are opposed to my playing on the team. This has been

bothering me. Do you have any advice for me?"

The next step in this stage of therapy is role-playing. The therapist assumed the role of the coach while Imelda tried out the script. Following the role-playing exercise, the therapist and Imelda developed a homework assignment that included a day and a time when Imelda would try out the script with her coach. Following this, Imelda was to do ratings and take notes to evaluate the degree of success she felt she had experienced in implementing the script (see Appendix J).

If necessary, the therapist and Imelda would modify the script and either try again with the same person or select someone else as a possible mentor in Imelda's efforts to achieve her cultural styles match goals. The therapist warned Imelda that she could encounter rejection from the person(s) for whom the script was intended. He also cautioned her that unforeseen circumstances might lead to failure of the script in part or in whole. Imelda was instructed that, should either rejection or failure occur, she should not blame herself, but merely take note of what happened and what was going on at the time. She was also asked to phone the therapist should she need to talk about feelings related to rejection or failure of a script.

As soon as they felt that the first goal of the cultural match series had been achieved, Imelda and the therapist proceeded to the other goals they

had identified. They focused on three life domains: the interpersonal domain; the life activities domain; and the information, travel, and media domain.

In the interpersonal domain, Imelda gained enough confidence through her initial contact with the one Hispanic basketball coach to make a greater effort to get to know both her Hispanic and non-Hispanic coaches better. Most of these coaches proved to be good models for arriving at a comfortable mix of traditional and modern values and belief systems.

From the encouragement she received from her coaches, Imelda made gains in the activities domain; she joined a support group of Hispanic women in sports in one of the local churches in her community. Other changes in the activities domain included having one of her Hispanic coaches accompany her as she talked to her grandparents about her commitment to sports. Further, Imelda succeeded in getting her grandparents to go to one of her games. This improved relations between Imelda and her grandparents. As they became proud of her achievements on the court, they began to view Imelda's accomplishments as an achievement for the family.

In the information, travel, and media domain, Imelda started to read books and magazine articles about female athletes such as Nancy Lopez, Babe Zaharias, and some of the tennis players from Spain who had played at Wimbledon. She shared these with her parents and grandparents. Imelda also

attended a women's basketball clinic at a state university. At the clinic she met other Hispanic women active in sports who had succeeded in making a good adjustment by combining traditional and modern values.

Harold. For Harold the first goal on the cultural match goals list was to develop traditional values with a view toward improving his relationship with his wife and children. In the interpersonal domain, the therapist began by asking Harold to think of a script that would increase his opportunities to interact with his wife. This task appealed to Harold's desire to do things on his own; he immediately began taking notes and developing a script. He wrote, "You mentioned some time ago that the Art League is having a reception during an opening at one of the galleries. I would like to go with you, if you wouldn't mind." As with Imelda, the therapist discussed the script with Harold, role-played it, and after the necessary modifications, asked Harold to enact it with his wife.

In the life activities domain, the therapist and Harold examined some possibilities for activities that could match his traditional cultural style. They decided Harold could use his interest in photography to strengthen his bond with his wife and children. The family could go on photography expeditions together on weekends; they would be able to drive out to a scenic spot or historic sections of town and each family member would take photographs. The family would then talk about what they were trying to accomplish with

composition of the picture, the subject matter, and the lighting.

To develop changes in the information, travel, and media domain, Harold began visiting museums and galleries in neighboring cities and universities in the Bay Area. He began reading magazines and books on photography and art, discovering a special interest in Leonardo da Vinci and others who had combined art with science and mathematics. He and his wife also planned an art tour of Europe for the coming summer, something she had wanted to do for a long time.

Tara. Tara needed to become more modern in the domain of equality of gender roles in her intimate relationships. In the interpersonal domain the therapist began by asking Tara to think of a couple she knew whom she admired because of the egalitarianism in their relationship. She identified a male cousin and his spouse who had been happily married for twenty years. She visited with this couple and asked about how they had achieved equality in their relationship. She received some useful advise.

Following this, Tara participated in the scriptwriting activity with the therapist. She needed to develop a script to discuss equality in the relationship with the person she was newly dating. One of the things she had learned from her cousin was that equality needed to be established early in a relationship. Tara developed the following script: "I need you to know that

there is something that is important to me in a relationship, that it has to be fifty-fifty. We both have to feel that we have equal say-so. What I learned from the previous failed relationships is that I become unhappy when I feel that things are not equal."

In the activities domain, the therapist encouraged Tara to join a local women's center support group which focused on equality in intimate relationships. In the information, travel, and media domain, the therapist encouraged Tara to read several books to help make her relationships more successful, including:

- McMillan, T. (1994). *Waiting to Exhale.*

- Norwood, R. (1991). *Women Who Love Too Much*

- Gray, J. (1992). *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*

- Estes, C. P. (1995). *Women Who Run with the Wolves*

- Beck, M. D. (1989). *Love Is Never Enough*

Raul. Raul needed to develop his mixed traditional and modern values reflective of his multicultural/multiracial background and experiences in his artwork. In order to fulfill the interpersonal domain, he joined an international art school in a nearby city and began to take courses there. He was able to meet and work collaboratively with Native American, Mexican

American, Mexican, Asian American, and African American artists.

In the information, travel, and media domain, Raul started to take trips to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and San Francisco, California. During these visits he was able to observe the confluence of cultures through art. He also read books about Native American, African American, Asian, and Latino art.

Strategies for Meeting Cognitive Style Coals

In addition to establishing and meeting cultural style goals, clients and therapists also strive to meet cognitive style goals in Sessions 3 through 5. These also include goals in the interpersonal domain; the activities domain; and the information, travel, and media domain.

Imelda. The therapist and Imelda focused on one of the cognitive styles match goals identified in Session 2: the need to further develop Imelda's field sensitive cognitive style in the learning/problem-solving area. The first step was for Imelda to examine her environment and identify a person who might serve as a model for her. After some discussion, she and the therapist identified one of Imelda's peers, a student described by Imelda as being successful as a preferred field sensitive student. This time Imelda was able to develop her script without much help from the therapist. She then role-played the script with the therapist, and together they made some minor modifications. As her homework assignment, Imelda explored the idea of

approaching her friend for help on some of her schoolwork. She carried out the assignment, took notes, and reviewed them at the next session with the therapist.

In the activities domain, Imelda approached the therapist with the suggestion of working as a volunteer in a program to tutor children in one of the economically depressed neighborhoods in her community. The therapist helped her to see that this could not only help to further develop her field sensitive learning style by her observation of it in others, but it could help her to develop her field sensitive teaching, counseling, and supervisory style as well. He suggested that she be observant of those children whose cognitive styles may be preferred field independent as well, because this experience could serve as an early introduction to the next phase of multicultural psychotherapy: mismatch.

Discussion of information, travel, and media experiences, which might encourage Imelda to develop her preferred field sensitive style, led to the idea of her visiting relatives in Mexico. There she was able to visit one of her aunts, a teacher in a Mexican school, where field sensitive learning/ problem-solving styles are emphasized. During her trip Imelda discussed term papers she was working on with her aunt. The aunt gave Imelda some ideas for using a field sensitive style in her English classes. She also lent Imelda some of the texts and workbooks used in grammar and literature classes in Mexico. Imelda and

the therapist reviewed these and identified materials that could be helpful in Imelda's development.

Harold. The cognitive style goal on which Harold decided to focus was his communication style. He and the therapist agreed that Harold would develop his field sensitive communication style to better match those of his wife and children, and also to further develop the preferred style, which he had abandoned after his brother's death.

Within the interpersonal domain, the therapist encouraged Harold to review his social environment and identify a person with the best field sensitive communication style he had known. Harold recalled a professor at his alma mater who was highly developed in terms of field sensitive communication style. When Harold was a student, it was this professor who had encouraged him to take up photography as a hobby. Harold developed a script for approaching the professor and, after trying the script out with the therapist, made some minor changes. Harold then planned for implementing the script and for evaluating its effectiveness.

In an effort to match his field sensitive style within the activities domain, Harold enrolled in advanced photography classes at one of the community colleges near his home. In the information, travel, and media domain, Harold and his wife went on a European tour that included seminars

in art and photography. Both the content and the teaching style of classes as described in the travel brochures seemed to be predominantly field sensitive in orientation.

Alex. Alex was encountering some difficulty in a required statistics and research design course he was taking; thus, his first cognitive style goal was to develop some field independent learning/problem-solving style skills. After a short discussion with the therapist regarding people in his class with whom he related well and who could be good models for learning field independent skills, Alex identified Janet. He described her as being bicognitive and socially sensitive; she had made an A on their last exam. He felt Janet would be receptive to his request that they study together. He developed a script, discussed it with the therapist, and proceeded to role-play it. He then carried it out successfully.

In the activities domain, the therapist asked Alex to modify the content of the practice problems in his statistics book by including some information about people and cultures he had been familiar with. The therapist assisted him initially; Alex then was able to do this on his own. In the information, travel and media domain, the therapist recommended two books on research methods that were written in a bicognitive style.

Tony. Tony's first goal in the cognitive styles domain concerned his

being able to develop a more field sensitive communication style when dealing with his adolescent children. He was concerned about a negative report from school about their behavior. Tony reported his children were "not listening to me and being *cabezudos*" (hardheaded or stubborn). The therapist asked him to consider that the approach he had been using had been too direct and that they might react more positively if he gave them an opportunity to present their side of the story. The therapist suggested that Tony allow his children to explain their feelings at the time the events in question had occurred. Tony and the therapist wrote a script together.

The therapist was aware that clients who are traditional in their value systems, as Tony is, may feel that scriptwriting and role-playing are too much like a game, and they might feel insulted by the activity. The therapist anticipated this reservation and explained that these activities are valuable teaching tools and that he would demonstrate first. He also assured Tony that if he felt uncomfortable, they would discontinue the practice and try something else. Initially Tony was reluctant but once he became engaged in the task he enjoyed it. He used the broad outline of the script, written partly in English and partly in Spanish, the way Tony and his children communicate.

In the activities domain, the therapist asked Tony to identify someone in his life whom he admired and who was field sensitive in communication style with adolescents. Tony identified a *compadre* (close friend) who was the

godfather of two of his children and who had a close and warm relationship with his adolescent son and daughter. The therapist asked Tony to observe his *compadre* closely when he interacted with members of his family and to incorporate some of what he learned in his scripts.

In the information, travel, and media domain, the therapist suggested that Tony watch *telenovelas* (TV soap operas in Spanish) that demonstrated field sensitive communication styles between adults and adolescents or younger adults.

Conformity Pressures and the Adoption of a False Self

Recognizing and overcoming pressures to conform are examined in Sessions 4 and 5. The following are the three components to this phase of client empowerment:

1. Becoming aware of conformity pressures both with respect to the source and the type of pressure

2. Becoming aware of the mismatch situations most associated with conformity pressures

3. Avoiding self-criticism and other types of negative thinking that could result in falling back into the styles of the false self

Imelda. Imelda and the therapist discussed those people and

institutions that were the greatest source of pressures to conform. They identified her parents, grandparents, boyfriend, and school. These people—her parents, grandparents, and boyfriend—were the greatest source of conformity pressures for cultural styles. Her school, on the other hand, and more specifically her English teacher, were the greatest source of this type of pressure with respect to cognitive styles.

The therapist and Imelda discussed how these pressures were applied to her and how she experienced them. The focus here was on the negative thinking triggered by these pressures: "I tell myself I'm being too different, too rebellious, that I'm not obedient, that I'm bad."

With the help of the therapist, Imelda became aware of mismatch situations in her daily life. She came to recognize that on the days she was playing in a game, her parents and grandparents applied the strongest pressure to have her conform to the traditional cultural style. This usually led to heated arguments, upsetting Imelda, and affecting her concentration during the game. It was at these times, she realized, that she was most vulnerable to falling back into the styles of her false self.

Harold. An analysis of the sources of pressures to conform for Harold identified his father, his partners, and the professional societies to which he belonged. Harold discovered that he experienced this pressure as guilt: "I feel

like I'm letting my partners down; I feel that I cannot be the kind of son my father always wanted, especially since my brother passed away. When I am with my colleagues at professional meetings, I feel that I don't really belong with them, with their interests and ways of doing things—I feel like a misfit."

For Harold the strongest instances of pressures to conform were when he visited his father or they talked on the phone. Harold was especially aware of the pressures when they talked about business or about his new ideas for product development. They got along well when they discussed other topics such as politics or sports. With his partners Harold recognized that the strongest pressures to conform, especially with respect to cognitive styles, were exerted when he made a presentation about his ideas for new product development or when he discussed personnel problems with them.

In the area of avoiding self-blame, self-criticism, and other forms of negative thinking, the therapist worked with both Imelda and Harold to get them to recognize their tendencies toward these forms of thinking. These cognitive distortions, identified by Ellis (1970) and by Beck (1976) in their work with neurotic and depressed clients, often trigger a return to the cognitive style of the false self.

Tara. Conformity pressures for Tara centered in the demands of her parents that she get married and settle down so that her daughter could have

a good home. Conformity pressures were also coming from her ex-boyfriend by way of Tamisha. Without Tara's permission, he was going to Tamisha's school and telling her he missed her mother and her, that he would like to live with them again so that he could become her real daddy, and that they could all be a real family like those most of her classmates had. In therapy Tara said, "I usually think that I need to do what is best for Tamisha and me: that I need to give myself time to finish my degree and get settled in my new job and my new home, but I begin to question myself when my parents keep lecturing me about making up with my ex-boyfriend and marrying him, because I need to think about Tamisha's future. I wind up feeling guilty and questioning my decisions."

To exert some control over the ex-boyfriend's conformity pressures, with the therapist's support, Tara talked to the school personnel and informed them that he could no longer see her daughter during school hours. She also confronted her mother and was very clear in letting her know why she had broken up with her ex-boyfriend and asked both of her parents to respect her right to make decisions for Tamisha and herself.

Enhancing Self-Esteem

A necessary accompaniment to the strategies for empowerment is the development of client's self-esteem and sense of mastery. The therapist not

only assists clients in facilitating self-discovery, but also helps clients recognize that they should be proud of their unique selves. Further, the therapist helps clients to recognize and enjoy the rewards that result from match experiences. Finally, the therapist assists clients in realizing the positive aspects of feeling that they are gaining control over their own destiny.

Self-Acceptance. Imelda expressed her growth in self-acceptance and pride in the feeling that she did not have to be as dependent on others for support as she had been: "I feel that I can rely on myself more now. I like myself more, and I don't feel that I need others to approve of me as much anymore."

Harold's growing pride in his unique self and his self-acceptance were reflected in his feelings of enthusiasm about his work: "I feel excited about my work and my ideas again. I feel creative for the first time in a long time."

Mastery. For Imelda, gaining more control over her life and feeling less like a victim of circumstances was a result of knowing what to anticipate. The feeling that she could deal with situations more effectively without getting upset and angry added to this realization of mastery: "I know what's coming now, and I feel more prepared for it. I don't lose my temper as much as I used to, because I no longer feel like I have to convince people; I just tell them how

I feel and then take it as it is. There are no longer the big conflicts I had with my parents and grandparents."

For Harold, mastery was equated with the loss of the feeling of disorientation and confusion: "I feel at peace with myself. I feel I understand myself and others better." Mastery for Tara meant making her own decisions and feeling comfortable about them. For Tony it meant feeling that he could still be an effective parent to his children in spite of his physical disability. He could still be a good role model to them. For Alex, mastery represented his ability to tell the truth to his parents and to feel comfortable about forging an identity as both Asian American and gay. Rose's sense of mastery involved arriving at the realization that her loss of vision would not interfere with her goal of continuing to be a teacher, a good parent, and leading an independent lifestyle.

Summary of Sessions 3 through 5

Sessions 3,4, and 5 included the following nine techniques and procedures:

> 1. Selection of a cultural match goal from the list developed during the second session.

> 2. Identification of a model.

> 3. Projection of empathy vis-à-vis the model.

4. Identification of the model's preferred styles.

5. Development of a script for approaching the model.

6. Role-playing.

7. Assignment of homework: enacting the script.

8. Evaluation of homework.

9. Modification of script and reenactment (if necessary).

These procedures and techniques are also used for achieving the following cognitive match goals:

• Awareness of sources of conformity pressures.

• Identification of mismatch situations associated with conformity pressures.

• Avoidance of self-criticism and cognitive distortions.

• Development of feelings of self-acceptance and mastery.

SESSIONS 6 THROUGH 10:
ENCOURAGING CULTURAL AND COGNITIVE FLEX

In this phase of therapy, the therapist helps the client to develop unfamiliar, or nonpreferred, cultural and cognitive styles in order to initiate

the process of multicultural personality development. The therapist also encourages the development of client mastery and empowerment.

Some clients have used various aspects of these unfamiliar or less-preferred styles in their efforts to conform (i.e., in their false selves) in the face of conformity pressures. For example, Imelda tried to force herself to be field independent in her cognitive style even though she was preferred field sensitive. She did this because she felt pressured to behave like most of her classmates. Harold, on the other hand, tried to adopt a modernistic orientation in his relationships with his wife and children in his effort to be more like his father. This phase of therapy involves the use of mismatch. Mismatch is introduced to the client gradually, in the context of match, and only after the client feels comfortable with his unique self.

As the therapist introduces clients to mismatch, she continues to match client's preferred cognitive and cultural styles to encourage the continued development of the preferred styles while the unfamiliar styles are being developed.

Distribution of the Sessions

As discussed in the match phase of therapy, the therapist makes a decision about the number of sessions necessary for achieving the client's mismatch goals, based on the number of goals to be achieved and the client's rate of

progress. Some clients require more time, others less. Since successful accomplishment of homework tasks is a crucial part of this phase of therapy, the number of sessions needed will depend on the difficulty of achieving the goals, the motivation of the client, and the rapidity with which the techniques of the multicultural model can be learned.

Introducing Mismatch. Mismatch is introduced only after the client has overcome most of the negative symptoms of the mismatch syndrome. The client should feel comfortable and self-confident. Feelings of alienation, anger, anxiety, and defensiveness should have subsided before mismatch is introduced.

The therapist should postpone the introduction of mismatch processes until the client begins to feel some pride in the unique self and some sense of mastery over his or her own destiny. To avoid reemergence of the symptoms of the mismatch syndrome, mismatch should always be introduced gradually and with caution.

The processes and techniques of therapy used to achieve mismatch goals are similar to those used to achieve match goals: There is an examination of the client's social environment for the purpose of identifying persons and institutions the client should learn to match. Again, as with match, techniques include empathy projection; scriptwriting; role-playing;

homework assignments to try out scripts; assessment; and, if necessary, reworking of the scripts and trying again.

In addition to the step-by-step process summarized previously, the procedures for accomplishing mismatch goals introduce two new therapeutic techniques: awareness of feelings and awareness of diversity challenges. Awareness of feelings is an introspective technique requiring the clients to recognize their feelings at a given moment in time. Clients ask themselves, "Flow am I feeling right now? Is this the right time for me to attempt match?" Awareness of feelings is important when clients are trying to match people or institutions with whom they have experienced conflicts.

Diversity challenges are similar to the emersion approach used for teaching languages: The person is placed in a situation where only the new language is spoken. In multicultural psychotherapy, clients are encouraged to interact with persons or to adapt to sociocultural environments that can stimulate development of the new values and personality characteristics they will need to achieve flex. Diversity challenges require the person to adopt new styles promoting the development of flex.

Traditional Adopting Modernistic. One of Imelda's mismatch goals was to adopt modernistic values and belief systems in domains other than equality in gender roles. Achieving this goal would make it possible for her to

develop a wider and more diverse circle of friends. The process followed in achieving Imelda's first mismatch goal included the therapist's review of the definitions of modern values and belief systems, as well as examples he had presented to her when he introduced the flex theory of personality during the second session (see Chapter 7):

> When we discussed values in our second session, I said that modern values are typical of people who live in large cities. They are also typical of those who tend to be members of liberal Protestant religions and whose lives are relatively free of the pressures of tradition and family. People with modern values tend to be individualistic in their orientations to life. Some examples of modern values, which I presented at that time, included individual competition and achievement and independence from the family. Do you think you would be okay trying values like these?

With this question the therapist gave Imelda the opportunity to express any reservations she might have about trying out behaviors reflecting modern values. These reservations could have taken two forms: feeling uncomfortable using nonpreferred styles because these are associated with pressures to conform or feelings of discomfort because they are associated with individuals or with institutions with which the client has had negative experiences in the past. In Imelda's case, she said that she had some trouble accepting modern values because they were associated with the pressures to conform she had experienced from her father and stepmother. She also reported that modern values made her uncomfortable because she associated them with the parents of a Caucasian boy she had once dated and whom she felt had rejected her because she was Hispanic.

At the same time, Imelda said, "I feel as if I'm already learning to use modern values because I am spending more time with my coaches. Getting closer to the Anglo coaches has also helped me to realize that not all Anglos are the same." The therapist reinforced her for this insight.

The therapist and Imelda reviewed her social environment in order to identify people and institutions that could help her to achieve her mismatch goals. They also examined the notes from her life history. The search led to the identification of Betty, one of her Caucasian teammates who was individually competitive and who seemed financially and emotionally independent of her family.

For Imelda, the third step in developing mismatch goals was empathy projection. She and the therapist discussed Betty:

> THERAPIST: What do you think Betty wants out of life?
>
> IMELDA: Well, I think she wants to be the best player on the team because she likes to have her name mentioned in assemblies when we win games. There have been times when I have disliked her because of the way she is —so competitive and all; but she has been friendly to me. She has invited me to parties at her house and at her friends' houses.

Awareness of feelings is yet another technique the therapist used with Imelda to encourage her to adopt modernistic values:

> THERAPIST: How do you feel right now?

> IMELDA: I don't feel so good; I'm upset because my Dad and I got into a big argument about my half-sister again last night.

> THERAPIST: So this would not be a good time for you to try to match someone like Betty. You need to try it when you're feeling better about things.

> IMELDA: Yes, I see. That makes sense. Otherwise, I'm likely to botch it up, right?

Imelda and the therapist discussed the possible script Imelda could use to approach her teammate for help. Recognizing that Imelda was field sensitive in terms of learning/problem-solving style, the therapist modeled for her and worked cooperatively with her in developing the script. Using a large pad on an easel, the therapist began by making suggestions and then encouraged Imelda to come up with ideas. As the process continued, Imelda did more and more of the work on her own.

After Imelda was satisfied with her script, she and the therapist role-played it, making changes suggested as the roles were tested. Imelda decided when and where to actually try the script with Betty; she decided to approach her during the next practice session and ask her if she could walk home with her since they lived near one another. Immediately after trying out the script with Betty, Imelda evaluated its effectiveness.

A second mismatch goal that Imelda and the therapist identified was to learn to communicate in a field independent style. They felt that this style

would be more effective in matching the preferred style of her English teacher, and that a successful match might make the teacher more receptive to becoming more flexible in her teaching style. The process for achieving this goal included the therapist's reviewing the definition and examples of the field independent cognitive style with a focus on communication styles:

> THERAPIST: When we talked about cognitive styles, I said that field independent styles were usually the preferred styles of people who are modern in their cultural style. We talked about how preferred field independent people communicate with others in messages that are short and to-the-point. These people usually do not include any personal information or feelings in what they say.
>
> IMELDA: Yes, that describes my English teacher.
>
> THERAPIST: Do you think it would be hard for you to communicate in a field independent style?
>
> IMELDA: I can do it, but I have a negative reaction to it because that's the way my parents talk to me when they are angry with me. Besides, I don't think I have been able to ever get along with teachers who talk that way. Lately, though, I have noticed that some of my coaches talk that way and I do like them, so I guess it's okay.
>
> As Imelda recognized that some of her coaches used the field independent style to communicate, she identified one of them as the person she could try her script with once it was developed. The therapist led Imelda in empathy projection:
>
> THERAPIST: What do you think your English teacher wants out of life?
>
> IMELDA: I think she wants to be voted the best teacher so that she can get the annual teaching award.

THERAPIST: How do you think she is feeling these days?

IMELDA: She was one of three teachers nominated for the award, so I think she feels pretty good right now.

Again, the therapist reminds Imelda to monitor her own feelings and to choose a time to try her script when she is not angry or upset. Imelda and the therapist discussed a possible script, wrote one, and role-played it, making changes as they saw necessary. Imelda tried out the script, evaluated it, and modified it. After trial and evaluation, the therapist and client reworked it as necessary until they were satisfied with it.

Concurrently with scriptwriting and homework assignments for achieving mismatch goals, Imelda, with the help of the therapist, was also identifying diversity challenges she would try:

1. She would go to a party where she was likely to be the only Hispanic. Imelda had turned down Betty's earlier invitations since she had been uncomfortable with the thought of being the only Hispanic in the group. Accepting an invitation now would be a good immersion opportunity for learning how to use modernistic values in interpersonal relationships.

2. Imelda decided to participate in teacher-student get-acquainted sessions sponsored by the student council. This experience would give Imelda an opportunity to interact with teachers who were field independent in communication style. It would also provide an opportunity to try out the field independent communication behaviors she was learning

through scriptwriting and role-playing with the therapist.

Throughout this phase of therapy, the therapist gave Imelda social rewards as she progressed. He gave frequent encouragement by saying "I'm very proud of the progress you are making."

Realizing Imelda's preferred styles, the therapist used modeling as a teaching style in developing the scripts and in role-playing them while Imelda watched, saying, for example: "Here is the way I would do it." Then he demonstrated what he would say and do when communicating with someone who was preferred field independent.

Summary of Sessions 6 through 10

In summary, Sessions 6 through 10 focused on the introduction of mismatch using the following seven techniques and procedures:

1. Reviewing the characteristics of unfamiliar cultural and cognitive styles.

2. Allowing the client to express feelings about these values and styles.

3. Reviewing the client's social environment and life history interview notes in order to identify people and institutions that can help the client to achieve mismatch goals.

4. Projecting empathy.

5. Being aware of feelings.

6. Scriptwriting and role-playing.

7. Enacting and evaluating scripts.

SUMMARY

The second stage of multicultural psychotherapy focuses on encouraging clients to accept their unique selves and initiates the process of flex development. The principal strategies and techniques employed are scriptwriting, role-playing, and homework assignments.

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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