

Stages of Racialized and Ethnic Identity Development*: White Identity Source: Janet Helms *Black and White Racial Identity Development: Theory, Research, and Practice*, cited in Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the School Cafeteria?* (NY: Basic Books, 1997), adapted and elaborated by Lisa Sung** (2/2002)

Correlating Cross Status	Self-Perception	Stance Toward Own (Dominant) Group	Stance Toward People of Color	Typical Perceptions/Expressions
[Pre-Contact &] Contact	“Normal:” no particular culture or ethnicity. Sees self as a person of goodwill, unprejudiced, colorblind. Views persons and the world individualistically and relationally; unaware of significance of group.	“Normal.” Sees own community as possessing goodwill, unprejudiced, colorblind. Racism is deliberate and overt; acts of hostility or discrimination, or hate crimes committed by certain individuals.	Disinterest or naive curiosity about ethnic or cultural differences.	“I do not have an ethnicity; I am American.” “I do not see why they keep focusing on our differences; underneath, we’re all the same.” “Why do they always stick to themselves?” “I do not think of you as ____; you are just you.” “Some of my best friends are ____?”
Disintegration Becomes aware of racism’s impact in one’s own and others’ lives.	Earlier beliefs about equality, “liberty and justice for all” shaken. Feelings of guilt and shame about historical oppression and about one’s own status in light of White privilege.	Anger. Tempted to distance self from others confronting the issues and one’s upbringing and community. May retreat into silence or may become overzealous.	Sees impact of racism in life of associate or friend. May react by trying to dissociate completely from own group and to become “adopted” by people of color.	“I am not like most White people; I am a very fair compassionate person.” “I can’t stand his jokes any longer.” “People are telling me to lighten up.”
Reintegration	Feelings of tension and guilt may be denied by blaming the victim and reasserting the cultural myths of rugged individualism and of pure meritocracy	Sides with and justifies the actions of own group and the pursuit of group interests.	Defensive: blames the sinned-against for their current predicament and problems.	“I am not responsible for society or the hate of a few.” “Everybody can succeed if they just work hard, so they have only themselves to blame.” “There is no race problem today - there are only agitators.”
Pseudo-Independent Understands cognitively the problem of White privilege, but is unsure of what do to about it.	May develop “aversive racism:” wants the ideals of equality and racial tolerance, yet is unwilling to confront own racialized biases and racialized privilege.	Tends to overlook and rationalize racializing biases and actions perpetuating White privilege, by 1) denying that prejudice exists; or 2) citing other reasons.	May try escaping Whiteness by associating with people of color; in the college years, usually rebuffed by those in the Encounter or Immersion/Emersion stages.	“I accept all minorities, everyone should.” “I’ve known him for years; there’s not a prejudiced bone in his body.” “I just don’t feel comfortable around her.” “I don’t think he’d fit in around here.”
Immersion/Emersion a) Ethnic b) Racial	Ethnic: Becomes interested in recovering knowledge of family roots, ethnic heritage. Racialized: Wants to develop a positive self-concept as a White person in light of the historical and contemporary reality of White privilege.	Ethnic: Begins search for ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Racialized: Identifies with White people who historically allied themselves with people of color in combating racism. Develops relationships for support and processing.	If successful in forming relationships with people of color, may benefit from their outside perspective and comparison.	“I do not know anything about my ethnicity or culture; I feel a little cheated. Why didn’t my family keep it alive?” “If I really start speaking up about racism, I might start losing friends over it. Do I really want to get into it with them?”
Autonomy Has developed a positive identity based in reality (vs. a culturally based presumed superiority)	Positive views of European American ethnic identity and of Whiteness are internalized. Makes commitment to oppose racism.	Committed to act and advocate for justice for people of color, by seeking to dismantle White privilege and by working for full inclusion.	Committed to act and to advocate for justice and to work to empower people of color for full participation and contribution.	“I can learn from both people of color and from White people.”

* This model does not suggest that all persons proceed through all stages; rather, it outlines the steps and eventual outcome of full identity development for those who engage the issues and pursue the process (especially during the college years.) ** Neither Cross nor Tatum define or distinguish ethnic and racialized identity. Nor do they use the terminology “people of color,” “co-ethnics,”

“racialization,” or “pre-contact” in their presentation. Also, “Ethnic Immersion/Emersion” has been added to Cross’ model.

Stages of Racialized and Ethnic Identity Development*: People of Color**

Source: William Cross, *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American Identity*, cited in Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the School Cafeteria?* (NY: Basic Books, 1997), adapted and elaborated by Lisa Sung.** (2/2002)

Cross' Identity Development Status	Self-Perception	Stance Toward Dominant Group	Stance Toward People of Color	Typical Perceptions/Expressions
Pre-Encounter. <i>Limited consciousness of as "other"</i>	Has absorbed the images, beliefs, values of dominant group. Considers self as "colorblind" and the world as "raceless." Views the world individually and relationally: unaware of significance of group	Identifies with and seeks acceptance among the dominant group, often by downplaying aspects associated with the dominant group.	Disinterest: distance. Co-ethnics may reject him/her because of assimilation to the dominant group.	"Do not call me _____. I am an American" "We are all just people." "Just treat me as the individual I am." "Why do they only stick to themselves?"
Encounter. <i>Impact of (usually negative) categorization is felt</i>	A Positive Encounter: Person is surprised by perceived differences. A Negative Encounter: Person feels devalued and rejected; now unsure of own identity and community. Earlier beliefs about equality, "liberty and justice for all" are shaken.	Hurt, anger, and confusion. May develop an "oppositional identity" both protecting self and keeping the dominant group at a distance. Invalidating responses result in further disengagement.	Openness to reconsidering the significance of ethnicity.	"My color was not supposed to mater, but clearly it does matter to them after all." "She's different - how could she be proud of being Black?"
Immersion/Emersion <i>Begins the search for positive identity concept</i>	Redefining self.	Little interest in developing relationships outside the group; outsiders are irrelevant.	Joins peer group, which becomes the new social network. Seeks positive images and history; surrounds self with symbols of identity.	"Black is beautiful." "Whites are so uptight."
Internalization <i>Possesses a positive identity concept</i>	The new identity is integrated into the self-concept and affirmed; a new sense of security results.	Wiling to establish meaningful relationships across group boundaries with those who respect the new-self-definition.	The ethnic identity and ethnic social network are consciously embraced.	"Say it strong and say it loud: I am Black and I am proud!"
Internalization-Commitment <i>Ongoing actions express a concern for one's group</i>	"Emissary:" Sees own achievements as advancing the group's cause.	Prepared to cross and transcend group boundaries regularly as an emissary.	Willing to act as spokesperson and advocate for the group. Prepared to function more effectively in diverse settings.	"I can learn from both Latinos and Whites."

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Note: This table is available on multiple websites, simply search "Lisa Sung Stages of Racialized and Ethnic Identity Development"