

Asian American Identity Development Model*

Kim J. (1981) The process of Asian American identity development from Sue, et al. (1998). Multicultural Counseling Competencies: Individual and Organizational Development. Sage Productions. Thousand Oaks, CA.

The *Ethnic Awareness* stage begins around the ages of 3-4 when the child's family members serve as the significant ethnic group model. Positive or neutral attitudes toward one's own ethnic origin are formed depending on the amount of ethnic exposure conveyed by the caretakers.

The *White Identification* stage begins when children enter school where peers and the surroundings become powerful forces in conveying racial prejudice, which negatively impacts their self-esteem and identity. The realization of "differentness" from such interactions leads to self-blame and a desire to escape their own racial heritage by identifying with White society.

The *Awakening to Social Political Consciousness* stage means the adoption of a new perspective, often correlated with increased political awareness. The primary result is an abandoning of identification with White society and a consequent understanding of oppression and oppressed groups.

The *Redirection* stage means a reconnection or renewed connection with one's Asian American heritage and culture. This is often followed by a realization of White oppression as the culprit for the negative experiences of youth. Anger against White racism may become a defining theme with increases of Asian American self and group pride.

The *Incorporation* stage encompasses the development of a positive and comfortable identity as Asian American and consequent respect for other racial/cultural heritages. Identification for or against White culture is no longer an important issue.

*It is important to note that this model was developed through the experiences of primarily Japanese Americans. When considering this model, it is important to note the diversity of the "Asian" group, which includes East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Indian Subcontinent (and depending on whose definition, may also include Middle East and Pacific Islands).

Further examination must also delineate the impact of the "Model Minority" myth surrounding East Asians particularly, as this stereotype often oppresses in unique ways compared to negative stereotypes surrounding many other racial minority groups.

Furthermore, there is a rising frequency of transracial adoptions – White parents adopting Asian children (especially girls). Early examination of identity development for these youth shows that there are significant differences from their experiences and traditional racial identity development models. Some youth have chosen to define themselves as multiracial and explain their experiences using multiracial identity frameworks. See Maria P.P. Root's work.