

## Acculturation

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## What is Acculturation?

- The exchange of cultural attitudes and behaviors that occur when people from differing cultural backgrounds come into contact with one another (Unger & Ritt-Olson, 2007)
- A process of accommodation with eventual (and irreversible) assimilation into the dominant culture group (Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009)
- Process of interactivity between cultures (Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009)



## Assimilation

- **Assimilation:** process of adopting the customs, behaviors, and/or national or collective identity of the host society in preference to, or in place of, those from one's country of origin.
- The concept implies that the collective identity, customs, and behaviors acquired in the host society replace those from one's country of origin.

(Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009)



## Racial Versus Ethnic Identity

- Racial identity relates to reactions to societal dynamics of "racial oppression"
- Ethnic Identity relates to the acquisition or maintenance of cultural characteristics

(Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2001)



## Other Cultural Terms

- **Cultural appropriation-** is the adoption of some specific elements of one culture by a different cultural group
- **Cultural imperialism-** the practice of promoting the culture or language of one nation in another
- **Enculturation-** is the process by which a person learns the requirements of the culture by which he or she is surrounded, and acquires values and behaviors that are appropriate or necessary in that culture.

(Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2001)



## John Berry's Acculturation Framework

- Delimits two separate processes:
  - Maintenance of the original culture
  - Development of relationships with the new culture
- Four acculturation strategies:
  - Integration
  - Separation
  - Assimilation
  - Marginalization

(Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009)



### Acculturation Attitudes from Berry's Fourfold Model

|                              | Cultural Maintenance<br>Yes | Cultural Maintenance<br>No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Contact Participation<br>Yes | Integration                 | Assimilation               |
| Contact Participation<br>No  | Separation/<br>Segregation  | Marginalization            |

### Factors that Contribute to Acculturation

- Berry and Kim's phases: pre-contact, contact, conflict, crisis, and adaption
- The degree of identification to country of origin
- The importance of contact with other culture of origin
- Age at migration
- Education

(Berry & Kim, 1987)



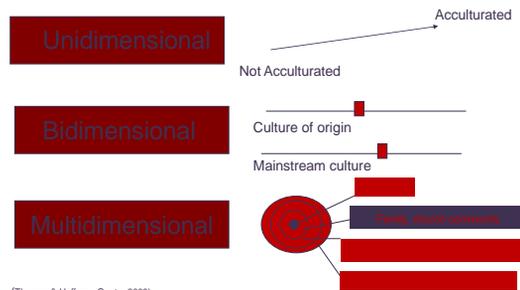
### Variables that Affect Acculturation for Hispanic Americans

- Discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity
- Emphasis on social and family ties
- Immigration statuses
- Geographic proximity
- The legacy of war within one's own country and with the United States

(Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009)



### Ways to Assess Acculturation



(Thomas & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009)

### Acculturation Stress

- Refers to the psychological, somatic, and social difficulties that may accompany acculturation processes
- Often characterized by three aspects:
  1. Lifelong duration
  2. Pervasiveness
  3. Intensity

(Berry & Kim, 1987)



### Measurements of Acculturation

- Language usage
- Customs
- Family style, cognitive style, and coping style
- Emotional and interpersonal behavior
- Political awareness and legal status
- Gender roles and societal class roles
- Employment and education
- Religious beliefs

(Berry & Kim, 1987)



## The Acculturation Process

- Six dimensions of psychological functioning directly affected:
  - Language, cognitive styles, personality, identity, attitudes, and acculturative stress
- Changes at three levels of functioning:
  - Behavioral, affective, and cognitive

(Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2001)



## Considerations when Assessing Acculturation

- Complex and multidimensional
- Willingness to explore the world through the client's eyes
- Assess differences within a community and between different generations of the same family
- Assess individuals and families who have immigrated to the United States for stressors and traumatizing events
- Conduct a thorough assessment of acculturation and acculturative stress

(National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2007)



## Sample Questions to ask when Assessing Acculturation

1. How do you identify yourself ethnically?
2. What ethnic identity does your family (mother and father) use?
3. How many different generations has your family been in the United States?
4. What does your community believe are the roles for a woman? For a man?
5. What language do you speak in your home?
6. What languages do you know?
7. What would your family say about you seeking support?
8. How does your community view domestic violence?



## Measurements for Assessing Acculturation

- Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans – II (ARMSMA II; Cuéllar, Arnold & Maldonado, 1995)
- The Societal, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale for Children (SAFE-C; Chavez, Moran, Reid & Lopez, 1997).

(National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2007)



## Why Is It Important To Assess Acculturation?

- Helps provide a thorough assessment of the client
- Meeting the client where they are and through their world view
- Understanding the needs and appropriate resources for the client
- Providing multicultural competent services



## Helpful Tips

- Begin by assessing your own racial/cultural identity, biases, stereotypes, and subjective thinking
- Don't assume every client from the same background has the same world view
- View the client from their perspective
- Learn about your client's culture



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