

Dominant Cultural Identity Development

Using the template below, record examples of your own self-talk (recalled or creatively reconstructed) for each of the stages of dominant cultural identity development. Be as honest as you can. If you progress to a row where your experience and self-perception does not align with the stage in the model, stop! In the remaining rows, write an aspirational self-statement to capture what you see as the essence of that stage. Choose one of these aspirational self-statements to repeat and carry with you in an effort to internalize this message.

Phase I: Uncovering of Culturally Oppressive Components of Identity		
Stage	Description	Self-Talk
Contact	Satisfaction with the status quo and lack of awareness or denial of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and other forms of cultural oppression by the dominant population.	
Disintegration	Exposure to circumstances that make it difficult to continue to deny the existence of cultural oppression and one's role in that oppression; this leads to confusion, disorientation, and fractured loyalties.	
Reintegration	Retreat into active valuing of dominant cultural identities and denigration of non-dominant populations with consequent reduction in anxiety and increase in socially acceptable forms of sexism, racism, and so on.	
Phase II: Development of Positive, Culturally Sensitive Identity		
Stage	Description	Self-Talk
Pseudo-Independence	Rationalization of one's own group norms and designation of others as racist, sexist, homophobic, and so on. Separation of self-identity from other group members who may be guilty of cultural oppression and of expecting nondominant groups to conform with dominant cultural norms.	
Immersion	Active, committed search for understanding of one's own identity as part of the dominant European, heterosexual, able-bodied, male culture. Honest quest for information, self-evaluation, and redefinition of self.	

From *Culturally Responsive and Socially Just Counselling: Teaching and Learning Guide* (2nd ed.), by S. Collins, 2022. Counseling Concepts.

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Emersion	Solidarity with like-minded individuals who are also seeking a culturally sensitive personal identity and searching for ways to oppose oppression.	
Autonomy	Thoughtful analysis of cultural factors in self and others, in organizational and systemic contexts, and actions that support non-oppressive practices.	

Adapted from:

Helms, J. E., & Cook, D. A. (1999). *Using race and culture in counselling and psychotherapy: Theory and process*. Allyn & Bacon.