

Latino/a American Identity Development Models

1. *Casual*: During this period messages, injunctions from the environment or significant others, or both either affirm, ignore, negate, or denigrate the ethnic heritage of the person. Affirmation of one's ethnic identity is lacking and the person may experience traumatic or humiliating experiences related to ethnicity. There is a failure to identify with Latino culture.

2. *Cognitive*: As a result of negative/distorted messages, three erroneous belief systems about Chicano/Latino heritage becomes incorporated into mental sets: (a) association of ethnic group membership with poverty and prejudice, (b) assimilation to White society is the only means of escape, and (c) assimilation is the only possible road to success.

3. *Consequence*: Fragmentation of ethnic identity becomes very noticeable and evident. The person feels ashamed, embarrassed by ethnic markers such as name, accent, skin color, cultural customs, and so on. The unwanted self-image leads to estrangement, and rejection of Chicano/Latino heritage.

4. *Working Through*: Two major dynamics distinguish this stage. First, the person becomes increasingly unable to cope with the psychological distress of ethnic identity conflict. Second, the person can no longer be a "pretender" by identifying with an alien ethnic identity. The person is propelled to reclaim and reintegrate disowned ethnic identity fragments. Ethnic consciousness increases.

5. *Successful Resolution*: This last stage is exemplified by greater acceptance of his or her culture and ethnicity. There is an improvement in self-esteem and a sense that ethnic identity represents a positive and success-promoting resource.

Ruiz (1990) from Sue, et al. (1998). *Multicultural Counseling Competencies: Individual and Organizational Development*. Sage Productions. Thousand Oaks, CA.