

Professional Issues and Innovative Practice

“What Are You?” Conceptualizing the Complexities of Bicultural and Biracial College Student Experiences

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Reflecting the increasing diversity of the United States, universities are seeing growing rates of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The authors present culturally responsive suggestions to facilitate conceptualization and counseling with biracial and bicultural college students, integrating cognitions, behaviors, emotions, and relationships associated with culture and cultural identity of both culture of origin and mainstream U.S. culture. Recommendations for counseling an increasingly diverse student body are presented.

Keywords: bicultural, biracial, college students, cultural case conceptualization, cultural identity

Over the past 40 years, the percentage of students of color enrolled in U.S. universities more than doubled from 16% in 1976 to 40% in 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015). Data collected in 2011–2012 showed that 24% of college students identified as first- or second-generation immigrants (NCES, 2016). These groups of students are diverse with regard to race, culture, and ethnicity. Students of color (e.g., African American, Asian American, Latino American) and first- and second-generation immigrants navigate between their family’s culture(s) of origin and mainstream U.S. culture, which is based on White norms (Maffini & Wong, 2012). Individuals who navigate two cultures are referred to as *bicultural* (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). For example, a second-generation student from Mexico may identify as monoethnic (e.g., Mexican) but is bicultural as he or she navigates both Mexican and mainstream U.S. culture. An added layer of complexity comes with the growing number of students who identify as two or more races (NCES, 2015) and thus are *biracial* or *multiracial*. An example of this is a student who identifies as Asian and White. In navigating these racial identities, the student also identifies with two (or more) cultures and may experience similar and different challenges compared to his or her monoracial (e.g., Asian or White) or monoethnic (e.g., Vietnamese) and bicultural (Vietnamese American) counterparts. Further complexity comes when people are biethnic (e.g., Chinese and Japanese) but monoracial (e.g., Asian American). In navigating these heritage cultures as well as mainstream American culture, they too are bicultural or multicultural.

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In addition to the normal academic and social challenges experienced by college students, bicultural and biracial students often report additional stressors, such as discrimination and microaggressions (J. C. Harris, 2017; White & Ali-Khan, 2013). These experiences are often compounded by limited social support, which then affects the students' psychological well-being and ability to thrive in higher education (Hwang & Goto, 2009; Renn, 2003). Thus, this article presents suggestions to guide conceptualization and interventions that can better support the psychological well-being of bicultural and biracial college students.

Experiences of Bicultural and Biracial College Students

To better understand bicultural and biracial students' psychological processes, one needs to recognize the context in which these experiences occur. Prior to college, students' identity development is shaped by socialization primarily from their family of origin (Brittian, Umaña-Taylor, & Derlan, 2013). However, when they enter college, they are in a new environment, meet people both similar to and different from themselves, and encounter new ideas that challenge their existing notions of identity. Renn (2003) applied Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1993) ecological model of development to mixed-race college students in an effort to contextualize their experiences on university campuses. In this model, students are embedded within spheres of influence from the microsystem to the macrosystem. For college students, a microsystem includes classmates, peers, roommates, and professors, whereas the mesosystem refers to interactions among those in the microsystem. The exosystem includes federal policies that relate to financial aid, education, immigration, and documentation, as well as administrators and policy makers who influence the campus culture, values, and rules. The macrosystem encapsulates the historical context, larger social influences, and cultural expectations that are not always visible but create the sociocultural context that shapes college students' experiences (Renn, 2003).

Student identity development is most heavily influenced by their microsystem and mesosystem and more indirectly affected by their exosystem and macrosystem. As students are exposed to new ideas, people, and cultures in their spheres of influence, they may begin to question and reflect on how their previous or current identity, which has been shaped by their past experiences (e.g., family, hometown), can be integrated with their new experiences—in effect shaping their understanding of themselves and the world. Next, we address challenges experienced by bicultural and biracial students. These hurdles often fall within the micro- and mesosystems but exist in the contexts and influences of the exo- and macrosystems.

Challenges

Bicultural and biracial college students face common struggles associated with academic and social adjustment to higher education (e.g., time management, study skills, making friends; Conley, Kirsch, Dickson, & Bryant,

2014). However, they often experience additional adversities compared with their White counterparts (J. C. Harris, 2017; Leon & Osetek, 2016–2017). In this section, we review how challenges influence students' mental health and well-being.

Macroaggressions, microaggressions, and discrimination are commonly experienced on college campuses across the United States. Macroaggressions are overt verbal or physical hate crimes that threaten people's safety (Downey & Stage, 1999). Most universities have policies prohibiting these acts; however, these incidents still occur and elicit fear among students in anticipation of their occurrence. Conversely, microaggressions are subtle, often unintended slights or attacks that have similar negative psychological outcomes compared with the more overt experiences, yet they often remain unaddressed (Sue, 2010). Microaggressions are experienced widely by individuals who identify as bicultural and biracial within their micro- and mesosystems. These experiences can result in increased cultural mistrust, decreased psychological well-being, and alienation from peers and communities, all of which have a negative impact on students' identity development and establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (J. C. Harris, 2017; Kim, Kendall, & Cheon, 2017; Sue, 2010). Additionally, perceived racial discrimination is associated with increased mental health difficulties, including psychological distress, suicidal ideation, state anxiety, trait anxiety, and depression (Hwang & Goto, 2009; McKenzie, 2006). Macro- and microaggressions and discrimination can occur in multiple layers of students' environments, which collectively shape their experiences and ability to succeed. For instance, a student may have witnessed or experienced hate crimes or acts of terror on campus (in their microsystem) while simultaneously experiencing the adverse effects of national policy changes (in their exosystem), such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (more commonly known as DACA). Navigating multiple cultures across different layers in one's ecosystem is challenging and requires vigilance to move fluidly between identities and contexts while combating marginalization and oppression (Leon & Osetek, 2016–2017).

An additional barrier that bicultural and biracial students face involves building a support network and feeling a sense of belonging within the university community. Although college is a time for emerging adults to explore their identities, the process of navigating multiple identities can complicate interactions with other students, student organizations, and university services (Renn, 2003). Navigating multiple cultures can further complicate the identity development process as individuals may actively negotiate identity expression between groups in order to avoid social oppression (Ellis & Chen, 2013). This may be seen when students consider joining student organizations. Some clubs are race or culture specific, and students who navigate multiple races or cultures may feel they are forced to choose one identity over another. Once in the organization, they may feel marginalized as their phenotype may be different from the other student members. Other clubs not specific to race or culture are often led by dominant demographic groups, which may not feel safe for bicultural or biracial students. Student organizations are important

to well-being because they foster interactions and understanding across racial groups, thereby encouraging and promoting a sense of community, empowerment, and identity development (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Museus, Sariñana, & Ryan, 2015).

Race-related attacks (e.g., macro- and microaggressions, discrimination) coupled with limited social support from peers and leaders (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators) can negatively affect students' psychological well-being, academic success, and ability to engage in the campus community. A lack of support and a community to engage with can affect these students' sense of belonging, which is linked to academic functioning and psychological well-being (Walton & Cohen, 2011). These factors may thwart positive identity development and can affect how bicultural and biracial college students feel about themselves and how they relate to others far beyond academia.

Bicultural and biracial college students who are the first generation in their family to attend college face additional challenges. First-generation students are often unaware of implicit university rules, expectations, and culture, which can hinder their ability to adapt and thrive in college (Reid & Moore, 2008; White & Ali-Kahn, 2013). Previous research found that first-generation students reported that the lack of knowledge and exposure to college-level academic discourse hindered their ability to connect with peers, engage in the campus community, and connect with faculty (White & Ali-Kahn, 2013). These misunderstandings can estrange first-generation students from others in the campus community and can contribute to them feeling isolated and unsupported. Students may look to their family for support only to experience further isolation there as well. Torres (2003) found that first-generation students struggled to balance their own acclimation to American college culture (e.g., independence, new freedoms) while their parents maintained strong adherence to traditions and expectations associated with their culture of origin (e.g., strong connection and communication with the family). Consequently, students felt alienated from the campus community (e.g., needing to spend time with family, checking in daily) and actively disconnected from their family of origin (e.g., lying to parents for fear they would disagree with their choices). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and explore the influence that generational status plays in a student's college experience when working with biracial and bicultural college students.

In sum, bicultural and biracial college students' experiences are accompanied by varying degrees of distress that influence their psychological well-being and academic functioning. We now focus on strengths and factors that help buffer against these challenges.

Culture and Cultural Identity

Despite the myriad challenges that bicultural and biracial college students confront, they have many strengths that can help them navigate these hurdles and develop resilience. For this population, one strength derives from successful cultural identity development. Early research proposed four ways individuals develop their biracial identity: (a) accepting the identity society assigns, (b)

identifying with both racial groups, (c) identifying with a single group, or (d) identifying with a new racial group (Root, 1990). Recent research extended this early framework and supports ways in which cultural and racial identity serve as strengths and protective factors among bicultural and biracial students. Coping mechanisms, including forming communities with those of similar backgrounds and educating peers of similar and different backgrounds about their identity, culture, and history (Leon & Osetek, 2016–2017; Museus et al., 2015), demonstrate connectedness to these students' bicultural identity. A well-developed bicultural or biracial identity is associated with positive mental health and well-being (Lusk, Taylor, Nanney, & Austin, 2010; Maffini & Wong, 2012).

This article merely skims the surface of the complex challenges and strengths of bicultural and biracial students. The challenges we have discussed are meant to shed light on some factors that influence the social and educational contexts these students navigate. Next, we present suggestions to inform conceptualization and counseling interventions that support the multidimensionality of bicultural and biracial identities.

Conceptualizing and Counseling Bicultural and Biracial College Students

Despite the challenges experienced by bicultural and biracial college students, these students are often less likely to use the resources available on college campuses, leaving them underserved by university counseling centers (Center for Collegiate Mental Health [CCMH], 2018; LeViness, Bershad, & Gorman, 2018). In light of the protective roles of culture and cultural identity, there is a need to continue to promote efforts that highlight the importance of communicating and facilitating culturally responsive strategies in counseling and outreach across university campuses. Within college counseling, common theoretical approaches include cognitive behavior therapy and relational approaches (Minami et al., 2009). Thus, many counselors conceptualize clients through the triad of cognitions, behaviors, and emotions (Beck, 2011), and many give attention to relational functioning and interpersonal growth (Levenson, 1995; Teyber & McClure, 2011) to ground their case conceptualization and inform treatment interventions. Building on counselors' familiarity with these four dimensions (cognitions, behaviors, emotions, and relationships) and the existing models of bicultural and biracial individuals' psychological processes (LaFromboise et al., 1993; Maffini & Wong, 2012; Renn, 2003), we propose an integrated approach in which these four dimensions are viewed through a lens of culture to inform conceptualization and culturally responsive counseling.

Cognitions

Cognitions include thoughts, values, beliefs, memories, language, stereotypes, attitudes, and attributions, all influenced by and contextualized within culture (Conway, Schaller, Tweed, & Hallett, 2001; Hong, Morris, Chiu, &

Benet-Martinez, 2000). Bicultural and biracial individuals may have two or more cognitive schemas, each influenced by a different culture. Similar to how people switch between languages, bicultural people alternate between different cultural schemas through frame switching, which may be triggered by language, situations, relationships, or other contextual cues (Conway et al., 2001; Hong et al., 2000; LaFromboise et al., 1993). For example, a client may share beliefs about herself as a strong independent woman focused on being a successful engineer when she is at school, but she finds herself internally conflicted with obligations to prioritize her family's needs and uphold her role as the oldest daughter who is expected to care for her parents and siblings at home. Rather than thinking of these two schemas as disparate or disjointed, counselors could view each schema through the lens of culture to help the client understand why she may be experiencing conflicting beliefs. Furthermore, previous research has shown how bilingual individuals demonstrate different personality profiles with each language (Ramirez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martinez, Potter, & Pennebaker, 2006). These dynamic cognitive patterns affect how bicultural and biracial students behave, feel, and interact with others.

Behaviors

Mannerisms, norms, traditions, and rituals are informed by explicit and implicit cultural rules and are often a behavioral expression of one's cultural identity informed by thoughts and feelings (Maffini & Wong, 2012). Bicultural and biracial college students may navigate two or more cultural schemas with differing expectations of behaviors (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). Comparable with cognitive patterns, behavioral expectations may be similar or conflict across cultures. Among college students, religious practices serve as one example that may be a source of conflict. Because most university calendars are based around Christian holidays, students of other religions may have to miss class in order to observe their holidays and traditions. In addition to the behavioral expectations of one's culture of origin as well as mainstream U.S. culture, social and academic norms associated with college culture can pose further challenges for bicultural and biracial students (Reid & Moore, 2008).

Emotions

Emotions are often a focal point of counseling, although sometimes the influences of culture in shaping one's feelings or one's feelings about the cultures people belong to are overlooked (Maffini & Wong, 2015). Emotions are closely coupled with cognitions, behaviors, and relationships within culture (Hong, Ip, Chiu, Morris, & Menon, 2001; LaFromboise et al., 1993). Cultures have varied expectations regarding the expression of different emotions. Relatedly, emotion labeling and vocabulary vary with language, reflecting cultural values and expectations. People who are bilingual may experience and express emotions differently in each language; these processes are often triggered by

context (Santiago-Rivera, Altarriba, Poll, Gonzalez-Miller, & Cragun, 2009). Furthermore, people may have both positive and negative feelings toward the cultures to which they belong (Maffini & Wong, 2015). As with cognitions and behaviors, the complexities of emotional processes affect cultural identity.

Relationships

Interpersonal relationships facilitate a sense of connectedness to other individuals and communities and are associated with greater positive emotions, whereas a lack of connectedness is linked to poor adjustment and negative well-being (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005). Cultural messages influence gender dynamics, social expectations, romantic relationships, social hierarchies, and other interpersonal norms that may be explicit or implicit. Bicultural and biracial individuals may navigate the social complexities associated with two or more cultural expectations. Although family members and peers can reinforce thoughts, behaviors, and emotions associated with each culture, the dynamic nature of a college environment can both challenge and foster identity development and community building. As students build new relationships, these experiences can foster new understanding of themselves in relation to others.

Each of the four dimensions reviewed plays a significant role in bicultural and biracial college students' experiences and identity. With growing empirical understanding of this population, this conceptualization can be used to support counseling interventions and guide counselors as they help bicultural and biracial clients explore their multidimensional narratives.

Strategies to Guide Counselors

Building from the aforementioned conceptualization of the four dimensions of psychological processes, we present strategies to guide assessment and counseling interventions with bicultural and biracial college students. Cognitions, behaviors, emotions, and relationships are embedded within many layers of context and are influenced by culture. For those navigating two or more cultures, this experience can seem particularly confusing or conflicting. Counselors can use the questions in Table 1 to facilitate exploration and understanding of the complexities of bicultural and biracial students' experiences.

As with all culturally responsive counseling, practitioners should take a holistic approach and consider the multiple dimensions of identity, intersectionality, power, and privilege. The ADDRESSING framework (Hays, 2001) and the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015) provide a structured foundation to approach the complexities of clients' lived experiences in a larger sociocultural context with awareness for how these dynamics are at play in the counselor–client relationship.

Most students seek counseling as a result of distress associated with depression, anxiety, a relationship ending, loneliness, substance use, and academic concerns

TABLE 1
Guiding Questions for Counseling Bicultural and
Biracial College Students

Category	Questions
Relationships (e.g., friends, family, classroom, campus, on- or off-campus organization, environment, city)	Who do you seek support from? When you are having a bad day, who do you call? What is your role in your family? With your peers? Student organization? In the classroom? Community? What is your main friendship group like? What do you like about your close friends? In what ways do you feel understood and misunderstood by your friends, family, mentors, professors, etc.? What are your family's expectations of you while you are at school (e.g., are you still heavily involved with tasks of the family, required to visit weekly, expected to visit for family functions)? What organizations are you involved in here? What do you like about these organizations? What do you dislike? If biracial and choosing to participate in a monoracial organization: What is your experience like participating in that organization? How does it feel that only part of your identity is addressed or celebrated? How do you feel about the part of your identity that is not addressed by the organization? How do you cope with that? Are you involved in the community (e.g., local, on-campus, off-campus, back home)? Do you connect/relate to this community? Do you feel accepted by this community? Does this community acknowledge your identity? Have you had experiences that stand out to you—either positive or negative—with others on campus or in the community? Are you treated differently because of your race or culture?
Behaviors (e.g., traditions, actions/reactions, coping strategies)	How often do you go home? Are there certain expectations of you from your family? Peers? In class? On campus? In the community near school? In your community at home? How does your family expect you to act? How do your friends expect you to act? What do you do in your free time when you are at school? What do you do in your free time when you are at home? What are your favorite traditions with your family? Friends? What are your favorite celebrations with your family? Friends? How do you normally cope with stress? How do your (family members/friends) cope with stress? Do you participate in any religious organizations at school or while at home?
Emotions (e.g., feelings about cultural cognitions, behaviors, relationships)	How do you feel about the cultures you are a part of (e.g., heritage culture[s], U.S. culture, the culture of this university)? How are emotions expressed in your family? Are there emotions that you are not allowed to express or emotions that are discouraged? In what language do you feel most comfortable expressing yourself? When you are mad, sad, or hurt, how do you express it when you are with friends? Family? When you are happy, how do you express it with family? Friends? Do you feel a sense of pride being a part of your culture? Being bicultural? Being biracial?

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)
**Guiding Questions for Counseling Bicultural and
 Biracial College Students**

Category	Questions
Emotions (<i>continued</i>)	Where do you feel a sense of belonging (e.g., family, friends, university, community)?
Cognitions (e.g., values, language, attitudes, stereotypes, perceived expectations)	What is most important to you? To your parents? To your friends? What are some values you hold that derive from the cultures you are a part of? What values do your friends or peers maintain? What values do you like or dislike within the university (e.g., from staff, faculty, instructors/professors)? What assumptions do people make of you? What assumptions do you make of others who are of a similar background as you? What assumptions do you make of others who are different from you? What is one thing you wish people would ask you? What do you like about the cultures you belong to (e.g., your heritage culture[s], U.S. culture, the culture of this university)? What language do you think in? What language do you dream in? What language do you use when you talk to your friends? What language do you use when you talk to your family?

rather than issues surrounding identity (Gallagher, 2015). However, throughout the assessment and counseling process, counselors can listen for cues that may provide more insight into internal conflicts related to cultural identity for bicultural and biracial college students. Being more in tune with these influences will help counselors pick up on often subtle cues clients provide. Timing will vary for each client, but providing space to further explore these issues at a pace and depth of the client's choosing can strengthen the therapeutic relationship and help the client explore some potentially unsettled issues.

Next, we provide suggestions for counselors to help bicultural and biracial college students explore the four dimensions of their psychological processes through the lens of culture. Incongruences among these dimensions due to culture may occur and may be a source of distress for the clients. Each client will respond differently—some will feel comfortable beginning with behaviors, others may want to start with relationships or cognitions. With a well-rounded conceptualization, counselors can make informed choices about when and how to best provide culturally responsive services to bicultural and biracial clients.

Relationships

It may be easier for counselors to begin with an exploration of social connectedness because relationships may seem more concrete and outside of oneself. Exploration of family structure, family relationships (both nuclear and extended), and engagement in a cultural community can provide insights and concrete examples of the bicultural and biracial college students' degree of connection and involvement in their culture of origin. Although cultural identity shifts throughout bicultural and biracial clients' collegiate experience,

it can be helpful to understand their previous formative experiences in childhood and adolescence. Exploration of clients' social relationships in college may shed light on social expectations, composition of their friend group, and how accepted they feel about their friend group, as well as what they enjoy and concerns they may have about their friends. Involvement in student organizations may be another source of social support and cultural engagement on campus. Bicultural and biracial college students may not explore their expectations of romantic relationships, gender roles, as well as sex and sexuality if unprompted, but these may be a potential source of concern or anxiety if there are discrepancies across cultures. Counselors should also inquire about other notable interpersonal experiences on campus with staff, faculty, or the local community. This may provide space for bicultural and biracial clients to share any positive or negative (e.g., possible microaggression or discrimination) experiences.

Behaviors

Behaviors are another concrete marker that may be easier for bicultural and biracial college students to address and may come out in discussions of social relationships. A prompt for this discussion could be counselors asking about traditions, practices, rituals, or expectations in the client's respective cultures. Identifying specific people (e.g., family, friends) or settings (e.g., home, campus) can help bicultural and biracial clients think more concretely about their experiences. For example, these clients may be able to identify behavioral expectations and rituals surrounding meals (e.g., style of eating, rituals prior to eating, time when meals can be eaten) when they are with family versus peers. Though seemingly mundane, practices around food may convey important clues about traditions, expectations, gender roles, and other values held within each culture. Helping bicultural and biracial clients identify ways in which the behavioral expectations are similar and different in each culture (e.g., with people or settings) can facilitate their ability to engage in more reflective processes.

Emotions

Given the interconnections among cognitions, behaviors, relationships, and emotions, bicultural and biracial clients will benefit from counselors asking them how they feel or what their reaction is during the exploration of other dimensions. Counselors should also consider ways in which emotions are shaped by clients' cultures and cultural identities. Bicultural and biracial clients can begin to identify emotions, both positive and negative, they commonly experience in each culture and how they feel about each culture, including areas of pride and shame (Maffini & Wong, 2015). An important facet of emotions is the cultural variations in expectations of expression and displays of emotions. Bicultural and biracial clients may find it helpful to discuss ways in which they are expected or allowed to display emotions as well as what

they are expected to withhold (or are disallowed from expressing). Emotional expression may also be related to language, which is highly interwoven with culture. Bicultural and biracial clients may note limited vocabulary or have difficulty finding the phrasing to convey how they feel, particularly if the term does not translate well across languages.

Cognitions

Cognitions can be most complex dimension to explore, particularly among younger bicultural and biracial college students who may be examining and articulating these experiences for the first time. The process also requires a degree of metacognition that may be challenging for some. Similar to behaviors, concrete examples of each context and group of people can help bicultural and biracial college students begin to identify their beliefs, values, and attitudes about themselves and others that may be similar or different in each culture. If clients need more scaffolding, exercises such as a values worksheet found in acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT; R. Harris, 2009) may be helpful. A strategy is to have clients fill out the worksheet with their values and then fill out a second worksheet with what they believe their parents' values are (or what their parents want their values to be). Similarly, having clients fill out a thought record with examples from situations or events from each culture could help them give voice to and reflect on each of their cognitive schema.

Context

Counselors may consider using the application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1993) ecological model of development to college students (Renn, 2003). Counselors should be aware of the campus climate, with consideration for how different groups are integrated and represented in the student body, leadership, and marketing. Counselors should reflect on how past or present events on campus may affect bicultural and biracial college students' well-being. For example, a hate crime that happened on campus during the students' freshman year may affect their experiences throughout their time at that university. Similarly, counselors should be aware of how university policies as well as state and federal laws may affect bicultural and biracial students, particularly as these continue to change and elicit uncertainty for many students and their families. For example, bicultural and biracial students may not feel safe disclosing their documentation status, yet fears of deportation may be weighing on them heavily. Counselors should also remember the historical and political context in which these students live in relation to larger national issues, such as laws that banned or segregated students, prohibited interracial marriage, or forbade citizenship and land ownership. Although these may seem like distant events for some, many of those laws were in effect well into the 20th century and may be part of the students' familial narratives. In this next section, we present a case example to illustrate how the integrated approach we presented may be applied to a college student client.

Case Example

A 20-year-old biracial male student who identifies as Filipino American (i.e., half Filipino and half White) presents with depressed mood, has difficulty sleeping and concentrating, and is currently failing half his classes. While initial behavioral intervention focuses on strategies to improve the client's functioning, the counselor and client begin to explore his thoughts, emotions, and social support, unveiling his experiences and feelings of conflict between his family at home and his friends in college. This prompts the counselor to inquire about the student's relationships and expectations. The client reports that his family expects him to come home every weekend to care for family members and engage in family and community events, whereas his college friends expect him to stay on campus and attend social events. The client emphasizes that he loves his family, but he is starting to feel pulled between worlds and that being at home takes away from his time to study and be with friends. When the counselor probes further, the client shares that although he values his family very much, he is striving to be independent and to pursue his education the way his friends are doing. The counselor wants to examine the client's feelings about the situation and wonders how this relates to the client's cultural identity. The client emphasizes that he takes pride in being Filipino and is embarrassed to disclose that he feels resentment, anger, and guilt because of his family's expectations. With regard to social support, the client discloses that he has a few Filipino friends on campus who seem to understand his struggles but who also tease him about "not being really Filipino" because he appears and acts "too White." He reports that he does not feel entirely connected to or understood by his White friends or his Filipino family members.

This case example describes a counselor helping a college student client explore his distress and supporting him as he grapples with conflicts in his cultural identity. The counselor helps the client articulate how he feels conflicted in values and behavioral expectations between both cultures, has mixed emotions about engaging in each, and does not feel socially connected to or understood by either group. His identity is an intermixing of both cultures rather than two separate experiences. Although each of the four dimensions reflect similar experiences, the client may have an easier time examining and discussing one area over another. For example, he may not be ready to explore some of the value differences in each culture but may be able to examine his choices with regard to behavioral expectations and some of his mixed emotions about navigating and feeling pulled between the two cultures. It may also be easier for him to examine ways in which he feels both supported and stressed in relationships with both his family and his friends. The counselor could also continue the initial exploration of emotion and inquire about the client's sense of belonging to each group (peers and family) and extend the connection to each culture. The counselor could help this client further explore his thoughts, actions, and feelings about each group (e.g., family at home and friends at school) to parse out where his cultures align and where they conflict. Helping the client develop greater insights about conflicts and similarities in his cultural schemas can help him grow in his self-awareness and cultural identity. Additionally, the

client may grow in his confidence to assert his needs in each culture. Growth in his sense of self can have a lasting impact on his psychological well-being.

Applying the aforementioned suggestions, counselors can disaggregate different dimensions of their bicultural and biracial clients' struggles and strengths as they navigate two or more cultures. With greater support and attentiveness to their complex cultural and racial experiences, bicultural and biracial college students can thrive in their journey through higher education.

Future Directions for Research

Despite a growing presence of bicultural and biracial students in higher education across the United States, these students continue to be underrepresented in research, which often limits policies and support services. Future research should continue to examine the unique impact of different cultural dimensions on bicultural and biracial students' psychological well-being. Each dimension is interwoven with other pieces, making it difficult to identify unique contributions. Understanding these nuances can better inform counseling interventions by allowing counselors to address specific dimensions of a bicultural and biracial client's cultural identity and psychosocial process. Overall, greater understanding of the cultural and psychological complexities of this population can better inform support services to improve mental health and facilitate academic success as the students move through higher education.

Conclusion

As the number of bicultural and biracial students continues to grow on college campuses, so does the need for culturally responsive counseling and outreach services. Bicultural and biracial students may perceive the world through multiple lenses of culture that govern how they think, act, feel, and relate to others. Although many of these processes are unconscious, students' dissonance may grow in college when they are exposed to new and different social and academic pressures. These students may also need more support and clear allies in safety amid a divisive sociopolitical climate. The conceptualization, counseling strategies, case example, and sample questions provided in this article serve as practical guidance to help counselors further expand their skill set and grow in their responsiveness to help an increasingly diverse student population feel heard, supported, and empowered.

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