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STUDENT HEALTH &
COUNSELING CENTER

Navigating the In-Between:
**Challenges That Arise Among Adult
Cross-Cultural Kids in College**

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Participants will be able to...

Define “Cross-Cultural Kid”

Identify at least **three** ways an adult CCK can be defined.

Identify Challenges

Describe at least **three** different challenges that adult CCKs often face while also attending a higher institution.

Identify Clinical Approaches

Identify at least **two** *multiculturally-competent* practices to utilize in counseling work with adult CCKs.





A **cross-cultural kid (CCK)** is defined as an individual who has significant cultural belonging in more than one culture.



- Third Culture Kid (TCK)

Has lived in another country that is different from the parents' origin country for a significant amount of time before the age of 18 years old (Williams, 2023).

■ Children of immigrants

1st generation (*Born outside of the U.S. and immigrated from a different country*)

2nd generation (*Born within the U.S. and at least 1 parent immigrated from a different country*)

- International students

Has citizenship in a different country and is pursuing education within the U.S.

Challenges

“... Since the TCK identity is an invisible one... for others to know they are a TCK, TCKs must tell them” (Williams, 2023).

■ TAKING ON ADULT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Providing for financial needs of family while also pursuing degree
- Navigating higher education by self
- Cultural brokering

■ EXPECTATIONS

- Fulfilling their part of “The American Dream”
- Completing college on time with high marks
- Balancing familial dependence and self independence
- Pressure to succeed for the future



■ NOT BELONGING 'ENOUGH'

- Bicultural identity conflict (Tikhonov et al., 2023)
- Assimilation (Kirui and Kao, 2018)
 - Upward adaptation and acculturation
 - Upward adaptation and ethnic solidarity
 - Downward assimilation
- State of the current socio-political climate

■ CULTURAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- Stigma: Diagnostic labels, “asking for help”
- Lack of awareness of resources
- Judgement from community
- Fear of broken confidentiality
- Language barriers
- Inadequate cultural competency from provider

■ MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

- Stress/anxiety/depression
- Body image
- Boundaries and interpersonal relationships
- Individualistic vs. collective care
- Transition and belonging in college environment
- Queer identity
- Loneliness/isolation
- Difficulty with academics
- Loss and grief
- Experiencing racism/discrimination/microaggressions

□ Despite these challenges, CCKs are...

- Adaptable
- Open to change
- Often better prepared academically
- More independent
- Open to differences

(Williams, 2023)

Clinical Approaches

“... The [Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies] set an expectation that counselors develop a critical consciousness about the power that both counselors and clients hold in the counseling relationship, especially as this power relates to privilege and oppression” (Singh et al., 2020).

Multicultural Competency

- Cultural adaptation of any therapeutic modality being utilized
- Awareness of cultural similarities/differences between therapist and client (power, privilege)
- Due diligence to learn on own time and willingness to learn from client and their lived experience



Multicultural Competency cont'd.

- Appropriate self-disclosure
- Radical acceptance/no judgement
- Trauma-informed
- Dialectics: One can appreciate the native culture and also identify flaws in it



Decolonized Framework

- Relational-Cultural Theory
- Critical Race Theory
- Intersectional Theory
- Liberation Psychology



■ RELATIONAL-CULTURAL THEORY

- Growth through connection and interdependence personally and culturally

“...Counselors must remain cognizant of the relational images, including cultural expectations and mistrust that is inherent for both parties in the counseling relationship.” (Singh et al., 2020).

■ CRITICAL RACE THEORY

- Permanence and intersectionality of race and racism, critique of liberalism and color blindness, interest convergence, counter-storytelling, and whiteness as a property

“...CRT can help counselors... continuously generate awareness, knowledge, skills, and action to challenge White supremacy as a driver of what mental health ‘looks like’ for communities” (Singh et al., 2020).

■ INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY

- Using counseling expertise collaboratively with the client as the expert of their own lived experience

“By including the relationship of identity and power, [IT] enhances counselors’ understanding of sociopolitical forces, colonization, and the influence of both on the counseling relationship” (Singh et al., 2020).

■ LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

1. Realismo-critico
2. Recovering historical memory
3. Concientización
4. Deidologized reality

“Counselors are sharing power with clients and, more important, creating space where clients can empower themselves to create their own truths” (Singh et al., 2020).

Discussion:

- Do you notice if CCK students seek services at your counseling center?
- What spaces do you have on your campus for CCKs?
- What are some issues that clients bring up that relate to being a CCK?
- How would you like to approach your clinical work with CCKs?

Overall Takeaways

- There are many students on your campus who have cross-cultural identities.
- CCKs often face challenges beyond what they present in college counseling.
- Using a multicultural and decolonized framework can help to serve CCKs.



References:

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