

Sexual Minorities: Exploring the Sexual Identity Development and Ethnic Identity Formation of Multicultural Populations

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Before 1973, homosexuality was regarded as a psychiatric illness entitled neurosis, the previous term for a personality disorder. It is currently considered a normal variation of human sexual orientation. Unfortunately, for some ethnic individuals it continues to be time of immense confusion, guilt and occasional denial regarding being born “differently” than their peers. According to Rust (2003), the coming out process for multicultural individuals involves combining their ethnic and sexual identity formations. As well, ethnic families often misconstrue coming out with rejecting traditional family roles and ethnicity. With the lack of current literature present on this topic, this paper is intended to increase awareness concerning: the impact of home, community, dominant culture, potential cultural challenges/advantages experienced by sexual minorities during the coming out process and the intersection between sexual identity development and ethnic identity formation. Prevalent psychotherapeutic themes, clinical interventions and supportive counselling techniques designed specifically for this population will also be discussed.