African American Racial Identity Development*

Adapted from www.intervarsity.org/glw/cfw/kog02/kog3_pkg_racial_&_ethnic_identity_charts.pdf, a chart based on the work of William Cross, *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American Identity*; Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria;* adapted and elaborated by Lisa Sung (2/2002).

STAGE	SELF-PERCEPTION	STANCE TOWARD WHITES	STANCE TOWARD OTHER AFRICAN AMERICANS	PERCEPTIONS/ EXPRESSIONS
1. Pre-Encounter. Limited consciousness of self as "other."	Has absorbed the images, beliefs, and values of dominant group. Considers self as "colorblind" and the world as "raceless." Views the world individualistically and relationally; unaware of significance of group.	Identifies with and seeks acceptance among the dominant group, often by downplaying aspects not associated with the dominant group.	Disinterest; distance; no special sense of connection. Other Blacks may reject him/her because of assimilation to the dominant group.	"Don't call me African American; I'm just *American*." "We're all just people." "Just treat me as the individual I am." "Why do some Black people only stick to themselves?"
2. Encounter. Impact of (usually negative) categorization is felt.	If *positive* encounter: surprised by perceived differences. If *negative* encounter: feels devalued and rejected; now unsure of own identity and community. Earlier beliefs about equality, "liberty and justice for all" shaken.	Hurt, anger, confusion. May develop an "oppositional identity," both protecting self and keeping the dominant group at a distance. Invalidating responses result in further disengagement.	Openness to reconsidering the significance of race. Willing to entertain the potential of identity affirmation in other African Americans.	"My color wasn't supposed to matter, but clearly it does matter to them after all." "She's different—how could she be *proud* of being Black?"
3. Immersion/ Emersion. Begins the search for positive identity concept.	Redefining self.	Little interest in developing relationships outside the group; outsiders are irrelevant. Dominant group can be seen as negative at this stage.	Joins peer group, which becomes the new social network. Seeks positive images and history; surrounds self with symbols of identity.	"I am proud of my African American heritage." "Whites are so uptight." "Call me by my African name."
4. Internalization. Possesses a positive sense of identity.	The new identity is integrated into the self-concept and affirmed; a new sense of security results.	Willing to establish meaningful relationships across group boundaries with those who respect the new self-definition.	The racial identity and social network are consciously embraced.	"Say it strong and say it loud: I'm Black and I'm proud!" "You really *see* me, so we can genuinely be friends."
5. Internalization-Commitment. Ongoing concern and action for one's group.	"Emissary": sees own achievements as advancing the group's cause.	Prepared to cross and transcend group boundaries regularly as an emissary.	Willing to act as spokesperson and advocate for the group. Prepared to function more effectively in diverse settings.	"I can learn from both African Americans and Whites."

* This model does not suggest that all persons proceed through all stages; rather, it outlines the steps and eventual outcome of full identity development for those who engage the issues and pursue the process (especially during the college years).