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### Understanding and supporting the transition of marginalized students entering college

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# UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION OF MARGINALIZED STUDENTS ENTERING COLLEGE

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Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference for  
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**Rollins**  
EST. 1885



# INITIAL REFLECTIONS

Turn to the person next to you and discuss potential adjustment experiences of marginalized status college students entering college from the following perspectives:

- **Affect** (their feelings)
- **Behavior** (how they may act during any part of this transition)
- **Cognitions** (their beliefs about themselves, their transition, and their new environment)



## TODAY'S OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES



Explore issues faced by marginalized students entering a transition into college



Discuss areas of ecological influence to consider (culture, race, family of origin, identity, history of oppression, privilege, etc.) and environmental influence as it relates to college student development



Understand the influence and responsibility of college counseling and student affairs offices on the student experience: Clinical and Collaboration



Gain experiential understanding of developmental factors through processing of case studies and interpersonal discussion



# OPERATIONALIZING THE MARGINALIZED COLLEGE STUDENT

- Diversity vs. Multiculturalism
  - *Multiculturalism*: "Prevailing perception primarily based on race or ethnicity"
  - *Diversity*: "Broader, more encompassing term that includes race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, socioeconomic status, age, and physical and mental ability" or can also identify first-generational or non-traditional students
- Marginalization: "Treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral" (Oxford Dictionary, 2020)
- Privilege: "An identity (e.g. gender, age, social class, physical ability, etc.) that offers advantages and benefits to a person or group population over another"
- Intersectionality: "The complex and cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups "



## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS (CONTINUED)

- Traditional student: A student that arrives to college within the typical age bracket of 18-24 years of age
- Nontraditional student: A student transitioning to college that is outside “typical” age bracket, or school is supplementary to another career or other responsibilities; likely a non-residential student
- First generation student: A student whom is the first in their family to receive the U.S. college educational system
- Domestic minority vs. International student
  - *Domestic minority*: A student claiming residential status in the university’s country of origin that does not hold national majority status(es) of gender, race, ethnicity, ability status, sexual orientation, etc.
  - *International student*: A student who resides in a country for the specific purpose of receiving an education



**MARGINALIZED STUDENTS EXPERIENCE THE SAME  
TRANSITIONS TO COLLEGE AS ALL STUDENTS.**





# ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL LOCATION ADJUSTMENT INFLUENCES: DOMESTIC - MINORITY STUDENTS

- First Generation Student
  - College applications
  - Financial aid applications/requirements (ex. FAFSA)
  - Living on campus/campus culture
  - Search for guidance
- Availability of Inclusive Clubs and Organizations
  - Religious, Racial/Ethnic, Sexual/Affectional Orientation, Gender Identity
- Oppression
  - Hate crimes
  - Microaggressions
  - Discrimination
  - Erasure of identity
- Sexual Violence & Rape Culture
- Accessibility
- Finances
  - Financial pressures/student loans
  - Maintaining scholarship requirements
- Class schedule
  - Students who work
  - Students who have children or are caregivers
- Familiarity with technology
- Study skills and organizational skills
- College demographics (statistical makeup of students and faculty)





# ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL LOCATION ADJUSTMENT INFLUENCES: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Language and Accent
- Finances
  - Not eligible for U.S. aid
  - Limited in how and where they can work
- SES - Efforts put in by family
  - No room for failure
  - Major and degree expectations
- Making friends
- Food and cuisine
- Current Rhetoric
- Distance/Time zone difference
  - Connection to loved ones
  - Family/country crisis back home - “Survivor Guilt”
- Legal Status
  - Out of their control
- Writing/Citations vary by country
  - Accidental plagiarism
- American Classroom Culture
  - Being spokesperson for country & culture/race along with the role of ambassador
- American College Life
  - Ex. Alcohol and marijuana use - legal vs illegal



# SCHLOSSBERG'S TRANSITION THEORY OF COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

- A **transition** is defined as “any event or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006, p. 33).
- The different types of transitions include **planned** (e.g., starting or ending the college career), **unanticipated** (e.g., significant illness or death of a friend or family member), and **nonevent** (e.g., not getting into graduate school) (Schlossberg, 2011).
- Schlossberg (2008) created a mnemonic, **the four Ss**, used to help individuals cope with transitions:
  - **Situation**: the other stressors that are happening at the time of the transition.
  - **Self**: the person's inner strength for dealing with the transition.
  - **Supports**: the support and resources available at the time of the transition.
  - **Strategies**: the coping strategies used to manage the transition.



# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM & INTERSECTIONAL THEORIES

- **The Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity** (Abes et al., 2007; Jones & McEwen, 2000) integrates three key elements:
  1. A conceptualization of how our **social identities** (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, religion, ability) are interrelated
  2. The influence of the context and the messages we are receiving about our social identities
  3. A meaning-making filter whereby we consider the salience and importance of those identities and how we wish to continue to construct or embody them
- **The Ecological Model of Multiracial Identity Development** (Renn, 2003) focuses on a subset of multiple identities, which pertains to students from multiple-heritage or racially and culturally blended families.
  - Terms often used to describe these identities include **biracial** or **multiracial** (involving the combination of two or more groups), **interracial** (involving the union of two or more groups), **multiple heritage** (including many cultures, ethnicities, or national origins as well as multiple races), **mixed race**, or **multiethnic** (Paladino, Rodriguez, & Long, 2018).
  - Common themes include a sense of uniqueness, the challenge of formulating identity and then finding acceptance and belonging, and questions related to physical appearance and identity (Paladino & Davis, 2006; Renn, 2003, 2004; Root, 1994).



## COUNSELING CONSIDERATIONS: KNOWLEDGE

- Awareness of campus and global climate, as well as resources for inclusion necessary for referrals or understanding
- Knowledge of student development theories & deviations from application for those holding marginalized identities
- Exercising cultural humility, cultural opportunities, and cultural comfort (MCO model developed by Owen, Leach, et al., 2011)
- Self-reflection on potential biases, assumptions, or conclusions of another's experience; self-reflection on lived experiences, internalized beliefs, or potential biases
- Potential of therapist as a representative of other power systems to client, and/or responsibility to create a corrective experience
- Potential of therapist as a representative of a non-privileged and underrepresented group





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# COUNSELING CONSIDERATIONS: SKILLS



Encouragement of open dialogue in session about salience of/experience with identities



Verbal acknowledgement of shared and/or difference in identities



Examining any transference or countertransference that might arise in the session



Respectful use of client's language and definitions



Intentional consideration of multicultural theories, interventions, and/or techniques



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*“Staff may hold a level of competence, but that in and of itself may not initially allow a student to feel comfortable and brave with them.”*

*(Paladino & Kocet, 2020)*

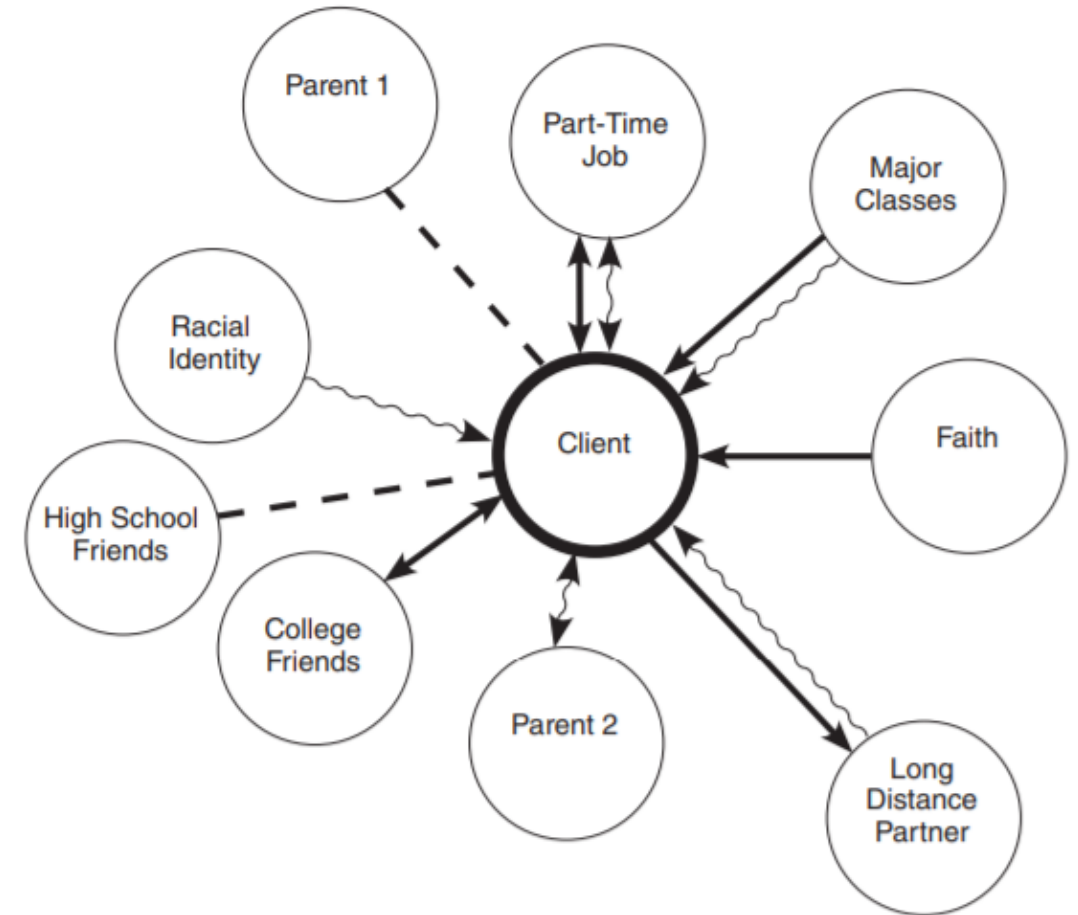






## COUNSELING CONSIDERATIONS: THE ECOMAP

- In Figure 3.2 the ecomap shows eight different examples (within nine systems) of energy flow and distance between systems and relationships through using standard ecomap symbols:
- 1. Parent 1 and high school friends: Both systems depicting a weak/tenuous relationship.
- 2. Part-time job: Client and system both giving positive energy and stress to each other.
- 3. Major classes: Client receiving both stress and positive energy from system.
- 4. Faith: Client deriving positive energy from system.
- 5. Long-distance partner: system stressing client while receiving positive energy from client.
- 6. Parent 2: Client and system are stressing each other.
- 7. College friends: Client and system giving positive energy to each other.
- 8. Racial identity: System stressing client.



**FIGURE 3.2**  
Example of an Eco Map

*Note.* Solid line indicates a strong/positive connection. Dashed line indicates a weak/tenuous connection. Wavy line indicates a stressful connection. Arrows indicate energy flow between client and systems.





# THE IMPORTANCE OF CAMPUS COLLABORATION: KNOWING YOUR PARTNERS

- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Residential Life/Housing
- Center for Inclusion and Campus Involvement
- Title IX
- Community Standards & Responsibility
- All other functional units
- Student Orientations
- Living Learning Communities
- Wellness Series
- Peer Mentor Programs
- First year experience course
- SafeZone training for counselors



# CAMPUS CONSIDERATIONS

## EX: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- **#YouAreWelcomeHere** is a campaign designed to affirm that our institutions are diverse, friendly, safe and committed to student development.
- Participating institutions and organizations are communicating the message in statements, photos, videos, events and other creative expressions that feature students, faculty, and staff.
- The repetition of the statement, “You are welcome here,” by a broad array of people is powerful and demonstrates that we support internationalization across our campus communities and across the country.



NAFSA: Association of International Educators

<https://www.youarewelcomehereusa.org/>





# CAMPUS CONSIDERATIONS

## EX: DOMESTIC-MINORITY STUDENTS





## CASE EXAMPLE: ALYCIA

Alycia is a second-year African American student who identifies as pansexual. She is currently dating Marina, a first-year Latina student. Alycia comes to the counseling center reporting significant anxiety. Alycia has been anxious for several months because of a number of issues that have arisen on campus, as well as issues in the national news. When she meets with her assigned counselor, she is randomly assigned to a graduate intern, Steven, who is a doctoral psychology student at a nearby university. Steven is Caucasian and identifies as a heterosexual, Jewish male. Alycia is nervous on meeting Steven because he is White. She is unsure if he will understand her experiences on campus. Alycia begins to tell Steven that she is nervous because several students have indicated that they are attending the Straight Pride Rally downtown. Although the city disagrees with the organizers of the Straight Pride event, city ordinance permits individuals and groups from a variety of political and sociocultural perspectives to hold rallies and parades in the city, as long as the group is compliant with required zoning laws. Alycia also indicates that a number of White students in her residence hall have been talking about recent immigration policy and believe the president's policies about apprehending undocumented families is the right thing to do...



## CASE EXAMPLE (CONTINUED)

...Alycia says that she is hearing more hateful rhetoric coming from her peers than she ever has in her time at the university. Two weeks ago, she and her girlfriend were holding hands while walking back from the student union, and a group of college men were harassing and name calling them. They had to run into the safety of the dining hall to avoid further harassment. Alycia says that watching the news and reading the campus newspaper is causing her significant distress. She witnesses daily instances of her African American friends being questioned by university police when her White peers are not experiencing the same ill treatment by police. She also heard about an instance where a swastika was carved in a bathroom stall on the floor above her in her residence hall with the words “Jews will not replace us!” sprawled in the stall also. Although the police were called immediately to the scene to investigate it, Alycia has become more fearful and no longer feels safe on campus. She asks Steven for help managing her anxiety.



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**What are some important factors necessary for counselors and campus staff to consider in supporting Alycia's success?**

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# QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

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