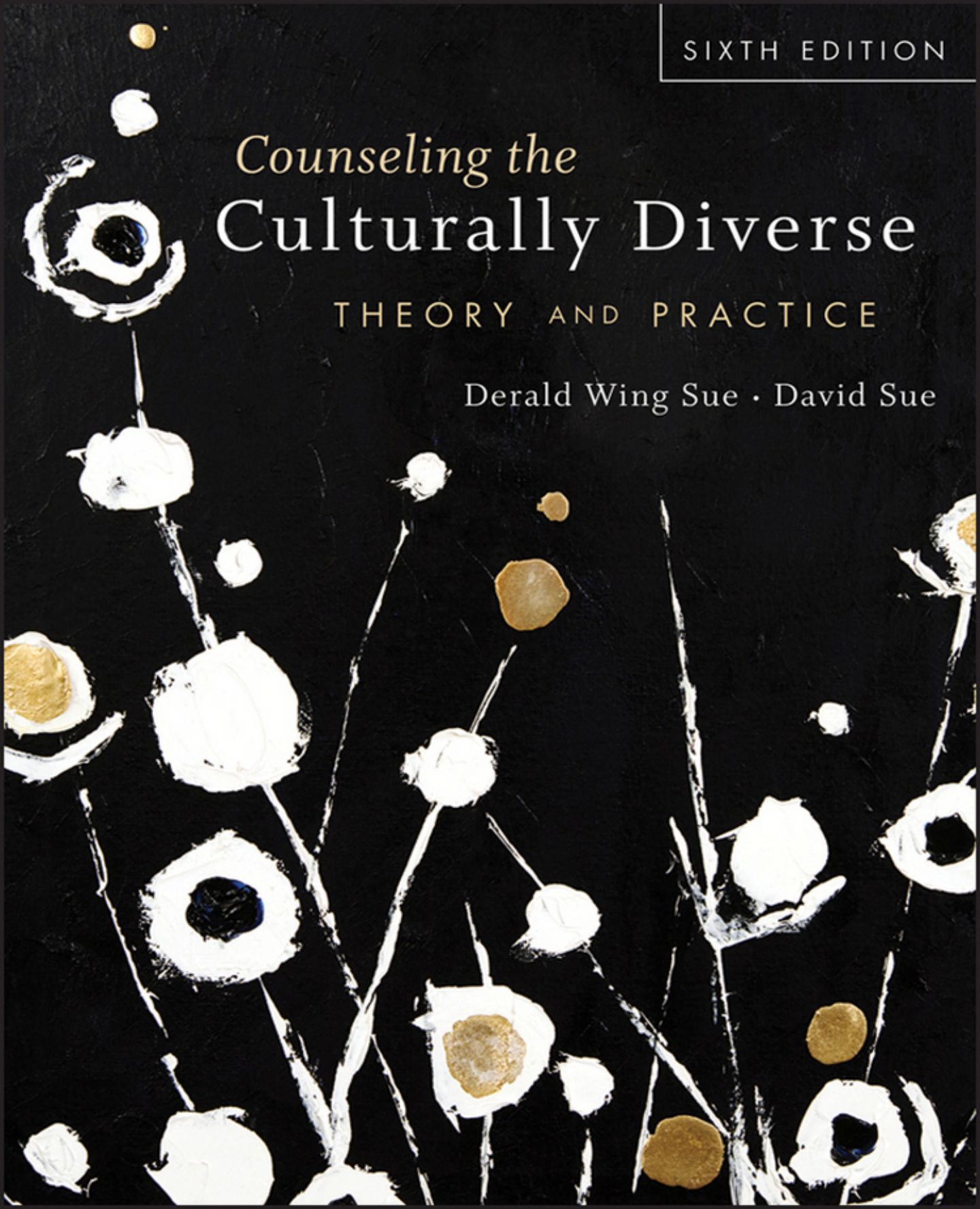


SIXTH EDITION

Counseling the Culturally Diverse

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Derald Wing Sue · David Sue



Praise for Counseling the Culturally Diverse

"This book is the one to read. It has invaluable information that is current, is extremely well written, and stands out from the other books in the field. The book touches the reader on multiple levels, bringing in personal stories, pushing one's thinking, and very clearly linking theory, history, policies, contemporary trends, and practice. Absolutely outstanding—don't miss it!"

—Fred Bemak, Ed.D.

Professor and Director of the Diversity Research and Action Center
Graduate School of Education
George Mason University

"Derald Sue and David Sue have achieved new heights with this most recent edition of their classic text, and they do not disappoint. Paralleling the evolving nature of multiculturalism itself, the book addresses the latest topics critical to the field, and generously expands the rest. The reader is given an opportunity to personally reflect, analyze, and apply material at every turn. Readers will find that this text more than lives up to its great expectations."

—Beth A. Durodoye, Ed.D.

Professor of Counseling
University of Texas at San Antonio

"With its most recent updates and revisions, Counseling the Culturally Diverse remains as relevant today as its first edition. Sue and Sue have continued to maintain the integrity of the content and continue to expand and include progressing perspectives within the multicultural and social justice literature. Their inclusion of the most up-to-date topical areas in the field, with personal narratives and examples, makes this edition a "comprehensive guide" that provides critical foundational materials, with real-world examples and practical ideas for implementation in the counseling and psychotherapy contexts. I have no doubt this sixth edition will remain the most utilized book in classroom settings across the country."

—Miguel E. Gallardo, Psy.D.

Associate Professor of Psychology
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Pepperdine University

"Sue and Sue, through their text, have found a substantive way to encourage a meaningful dialogue about the role of culture and experience in the counseling process. Their treatment of the contextual uniqueness that clients bring to the counseling relationship will undoubtedly serve to help counseling students and practicing counselors alike to find their sense of self throughout their professional journey."

—Thomas J. Hernandez, Ed.D.

LMHC Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Counselor Education
The College at Brockport

“Sue and Sue have done it again! This latest edition of Counseling the Culturally Diverse is a phenomenal piece of work that is comprehensive in scope, penetrating in its insights, and pragmatic in the way it teaches the reader how to navigate the pathways of culture our discipline and profession struggle so profoundly with. The journey toward developing multicultural understanding and competence is one of the most significant challenges in a professional psychologist’s and counselor’s life. Indeed, the landscape of progress toward a more culturally competent and socially just profession is dotted with stones of stagnation, the rocks of resignation, and the dust of denial about the elements of psychological and counseling instruction and practice that are necessary to master in one’s professional growth and development. This text is as good a roadmap as there is in the profession and those who make the choice to not just read the pages of each chapter, but also understand and embrace the principles and practices that are outlined within, will find their journey toward multicultural understanding and competence much more rewarding, enriching, and fulfilling. This book is simply an awesome resource, and I am honored and proud to endorse it!”

—Thomas A. Parham, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor Student Affairs
University of California Irvine
Distinguished Psychologist, Association of Black Psychologists

“This expanded and significantly revised sixth edition of the multicultural counseling field’s one true classic text, Counseling the Culturally Diverse, continues its tradition of defining the field and charting a proactive course for training a new decade of counselors and therapists for culturally competent practice in our increasingly culturally diverse and globally interconnected society. Topical coverage is state-of-the-art, comprehensive, and in-depth, and the writing throughout the entire text is crisp, clear, and engaging. If only one book was to be read in an entire master’s or doctoral program in counseling or psychology, it should be Counseling the Culturally Diverse.”

—Joseph G. Ponterotto, Ph.D.
Professor and Practicing Multicultural Psychologist
Fordham University
Co-Editor or Co-Author of *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling*,
Handbook of Multicultural Assessment,
Handbook of Racial/Ethnic Minority Counseling Research

“This edition adds the latest hot button issues in the multicultural world. The authors have skillfully and sensitively added the latest evidence-based knowledge of critical problems that can surface in counseling/therapy, including ‘microaggressions’, interethnic relationships, Middle Eastern issues, and immigration/refugee complexities. Everything you ever wanted to know about multicultural counseling is included in this edition. It continues to be the standard for any mental health professional treating persons from racial/ethnic minority populations. . . . It is authoritative, illuminating, and clinically compelling.”

—Melba Vasquez, Ph.D., ABPP
Past President of the American Psychological Association
Independent Practice
Austin, Texas

SIXTH EDITION

COUNSELING THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE

Theory and Practice

Derald Wing Sue
David Sue

WILEY

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Preface

Since its publication in 1981, *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice* (CCD) has become a classic in the field, used in nearly 50% of graduate training programs in counseling, and now forms part of the multicultural knowledge base of licensing and certification exams. It continues to lead the field in the theory, research, and practice of multicultural counseling/therapy and upholds the highest standards of scholarship; it is the most frequently cited text in multicultural psychology and ethnic minority mental health. We believe that the success of CCD is related to its (a) integrated conceptual framework; (b) up-to-date coverage of research in the field; (c) ability to actively address clinical applications through translating research/concepts to practice; (d) use of numerous examples, vignettes, and case studies that add life and meaning to the material; (e) engaging writing style; and (f) passionate style of communication—hard hitting, intense, and challenging. Further, the chapters on specific populations continue to be hailed as among the best thumbnail sketches of how multicultural counseling relates to the various marginalized groups in our society. The sixth edition of CCD does not change the basic formula, which has made and continues to make it a success in the academic and clinical markets.

NEW CHAPTERS

The sixth edition has significant revisions, however, that reflect changes in the field and new frontiers of importance to the mental health professions. Four very important chapters have been added to Sections One and Two: In Section One, Chapter 3, *Multicultural Counseling Competence for Minority Group Counselors/Therapists*, and Chapter 9, *Multicultural Evidence-Based Practice*, break new ground in the multicultural field. With respect to the former, we discuss how cultural competence is not only important for majority group clinicians but also for people of color, women, and other minority group therapists. To illustrate this, we devote an entire chapter (Chapter 3) to discussing challenges related to interracial/interethnic counseling, minority counselor–majority client relationships, and the unique and common clinical situations and dilemmas likely to arise in such therapeutic encounters. This chapter makes it clear that multicultural counseling is composed of many dyadic combinations and not simply a majority-minority relationship.

In Chapter 9, we discuss how evidence-based practice (EBP) represents one of the visible aspects of the profession's use of research to determine the most effective

forms of therapy for various disorders. Multicultural psychologists have cautioned, however, that most of the studies used to determine therapeutic effectiveness have been conducted on primarily White participants or clients and lack validity for clients of color and other marginalized groups. In response to this legitimate criticism, we review research on how EBP has begun to concentrate on specific populations, such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/a Americans, and Native Americans. What types of treatments are most effective for which population, problem, and situation? We believe that an important subfield within MCT—multicultural evidence-based practice—will soon exert major influence on the profession.

In Section Two, Chapter 13, *Culturally Competent Assessment*, provides an overarching umbrella introduction to all the special population chapters. It provides guidelines of how to approach the use of the population-specific chapters from the perspective of open and flexible assessment to the avoidance of using the material in a rigid, stereotypical manner. It weaves together common threads that affect nearly all marginalized groups and balances them with group-specific issues. Chapter 25, *Poverty and Counseling*, is a very important addition to the special populations section. Our reviewers have constantly pointed out how important it was for mental health providers to understand the impact of poverty on their clients. We were very fortunate to have Dr. Laura Smith, an expert on poverty and social class, share her research and work with us on this chapter.

CHAPTER REVISIONS

Nearly all remaining chapters have undergone revisions; some have quite extensively updated references, introduce new research and concepts, and discuss future directions in counseling, therapy, and mental health. Chapter 1, *The Multicultural Journey to Cultural Competence: Personal Narratives*, continues to serve as an anchor to help students process the emotive nature of the material. Although the passionate nature of the text has proved strong in generating difficult dialogues on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other sociodemographic differences, it has also posed unique challenges to instructors. For some students, the strong passions and feelings aroused on these topics occasionally lead to defensiveness and require a skilled instructor to help students through the learning process. To aid instructors in processing the meaning of their emotional reactions, Chapter 1 presents three personal narratives by Drs. Mark Kiselica, Le Ondra Clark, and Derald Wing Sue of their racial/cultural awakening. Drs. Kiselica and Clark describe their reactions to reading *CCD* as students in their respective graduate programs, and Dr. Sue reflects upon how *CCD* came to be written.

Dr. Mark Kiselica, a White counseling psychologist, has written in several professional publications about how influential the book was for his personal awakening to multicultural issues as a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Kiselica, a well-respected scholar and researcher in counseling psychology, describes his initial reactions of anger and disgust with the contents of the book and his eventual understanding of his strong emotional reactions. On the

other hand, Dr. Le Onda Clark, an African American psychologist, contrasts her reaction to that of Dr. Kiselica. She describes how her experiences in a primarily White, Western European graduate program served to assail her racial/cultural identity. She describes how, being one of the few students of color in the counseling psychology program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the content and views expressed in the book served as a source of “cultural nutrients” that nourished her through her graduate training and validated her racial identity. The inclusion of two brief personal narratives, back to back in the same chapter, illustrates lessons related to topical areas of the text. It is hoped that students will be able to obtain insights into how *CCD* was developed from the senior author’s perspective and also understand Kiselica’s initial defensiveness and anger and Clark’s feelings of liberation and validation to the contents of the book. Instructors will find these narratives helpful in discussing the personal reactions of their students to the material and allowing for an exploration of differences in worldviews exhibited by Drs. Kiselica and Clark.

Because social justice plays such an important role in the counseling profession, the contents from the social justice chapter (formerly Chapter 12) have been moved and integrated with Chapter 4, *The Politics of Counseling and Psychotherapy: Social Justice in Counseling*, and Chapter 5, *Systemic Oppression: Trust, Mistrust, Credibility, and Worldviews*, to give the issue front-and-center coverage. One of the most ground-breaking chapters in the fifth edition was our inclusion of microaggressions as an important topic in the mental health professions. Chapter 6, *Microaggressions in Counseling and Psychotherapy*, has been completely revised with the most updated research and scholarly works in the field. We are very appreciative of Dr. Christina M. Capodilupo’s major contribution to this chapter. Rather than discussing racial microaggressions only, we broaden the concept to cover gender and sexual orientation microaggressions as well. Research and study on the manifestation, dynamics, and impact of microaggressions is one of the most exciting developments in the field of mental health.

Another major change in the practice dimension of multicultural counseling and therapy has been our reworking of two chapters considered core content of the fifth edition. We have chosen to combine a discussion of the generic characteristics of counseling/therapy as it applies to both individual counseling and family counseling in Chapter 7, *Barriers to Multicultural Counseling and Therapy: Individual and Family Perspectives*. Feedback from instructors suggested that the interplay of the generic characteristics of counseling were equally applicable to group definitions of individual and family functioning and that they were more appropriately combined. The two chapters on culturally appropriate intervention strategies and non-Western and indigenous methods of healing have been updated and revised. Chapter 10 has new examples of Native American healing rituals and a discussion of the role religion may play in the healing process. Chapters 11 and 12 on racial/cultural identity development for persons of color and White Americans have also been updated and include a focus on identity development and dyadic combinations in therapy.

We have maintained our two-part division of the book with 12 separate chapters in Section One, *The Multiple Dimensions of Multicultural Counseling and*

Therapy, and 13 specific population-related chapters in Section Two, *Multicultural Counseling and Specific Populations*. As mentioned earlier, new to this section are Chapters 13 and 25. Each population-specific chapter has been thoroughly updated using common topical headings that will allow for better cross-comparisons. We are very appreciative of Dr. Diane M. Sue's contributions to the special population chapters.

TEACHING AND LEARNING AIDS

For instructors using the text, we have included a new feature in each of the chapters in Section One. Each chapter opens with broad **Chapter Focus Questions** followed by more specific, and oftentimes controversial, **Reflection and Discussion Questions** interspersed throughout. In many respects, the Chapter Focus Questions serve as opening "course objectives" for the entire chapter, but these questions not only preview the content to be covered but also allow instructors and trainers to use them as discussion questions throughout the course or workshop. The specific Reflection and Discussion Questions allow for more concentrated and detailed discussion by students on identifiable topical areas. The questions not only were developed from the content of each chapter but also have been tested in our classes and workshops for their educational value. In many cases, we have divided students or participants into small discussion groups and used these questions to stimulate further exploration and learning. These questions have been found to effectively engage students with the content of the material, allow them to share their own perspectives, and allow them to point out alternative ways of viewing the world. As in the previous edition, we have retained the **"Implications for Clinical Practice"** sections in each major chapter. Instructors continue to comment on their helpfulness to students.

New auxiliary materials have also been developed to aid in teaching the concepts for students. We are grateful to Drs. Gina Torino and Christina Capodilupo for their work in developing materials (overheads, tests, resources, learning activities, role-plays, etc.) that correlate with specific chapters of *CCD*. Professors will find the *Instructor's Manual* a valuable tool in teaching the concepts of multicultural counseling and therapy.

To further aid instructors using the text, a series of videotapes or DVDs in lecture format sponsored by Microtraining, an imprint of Alexander Street Press, are available. Each tape/DVD was specifically developed to cover the content of specific chapters and/or to illustrate a topical area of the text. They can be used as stand-alone lectures on multicultural counseling for classes on counseling and therapy, minority mental health issues, or broader multicultural/diversity topics. Such use allows instructors to assign specific chapters of the text and show the tapes associated with the content. We are hopeful that such an approach will allow instructors greater freedom in developing their own class activities (see the *Instructor's Manual*) to supplement both chapter readings and taped lectures. Approximately a dozen DVDs can be used throughout the duration of the course. To purchase the DVDs, please visit Microtraining's website at www.emicrotraining.com.

APPRECIATION

There is an African American proverb that states, “We stand on the head and shoulders of many who have gone on before us.” We would like to acknowledge all the dedicated multicultural pioneers in the field who have journeyed with us along the path of multiculturalism before it became fashionable. They are too numerous to name, but their knowledge and wisdom have guided the production of *CCD*. Certainly this book would not have been possible without their wisdom, commitment, and sacrifice. We thank them for their inspiration, courage, and dedication, and hope that they will look down on us and be pleased with our work. Special thanks go to Rachel Livsey, our editor, who supported the revision efforts and constantly encouraged the many new directions exemplified in the sixth edition. We also wish to thank the staff of John Wiley & Sons, especially Sweta Gupta, for the enormous time and effort placed in obtaining, evaluating, and providing us with the necessary data and feedback to produce this edition of *CCD*. Their help was no small undertaking, and we feel fortunate to have Wiley as our publisher.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to those who reviewed the fifth edition and the proposal for the sixth edition: Candia Elliott, Portland Community College; Leila A. Vaughn, EdD, NCC, formerly at Troy University; Alfred Bryant, Jr., PhD, University of North Carolina at Pembroke; Thomas J. Hernández, EdD, LMHC, The College at Brockport; Kelley Haynes, PsyD, Argosy University; Isabel S. Perez-Yanez, MPH, CHES, CATC, Principal at Isabel and Training Associates; Peter J. McKimmin, PhD, CPRP, Alliant International University; Beth A. Durodoye, EdD, NCC, The University of Texas at San Antonio; Leah M. Rouse Arndt, PhD, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

Working on this sixth edition continues to be a labor of love. It would not have been possible, however, without the love and support of our families, who provided the patience and nourishment that sustained us throughout our work on the text. Derald Wing Sue wishes to express his love for his wife, Paulina, his son, Derald Paul, and his daughter, Marissa Catherine. David Sue wishes to express his love and appreciation to his wife and his children.

We hope that *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice, Sixth Edition*, will stand on “the truth” and continue to be the standard bearer of multicultural counseling and therapy texts in the field.

Derald Wing Sue
David Sue

About the Authors

Derald Wing Sue is Professor of Psychology and Education in the Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. He served as president of the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, the Society of Counseling Psychology, and the Asian American Psychological Association. Dr. Sue is an Associate Editor of *American Psychologist* and continues to be a consulting editor for numerous publications. He is author of over 150 publications, including 15 books, and is well known for his work on racism/antiracism, cultural competence, multicultural counseling and therapy, and social justice advocacy. Two of his books, *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice* and *Overcoming our Racism: The Journey to Liberation* (John Wiley & Sons) are considered classics in the field. Dr. Sue's most recent research on racial, gender, and sexual orientation microaggressions has provided a major breakthrough in understanding how everyday slights, insults and invalidations toward marginalized groups create psychological harm to their mental and physical health and create disparities for them in education, employment, and health care. His most recent book *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* (John Wiley & Sons) won the 2010 National Diversity and Inclusion Book Prize from UnityFirst.com. A national survey has identified Derald Wing Sue as "the most influential multicultural scholar in the United States," and his works are among the most frequently cited.



David Sue is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Western Washington University where he has served as the director of both the Psychology Counseling Clinic and the Mental Health Counseling Program. He is also an associate of the Center for Cross-Cultural Research at Western Washington University. He and his wife, Diane M. Sue, have co-authored the books *Foundations of Counseling and Psychotherapy: Evidence-Based Practices for a Diverse Society*, *Understanding Abnormal Psychology* (10th edition), and *Essentials of Abnormal Psychology*. He is co-author of *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice*. He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Washington State University. His writing and research interests revolve around multicultural issues in individual and group counseling and the integration of multicultural therapy with evidence-based practice. He enjoys hiking, snowshoeing, traveling, and spending time with his family.



The Multiple Dimensions of Multicultural Counseling and Therapy

Becoming culturally competent in working with diverse populations is a complex interaction of many dimensions that involve broad theoretical, conceptual, research, and practice issues. This section is divided into four parts (each part contains a number of chapters) that describe, explain, and analyze necessary conditions that mental health practitioners must address on issues related to multicultural counseling/therapy, cultural competence, and sociopolitical influences that cut across specific populations.

- Part I: *The Affective and Conceptual Dimensions of Multicultural Counseling and Therapy* makes clear that the journey to cultural competence requires an emotional awakening related to one's knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors related to race, culture, ethnicity, gender, and other diverse groups. To become culturally competent means developing a broad conceptual framework in viewing diversity and multiculturalism. It also means an understanding that multicultural counseling competence applies equally to majority and minority trainees and to helping professionals.
- Part II: *The Political Dimensions of Mental Health Practice* discusses (a) the need to acknowledge the political bases of western European approaches, (b) the need to recognize that counseling and psychotherapy may represent a microcosm of race relations, gender relations, and other majority-minority relations in our larger society, and (c) how modern forms of bias

(microaggressions) may affect both the psychological health of socially marginalized groups in our and their standard of living.

- Part III: *The Practice Dimensions of Multicultural Counseling/Therapy* integrates multicultural premises developed from the first two parts into the domain of clinical work. It reviews, analyzes, and points to best practices in working with diverse populations at the individual, familial, group, institutional, and societal levels. The theme of social justice counseling is carried over from Part II but is uniquely balanced with two major new developments in the field: multicultural evidence-based practice and the contributions of non-Western indigenous methods of healing.
- Part IV: *Racial/Cultural Identity Development in Multicultural Counseling and Therapy* has always been a challenging journey for both persons of color and White people. The most recent and up-to-date findings of racial identity development are contained in two chapters. Who clinicians and clients are as racial/cultural beings and its impact on the dyadic combinations in therapy can either enhance or negate the therapeutic outcome. Questions such as “Who are you as a racial/cultural being?,” “What does it mean to be a person of color?,” and “What does it mean to be White?” must be adequately addressed in the journey to cultural competence.

The Affective and Conceptual Dimensions of Multicultural Counseling/Therapy

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The Multicultural Journey to Cultural Competence: Personal Narratives

CHAPTER FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do our personal reactions to topics of race, gender, sexual orientation, and oppression have to do with counseling diverse clients?
2. Why do many majority group members react so differently from marginalized group members (people of color, women, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) populations) when issues of racism, sexism, or heterosexism are discussed?
3. Who are you as a racial/cultural being? How often have you thought about yourself as a man/woman, White individual/person of color, or straight/gay?
4. How well can you understand the worldviews of majority and/or socially devalued group members in this society? Why are the perspectives so different from one another?
5. What implications for multicultural counseling do your worldviews have for your ability to understand, empathize, and work effectively with diverse clients?
6. Using racial identity as an example, can you construct your own personal/historical narrative as to when you became aware of race, how it has developed, and where it now fits into your life?
7. Why are these questions important for your development as a culturally competent mental health professional?

Reading *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice* (CCD) is very likely to elicit strong emotions among readers. Not only may the content of the book challenge your racial, gender, and sexual orientation realities, but its passionate, direct, and hard-hitting nature is likely to arouse deep feelings of guilt,

defensiveness, anger, sadness, hopelessness, and anxiety in some of you. Some readers, however, will find solace in the book; they will experience a sense of validation, comfort, and even feelings of liberation as they read the text. In most cases, these individuals will come from socially devalued groups in our society. What accounts for these two very different reactions? For practicing professionals and trainees in the helping professions, understanding the differing worldviews of our culturally diverse clients is tantamount to effective multicultural counseling. But understanding our own reactions to issues of diversity, multiculturalism, oppression, race, gender, and sexual orientation is equally important to our development as counselors/therapists (Todd & Abrams, 2011). The adage “counselor or therapist, know thyself” is the basic building block to cultural competence in the helping professions.

Becoming culturally competent in mental health practice demands that nested or embedded emotions associated with race, culture, gender, and other sociodemographic differences be openly experienced and discussed. It is these intense feelings that often block our ability to hear the voices of those most oppressed and disempowered (D. W. Sue, 2011). How we, as helping professionals, deal with these strong feelings can either enhance or negate a deeper understanding of ourselves as racial/cultural beings and our understanding of the worldviews of culturally diverse clients. Using racism as an example, Sara Winter (1977, p. 24), a White female psychologist, powerfully enumerates the reactions that many Whites experience when topics of race or racism are openly discussed. These disturbing feelings, she contends, serve to protect us from having to examine our own prejudices and biases.

When someone pushes racism into my awareness, I feel **guilty** (that I could be doing so much more); **angry** (I don't like to feel like I'm wrong); **defensive** (I already have two Black friends . . . I worry more about racism than most whites do—isn't that enough); **turned off** (I have other priorities in my life with guilt about that thought); **helpless** (the problem is so big—what can I do?). I HATE TO FEEL THIS WAY. That is why I minimize race issues and let them fade from my awareness whenever possible.

On the other hand, many marginalized groups react equally strongly when issues of oppression are raised, especially when their stories of discrimination and pain are minimized or neglected. Their reality of racism, sexism, and homophobia, they contend, is relatively unknown or ignored by those in power because of the discomfort that pervades such topics. Worse yet, many well-intentioned majority persons seem disinclined to hear the personal stories of suffering, humiliation, and pain that accrue to persons of color and other marginalized groups in our society. As Winters says, it is just easier to minimize race issues and not think about them. The following quote gives some idea of what it is like for a Black man to live his life day in and day out in a society filled with both covert and overt racist acts that often are invisible to well-intentioned White Americans.

I don't think white people, generally, understand the full meaning of racist discriminatory behaviors directed toward Americans of African descent. They seem to see each act of discrimination or any act of violence as an "isolated" event. As a result, most white Americans cannot understand the strong reaction manifested by blacks when such events occur. . . . They forget that in most cases, we live lives of quiet desperation generated by a litany of daily large and small events that, whether or not by design, remind us of our "place" in American society. [Whites] ignore the personal context of the stimulus. That is, they deny the historical impact that a negative act may have on an individual. "Nigger" to a white may simply be an epithet that should be ignored. To most blacks, the term brings into sharp and current focus all kinds of acts of racism—murder, rape, torture, denial of constitutional rights, insults, limited opportunity structure, economic problems, unequal justice under the law and a myriad of . . . other racist and discriminatory acts that occur daily in the lives of most Americans of African descent. (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, pp. 23–24)

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

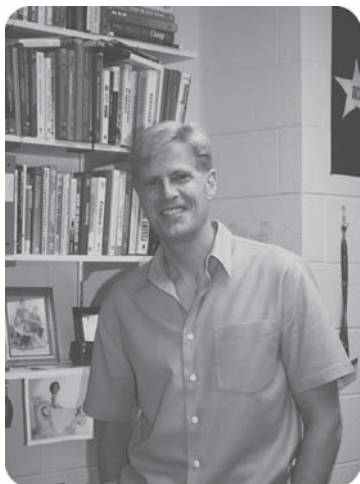
1. Look at the two quotes provided in this section. From a White perspective and a Black one, what worldviews are being reflected in each?
2. As a White counselor working with a Black client, would you be able to truly relate to the worldview being expressed? As a Black counselor working with a White client, what challenges do you anticipate in the therapeutic relationship?

Our opening chapter is meant to be a reflective and emotional one. Although the entire volume is filled with the knowledge base of multicultural counseling and therapy derived from research findings, it is important to realize that cognitive understanding and intellectual competence are not enough. Concepts of multiculturalism, diversity, race, culture, ethnicity, and so forth, are more than intellectual concepts. Multiculturalism deals with real human experiences, and as a result, understanding your emotional reactions is equally important in the journey to cultural competence. To aid you in your journey, we present several personal narratives concerning the text you are about to read. Try to identify the (a) emotive reactions being expressed by the writer, (b) reasons that provoked the feelings, and (c) effects they had on their definitions of counseling/therapy. We hope that you will carefully monitor your own emotional reactions throughout this course, not allow them to interfere with your journey to cultural competence, and try to understand them as they relate to your own racial/cultural awakening and identity.

MY PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY AS A WHITE PERSON: REACTIONS TO *COUNSELING THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE: THEORY AND PRACTICE*

by Mark S. Kiselica

I was shaken to my core the first time I read *Counseling the Culturally Different* (now *Counseling the Culturally Diverse*) by Derald Wing Sue (1981). At the time, I was a doctoral candidate at The Pennsylvania State University's counseling psychology program, and I had been reading Sue's book in preparation for my comprehensive examinations, which I was scheduled to take toward the end of the spring semester of 1985.



Mark S. Kiselica

I wish I could tell you that I had acquired Sue's book because I was genuinely interested in learning about multicultural counseling, or, as it was labeled back then, "cross-cultural counseling." I am embarrassed to say, however, that that was not the case. I had purchased Sue's book purely out of necessity, figuring out that I had better read the book because I was likely to be asked a major question about cross-cultural counseling on the comps. During the early and middle 1980s, taking a course in multicultural counseling was not a requirement in many graduate counseling programs, including mine, and I had decided not to take my department's pertinent course as an elective. I saw myself as a culturally sensitive person, and I concluded that the course wouldn't have much to offer me. Nevertheless, I understood that Dr. Harold Cheatham, the professor who taught the course, would likely submit a question to the pool of materials being used to construct the comps. So, I prudently went to the university bookstore and purchased a copy of *Counseling the Culturally Different* (CCD) because that was the text Dr. Cheatham used for his course. I had decided that reading and studying the book would prepare me for whatever question Dr. Cheatham might devise, so I read it carefully, making sure to take detailed notes on everything Sue had to say.

I didn't get very far with my highlighting and note-taking before I started to react to Sue's book with great anger and disgust. Early on in the text, Sue blasted the mental health system for its historical mistreatment of people who were considered to be ethnic minorities in the United States. He especially took on White mental health professionals, charging them with a legacy of ethnocentric and racist beliefs and practices that had harmed people of color and made them leery of counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists. It seemed that Sue didn't have a single good thing to say about White America. I was ticked off at him, and I resented that I had to read his book. However, I knew I had better complete his text and know the subject matter covered in it if I wanted to succeed on the examinations. So, out of necessity, I read on and struggled with the feelings that Sue's words stirred in me.

I was very upset as I read and reread Sue's book. I felt that Sue had an axe to grind with White America and that he was using his book to do so. I believed that

his accusations were grossly exaggerated and, at least to some extent, unfair. And I felt defensive because I am White and my ancestors had not perpetrated any of the offenses against ethnic minorities that Sue had charged. I looked forward to the day when I would be relieved of him and his writings.

Yet for reasons I didn't fully understand at the time, my anger, defensiveness, and resentment began to fade, and I found myself reading Sue's book again and again. Something was happening to me, and I couldn't put my finger on it. Surprisingly, once I had reached the point where I understood the content and theory provided in Sue's book and, hence, had achieved my purposes for reading the text, I kept opening it up again. And strangely, with each fresh reading, I experienced new waves of emotions. Instead of reacting with bitterness, I was now feeling sadness—mild sadness at first, but later, a profound sense of sadness, and even grief. At times, my eyes filled with tears, and I found myself now wanting to absorb the message that Sue was trying to convey. *What was happening to me?*

I tried to make sense of my emotions—to ascertain why I was drawn back to Sue's book again and again in spite of my initial rejection of it. I know it may sound crazy, but I read certain sections of Sue's book repeatedly and then reflected on what was happening inside of me. I spent quite a bit of time alone with Sue's book, sometimes in my office. A couple of other times, I went for long walks in the woods, trying to understand why this book was becoming so important to me. *My life was changing and I needed to know why.*

I began to discover important lessons about myself, significant insights prompted by reading Sue's book that would shape the direction of my future. I gradually realized that my entire life I had identified with oppressed peoples because my ancestors and my immediate family had encountered so many hardships throughout our history. My mother's family was from Ireland, and throughout the ages, they had suffered severe poverty and political and cultural domination by the British. Their language, Gaelic, had been taken from them. They were forced to change the spelling of their last name. They left Ireland for a better life in America, realizing that they would never be able to return to their homeland, and their hearts were ripped apart by such a heart-wrenching departure. Yet they arrived in America with the hope of providing something better for their children, and they stood up to the terrible stereotypes about and maltreatment of the Irish by the American establishment. My maternal grandfather worked as a railroad laborer until it killed him, and my grandmother cleaned the homes of wealthy Americans until she could work no longer, still poor and living in a ghetto at the time of her death. All of these images came back to me as I read Sue's book.

More images entered my mind, this time regarding my father's family from Slovakia. They, too, had been poor. They, too, suffered through years of external domination and persecution, including the destruction of their homes and villages by invading armies, and the desecration of their churches and their political institutions. My paternal grandparents fled to the United States, and my father was raised in a poor, immigrant neighborhood where English was his second language. My father had a learning disability and was lame

from a horrific leg injury for which he received inadequate medical care. For decades, he labored in factories under deplorable conditions that would eventually disable him. Yet all he ever dreamed about was giving my brothers and sisters and me a better life. Sue's book reminded me of my father and all that he and his family went through, and their pain surged through me, leaving me teary-eyed.

These memories helped me to look at Sue's book from a different point of view. It caused me to realize more fully that the historical experiences of other racial and ethnic groups were similar in some respects to those of my family. And with that particular realization, more tears swelled in my eyes—tears of empathy and tears of shame. I began to feel—*really feel*—for what people of color had experienced in this country, and I was ashamed of the fact that it had taken me so long to develop that level of empathic understanding. “How could I have been so clueless?” I wondered to myself at the time.

My head began to spin as a vortex of thoughts swirled in my mind. I now realized that Sue was right! The system *had* been destructive toward people of color, and although my ancestors and I had not directly been a part of that oppressive system, I had unknowingly contributed to it. I began to think about how I had viewed people of color throughout my life, and I had to admit to myself that I had unconsciously bought into the racist stereotypes about African Americans and Latinos. Yes, I had laughed at and told racist jokes. Yes, I had used the “N” word when referring to African Americans. *Yes, I had been a racist.*

Admitting that I have been racist is not an easy thing for me to do. It isn't easy now, and it certainly wasn't easy in 1985, when I naively thought I was such a culturally sensitive person. I had good reasons to conclude, albeit erroneously, that I was *not* a racist. I had never been a member of the Ku Klux Klan. When I was a boy, I had had a handful of Cuban American and African American friends. My family and I had always supported the Democratic Party and liberal legislative initiatives. Yes, I was one of the good guys, so the word *racist* couldn't apply to me. But I was wrong, blinded by the insular world in which I had been raised, a world of well-meaning Whites in an era of racial segregation that dictated little substantive contact with people who were different from me: a world that socialized American Whites, including me, to become racist.

Sue's book forced me to remove my blinders. He helped me to see that I was both a product and an

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