Existential Hazards of the Multicultural Individual: Defining and Understanding "Cultural Homelessness"

VERONICA NAVARRETE VIVERO
SHARON RAE JENKINS
University of North Texas

Cultural homelessness (CH) is the authors' term to describe unique experiences and feelings reported by some multicultural individuals. Ethnically related concepts found in the cross-cultural and multiethnic literature (e.g., marginality, intercultural effectiveness, ethnic enclaves, reference group) are used to explain how CH may arise from cross-cultural tensions within the ethnically mixed family and between the family and its culturally different environment, especially due to geographic moves. CH is conceptualized as a situationally imposed developmental challenge, forcing the child to accommodate to contradictory and changing norms, values, verbal and nonverbal communication styles, and attachment processes. Culturally homeless individuals may enjoy a broader, stronger cognitive and social repertoire because of their multiple cultural frames of reference. However, code-switching complexities may lead to emotional and social confusion, which, if internalized, may result in self-blame and shame. Culturally encoded emotion labeling may be disrupted, leading to alexithymia.

• race • ethnicity • culture • biracial • biethnic • bicultural • multiracial • multiethnic • multicultural • identity • marginality

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• *Veronica Navarrete Vivero and Sharon Rae Jenkins, Department of Psychology, University of North Texas.*

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sharon Rae Jenkins, Department of Psychology, University of North Texas, P.O. Box 311280, Denton, Texas 76203–1280. Electronic mail may be sent to jenkinss@unt.edu.

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Theoretical and research interest in identity development in minority individuals has accelerated dramatically since 1985. This literature has focused primarily on specific minority groups, such as African Americans (Cross, 1971; Parham & Helms, 1985; Thomas & Thomas, 1971), Asian Americans (S. Sue, 1988; D. W. Sue & Sue, 1990; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987), Latinos (Ruiz, 1990), females (Comas-Díaz & Greene, 1994; Downing & Roush, 1985; Root, 1990), biracial individuals (Poston, 1990; Root, 1990), homosexual individuals (Troiden, 1989), immigrants (Cui & Van den Berg, 1991; Winkelman, 1994), and individuals who are members of multiple minority groups (Kich, 1996; Reynolds & Pope, 1991). Three major interdisciplinary collections (Root, 1992, 1996; Zack, 1995) have begun to define the issues facing multiracial people. However, the broader developmental and emotional dilemmas experienced by individuals of ethnically mixed background have not often been addressed. Ethnicity, unlike race, provides a cultural framework for socialization of children (Jenkins & Vivero, 1998).

The multiethnic population has generally been ignored in the literature (Phinney, 1990; Poston, 1990), perhaps for three reasons. First, these individuals' experiences are as varied as their ethnic combinations. They do not fit into a specific ethnic group, nor do they follow existing groups' cultural patterns, making them hard to locate and study. Second, some may attempt to identify with, or at least self-classify as, only one ethnic group (Phinney, 1990; Poston, 1990; Root, 1995). Third, these individuals may have life experiences of not being well understood, so they may work hard to assimilate and hide their differences, making them difficult to identify (Vivero, 1997b). In particular, they may distrust and resist being studied (Poussaint, 1984; Wardle, 1987). In addition to these impediments in the population, process theories of cultural interaction have varied in their underlying assumptions and have had limited success in explaining practical problems among multicultural groups (reviewed in Oetting & Beauvais, 1991). However, understanding the developmental hazards of multicultural experience has become increasingly important as the world's population becomes more geographically mobile and inclined to procreate across ethnic lines (see Root, 1995). Although the most relevant available literature is on racial–ethnic differences within the family, other important cross-cultural situations may include belonging to a racial, ethnic, or cultural minority (see Tatum, 1987); cross-cultural geographic moves (Park, 1928); and having a different primary language from the immediate cultural environment.

Under favorable conditions, multicultural experiences may result in personal strengths such as cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 1988), intercultural effectiveness (Cui & Van den Berg, 1991), greater flexibility (Ramirez, 1984), and less ethnocentric attitudes (Park, 1950; Smith, 1991). However, under unfavorable conditions such experiences may result in a pattern of emotional distress and psychological vulnerability. We have identified this range of experiences in both psychotherapy clients and our multicultural colleagues. The purpose of this article is to present our definition of "cultural homelessness" and the factors that may contribute to becoming culturally homeless, to assist in the recognition of these individuals' unique problems and to facilitate psychotherapy with this population. Culturally homeless individuals appear to have distinctive patterns of experiences that differ from those of specific ethnic minorities, immigrants, and others who are culturally different from their environs. There may be characteristic identity development disruptions during childhood and subsequent difficulties in adulthood. We will compare and contrast cultural homelessness with different ethnically related concepts.

Multiple Ethnicities: Marginality or Integration?

Numerous social forces combine to marginalize (Stonequist, 1937) multiracial individu-

als and to complicate their formation of an integrated multiracial identity. Existing racial–ethnic categorization methods such as those used in the U.S. census typically do not allow for the selection of biracial identification (Fernández, 1996; Herring, 1995). In addition, there is a hierarchical social status system based on skin color, and biracial people have historically been classified by status rather than by their choice (Root, 1990). Mixed-race people are identified by the blood of the lowest status parent (Fernández, 1996; Root, 1990), increasing the probability of racism and discrimination. For example, non-White racial features or traceable non-White blood lead to classification as non-White (Henriques, 1975); an individual with one Black parent is considered Black regardless of the other parent's race (Poussaint, 1984). This may add to the racially mixed individual's feeling of being forced to choose one racial identity over the other (thus denying the other part of his or her identity; Hershel, 1995). In addition, it conveys the message that part of the multicultural individual's racial background is not recognized at a sociocultural level.

Despite the definitional debates in the literature on race, ethnicity, and culture, there is consensus that (a) the term *race* emphasizes the person's genetic heritage, *ethnicity* highlights sociocultural heritage, and *culture* refers more to current practices than to multigenerational heritage, and (b) that people who differ in race also differ in ethnicity but the reverse may not be true (Jenkins & Vivero, 1998). The literature on racially mixed people has focused on issues of ambiguous appearance, racial identity, and status inequality (Camper, 1994; Root, 1990, 1992, 1996). A different and less discussed set of frictions is involved in the contrasting cultural rules inherited by multiethnic children, whether their parents are of the same or different races. Contrasts in cultural rules defining a group's way of life can be powerful status differentiators. For example, Hershel (1995) described the use of cultural contrasts (e.g., in behavior, beliefs, and attitudes) more than racial descriptors for defining in-groups and out-groups among established mixed-race ethnic groups such as mestizos and native Hawaiians. Multiethnic individuals combine in one person the contrasting interaction rules of more than two cultures, providing unique insight into the effects of multicultural experience (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993).

Two divergent perspectives have prevailed in the literature regarding the developmental features of multiethnic individuals; one view emphasizes the advantages and the other the conflicts (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). There is evidence that multicultural experiences in adulthood are associated with greater individuation (Park, 1928) and broadened adaptive skills (Cui & Van den Berg, 1991; Park, 1950). Park (1928) described the "marginal man" (one who is at the edge of two cultures) as "not merely emancipated, but enlightened" (p. 888), and later as "the individual with the keener intelligence, the wider horizon, the more detached and rational viewpoint" (Park, 1950, pp. 375–376). (Park [1928] also acknowledged the cost in conflict of "the divided self" and possible inner turmoil and disillusionment.) Poston (1990) argued that achievement of a biracial identity is not only possible but also healthy; biculturally identified youths appear to have higher self-esteem and stronger links to family and school (Oetting & Beauvais, 1991). Multiethnic individuals may exhibit greater cognitive flexibility and bicultural competency (Cui & Van den Berg, 1991; Hall, 1980; Ramirez, 1984; Wilson, 1984) and may be less ethnocentric than monoethnic people (Poston, 1990; Smith, 1985).

Park's student Stonequist (1937) introduced the first model of biethnic identity development, the marginal man model. Marginality models emphasize the exacerbation of problems associated with normal identity development due to greater uncertainty and ambiguity in individual identification with parents, group identification with peers, and sociocultural identification with a specific ethnic or racial group (Gibbs, 1987; Stonequist, 1937); thus, they are considered

"deficit" models. Stonequist contended that the marginal individual is a person caught between two cultures, never fitting into either one. The ethnically mixed individual was portrayed as a troubled and anxious outsider who lacks a clear ethnic identity (Gibbs, 1987; Sommers, 1964; Teicher, 1968). Individuals with a multiethnic background were presented in terms of their problems integrating multiple cultures and developing a multiethnic–multicultural identity. Stonequist's perspective was generally accepted as prototypic of mixed-race–ethnicity individuals (Berzon, 1978; Nakashima, 1992). The greater popularity of these models that tend to pathologize multiethnic people is consistent with other social and political pressures against racial mixing that lasted until the 1960s (Fernández, 1996).

Thus far, the limited available empirical work on these perspectives has focused on defining and measuring the constructs at issue. There is modest evidence from methodologically limited studies suggesting that biracial individuals may not differ dramatically from their monoracial peers in self-concept and self-worth (reviewed in Field, 1996; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). However, neither of these views has been persuasively tested; this is perhaps due in part to the inhibiting conditions noted earlier, in part to the measures employed, and in part to the population and settings in which these measures were used (i.e., settings in which ethnic minorities constituted the numerical majority). Furthermore, there does not appear to be any integrative literature on the range of consequences of the varieties of multicultural experience.

Reference Groups, Ethnic Enclaves, and Cultural Homes

Members of a monocultural minority group are defined as individuals who have a single shared cultural heritage that is different from the surrounding majority culture. Because of this difference, they are likely to experience some form of isolation and discrimination from the majority and other minority groups. Most ethnic minority groups in the United States have tended to form communities, however small, where they have other people of similar heritage to sustain their ethnic values, socialization practices, and culture.

Belonging to an identified racial, ethnic, or cultural minority community may be important for a minority individual's development of a healthy ethnic identity, acquisition of a cultural frame of reference, learning of culturally appropriate social skills, and emotional attachment to the group and the resulting identity. All of these contribute to making this group a *cultural home.* The literature currently provides cognitive constructs for understanding this belonging that refer to the ideas of collective identity and ethnic group membership (reference group orientation, Cross, 1985, 1991; and ethnic reference group, Smith, 1991). More recently, Landrine and Klonoff's (1996) construct of ethnic enclaves defines *belonging* from the perspective of the social group and socialization processes that may provide physical safety and positive ethnic identity reinforcement for the individual, especially during childhood. Our construct of *cultural home* emphasizes the emotional aspects of group membership, identification, attachment, and belonging.

A cultural home is a sense of belonging to an ethnic or geographic community with consistent socialization themes and traditions, demarcated by a clear understanding of who the in- and out-groups are. The cultural home provides a set of integrated assumptions, values, beliefs, social role norms, and emotional attachments that constitutes a meaningful personal identity developed and located within a sociocultural framework and is shared by a group of similarly located individuals. Group members can use this frame of reference to know what is appropriate and acceptable, and to know where they fit within that structure, to achieve growth and fulfillment both indi-

vidually and as a group. A cultural home is thus a cognitively grasped and emotionally comforting sense of "being at home" with a group of people sharing a stable environment with a similar collective history and practices. A cultural home enables the individual to find social meaning, continuity, primary social support, and group participation, all of which increase the emotional attachment to one's group.

The sense of a cultural home is similar in its cognitive aspects to the concepts of reference group orientation (Cross, 1985) and ethnic reference group (Smith, 1991), which originate from the sociological construct of *reference group*. Shibutani (1955) reviewed three common but differing usages of this term: a group used as a point of comparison for self-evaluation, a group in which acceptance and participation are desired, and a group used as a frame of reference to structure social perceptions. The reference group's understanding of the world provides a framework for the individual's goals and behavior, regardless of her or his group membership (Shibutani & Kwan, 1965). On the basis of this concept, an ethnic reference group may be defined as "a reference group called upon by people who share a common history and culture, who may be identifiable because they share similar physical features and values and who, through the process of interacting with each other and establishing boundaries with each other, identify themselves as members of that group" (Smith, 1991, p. 181).

The concept of ethnic reference group can be linked to De Vos's (1975) idea that people need to attain a sense of survival through social belonging, which can be achieved by self-identifying with, preferring, and behaving according to one's own ethnic group. Through the socialization process and acceptance of individuals as members, this group becomes an ethnic enclave (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996). Belonging to a clearly bounded in-group such as an ethnic enclave may also give members a sense of safety within the social structure and of knowing one's place within this structure. Ethnic self-identification and preferences are manifested in feelings of group pride (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990) and loyalty (De Vos, 1975). A stable cultural context within the ethnic enclave remains whenever adults in the community are willing and able to maintain it. Each such community has its own children's stories; heroes; role models with whom they identify; favorite games; special dates and holidays to celebrate; and particular food, dress, and songs. Enclaves provide ethnic minority individuals with a place to feel that they belong together because their similarity creates symbolic and emotional ties. Jewish ghettos, for example, have the effect of surrounding people with a homogeneous culture that feels familiar, safe, and like their own. In an ethnic enclave everyone celebrates and understands the culture that underlies the group's beliefs and values; members of the enclave constitute the in-group.

As an extension of Landrine and Klonoff's (1996) concept of ethnic enclave and De Vos's (1975) idea of social belonging, a cultural home provides the individual with stable and consistent rules, norms, beliefs, and values that are based on a common history and culture, in addition to providing positive reinforcement and safety. Whereas the ethnic reference group provides the individual with a cognitive and behavioral frame of reference, and the ethnic enclave serves the individual with socialization and protective functions, the cultural home plays the more emotional role associated with attachment and soothing (Bowlby, 1973). Ethnic enclaves and ghettos give their residents an "ethnic home," even when the residents are aware of the barriers that limit their participation in the majority's culture. The sense of "being at home" culturally is safe, relaxing, stress reducing, pleasurable, and comfortingly familiar. The ethnic reference group presents a group identity that shapes individual identity, and the ethnic enclave may offer its members social connections and protection from members of the out-group, but it is in the cultural home that the individual is able to

feel safe, accepted, and valued. Being a member of an ethnic enclave does not mean that the individual automatically has a cultural home; a person may feel "not at home" if some aspect of him- or herself is rejected (i.e., racial mixture, sexual orientation).

By virtue of the soothing functions of secure attachment and mirroring (Bowlby, 1973; Kohut, 1977), a cultural home can be a vital coping resource. Many oppressed groups have survived and acquired social power through the sense of belonging to a particular group, strengthening the emotional ties to other members of the group. For example, Jews who experienced concentration camps have reported that what helped them survive during the Holocaust was being with other Jews for a shared reason: their ethnic identification (Herman, 1992). They were coming from a strong sense of community that was difficult to destroy or weaken.

This sense of cultural community may be geographically circumscribed, as in the ghetto, and for some cultures an identified place may be symbolically important (e.g., Israel). However, a stable location is not an essential feature of a cultural home; being a nomad does not preclude someone from having a physical place to call "home." The difference is that for nomads their home moves geographically from place to place. Gypsies are nomadic people; they move constantly geographically, but their home travels with their group, remaining within their community and having a "symbiotic rather than social" (Park, 1928) relation to the larger culture. They own no territory, but each community sustains a conscious cultural identity through their dialect and language, strong traditions, rituals, dress, social structure and norms, governing hierarchy, and specific behaviors. They have verbal and nonverbal communication patterns that enable shared meanings within their own community, differentiating in-group members from individuals of the out-group. Thus, even nomads recognize and know that they have a social location that "feels" like home, and they can physically go to this place.

Cultural Homelessness

The prejudice, misunderstanding, isolation, and other difficulties experienced by minority group members are compounded and intensified for people of mixed ethnicity who may feel rejected by both minority and majority groups. Their experiences are associated with being not just a minority but rather a "multiple minority," which makes them different from each of their parents and, likely, from other family members. Constructs that most people take for granted, such as "primary language," "main familial culture," and "home," may take on a different meaning for multiethnic people. The parents may be monocultural minority or majority group members, regardless of their native nationality, but of differing cultures, or they may themselves be bicultural. When the families are in close contact, their children may confront up to four grandparents, each having different strongly held mono- or bicultural traditions, complicating the children's attachment to any one of these. This situation may be compounded by the family's geographical mobility; the children may find it necessary to adapt to a series of different cultures, and perhaps nations, during their formative years, and they may be required to learn new communication styles and methods to do so. Cultures may differ dramatically in their construals of the self and of the interdependence of selves in relationships, and these construals have a strong impact on subjective experience (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). What happens when a child has grown up learning divergent and contradictory construals of the self and others, especially if these change unpredictably (Vivero, 1997a)?

Cultural homelessness describes certain individuals of mixed ethnic and/or cultural background living within a framework of experiences, feelings, and thoughts that do

not belong to any single racial, ethnic, or cultural reference group. By definition, the individuals involved are distinguished by their uniqueness. These cognitive and emotional frames of reference are specific to each individual's combination of familial and geographic multicultural experiences and their own family's way of dealing with these cultural differences. However, culturally homeless people share a sense of not belonging and not being accepted as members by any existing group because of their uniqueness; for them, all groups are outgroups. Not having an ethnic enclave of their own, and not having any other community with which to identify, they lack a cultural home; they may best be defined as "always being a minority everywhere they go" (Vivero, 1997b). Similar to first-generation immigrants, culturally homeless individuals may have the intense feeling and longing to "go home"; however, they cannot, because they have never had a cultural home. Not knowing how it feels to "be home," they cannot rely on memories of having had a cultural home. Unlike members of monocultural ethnic minority groups, culturally homeless people are aware that they lack this coherent sense of having a cultural home. Cultural homelessness is "not having a home" rather than "not being at home."

Cultural homelessness may but does not necessarily come from multiple geographic moves, although cross-cultural moves may increase the sense of homelessness if the child never establishes a sense of home within any one culture. Living in different cultures may cause people, especially children, to feel lonely and dislocated. Immigrants may not have access to their cultural home or ethnic enclave, but this does not mean that they lack one. Dislocation does not prevent them from knowing where home is or where the rest of the people like them are. Children of parents in the armed forces, for example, often move geographically; however, their lives are typically centered within the base, which is American territory, where schools, traditions, holidays, and language are strongly preserved. The repeated moves are no doubt stressful in themselves, and mothers and children may feel especially isolated and lonely. Nevertheless, having such a cultural enclave may be prophylactic against becoming culturally homeless by providing social support, community, and others "like them."

Ethnically mixed families may contain conflicting cultural frames of reference, because family members have different ethnic reference groups. Children who come from a mixture of two or more different ethnic backgrounds are likely to learn quite early in life to respond differently to different family members, using a different frame of reference with each parent, even when speaking the same language. Even when their primary language is the same as that of the dominant culture, ethnic minority groups may have different verbal and nonverbal forms of communication than do members of the dominant culture. This has been attributed to cultural differences in conversational cueing systems, but it may be complicated by average differences in status characteristics, such as social class (LaFrance & Mayo, 1976). Code-switching cues may be nonverbal and hard to recognize consciously or explain. The child may learn that contradictory behaviors are both right and wrong, depending on who is participating in the interaction. Lack of consistent reference points may lead to frame-of-reference confusion in social situations and identity development disruption in a child without the cognitive capacity to resolve these contradictions. These inconsistencies may complicate the child's ability to form an attachment or identification with any culture, resulting in cultural anomie or cultural alienation as defined by Oetting and Beauvais's (1991) model.

In societies where clear ethnic divisions are emphasized and encouraged, a multiethnic child may feel confused and frightened to realize that everyone belongs to one group or another. This is especially true

where racial discrimination predominates and interracial relationships and their offspring are not valued or are openly discouraged. Root (1990) described the negative impact on mixed-race children of adults' ambivalent verbal and nonverbal attention to a child's racially ambiguous appearance.

The poetry, songs, dialogues, and stories of racially mixed women report very similar experiences and feelings (Camper, 1994). When these women's experiences are summarized, a few common themes appear repeatedly throughout: "We got the best of both worlds, we got the worst of both worlds; nevertheless, we are stigmatized, rejected, and told that we don't belong to either world" (Vivero, 1997a). The emphasis on women's physical appearance in American culture likely complicates their mixed-race status (Root, 1997), especially if they are excluded from social cliques beginning in early adolescence (Gibbs, 1987). The "where are you from?" question that racially mixed, phenotypically ambiguous women describe is another way of saying that people constantly remind the multiracial individual of his or her "nonbelonging" multiminority status. Mercedes Baines, a multiracial woman, said: "There is not a simple answer—I do not fit in a simple box. It depends on the day the colour I feel" (Baines, 1994, p. 152). Another woman, when asked "where are you from?," responded: "I get asked that question on a regular basis. You don't have [a] back home, you know, like 'back in the wherever'. . . . So, it ends up making you feel you really don't have anywhere that you belong" (McNeilly, 1994, pp. 201–202).

A fellow therapist who was dealing with some of these issues herself commented in obvious pain that "[she] didn't belong here nor there; [she] had always been an observer of how other people had a 'culture,' a group they could relate to." She further explained that, as a child, this was very confusing and had caused her significant pain throughout her life. Once the concept of cultural homelessness was offered to her, she expressed much relief that now she too had a place where she belonged; this might have had the effect of providing her with a sense of "home" (Vivero, 1997b).

Although culturally homeless individuals may have acquired a cognitive schema suitable for recognizing a cultural home, both the personal identification and the emotions associated with a specific cultural home are absent. Cultural homelessness may include both perceived and actual social and emotional isolation that creates a sense of "wanting to be home" but not knowing where "home" is or how it feels. Such individuals may devote a great amount of emotional energy struggling to obtain a cultural home by attempting to identify with or be accepted by a particular ethnic group but usually feel they have failed. The emotional experience of homelessness may be intense, but vague and preverbal: "Home" is never stable, never complete; there is always something or someone lacking, and the pieces that are present are often incompatible. There is no one particular place or specific group of people with whom to identify or consistent frame of reference to follow.

Subjectively, cultural homelessness may produce a sense of having built pieces of home in different places, with different shapes, and being unable to put these pieces together as a whole. In an attempt to describe what this homelessness feels like, a self-identified culturally homeless individual explained:

> You start building a home in one place within one culture, you get about so much done but do not complete it. Then you continue to build your home within another culture; you leave it there and go somewhere else. At the end, you have different pieces of home in different places. You can never put them together because they may contradict or conflict with one another. If you try to piece the parts together you make "home" collapse.

Three core experiences of cultural homelessness are rejection, confusion, and isolation. Culturally homeless people rarely

experience unconditional acceptance. They are likely to be rejected by both their families (of mixed background, with their own contrasting experiences) and their surrounding environments for being different, despite their energetic attempts to cover up these differences. The lack of acceptance from the cultural community of either parent or any grandparent leads to the subjective sense of being a bystander. There may be strongly felt but poorly understood alienation from the social processes in which other people are seen as being included. Exclusion may be attributed to the self and internalized as being deficient in some respect. Hershel (1995) described the self-doubt and self-alienation induced in some biracial people by invalidating situations, which may result in their hiding emotionally for self-protection.

Hypervigilant attempts to imitate these included others may be focused on overcoming isolation and achieving acceptance, membership, and, finally, a sense of belonging; however, these attempts may ultimately be felt as futile. Culturally homeless individuals may be confused and frustrated by this rejection and the resulting sense of personal deficit; they often wonder what makes other people acceptable and welcome. There may be confusion about how to behave in order to belong (as noted by Hershel [1995] for biracial individuals) and despair that comes with contradictory demands and alienation. This rejection and confusion may result in self-imposed isolation to avoid further painful struggles to integrate and understand these experiences. These feelings seem to be pervasive in the culturally homeless person throughout the life span but are especially prominent in retrospective memories of childhood.

Prevalent feelings in culturally homeless individuals are loneliness and intense sadness for the largely preverbal experience of lacking something subtle and indescribable that most people seem to have but which they cannot find for themselves, or even identify, much less understand how others acquired it. There is an inarticulate sense of loss; he or she feels a deficit that does not allow him or her to relate to other children's experiences, and vice versa. Although many children may experience these feelings in a milder, more transient form, for the culturally homeless child they are likely to be more intense and chronic.

Hypothesized Disruptions of Developmental Processes

The specific nature of the circumstances that predispose an individual to varying degrees of cultural homelessness is at present an empirical question. The current conceptual framework suggests that chronic overwhelming contradictory demands in childhood form the central risk factor. These demands may be most likely when contrasting unreconciled ethnic cultures are present in the immediate family residing with the child, between the family and the surrounding culture, or both; especially when language differences and status discrepancies are involved such that the child is forced to choose and is punished for all choices.

However, simply having a dysfunctional family is not enough to produce cultural homelessness; these dysfunctions must transcend individual personality differences and extend deep into culturally valued definitions of right and wrong behavior. The family's immediate cultural context may support one parent or the other, or may reject both because of their association, and likewise the resulting children. Even if one parent belongs to the ethnic majority group, the family may be stigmatized by association with the minority parent. Similarly, even if an ethnic enclave is available for one parent, the other will be stigmatized as an outsider within the enclave.

Equal social status of parents within the family (Root, 1990), actively articulated mutual support among family members, and the enjoyable sharing of their differing traditions may help the child to integrate these experiences. This is even more likely if there

is no familial pressure to choose, all choices are rewarded, and the possibility of contradictions is recognized, articulated, and resolved by familial adults. The risk of conflictual demands imposed from outside of the family remains, as may be the case for ethnic minority or immigrant children, but is complicated by the ambiguous appearance or behavior that the multicultural child may present and that others may misunderstand.

Culturally homeless people we have encountered usually report having grown up in an environment where "norms" as abstract, generalized, consistent principles do not apply. Neither the dominant culture's nor any one minority's norms have consistently predominated in their upbringing. Expectations, rules, and socially acceptable behaviors have not been clearly defined or have been inconsistent throughout their lives, varying among family members, family, social context, or over time.

In addition, the parents may be multiethnic themselves and unable to answer or even understand the child's questions and struggles with identity development. Racial–ethnic tensions in the larger culture may be mirrored within the family of a culturally homeless person as well as between the family and its social environment. Conflicts and tensions may arise between different sides of the family, with children feeling caught in the middle, unable to form unambivalent attachment to any one ethnic group or identity. Multiethnic therapy clients with the most cultural-homelessness–related problems are those for whom one side of the family looked down on the other side and excluded the children for being "half-breeds." This is consistent with Stonequist's (1937) concept of marginality; however, the culturally homeless individual may feel marginal in more than two cultures.

The multiethnic child may grow up constantly wondering and asking "where do I fit?" (as an individual within his or her family; Gibbs, 1987; Root, 1990) and "where does my family fit?" (as a system or unity within the larger community and society). Typically, children who develop within a monocultural family would not think to ask these questions until late adolescence or early adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Hershel, 1995; Marcia, 1987; Smith, 1991; Waterman, 1985). The multiethnic child may confront these issues at a much earlier developmental period (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1987; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987) as a result of exclusion and rejection by others and lack of social validation (Hershel, 1995). This may be too early for the language and cognitive development needed to communicate these concerns effectively, especially if such discussion is emotionally charged for the adults. This is likely to add to the child's confusion and feeling of inadequacy, particularly if the adults around him or her are not able to understand the questions, much less answer them. The developmental differences may leave the adults oblivious to the child's experience and unable to understand or empathize with the child's feelings. Without appropriate cognitive or linguistic tools, and in the absence of adult empathic attunement and mirroring (Kohut, 1977), this aspect of the child's experience may remain preverbal, unarticulated, and confusing.

In the course of development, failure to assimilate to any single culture, dominant or minority, may result in more frequent inadvertent norm violations in all cultural contexts, resulting in shame, usually leading to self-blame. These feelings may be especially acute for adolescents, given their developmental task of identity formation and their ambivalence about differences from peers (Gibbs, 1987; Root, 1997). This may tend to produce more isolation, lower self-esteem, and depression because of repeated failures to find a stable cultural foundation for identity development. The search for a place in a community has been a source of struggle and tension among racially mixed individuals (Nakashima, 1996).

Identifying oneself as culturally homeless does not mean lack of or confused self-identity, it means that one's self-identity is that of not belonging to any one particular culture, being a perpetual outsider in the

more negative sense of alterity (see Weisman, 1996). Once the culturally homeless child begins to develop a self-identity as "different," it may be very hard to change it. Developmentally normative offenses against cultural standards may become increasingly shaming as both the child and peers become alert to these incidents and come to expect them, exaggerating their frequency, extremity, and importance. They will often be attributed to internal, stable differences (seen as deficiencies) in the self and interpreted by the child, and often those around him or her, as a personal failure to adapt, confirming chronic shame and self-blame. As in the case of immigrant children, the child may have to face the dilemma of choosing between peer rejection for being different and his or her family's anger and rejection for attempting to assimilate to the dominant culture to be accepted by his or her peers. In some cases, both may continue to happen despite these efforts. Similarly, ethnically mixed children may feel forced to choose one parent's culture over the other (Morten & Atkinson, 1983), especially if the cultures have contradictory practices and integration of frames of reference is not possible. Guilt and shame may develop or increase because of feelings of betraying or rejecting one parent's cultural practices and values.

A European-Japanese-American child living in the United States, for example, may be confronted with contradictory expectations to be independent and autonomous, stand out from the crowd, question authority, self-explore, solve his or her own problems, argue for his or her own opinions, and express his or her feelings and at the same time to accept and follow unquestionable norms, blend in with the group, seek parental advice and guidance, be silently obedient and submissive, and yield to authority, putting his or her own needs aside on behalf of familial harmony (see Markus & Kitayama, 1991). These differing pressures may arise between family members or between the family and the cultural surroundings. A child who has an Asian and an American parent may learn to take her shoes off when entering her home or another Asian home; however, in an American house this is inappropriate.

One such individual commented that, although socially appropriate, she still feels disrespectful and "dirty" when keeping her shoes on in an American friend's house. Had she not experienced multiple cross-cultural geographic moves throughout her childhood and adolescence, a stable acculturation experience may have helped her to integrate these contradictions into alternative cognitive structures of social etiquette paradigms, along with a code-switching rule system for when to follow each paradigm. Lacking such stability, these situations may create tension and conflict in the multicultural child, who is faced with the developmental challenge of internalizing discrepant behaviors as appropriate and yet is unable to integrate them. This is probably confusing and may give the child the sense of always doing something wrong, because one cannot simultaneously execute contradictory behaviors.

Multiethnic and cross-culturally experienced children may become chronically hypervigilant for cues about how to interact in order to be able to code-switch culturally appropriate behaviors several times a day. Their social responses will typically vary depending on the current situation, participants, or cultural location. The environmental demands leading to this adaptive capability may force the early acquisition of a flexible repertoire of social skills. However, to the extent that strong early demands exceed the child's cognitive capacity to encode corresponding abstract social rules, this repertoire may depend on more concrete and rudimentary internal processes such as imitation and mimicry rather than a secure grasp on explicit principles of social interaction. This may function as a chronic stressor that may predispose the child to cultural homelessness.

These complications may be compounded by difficulty in finding other people with whom they can identify and communicate. Despite the potential strengths of multiethnic children's broader cultural resources, at earlier developmental

stages differences of any kind are easily stigmatized by peers, making these periods harder to negotiate (Gibbs, 1987; Root, 1990). Adult models for reconciling these conflicts may not be available; indeed, few adults may grasp and empathize with the child's dilemma. The combination of social stigma and isolation may provide an additional barrier to the development of language to label experiences and feelings. There is danger that shame and self-blame may be internalized and incorporated as part of the self-identity, because the children may attribute their difficulties to being different, inadequate, and unable to do what it takes to be like others.

Having siblings may not relieve the culturally homeless child's isolation or provide support and validation for his or her experience. If the family has experienced frequent geographic relocations, the siblings may have different cultural developmental bases and culturally organized memories; they may not share the same cultural experiences and attachments at the same points in development. Such stratified socialization may produce unusual age cohort differences between siblings that are beyond the children's developmental ability to understand or transcend. The family then is not a culturally integrated entity; each member is a minority of one. Culturally homeless psychotherapy clients have consistently reported that all their siblings are different, thus distanced from one another.

Starting early in childhood, culturally homeless people may have often had to accommodate their thoughts, feelings, and actions to a rapid succession of different social norms and expectations. Early questions and confusions about personal and family cultural identity may linger, along with feelings of self-blame and shame. They may not have acquired any one culturally specific and consistent repertoire of interaction rituals (Goffman, 1967), instead borrowing from each current interaction, however different and contradictory from the previous one. This may include speaking different verbal or nonverbal languages (with the need for accurate code-switching); for example, being submissively obedient to one parent while trying to become independent for the other. These individuals usually report that no matter which way they act, think, or feel, they are always giving up, overriding, or violating the opposite side; they always feel half wrong.

Although both result from demands for accommodation to cultural differences, cultural homelessness differs from the willing divestiture of ethnic traditions by White European Americans as described by Root (1995), a loss of heritage that could be called *ethnic homelessness*. This latter assimilation has usually been a voluntary shedding, and more often a trade-in of historical ethnic culture, to gain an identification with present and future American mainstream culture as an adopted cultural home. Moreover, it occurs in the context of European-dominated White American culture that has preserved (albeit sometimes blended and transformed) some of the traditions of many European ethnicities, resulting more often in "melting" than in dissolution.

In general, majority individuals in a culture age are what linguists call the *unmarked case* (or default option) where ethnicity is concerned. Thus they tend to self-identify by other dimensions (on which they are the less typical "marked case"; e.g., being gay or lesbian, disabled, royal, peasant, of a religious minority, or employed in a particular profession) that are more salient to them and that offer a basis for community. Ethnic homelessness for them will have the emotional correlates discussed here only in situations that emphasize the importance of having an ethnic home. Thus, discussions of ethnicity may be exceedingly uncomfortable for them—not because of code-switching difficulties, as for the culturally homeless person, but because of not having a code called "ethnicity" for which they are the marked case. Whereas the culturally homeless person has no home to go to, the ethnically homeless person has no home to come from. Ethnic and racial minorities, being the marked case, are more often charac-

terized as "different" and described by their ethnicity as a distinguishing feature.

Preparing a Child for Culture Membership

Two aspects of socialization—language development and holidays with mythological characters—serve especially the function of preparing children for membership in a particular culture. Thus, ambiguity in these, produced by intrafamily disagreements or by discrepancies between familial practices and the dominant culture, may contribute to cultural homelessness. How this might happen we explain in some detail to illustrate the developmental disruptions of interest and to provide examples of the developmental processes linking childhood environments to inner experiences. Other aspects that may function similarly include socialization for politeness (greetings, table manners, hospitality) and role transition rituals (marriages, graduations, funerals) used to teach norms and expectations. Through these processes the child learns ethnic behaviors (Brookins, 1996) and to use his or her own cultural group as the reference group (Cross, 1985; Smith, 1991). Discontinuities in these may contribute to cultural homelessness.

Socialization Through Language Development

Part of the socialization process for children is the acquisition and production of language. Children are likely to learn a primary language by imitating and replicating what they hear through interactions and communications with others. Most children acquire and learn different parts of their native language at different age-appropriate developmental stages. They build associations between the phonetic sounds and semantic, emotional, and consequential meaning of the words, in addition to the social implications, appropriateness, and applications (reviewed in Santrock, 1989). Ethnically mixed children may learn more than one language at a young age to communicate with different family members; what happens if a family member moves away or dies? Those who have moved across cultures may gain new languages but cease speaking (and thus lose fluency in) a previously acquired language. A complicating factor is that the emotional meaning of language is culture and context specific. Literal translation of words from one language, culture, or context to another does not translate the emotional meaning; often something gets lost in the translation when a language is lost.

Children from an ethnically mixed family usually have to learn that the same word may have different shades of meaning, implications, and consequences according to who is interacting with them. Parents, siblings, relatives, and peers may speak a different cultural language than the multicultural child, although they may all sound the same (i.e., English). Furthermore, when the child moves geographically, the parents speak phonetically different languages (i.e., English and Spanish), or both, the process of learning these subtler meanings may be more complex and confusing. There may be a developmental disruption in learning consistent emotional meanings of words, giving them the sense that they cannot communicate, no matter how articulate they might be. This self-perceived failure to make oneself understood usually leads to self-blame, adding to the feelings of inadequacy and disconnection, perhaps disrupting the developmentally appropriate socialization process.

The assumption that everyone has only one primary language is another example that illustrates how culturally mixed children are made to feel different. Culturally homeless children are likely to have a different concept of what *primary language* means; for these children a mixture of two or three languages may constitute their primary language. The culturally homeless child may observe these and other obvious differences between themselves and other children without being able to identify the source of the difference or label their experience. They may wish to have what other children

do, such as a "common" language that has the same meaning for everyone, without knowing how to acquire it.

The effects of the disruptions in language development may be seen in culturally homeless psychotherapy clients who report communication problems, an inability to describe and label their experiences, and difficulties expressing how they feel. These deficits in language development are likely to further increase their sense of social inadequacy, isolation, and lack of social support. They usually present these as their own deficiencies, describing shame for not having "learned correctly" when they "should have"; some are quiet and inarticulate. Most others, however, may appear articulate by virtue of their ability to acquire rapidly the communication framework of the person with whom they are interacting. This may include not only spoken language but also individuated word meanings and metaphors, as well as nonverbal cues and responses, especially for the expression of affect. This ability to learn others' language use rapidly may develop at the expense of a stable communication framework of their own. All languages may lack emotional meaning for the culturally homeless individual's personal expression of feelings.

Socialization Through Holidays and Mythological Characters

Holiday rituals and mythological characters are important child-rearing practices for socialization (Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, etc.). There is usually a strong emotional attachment to these ritual figures. They serve a modeling function and symbolize the meaning of the holiday, but as attachment objects they also have a soothing effect. When the cultural surrounding changes (as with geographic moves or family restructuring), the emotional attachment and culture-specific meaning of these figures either disappears or shifts for the child, calling up a different set of self-identity and object relations (who is the good witch, who is not, and where is Kansas?). Dictionaries do not translate emotional meaning, which is very confusing when the culturally homeless child is trying to communicate with peers but cannot find the correct words for "Santa Claus's elves" or "the good fairy," because there are no literal translations.

For the growing culturally homeless child, this may tend to impede or disrupt the continuity of development within any one culture. When parents are of differing ethnic backgrounds, for example, one parent's cultural holidays may not have the same meaning or intensity as for the other parent, even for families that celebrate both parents' cultural holidays. This difference of emotional attachment to celebrations may weaken the family's sense of being a cohesive entity with a common understanding of the world. The culturally homeless child may make plans for Halloween with one parent while talking with the other parent about how meaningless it is to celebrate Thanksgiving. Another example might be in a Catholic–Jewish mixed family with regard to the celebration of Christmas and Hanukkah, Easter and Yom Kippur. If the family cannot resolve these differences and celebrates neither set of holidays, the children may feel they are outsiders in both cultures. Divorce may aggravate these conflicts; for example, by children "observing the Jewish sabbath in one household and being told to break it in another" (Goodman, 1997, p. 33A). When a child constantly faces such discontinuities and has to adapt to frequent shifts across cultures, he or she may never become attached to fairy tales that are familiar, helpful, and soothing to monocultural children and that for monocultural adults call up strong positive emotional associations with childhood.

Changes in or apparent "disappearance" of cultural holidays (because of geographic moves) may be a source of emotional dislocation for children, but those associated with certain aspects of childhood may be especially disruptive when changing cultural contexts. Part of the ritual function of holidays is that everyone performs basically the same behaviors. Cultural rituals

strengthen subjective community membership and identification by encouraging certain visible and meaningful similarities; differences under the surface disappear. For example, Halloween brings children together, creating shared meanings because they all say the same words, execute the same ritual behaviors, and dress in costumes. On this occasion, a culturally homeless child can join in an activity that overrides differences, because the goal is to be unique in one's costume while participating in a collectivizing ritual. The child becomes "like everyone else" in his or her difference; there is a feeling of community, belonging to a group, togetherness, equality. Moving across cultures may force the child to lose even these few experiences of sameness and community membership. Culturally homeless children may lose or change these culture-specific rituals, not because he or she has developmentally outgrown them but because he or she has lost the cultural context. This could be especially painful and confusing and may contribute to a sense of premature loss and isolation, the loss of object constancy for cultural tradition.

Cultural Dislocation or Displacement

Various kinds of cultural dislocation, if cumulative and developmentally important, may contribute to cultural homelessness but may not suffice to induce it. First-generation immigrants may also suffer the isolation and discrimination of minority status. Like native minorities, they may be targets of ridicule, stigma, and open prejudice, especially when they do not speak the predominant culture's language. First-generation immigrants may not be able to adapt to the new culture, choosing either to return home or to reside in an ethnic enclave whenever possible. Living in an ethnic enclave, according to Winkelman (1994), is a typical lifetime reaction of many immigrants and is used as a form of isolation from the new culture. However, although immigrants experience cultural dislocation, they have prior experience of a cultural home in their country of origin. They may miss their home, and perhaps be unable to adapt to their new environment, but they can recall what home was like, understand what they have to do to go back home, and may find consolation in dreaming about returning to that home someday. Being physically separated from other members of one's ethnic group does not preclude the individual from feeling that he or she belongs to that group.

Individuals who are separated from their ethnic group because of geographic relocation usually experience cultural shock (Oberg, 1954, 1960). This may force the individual or family either to adapt to the unfamiliar setting or to live in isolation (Winkelman, 1994). Isolation, misunderstanding, and discrimination are more common in situations where there are very few people who share the individual's minority status, especially when the differences between the dominant group and the minority individual are culturally stigmatized (Frable, 1993). When ethnic minority children are reared separately from their parents' culture and ethnic group, they may feel that their experiences are unique and therefore "wrong" and incommunicable. Without the secure attachment to an ethnic community or enclave, these cumulative experiences may make the isolated ethnic minority child feel inadequate and unsafe about being different (Tatum, 1987). When these feelings of insecurity are chronic, they may become part of the child's developing self-identity. This internalization typically leads to self-blame, guilt, and shame about being different.

Fearing the cultural majority's labels, stigmatization, and discrimination, some monocultural ethnic minority individuals may try desperately to fit into the dominant culture's norms as a defensive strategy. The parents' cultural traditions may be rejected in an effort toward acculturation—for example, by changing surnames and striving for the physical presentation of dominant culture members; family conflicts may en-

sue. Although they may be striving to "leave home" culturally, they have some concept of what they are leaving and toward what they are moving. This process has been identified and labeled by several existing models of ethnic identity development as the *pre-encounter stage* (Cross, 1971), *assimilation* (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992), *accommodation* (Triandis, Kashima, Shimada, & Villareal, 1986), and *cultural shift* (Mendoza & Martinez, 1981). For these individuals, further ethnic identity development within their own cultures is a possible (and likely positive) outcome. Given the context of multiple cultures, claiming an ethnic identity is more complicated for ethnically mixed people (Cliff, 1980; but see Weisman's [1996] discussion of alterity as a route to a positive mixed-heritage identity).

Mental Health Considerations

Returning to the earlier discussion of the literature on advantage models and deficit models, we argue that multicultural people may show clear advantages related to their culturally enriched environment. However, to the extent that their close relationships in childhood are emotionally ambiguous or present contradictory demands that exceed the child's developmental capacity, there may also be problems. Demands from within the family that contradict those from the external sociocultural environment may likewise threaten the integrity of development. In our opinion, childhood experiences that lead to cultural homelessness are also likely to stimulate the development of notable cognitive and social strengths. However, they may undermine emotional development by threatening the security of identification and attachment with a particular ethnic or other reference group, ethnic identity, and ethnic self-label.

Culturally homeless individuals are often characterized by the benefits of multicultural experience: cognitive flexibility, more independent thinking, multiple problem-solving strategies, the ability to adapt to constantly changing social environments, acute social perceptions, facile social mimicry, and a greater variety of experiences on which to draw. These individuals also seem to have richer cognitive resources such as creativity, improvisation abilities, and a broader fund of information. Nonverbal communication skills are often a particular strength, because these individuals are usually very sensitive and attuned to others' expressions and feelings, to which they can respond quickly and empathically.

The developmental discontinuities that may be experienced by the culturally homeless child could be beneficially challenging for development, under the right circumstances and if they are not too large, especially when bridging the gap calls forth an energetic effort that requires growth. Even under more negative circumstances, the cognitive strengths are often apparent. However, if the developmental demands noted above exceed the empathic social supports available to resolve these contradictions, there may be a discrepancy between these cognitive abilities and difficulties that are emotional in nature. For example, a child may not be able to understand his or her own feelings of isolation, "different-ness," and shame. He or she may learn to label these feelings incorrectly or may not develop the language to communicate them effectively. Chronic self-blame and low self-esteem may complicate the use of intellectual resources for solving real-life problems and perhaps may lead to additional mental health problems.

Both the strengths and the difficulties of culturally homeless individuals probably stem from their more extensive repertoire of cultural frames of reference and the necessity of being able to mobilize these effectively in appropriate situations by code-switching in response to situational cues. The cognitive burden thus imposed apparently stimulates cognitive strengths, but at the cost of confusion and errors when cues are ambiguous or the demands exceed developmental resources. There is also typi-

cally confusion regarding group identification (ethnic self-labeling) and personal ethnic identity. The social consequences of these complexities and their manifestations in interaction include rejection and noninclusion by others and subsequent social withdrawal accompanied by self-blame, shame, and distress. Emotional consequences in addition to these negative affects include confused emotional experience and alexithymia associated with incomplete frames of reference or failed code-switching that may complicate culturally encoded emotion labeling.

As clients, culturally homeless people rarely present with obvious cultural homelessness symptoms, as Root (1997) noted for mixed-race women regarding their racial status. More often, there will be identity confusion, social isolation, sadness, a vague sense of loss, shame, self-blame, and a treatment-resistant depression that may appear diffusely characterological. In addition, clients are likely to present with pervasive feelings of being different, describe themselves as "weird," and complain of being unable to belong or fit in, despite their efforts and need to do so. Emotional experience may be preverbal and strikingly primitive compared to the client's unusual cognitive and social sophistication. The client may frequently report that "I can't put words to it" and may have much difficulty articulating or correctly labeling feelings. The client may be largely unable to integrate affective and cognitive aspects of experience. Symptoms may present as complications to treatment for other disorders. Cultural homelessness may be misdiagnosed as a mood or personality disorder and may undermine the therapeutic alliance if the therapist is not culturally sensitive and aware.

An important goal of therapy might be to help clients understand that although their experiences and feelings may be unique to them, they are not "wrong." Culturally homeless clients may need help learning that their confusion is not due to their inability to understand what is appropriate behavior but more likely is due to the inconsistencies they had to confront at an age before they were developmentally equipped to do so effectively. Memories of inconsistent situational demands and how they were resolved might be explored productively. These clients may also need to understand that not being able to resolve these inconsistencies is not their fault or inadequacy and need not be a source of shame, self-blame, or guilt. A detailed description of treatment goals and specific techniques that may help the culturally homeless client are discussed in a separate article now being developed (Vivero, 1997b).

Usually what is most helpful to clients is to suggest cultural homelessness as a cause for this distress. They may feel relieved that they are not "crazy" and that they now have an identified problem they can work on, understand, and solve. Culturally homeless individuals may need to reconcile with the idea of being different without being "wrong"; they may need to learn more self-accepting ways of being different. They may have to come to terms with the idea that there was something missing (childhood fairy tales or the Easter Bunny, no one primary language) or, conversely, something in excess (childhood tales in three different languages, three primary languages) that could not be integrated as a whole. Where family conflicts have been overtly acrimonious, more difficult resolutions on multiple emotional and symbolic levels may be needed, as perhaps for the orthodox-Jewish–reared son of a fundamentalist Christian father who, after his parents' divorce, "[grew] payes—religious locks of hair—under his mother's eye and [lost] them to his father's scissors" (Goodman, 1997, p. 33A).

Culturally homeless clients may need help to give up the ideal of striving to fit in and come to terms with who they are. These clients may need to learn that effective communication comes from explaining, whenever possible, what accounts for their differentness. Clients may first need to accept and become comfortable with their differences.

The question then becomes not how to make oneself less different, or more like everyone else, but how to use it as a strength.

Often, helping clients to identify, name, and explain their feelings and experiences promotes a more clear understanding of who they are and where they are coming from; it provides a name for culturally homeless clients' experiences that may account for their uniqueness. The process of identifying and naming their cultural homelessness may also give them a sense that they are not alone; it implies that these experiences are not unique to them, that there are other people with similar experiences, feelings, and difficulties. In addition, naming facilitates explaining to others, which helps in forming a safer social network.

In any case, the aim of this aspect of therapy is awareness; conscious choice; dealing with experiences that are painful for the client; and understanding and accepting who they are, their differences, and where these are coming from. Once these goals are achieved, they can feel safe, connected to others, and securely attached in their interpersonal relationships, so that they are able to move freely and comfortably across all the cultures that are part of their self-identity.

An additional treatment goal might be to use this new understanding of cultural homelessness and its unique characteristics, plus the experience of network connection, to help clients make choices about their cultural identity. Similarly to Root's (1990) proposed resolutions for mixed-race people, clients may be helped to build a cultural home by identifying with one or two cultures, probably the most predominant in their lives, or by "adopting" the culture where they live, have children, or form a family. Conversely, they could decide to retain cultural homelessness as an identity, choosing not to identify with any particular ethnicity, perhaps integrating to the extent possible their multiple cultures. They may keep all the different parts of their cultural–ethnic identity, recognizing and accepting that everywhere they go they would have a "part home," knowing that their home is ultimately "spread all over." They would then become "citizens of the world" (Park, 1928).

Working in therapy with techniques that facilitate the expression of feelings while initially requiring of the client only a minimum use of verbal communication may help both client and therapist to establish rapport and give both the opportunity to know each other in a nonthreatening environment. This approach may make the client more aware of his or her feelings and provide the therapist with an opportunity to help the client bring his or her feelings and experiences to conscious awareness so they can be accurately labeled and communicated. The client may feel better able to verbalize complex feelings that have been present but not understood before and therefore were noncommunicable. The therapist, on the other hand, can begin to understand the client's nonverbal language and may connect this with the therapist's own experiences. Sharing this may be the initial step in forming a relational mode of interaction in the client–therapist relationship (Vivero, 1997b).

Acknowledging differences is important to convey respect for the culturally homeless client. The therapist's efforts to understand these differences and what they mean for the client conveys empathy, which is usually essential for a positive outcome of therapy. It is important not to try to "mainstream" clients but to work with their own strengths and help them understand and use these to overcome their difficulties.

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