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Every individual grows toward intercultural development at his or her own pace, which varies upon his or her level of external experiences and internal awareness. We can improve our own interactions and judgments while amongst different cultures. It is our responsibility as individuals and professionals in psychology to learn to accept that there are cultures, religions, and traditions with unique entities existing across the globe. Understanding and learning about other cultures does not indicate that an individual must agree with them.

Bennett (2004) created a sequence called the ethnocentric stages of development to describe individuals' levels of intercultural competence. My graduate program encourages development toward intercultural competence throughout the ethnocentric stages. I take pride in my current level of intercultural competence within the adaptation stage, which involves the ability to understand others' differences and shift my viewpoints and outlooks when approaching a new culture. It would be difficult for any individual to shift from one culture to another seamlessly. Learning other languages and traditions may take some time. However, the multiple outlooks with which I challenge myself help me to understand and define another culture's traditions and lifestyles.

I was raised in an American and in an Indian culture. I am an Indian American. Becoming empathic to another individual's experiences includes my ability to place myself in another's shoes. I adapt to others' behaviors and cultural differences to become more aware of my own judgments and expectations of others and myself. I continue to learn from those around me, regardless of their present level of intercultural competence.

My current view of multiculturalism (i.e., adaptation) also allows me to be effective as a cultural mediator. When interacting with groups or individuals in the minimization stage, I stimulate conversation around controversial topics to encourage a more accepting and ethnorelative orientation. An example of encouraged conversations may include the identification and understanding that discrimination, stereotyping, and biases exist in all of us. For example, as an associate instructor of a course on multicultural education, I had opportunities to share my knowledge and experiences with undergraduate students at Indiana State University. In each class, I challenged students to consider racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ageism as realities that exist in our society to help them increase their intercultural competence. Several class sessions have incorporated heated discussions. I encouraged these chance opportunities for undergraduate students to learn from each other, accepting that all individuals have unique and different views of the world. I encouraged my undergraduate students to accept that all individuals are unique and different (e.g., regarding race, culture, SES), with distinctive experiences, which may allow them access to different levels of social capital.

My development as an interculturally competent individual must be maintained and challenged continuously to grow. Intercultural considerations for children, adolescents, and adults are based on our ability to become more empathic and altruistic in our daily actions, as professionals and social beings.