

Multiracial Identity and Self-Disclosure

In the United States, a growing number of individuals are identifying as multiracial (Frey, 2021). The 2020 U.S. Census noted 33.8 million people identify as multiracial, a 276% increase from 9 million in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Specifically, the largest subsets of multiracial people identify as Black/African American-White and Asian American-White (Ho et al., 2011). Previous research points to multiracial individuals having a distinct racial identity development process which may influence daily and long-term psychological well-being (Jackson et al., 2012). Unlike individuals belonging to one racial group, those who belong to many face discrimination and exclusion from both racial groups. Factors such as one's physical appearance, gender, cultural exposure, family discussions, and ideas about social group dominance may have an impact on how multiracial individuals communicate with others in various environments (Green, Keita Christophe, & Lozada, 2022).

Research has pointed out the fluid nature of identity, which can change across one's lifetime. Individuals who identify with more than one racial group may have difficulty navigating social interactions with members who belong to the same and other groups, which can impact a person's identity development. Multiracial individuals' social interactions with others within and outside of their racial groups influences their sense of belonging and willingness to interact further.

These race-related interactions can influence one's daily and long-term mental health. Individuals who belong to a minority group categorized by race, gender, or sexual orientation experience stressors in life that are unique, chronic, and negatively influence health (Cyrus, 2017). The minority stress model has frequently been used to conceptualize the impact of racial stressors on the well-being of multiracial individuals (Binning et al., 2009). Some scholars disagree about whether the model adequately encapsulates the results of minority-based stress (Franco et al., 2021; Pauker et al., 2018). For example, Binning, Unzueta, Huo, and Molina (2009) examined (N= 182) high school students with various racial/ethnic backgrounds to determine how multiracial individuals identified their racial identity and the related impact on their psychological well-being and social engagement levels. They found that respondents who identified with multiple racial groups reported around the same or higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those who identified primarily with one racial group (Binning et al., 2009). However, other researchers found the minority stress model to be an effective framework for understanding multiracial individuals and the distinct form of discrimination they experience due to their membership in more than one racial group (Franco, Durkee, McElroy-Heltzel, 2021).

The current study investigates the relationships between multiracial identity development and communication with individuals both within and outside of their racial groups. Variables such as racial salience, gender, family racial socialization, cultural exposure, physical appearance, and predominant racial environment will be examined to determine their impact.