

EMDR Phase 1: Client History Identity, Race, & Culture Interview

I would like to ask you some questions about your identity, race, and culture and first want to recognize that we have differences and similarities. Do you have any questions or concerns about my identity/race/culture? Do you have questions or concerns about how our differences or similarities may impact your comfort, safety, and the effectiveness of your treatment?

I'm curious if you feel comfortable with me asking you some questions about your experiences with your identity, race, and culture? If yes:

How would you identify yourself in each of these areas (both past and present if they have evolved)? Are there ways others would identify you that you don't feel fits you? PLEASE ONLY PROVIDE ANSWERS TO THOSE ASPECTS YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE DISCLOSING AT THIS POINT.

Age / Generation

Ethnicity / Race / Ancestral background

Family role / Marital status

Sex / Gender Identity

Sexual Orientation / Sexual preferences

Religion / Faith

Hobbies / Social interests

Political views

Education level / School affiliation

Intellectual style or ability/disability

Occupation / Career

Economic status/ Social class

Neighborhood / Region

Immigration status / Citizenship

Physical ability/disability

Physical appearance

Health status / Medical diagnosis

Mental health status/diagnosis

Which of these aspects of your identity/race/culture do you consider to be most important to who you are? Which 3 (approx) have the most significant positive associations? [Circle them above] Which 3 (approx) have the most significant negative associations? [Square them above]

Adapted from Alter-Reid, K., Angelini, C., Chang, S., Gattinara, P., Grey, E., Hearting, J., Heber, R., Juhasz, J., Lewis, R., Lewis, R., Lutz, B., Marich, J., Masters, R., McConnell, E., Monteiro, A., Nickerson, M., O'Brien, J., Onofri, A., Robinson ,N., Royale, L., Seubert, A., Shapiro, R., Siniego, L., & Yaskin, J. In Nickerson, M.I. (Ed.), *Cultural Competence and Healing Culturally-Based Trauma with EMDR Therapy: Innovative Strategies and Protocols*. New York, NY: Springer. Edited in consultation with Chaffers, Q., Hamilton, H., Kase, R., Marich, J., & Urdaneto Melo, V. and the EMDRIA Diversity, Community & Culture SIG (personal communication, July 2020).

Promoted by Diane Desplantes, LCSW and developed by Colette Lord, PhD & Susanne Morgan, LMFT ~ EMDR Readiness Academy (Updated 9/2021)

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The following questions may be asked directly, but the information may also be more appropriately gathered during the course of more natural narrative history gathering. The questions should be posed thoughtfully, with consideration to timing (sufficient therapeutic alliance) and method (as indirect phrasing as suggested by Levis & Siniego (2016) may create a safer context for the client). Not all of the questions below need to be asked, but only those that seem to be clinically fitting for each client. Questions specifically eliciting Community Cultural Wealth Resources (CCRW – Levis, 2016) are noted in italics.

Have you ever felt significant affirmation and belonging because of your identity/race/culture? Are there groups, gatherings, or celebrations (including places of worship, traditions, or festivals) that create a sense of social support for you? (Social Capital)

From whom did you learn lessons about friendship, love, travel, adventure, family values, education, faith, religion? Do you have any role models or mentors who share your identity/race/culture? What skills or strengths do you admire in them that you have (or would like to) develop in yourself? Who would be proud of you for how you are handling challenging experiences associated with your identity/race/culture? (Familial & Social Capital)

What skills, strengths, or intuition have allowed you to navigate language differences, negotiate living in two worlds, and/or maneuver through systems that are unfriendly, dangerous, and full of hurdles for those not in the dominant culture? (Cultural Intuition, Navigational & Linguistic Capital)

Did you ever feel different because of any aspect of your identity/race/culture? When did you start noticing that? What were the messages you received around that difference?

Have you ever been misjudged, misunderstood, held back, harmed, or physically assaulted because of any aspect of your identity/race/culture? If so, was action taken to validate, rectify, or repair what happened? With whom did you feel safe to share what happened? *What knowledge, skills, empowerment, or pride have you developed in resisting subordination and oppression? (Resistant Capital)*

Have any of your immediate or extended family experienced misjudgment or discrimination because of their identity/race/culture? If so, was action taken to validate, rectify, or repair what happened? How was this spoken of within the family?

Was there a transition to accepting any aspects of your identity/race/culture? Have you ever felt the need to hide any aspect of your identity/race/culture? Are there sacrifices you have made (or anticipate may be necessary) associated with navigating differences between your identity/race/culture and the dominant culture?

During your hardest times navigating challenges associated with your identity/race/culture, how did you keep going? Is your determination related to others whose dreams or well-being depend on you practically or as a role model? Are there spiritual/religious beliefs and practices that help you endure and make meaning of difficulties in relation to your identity/race/culture? (Aspirational & Spiritual Capital)

What has it been like for you to be talking to me, a(n) _____ (therapist's identity/race/culture), about your experiences with your identity/race/culture?

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