



4. Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989)

Case Example: Understanding Multiple Layers of Marginalization

Scenario:

Maria, a 16-year-old Afro-Latina girl, has been struggling with depression and social withdrawal. Her mother, Rosa, is skeptical about therapy, believing that Maria is being overly dramatic. Rosa has a strict parenting style and values resilience, often saying, "In this family we don't have time to be sad." Maria, on the other hand, feels disconnected at school and at home, expressing that she doesn't feel 'Black enough' or 'Latina enough' and faces racism at school. During sessions, Maria rarely speaks, but she opens up about feeling misunderstood in both her racial and gender identities. She also mentions that she's been thinking about her sexual identity but hasn't told anyone yet.

Application of Intersectionality:

- The clinician acknowledges Maria's multiple identities (Afro-Latina, female, possibly LGBTQ+) and how they intersect to shape her lived experience.
- They work with Rosa to validate Maria's emotions while respecting the family's cultural values, bridging generational and identity-based differences.

Intervention Plan:

- Introduce Maria to culturally affirming resources, mentors, or affinity groups.
- Help Rosa reframe mental health support in a way that aligns with her cultural emphasis on resilience.
- Provide Maria a safe space to explore identity struggles without judgment.

Clinician Reflection Questions:

- Am I considering how different aspects of a client's identity shape their experience?
- How can I support the client without dismissing their family's cultural framework?

- What affirming resources can I connect the client to that reflect their intersecting identities?