

**Strengthening
Intergenerational/Intercultural Ties
in Immigrant Families (SITIF):
A Culturally Based Intervention**

Yu-Wen Ying, Ph.D.
University of California, Berkeley

Presented at the
**20th Annual Research Conference on
System of Care for Children's Mental Health:
Expanding the Research Base**

March 5, 2007, Tampa, Florida

1

Overview

1. Why is intergenerational conflict in immigrant families a significant problem?
2. How does intergenerational conflict develop in immigrant families and what are its consequences?
3. What characterizes culturally competent mental health interventions?
4. How does Strengthening Intergenerational/Intercultural Ties in Immigrant Families (SITIF) address intergenerational conflict in a culturally competent manner?
5. How does SITIF enhance parents' cultural competence in relating to their children?
6. Is SITIF effective?

2

1. Why is intergenerational conflict in immigrant families a significant problem?

- It is a normative stressor in immigrant households, with documented mental health consequences in parents and children.
- Immigrants comprise 12% of the American population, and one million new immigrants arrive annually.
- Today, 88% of Asian American and 58% of Latino American children are growing up in immigrant households, and potentially at risk of intergenerational conflict.

3

2. How does intergenerational conflict develop in immigrant families and what are its consequence?

- Differential age at migration and propensity to acculturate between immigrant parents and their children.
- Adult migrants retain values of home culture, while their children are more likely to embrace majority American culture through schooling and peers.

4

The majority of immigrants come from countries in Latin America (50%) and Asia (25%) whose cultural values differ significantly from majority American culture, setting the stage for intergenerational/intercultural conflict.

For example,

	<u>Sense of Self</u>	<u>Social Relationships</u>
Asia/Latin America	interdependent	hierarchical
Majority America	independent	egalitarian

■ **Consequences of this conflict**

- Parents - Surprise, Dismay, Distress, Depression (unanticipated, personal)
- Children - Depression, Anxiety, Low Self-Esteem, Gang Involvement

5

3. What characterizes culturally competent mental health interventions?

Zayas et al. (1996)'s study* of 150 clinical psychologists and social workers found ethnic sensitive therapy to be defined as:

- a. **Awareness of Difference**
- b. **Knowledge of Ethnic Culture's Content** (norms, customs, language, life style, etc.)
- c. **Distinguishing Culture and Pathology in Assessment** (definition of normality and pathology are culture-bound and not universal)
- d. **Taking Culture into Account in Therapy**

6

Furthermore, **Sue and Zane (1987)**** suggest Culturally-Competent Therapy entails:

Distal Determinants: Therapist's Ascribed Credibility due to ethnicity, age, gender, degree, etc.

Proximal Determinants: Therapist's Achieved Credibility due to Therapist-Client Congruence in

Problem Conceptualization

Means of Solution

Goal Setting

Gift Giving

*Zayas, L., Torres, L. R., Malcolm, J., & DeRosiers, F. S. (1996). Clinicians' definitions of ethnically sensitive therapy. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 27*, 78-82.

**Sue, S., & Zane, N. (1987). The role of culture and cultural techniques in psychotherapy: A critique and reformulation. *American Psychologist, 42*, 37-45.

7

4. How does SITIF address intergenerational conflict in a culturally competent manner?

Using Zayas et al.'s Criteria

a. Awareness of Difference

b. Knowledge of Ethnic Culture's Content (different values inform parenting across cultures)

c. Distinguishing Culture and Pathology in Assessment (parenting practices are not universal, but culture-bound)

d. Taking Culture into Account in Therapy (uses an educational, non-clinical format)

8

Using Sue and Zane (1987)'s Criteria

Problem Conceptualization - parents use traditional methods that are culturally-determined, not wrong

Means of Solution - acceptable, educational method

Goal Setting - consistent with parents' goal to improve communication

Gift Giving - acknowledging relativity of parenting methods across cultures

9

5. How does SITIF enhance parents' cultural competence in relating to their children?

Aims of SITIF: Parents

Affectively care about and empathize with their child's point of view;

Cognitively understand cultural difference, and how it impacts the child's development and their intergenerational relationship; and

Behaviorally develop skills to promote greater intergenerational understanding.

10

Zayas et al.'s (1996) Criteria

Awareness of Cultural Difference (affective and cognitive)

Knowledge of Majority American Culture's Content (cognitive and behavioral - parenting methods and desired child outcomes)

Distinguishing Culture and Pathology in Assessment (child may be following a norm that is different than parents')

Taking Culture into Account in Parenting (use parenting methods that open up communication)

11

Sue & Zane's (1987) Criteria

Problem Conceptualization (understand child's perspective)

Means of Solution (use structure/rewards rather than command and punishment)

Goal Setting (after communication and negotiation)

Gift Giving (reflective listening)

12

Class Sessions

Awareness and Knowledge

- Class 1. Overview of the Course and Simulation of a Cross-Cultural Encounter
- Class 2. Learning about Cultural Differences
- Class 3. Understanding Your Child

Behavioral Parenting Skills

- Class 4. Showing Understanding and Parent Message
- Class 5. Establishing Structure and Rewarding the Child
- Class 6. Rules, Limits and Special Time

Coping with Stress

- Class 7. Coping with Stress

Integration

- Class 8. Review and Integration

13

6. Is SITIF effective?

Objectively, is SITIF effective in enhancing awareness/knowledge, behavioral skills, coping with stress, and overall parenting ability? Subjectively, do parents rate it as effective and report expected changes?

Procedure

Mandarin-speaking, middle class parents were recruited at a Saturday Chinese language school.
Cantonese-speaking, working class parents were recruited via a Cantonese radio program, flyers in Chinatown, and word of mouth.
Mandarin class was offered at Saturday Chinese language school
Cantonese class was offered in a Chinatown social agency on a weekday.
On average, middle class parents attended 7.50 sessions (SD = .82) and working class parents attended 6.36 sessions (SD = 1.08) out of 8.
Parents completed an evaluation of the class at its termination.

14

Sample: Middle and Working Class Chinese American Samples

		Mandarin (n=16)	Cantonese (n=14)
Sex	% Female	81.3%	85.7%
Mean Age (SD)		42(5.93)	41.93(8.43)
Birth Place***	% Taiwan	68.8%	0%
	% China	12.5%	37.1%
	% Hong Kong	12.5%	21.4%
	% Other	6.3%	21.4%
Mean Age at Migration (SD)**		24.63(3.14)	32.36(9.20)
Mean Education (SD)***		17.94(2.41)	10.86(3.51)
Occupation***	% Professional	62.5%	0%
	% Business	25%	14.3%
	% Clerical	6.3%	21.4%
	% Homemaker	6.3%	64.3%
Social Network	% Chi immigrants	81.3%	57.1%
	% Mixed	18.8%	42.9%
Mean Number of Children (SD)		1.88(.72)	1.92(.49)
Target Child's Sex % Male		31.3%	50%
Target Child's Mean Age (SD)		11(4.21)	14.21(8.26)

Significant group differences at *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed tests

15

Objective Measures:

Awareness and Knowledge (5 questions)

Sample Questions: How may parents assist their children who grow up in the U.S. with a positive Chinese American identity?
How may intergenerational/intercultural gap occur in immigrant families?

Rationale and Implementation of Skills (14 questions)

Sample Questions: What is the reason for using Showing Understanding to your child? How do you actually do it?

Coping with Stress (1 question):

How may parents reduce their stress level?

Inter-rater reliability of response coding to open-ended questions: 91.75%

Subjective Measures:

Overall Effectiveness (7 questions, 5 point-Likert type questions, with "1" indicating complete disagreement, "3" indicating neutrality, and "5" indicating complete agreement.)

Sample Questions: This course strengthened my understanding of my child.
This course enhanced my relationship with my child.

Changes in Self, Parenting Method, and Intergenerational Relationship

16

Results

	All (n=30)	Middle Class (n=16)	Working Class (n=14)
Objective Mastery of SITIF (% Correct Responses)			
Mean (SD) Awareness/Knowledge (5 items)*	4.13(.86)	4.44(.51)	3.79(1.05)
Mean (SD) Rationale of Skills (7 items)**	4.37(1.54)	5.06(1.29)	3.57(1.45)
Mean (SD) Implementation of Skills (7 items)	4.10 (1.77)	4.50(1.37)	3.64(2.10)
Mean (SD) Coping with Stress (1 item)	.93(.17)	1.00(0)	.86 (.36)
Subjective Evaluation of SITIF's Effectiveness			
Mean (SD) Effectiveness (7 items)	4.73(.34)	4.69 (.39)	4.78(.28)
% Reporting Personal Change	93.3%	100%	85.7%
% Reporting Parenting Method Change	90%	93.7%	85.7%
% Reporting Improved Relationship	96.7%	100%	92.9%

Significant group differences at *p<.05, **p<.01, two-tailed tests

17

Study Limitations and Future Directions:

1. Expand SITIF to 10 session course to enhance mastery.
2. Test SITIF with non-Chinese immigrant parents.
3. Use randomized controlled design?
4. Use larger sample size

18