Women's Circle Theoretical Framework:
An Integration of Relational-Cultural and Student Development Theories

Women's Circles promote women's growth and development. The circle itself positions each woman in equal relationship to each other in recognition that empathic relationships and inherent connectedness are the key factors in healthy growth and development.

Women's Circles represent an integration of theories of development that rest upon and are encompassed within Relational-Cultural theory, which recognizes that "people grow through and toward relationships throughout the lifespan[i]".

Healthy relationships are at the core of human development from a Relational-Cultural perspective. "People need to be in connection in order to change, open up, shift, transform, heal and grow"[ii] **(**Jordan & Hartling, 2002). Relational-Cultural theory emphasizes empathic, caring relationships as dynamic processes that build health and wellness. These processes begin with a bond between people that develops through attentive and empathic listening.

When women come together in Women's Circle to share, listen actively, and participate in gender-relevant activities and discussions, the bonds they form are a foundation for their continuing growth across all developmental domains including: physical, intellectual, relational, social-emotional, occupational and spiritual development. Where genuine connections form, women's capacities increase in skills including authentic exploration, self-expression, risk-taking, reflection, as well as interpersonal skills.

Upon this foundation of healthy connections, Women's Circle developers have integrated and applied the following recognized student development theories and theorists when selecting themes, activities, exercises, and discussions:

- The Seven Vectors, *Arthur Chickering*
- Women's Ways of Knowing, *Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule*
- Identity Formation (Majority-Minority; Racial-Cultural; Sexual Orientation, etc.), *Multiple theorists including G. R. Atkinson et al, Cass, Poston, Helm's, Root, etc.)*
- Cognitive Theory of Development, *William Perry*

Each of these theories is described below in more detail. Some of the main theories that are used by student personnel professionals at colleges and universities world-wide are explained. These will be especially helpful when working with young women in a Women's Circles.

An Overview of Student Development Theories
By Susannah M. Turner, Office of Student Life, The Ohio State University

Women students between the ages of 18 and 24 develop in many ways during their college and life experiences.

We may not know for years that a single lecture or conversation or experience started a chain reaction that transformed some aspect of ourselves. We cannot easily discern what subtle mix of people, books, settings, or events promotes growth. Nor can we easily name changes in ways of thinking, feeling, or interpreting the world. But we can observe behavior and record words, both of which can reveal shifts from hunch to analysis, from simple to complex perceptions, from divisive bias to compassionate understanding. Theory can give us the lenses to see these changes and help them along.

The Seven Vectors: An Overview
by Arthur Chickering

1. **DEVELOPING COMPETENCE**. Three kinds of competence develop in college: intellectual competence, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competence.

- Intellectual competence is skill in using one's mind. It involves mastering content, gaining intellectual and aesthetic sophistication, and, most important, building a repertoire of skills to comprehend, analyze, and synthesize. It also entails developing new frames of reference that integrate more points of view and serve as "more adequate" structures for making sense out of our observations and experiences.

- Physical and manual competence can involve athletic and artistic achievement, designing and making tangible products, and gaining strength, fitness, and self-discipline. Competition and creation bring emotions to the surface since our performance and our projects are on display for others' approval or criticism. Leisure activities can become lifelong pursuits and therefore part of identity.

- Interpersonal competence entails not only the skills of listening, cooperating, and communicating effectively, but also the more complex abilities to tune in to another person and respond appropriately, to align personal agendas with the goals of the group, and to choose from a variety of strategies to help a relationship flourish or a group function.

Students' overall sense of competence increases as they learn to trust their abilities, receive accurate feedback from others, and integrate their skills into a stable self-assurance.

2. **MANAGING EMOTIONS**. Whether new to college or returning after time away, few students escape anger, fear, hurt, longing, boredom, and tension. Anxiety, anger, depression, desire, guilt, and shame have the power to derail the educational process when they become excessive or overwhelming. These emotions need good management. The first task along this vector is not to eliminate them but to allow them into awareness and acknowledge them as signals, much like the oil light on the dashboard.

- Development proceeds when students learn appropriate channels for releasing irritations before they explode, dealing with fears before they immobilize, and healing emotional wounds before they harm other relationships. It may be hard to accept that some amount of boredom and tension is normal, that some anxiety helps performance, and that impulse gratification must sometimes be squelched.

- Some students come with the faucets of emotional expression wide open, and their task is to develop flexible controls. Others have yet to open the tap. Their challenge is to get in touch with the full range and variety of feelings and to learn to exercise self-regulation rather than repression. As self-control and self-expression come into balance, awareness and integration ideally support each other.

- More positive kinds of emotions have received less attention from researchers. They include feelings like rapture, relief, sympathy, yearning, worship, wonder, and awe. These may not need to be "managed" so much as brought into awareness and allowed to exist. Students must learn to balance self-assertive tendencies, which may involve some form of aggressiveness or defensiveness, with participatory tendencies, which involve transcending the boundaries of the individual self, identifying or bonding with another, or feeling part of a larger whole.

3. MOVING THROUGH AUTONOMY TOWARD INTERDEPENDENCE. A key developmental step for students is learning to function with relative self-sufficiency, to take responsibility for pursuing self-chosen goals, and to be less bound by others' opinions. Movement requires both emotional and instrumental independence, and later recognition and acceptance of interdependence.

- Emotional independence means freedom from continual and pressing needs for reassurance, affection, or approval. It begins with separation from parents and proceeds through reliance on peers, nonparental adults, and occupational or institutional reference groups. It culminates in diminishing need for such supports and increased willingness to risk loss of friends or status in order to pursue strong interests or stand on convictions.

- Instrumental independence has two major components: the ability to organize activities and to solve problems in a self-directed way, and the ability to be mobile. It means developing that volitional part of the self that can think critically and independently and that can then translate ideas into focused action. It also involves learning to get from one place to another, without having to be taken by the hand or given detailed directions, and to find the information or resources required to fulfill personal needs and desires.

- Developing autonomy culminates in the recognition that one cannot operate in a vacuum and that greater autonomy enables healthier forms of interdependence. Relationships with parents are revised. New relationships based on equality and reciprocity replace the older, less consciously chosen peer bonds. Interpersonal context broadens to include the community, the society, the world. The need to be independent and the longing for inclusions become better balanced. Interdependence means respecting the autonomy of others and looking for ways to give and take with an ever-expanding circle of friends.

4. **DEVELOPING MATURE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.** Developing mature relationships   involves (1) tolerance and appreciation of differences (2) capacity for intimacy.

- Tolerance can be seen in both an intercultural and an interpersonal context. At its heart is the ability to respond to people in their own right rather than as stereotypes or transference objects calling for particular conventions. Respecting differences in close friends can generalize to acquaintances from other continents and cultures. Awareness, breadth of experience, openness, curiosity, and objectivity help students refine first impressions, reduce bias and ethnocentrism, increase empathy an altruism, and enjoy diversity.

- In addition to greater tolerance, the capacity for healthy intimacy increases. For most adolescent couples, each is the pool and each the Narcissus. Satisfying relationships depend on spatial proximity, so that each can nod to the other and in the reflection observe her. Developing mature relationships means not only freedom from narcissism, but also the ability to choose healthy relationships and make lasting commitments based on honesty, responsiveness, and unconditional regard. Increased capacity for intimacy involves a shift in the quality of relationships with intimates and close friends. The shift is away from too much dependence or too much dominance and toward interdependence between equals. Development may mean more in-depth sharing and greater tolerance for autonomy, more acceptance of flaws and appreciation of assets, more selectivity in choosing nurturing relationships, and more long-lasting relationships that endure through crises, distance, and separation.

5. **ESTABLISHING IDENTITY**. Identity formation depends in part on the other vectors already mentioned: competence, emotional maturity, autonomy, and positive relationships.
- Development of identity involves: (1) comfort with body and appearance, (2) comfort with gender identity and sexual orientation, (3) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, (4) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style , (5) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, (6) self-acceptance and self-esteem,   and (7) personal stability and integration. A more cohesive sense of self emerges, and it becomes more apparent that there is an I who coordinates the facets of personality, who "owns" the house of self and is comfortable in all of its rooms.

- College student concern with appearance is obvious. Though gowns no longer prevail except at Oxford and Cambridge, town residents recognize students, especially younger ones who don emblems of student culture. Whatever the limitations or prescriptions, experimentation occurs. With clarification of identity, however, it diminishes. By graduation, most of the early creative- or bizarre-variations are given up. Experimentation with dress and appearance herald pathways to sexual identity. Looking at old high school yearbooks confirms the evolution of hairstyles. Macho, androgynous, or femme fatale "looks" come and go, but identity hinges on finding out what it means to be coming to terms with one's sexuality.

- Establishing identity also includes reflecting on one's family of origin and ethnic heritage, defining self as a part of a religious or cultural tradition, and seeing self within a social and historical context. It involves finding roles and styles at work, at play, and at home that are

genuine expressions of self and that further sharpen self-definition. It involves gaining a sense of how one is seen and evaluated by others. It leads to clarity and stability and a feeling of warmth for this core self as capable, familiar, worthwhile.

6. **DEVELOPING PURPOSE**. Many college women are all dressed up and do not know where they want to go. They have energy but no destination. While they may have clarified who they are and where they came from, they have only the vaguest notion of who they want to be. For large numbers of college women, the purpose of college is to qualify them for a good job, not to help them build skills applicable in the widest variety of life experiences; it is to ensure a comfortable life-style, not to broaden their knowledge base, find a philosophy of life, or become a lifelong learner.

- Developing purpose entails an increasing ability to be intentional, to assess interests and options, to clarify goals, to make plans, and to persist despite obstacles. It requires formulating plans for action and a set of priorities that integrate three major elements: (1) vocational plans and aspirations, (2) personal interests, and (3) interpersonal and family commitments. It also involves a growing ability to unify one's many different goals within the scope of a larger, more meaningful purpose, and to exercise intentionality on a daily basis.

- We use the term vocation in its broadest sense-as specific career or as broad calling. Vocations can include paid work, unpaid work, or both. We discover our vocation by discovering what we love to do, what energizes and fulfills us, what uses our talents and challenges us to develop new ones, and what actualizes all our potentials for excellence. Ideally, these vocational plans flow from deepening interests, and in turn, lend momentum to further aspirations that have meaning and value. Considerations of life-style and family also enter the equation.

- As intimate relationships increasingly involve the question of long-term partnership and as formal education and vocational exploration draw to a close, next steps must be identified. It is difficult to construct a plan that balances life-style considerations, vocational aspirations, and avocational interests. Many compromises must be made, and clarifying values can help the decision-making process.

7. **DEVELOPING INTEGRITY**. Developing integrity is closely related to establishing identity and clarifying purposes. Our core values and beliefs provide the foundation for interpreting experience, guiding behavior, and maintaining self-respect. Developing integrity involves three sequential but overlapping stages: (1) humanizing values: shifting away from automatic application of uncompromising beliefs and using principled thinking in balancing one's own self-interest with the interests of one's fellow human beings, (2) personalizing values: consciously affirming core values and beliefs while respecting other points of view, and (3) developing congruence: matching personal values with socially responsible behavior.

- Humanizing values involves a shift from a literal belief in the absoluteness of rules to a more relative view, where connections are made between rules and the purposes they are meant to serve. Thus, the rules for a ball game can change to accommodate limited numbers of players or other unusual conditions; rules concerning situations, while overriding principles (such as the

Golden Rule) become more important. This change has also been called "liberalization of the superego" or "enlightenment of conscience"–the process by which the rigid rules received unquestioned from parents are reformulated in the light of wider experience and made relevant to new conditions (Sanford, 1962, p. 278).

- Students bring to college an array of assumptions about what is right and wrong, true and false, good and bad, important and unimportant. Younger students may have acquired these assumptions from parents, spiritual upbringing, school, media, or other sources. When others' values are internalized, most behavior conforms even when no one outside of oneself is there to judge. Behavior that is deemed wrong or unproductive produces either anxiety or specific fear of discovery and punishment. Most of the values are implicit and unconsciously held; therefore, they are hard to identify or explain. With humanizing of values, many of these assumptions come to light and are examined. Many are discarded on brief inspection, sometimes with later regret. Some are tried and found unsuitable. A few are set aside because they still fit and can be incorporated into a new wardrobe.

- Personalizing of values occurs as the new wardrobe is assembled. Ultimately, the items selected are those required by the characteristics of the wearer, by the work expected to be done, by the situations to be encountered, and by the persons who are seen as important. In short, individuals select guidelines to suit themselves and to suit the conditions of their lives. In time, the components of this wardrobe are actively embraced as part of the self and become standards by which to flexibly assess personal actions.

- Personalizing of values leads to the development of congruence–the achievement of behavior consistent with the personalized values held. With this final stage, internal debate is minimized. Once the implications of a situation are understood and the consequences of alternatives seem clear, the response is highly determined; it is made with conviction, without debate or equivocation.

  These, then, are the seven major developmental vectors for college students. Each has additional components, and more detailed study reveals further ramifications. This overview, however, suggests the major configurations.

Chickering, Arthur W. and Linda Reisser. (1993), Education and Identity, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Women's Ways of Knowing

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) examined the epistemology, or "ways of knowing," of a diverse group of women with a focus on cognitive development across a broad range of contexts including but not limited to the formal educational system. While conceptually grounded originally in the work of Perry (1970) in cognitive development and Gilligan (1982) in moral/personal development in women, the authors discovered that existing developmental theories at the time did not address some issues and experiences that were common and significant in the lives and cognitive development of women (Love and Guthrie 1999). While the developmental positions described in "Women's Ways of Knowing" overlap to a large degree with Perry's cognitive developmental scheme, the authors

describe additional knowledge perspectives not observed in Perry's study (Perry 1970) and report gender-related influences on cognitive development in women.

The 135 women who participated in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's study ranged from age 16 to over 60, came from rural and urban populations, and varied in socioeconomic class, ethnicity and educational history (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule 1986, Love and Guthrie 1999). As such, they represented a more diverse group than was included in Perry's 1970 study of male students at Harvard. The authors illustrated how the epistemological assumptions of the participating women were intimately linked to their perceptions of themselves and their relationship to their world. Each of the five "ways of knowing", or knowledge perspectives, represents a different point in the women's cognitive development, dependent on conceptions of self (self), relationship with others (voice) and understanding of the origins and identity of authority, truth and knowledge (mind) (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule 1986, Love and Guthrie 1999).

Ways of Knowing

Silence

Silence is the name given to the first position, and describes women who felt disconnected from knowledge, the sources of knowledge and their relationship to knowledge (West 2004, Love and Guthrie 1999, Belenky et al. 1986). Women describing this position were notable for their extreme sense of isolation and fear of authorities, their fragile sense of self, and feelings of being "deaf and dumb," i.e., having no independent voice. Women in this knowledge position were often young, of limited education, socioeconomically poor, and very often had experienced a history of abuse. These women viewed themselves as being incapable of knowing or thinking, appeared to conduct little or no internal dialogue and generally felt no sense of connection with others. Their "acts of knowing" involved only specific actions and behaviors occurring in the present (Love and Guthrie 1999). Notably, amongst these women, words were viewed as weapons used to inflict harm, to isolate and to diminish others (Belenky et al. 1986). Authorities of knowledge were viewed as all-powerful and experiences with authority were overwhelmingly negative for these women. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule emphasize that women who are characterized by the position of silence were overwhelmingly raised "in profound isolation under the most demeaning circumstances" and that their feelings of being "deaf and dumb" originate in a profound lack of confidence in their own "meaning-making and meaning-sharing abilities," rather than a lack of intellectual endowment.

Received Knowledge: Listening to the voices of others

Received knowledge describes the position in which women in the study perceived knowledge as a set of absolute truths received from infallible authorities. The process of learning, as understood by received knowers, involves receiving and repeating the knowledge and words of authorities. In this sense words are no longer viewed as weapons, and are seen as critical to the learning process, but the origin and meaning of words and knowledge remain external (Love and Guthrie 1999). Women characterizing this position lacked confidence in their own ability to speak and generally defined themselves externally, usually in relation to social norms, gender roles and expectations of others, i.e., cultural ideals of women as set forth by external authorities. Love and Guthrie (1999) emphasize

Belenky et al.'s finding that the experience of giving birth provided an important stimulus in moving women from a position of silence to a position of received knowledge.

Subjective Knowledge: The inner voice

Subjective knowledge is characterized by the recognition of the self as an authority. Subjective knowers rely on their own subjective thoughts, feelings and experiences for knowledge and truth - the "infallible gut" as Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule refer to it. Women with this perspective at some point experienced the development of a "protesting inner voice" (Love and Guthrie 1999), which allowed them to make their own claims to truth and knowledge. Along with the nascent discovery of the inner voice, subjective knowers showed a general distrust of analysis and logical reasoning (Love and Guthrie 1999) and did not see value in considering the weight of evidence in evaluating knowledge. Instead, they considered knowledge and truth to be inherently personal and subjective, to be experienced rather than intellectualized. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule state that subjective knowers often block out conflicting opinions of others, but may seek the support and affirmation of those in agreement. The authors note that half of the women in their study occupied this position, but that they were spread across the full range of ages. Like women characterizing the first two positions, pervasive sexual harassment and abuse was evident in the personal histories of subjective knowers, but unlike the first two positions, these women generally felt optimism and positivity towards the future. Love and Guthrie (1999) emphasize that the transition to subjective knowledge was most often driven by positive changes in the personal lives of women (a shift to equitable, mutually-respectful and supportive relationships and away from abusive relationships in particular), rather than experiences within the educational system.

Procedural Knowledge: Separate and connected knowing

Procedural knowledge reflects the recognition that multiple sources of knowledge exist, and that procedures are necessary for evaluating the relative merit of these sources. Procedural knowers focus on methods and techniques for evaluating the accuracy of external truth and the relative worth of authority. The transition to procedural knowledge was experienced by many women in the study as a regression or crisis of confidence initially, as the inner voice of subjective knowing became critical both of external authorities and internal subjective knowledge (Love and Guthrie 1999). However, what followed was the recognition that insights and information outside of personal experience could have bearing on knowledge. Procedural knowers sought to understand authorities, focusing on reasoned reflection rather than absolutism (Love and Guthrie 1999) and the use of context-specific procedures to evaluate information that could be interpreted in multiple ways (West 2004). Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule describe two alternative modes of procedural knowledge: separate knowing and connected knowing. Separate knowers tend to be adversarial and focused on critical analysis that excludes personal feelings and beliefs. Academic environments often favored this form of procedural knowledge. Connected knowers on the other hand seek to understand others' ideas and points of view, emphasizing the relevance of context in the development of knowledge and the fundamental value of experience. Most procedural knowers in this study were economically privileged, Caucasian, young college students or graduates.

Constructed Knowledge: Integrating the voices

Constructed knowledge as a position is characterized by a recognition of the interrelatedness of knowledge, knowing and the knower (Love and Guthrie 1999). Women with this perspective considered all knowledge as constructed, and understood that knowledge is inherently mutable, subject to time, experience, and context. They saw knowledge as "a constant process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction" (Love and Guthrie 1999). Women in this position generally came to it after intense self-reflection. They were able to engage in what Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule refer to as "real talk:" the ability to listen, share and cooperate while maintaining one's own voice undiminished. The position of constructed knowledge often involves enormous "empathetic potential:" a capacity to feel connected with another person despite potentially enormous differences. Many women in this position nonetheless experience loneliness and discouragement, largely due to difficulty in finding companionable and supportive partners.

Belenky, Mary Field, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule. (1986), Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind, New York: Basic Books.

Identity Development – Racial-ethnic; Sexual orientation and Gender Identity;

Identity formation is the process of the development of the distinct personality of an individual in a particular stage of life in which individual characteristics are possessed by which a person is recognized or known (such as the establishment of a reputation). This process defines individuals to others and themselves. Pieces of the person's actual identity include a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness from others, and a sense of affiliation. Identity formation leads to a number of issues of personal identity and an identity where the individual has some sort of comprehension of him or herself as a discrete, separate entity. In developmental psychology, a stage is a distinct phase in an individual's development. Many theories in psychology characterize development in terms of stages. (*adapted from Wikipedia*)

The women participating in the circles may be going through some of these identity models during their college or life experiences. It may be helpful to be familiar with some of these models and their stages to more effectively work with the women in your Women's Circles. Some of the models and their basic stages are listed below. If you have a particular interest in one of the models or you think one of the women you are working with is struggling in one of these areas, we suggest consulting the following texts for more specific information:

Schmidt, J. J. (2006). *Social and cultural foundations of counseling and human services: Multiple influences on self-concept development.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Smith, T. B. (2004). *Practicing multiculturalism: Affirming diversity in counseling and psychology.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Minority Identity Development Model

- PRE-ENCOUNTER STAGE--Individuals are programmed to perceive and think of the world as being non-minority or anti-minority and act in ways that devalue their minority development.
- ENCOUNTER STAGE--Individuals begin to gain awareness of what it means to be minority, and they begin to validate themselves in terms of minority identity.
- IMMERSION STAGE--Individuals reject all nonminority values and fully immerse themselves in minority culture.
- INTERNALIZATION STAGE--Individuals develop a secure and self-confident minority identity and are also comfortable expressing preferences and interests for experiences from non-minority cultures.

Majority Identity Development Model

- PRE-EXPOSURE STAGE--Little thought has been given to multicultural issues or to one's own role as a majority group member in a racist and oppressive society.
- EXPOSURE STAGE--The individual is confronted with the realities of racism and prejudice. He or she is forced to examine his or her own role as a majority group member. In this examination, it is learned how the European-American view has been taken for granted as the "proper" (only) view. Anger and guilt arise. Anger because it has always been assumed that past ways of conceptualizing the world have been thought to be fair and just. Guilt because the person realized his or her naive acceptance of the "fairness" view, and that he or she has been fostering subtle racism.
- ZEALOT-DEFENSIVE STAGE--One of two reactions: Become a zealot for minority causes or become defensive about majority view and perhaps even withdraw from finding out about multicultural view altogether. In becoming a zealot, the person is reacting to his or her own --or the majority culture's collective--guilt. It tends to be other-focused rather than self-focused. In becoming defensive, the person either attempts to have contact with majority culture individuals, or he or she tries to defend majority culture values by pointing out all of the "concessions" made by the culture to minority cultures.
- INTEGRATION STAGE--The overly strong feelings of the Zealot- Defensive Stage subside, and a more balanced view takes its place. Instead, a deeper appreciation of one's own culture allows one to have a secure, self-confident identity, allowing for appreciation of other cultures. One is able to accept differences both intellectually and emotionally.

Atkinson et al.'s Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model

- Stage 1—Conformity
- Stage 2—Dissonance and Appreciating
- Stage 3—Resistance and Immersion
- Stage 4—Introspection
- Stage 5—Integrative Awareness

Helms' White Racial Identity Development Model

- CONTACT STATUS--oblivious to and unaware of racism
- DISINTEGRATION STATUS--conflicted over irresolvable racial moral dilemmas
- REINTEGRATION STATUS--regression to White superiority and minority inferiority
- PSEUDOINDEPENDENCE STATUS--painful or insightful encounter or event that jars the person from the reintegration status
- IMMERSION/EMERSION STATUS--an increasing willingness to confront one's own biases
- AUTONOMY STATUS--values diversity, is no longer fearful, intimidated, or uncomfortable with discussions of race, and is active in seeking interracial experiences

Biracial Identity Development Model (Poston, 1990)

- Stage 1--PERSONAL IDENTITY. Identity independent of ethnic background.
- Stage 2--CHOICE OF GROUP CATEGORIZATION. Pushed to choose one group of orientation. Factors of influence (from Hall, 1980): (1) status; (2) social support; (3) personal.
- Stage 3--ENMESHMENT/DENIAL. Confusion & guilt over having to choose one ethnicity over the other. Self-hate.
- Stage 4--APPRECIATION. Beginning to appreciate multiple identity & broaden their RGO.
- Stage 5--INTEGRATION. More fully appreciated multicultural identity and existence.

Multiracial/ethnic Identity (Root, 1990)

- Acceptance of the identity society assigns. Passive resolution of identity status. May be positive, but often is tenuous.
- Identification with both racial groups. Active resolution of identity status. May be idealistic but not available in certain parts of the country.
- Identification with a single racial group. Active resolution of identity status. Again, may not be available in certain parts of the country.
- Identification as a new racial group. Strong kinship to other biracial persons. positive resolution if the person is not trying to hide or reject any aspect of his/her heritage.
- Symbolic racial group. Hyperdescent identification, only recognizing one's racial heritage intellectually.

Cass's (1979, 1984) Gay and Lesbian Identity Development Model

- Stage 1--FIRST AWARENESS. Identity confusion.
- Stage 2--AWARENESS. Identity comparison. Alienation from others.
- Stage 3--IDENTITY TOLERANCE. Beginning to accept.
- Stage 4 –IDENTITY ACCEPTANCE . Clarity, coming out to some.
- Stage 5--IDENTITY PRIDE. Identity pride emerging.
- Stage 6 –IDENTITY SYNTHESIS. Integration into full sense of self; congruence of internal and external sense of self.

Adapted from: Cass, V. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model. *Journal of Sex Research*, 20, 143-167.

D'Augelli's Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Development

- Interactive Process 1 – Exiting Heterosexual Identity. Recognition that attractions are not heterosexual and beginning to tell others.
- Interactive Process 2 – Developing a personal gay/lesbian/bisexual identity. Creating a personal, stable sense of identity in thoughts, feelings, and desires.
- Interactive Process 3 –Developing a social identity as a gay/lesbian/bisexual person. Creating a social support network.
- Interactive Process 4– Becoming a gay/lesbian/bisexual offspring. Telling one's parents and redefining relationships subsequent to disclosure.
- Interactive Process 5 – Developing a gay/lesbian/bisexual intimacy status. Beyond the relationship is the status in a culture that largely does not hold or recognize a legitimate status.
- Interactive Process 6 – Entering a gay/lesbian/bisexual community. Some will choose to become involved and active on gay/lesbian/bisexual causes for social or political reasons.

D'Augell, A. R. (1994). Identity development and sexual orientation: Toward a model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development. In E. J. Trickett, R. J. Watts, & D. Birman (Eds.), *Human diversity: Perspectives on people in context* (pp. 312-333). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Adapted from:
Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 96-98). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Retrieved from:
http://www.uga.edu/safespace/pdf/UC%20Riverside%20LGBT%20Identity%20Development%20Theory.pdf (04/10/11)

Cognitive Theory of Development

By William Perry

William Perry claimed (and his claims have been substantiated by subsequent research) that college students (but others, too) "journey" through nine "positions" with respect to intellectual (and moral) development. These stages can be characterized in terms of the student's attitude towards knowledge. The nine positions, grouped into four categories, are:

A. Dualism/Received Knowledge:
   There are right/wrong answers, engraved on Golden Tablets in the sky, known to Authorities.
   1. Basic Duality:
      All problems are solvable;
      Therefore, the student's task is *to learn the Right Solutions*

   2. Full Dualism:
      Some Authorities (literature, philosophy) disagree;

others (science, math) agree.
Therefore, there are Right Solutions, but some teachers' views of the Tablets are obscured.
Therefore, student's task is to learn the Right Solutions and *ignore the others*!

B. Multiplicity/Subjective Knowledge:
There are conflicting answers;
therefore, students must trust their "inner voices", not external Authority.
   3. Early Multiplicity:
       There are 2 kinds of problems:
       ▪   those whose solutions we know
       ▪   those whose solutions we don't know yet (thus, a kind of dualism).

       Student's task is to learn *how to find* the Right Solutions.

   4. Late Multiplicity:
       Most problems are of the second kind;
       therefore, everyone has a right to their own opinion; or some problems are unsolvable;
       therefore, it doesn't matter which (if any) solution you choose.

       Student's task is to shoot the bull.

C. At this point, some students become alienated, and either retreat to an earlier ("safer") position ("I think I'll study math, not literature, because there are clear answers and not as much uncertainty") or else escape (drop out) ("I can't stand college; all they want is right answers" or else "I can't stand college; no one gives you the right answers".)

D. Relativism/Procedural Knowledge:
There are disciplinary reasoning methods:
Connected knowledge: empathetic (why do you believe X?; what does this poem say to me?)
vs. Separated knowledge: "objective analysis" (what techniques can I use to analyze this poem?)
   5. Contextual Relativism:
       All proposed solutions are supported by reasons;
       i.e., must be viewed *in context* & *relative to support*.
       Some solutions are better than others, depending on context.
       Student's task is to learn to *evaluate solutions*.

   6. "Pre-Commitment":
       Student sees the necessity of:
       ▪   making choices

- committing to a solution

E. Commitment/Constructed Knowledge:
   Integration of knowledge learned from others with personal experience and reflection.
   7. Commitment:
      Student makes a commitment.

   8. Challenges to Commitment:
      Student experiences implications of commitment.
      Student explores issues of responsibility.

   9. "Post-Commitment":
      Student realizes commitment is an ongoing, unfolding, evolving activity

The journey is sometimes repeated; and one can be at different stages at the same time with respect to different subjects.

Perry, William G., Jr. (1970), _Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston).

Perry, William G., Jr. (1981), "Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning", in Arthur W. Chickering and Associates, _The Modern American College_ (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass): 76-116.

Conclusion:

Women's Circle curricula utilize these theoretical models in conjunction with an ongoing attention to: a) the quality of the relational experiences among the circle participants, and b) an exploration of how the participants' various beliefs, emotions, behaviors and connections impact their relationships, and c) what impact their relationship experiences have on their beliefs, emotions and behaviors.

Relational-Cultural theory asserts that it is through mutual empathic connection that growth is set into motion. In this way, development in the areas of competence, integrity, emotional regulation, purpose, interpersonal relationships, use of voice, inner and outer knowing, sense of self and other, identity development with respect to ethnicity and culture, gender identification and sexual orientation, and cognitive development are fostered and supported in Women's Circles.

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[i] http://www.jbmti.org/Our-Work/relational-cultural-theory

[ii] Jordan, J.V., & Hartling, L.M., (2002). New developments in relational-cultural theory. In M. Ballou & L.S. Brown (Eds.), _Rethinking Mental Health and Disorders_: _Feminist Perspectives_ (pp.48-70.) New York: Guilford Publications.