

## Assertion and Questions

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Strong ethnic identity moderates the effects of discrimination for Middle Eastern adolescents.

### Questions

1. What factors of ethnic identity contribute to healthy psychological functioning in the face of discrimination?
2. How does a strong ethnic identity moderate the negative impacts of discrimination for Middle Eastern adolescents?
3. What is the relationship between ethnic identity and academic achievement for Middle Eastern adolescents?

## Abstract

- Explores the relationship between ethnic identity and discrimination among Middle Eastern adolescents
- Phinney's (1990) theory of ethnic identity development, Helms' (1995) theory of racial identity development, and Boyd-Franklin's (2003) structural family theory are integrated to create the Strong Ethnic Identity Model (SEIM)
- The SEIM, addressing the issue, is applicable to Middle Eastern adolescents
- Best practices, utilizing Response to Intervention (RtI) for school psychologists and school staff are offered
- Recommendations and future directions for research and practice are presented

## Literature Review

### Background Information

- Approximately 3 million Middle Eastern Americans living in the United States
- Discrimination leads to poor psychological, physical, and academic outcomes
- Strong identification to one's ethnicity is positively correlated to high self-esteem, self-confidence, purpose in life, psychological wellbeing, and promising educational outcomes

### Definition of Terms

- *Discrimination*: unfair treatment by others on the basis of one's social group membership
- *Middle Eastern*: heterogeneous group of peoples who originate from the geographical region extending from Syria in the north to Yemen in the south, and from Morocco on the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Persian Gulf countries in the east
- *Ethnic identity*: self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging to the group, attitudes about one's group membership, and ethnic involvement (Phinney, 1990)

## Theoretical Foundations

### Phinney's Theory of Ethnic Identity Development (Phinney, 1989; 1990; 1992; 1996)

*Three Stage Model*: Stage (1) Unexamined ethnic identity; Stage (2) Ethnic identity search; and Stage (3) Ethnic identity achievement.

- Components of ethnic identity include: self-identification as a group member, sense of belonging to the group, attitude towards one's ethnic group, and ethnic involvement.

### Helms' Theory of Racial Identity Development (Helms, 1990; 1995)

*Five Status Model and Information Processing Strategy (IPS)*: Status (1) Conformity, IPS: Selective perception and obliviousness to socioracial concerns; Status (2) Dissonance, IPS: Repression of anxiety-provoking racial information; Status (3) Immersion/Emersion, IPS: Hypervigilance toward racial stimuli and dichotomous thinking; Status (4) Internalization, IPS: Flexibility and analytic thinking; and Status (5) Integrative Awareness, IPS: Flexibility and complexity of thought.

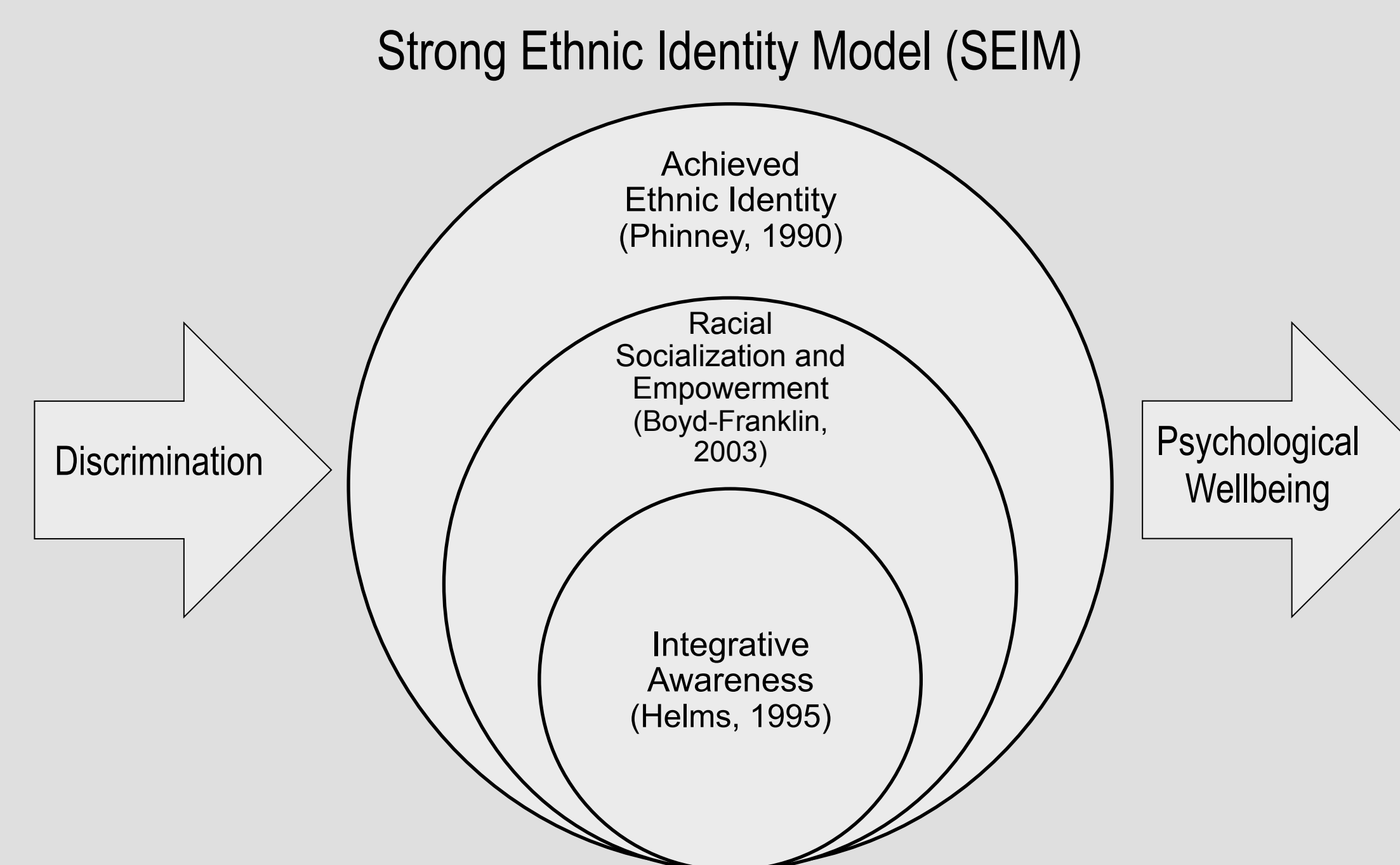
### Boyd-Franklin's Family Systems Theory (Boyd-Franklin, 2003)

- Families must provide racial socialization for their children, which is a process that enables children to feel pride in their racial identity and self-esteem.
- Restructuring of the hierarchical organizations within the family must occur through *empowerment*, in which the appropriate designation of power within the family system is mobilized in order for the family to successfully interact with external systems, despite experiences of discrimination.

## Proposed Integrative Model

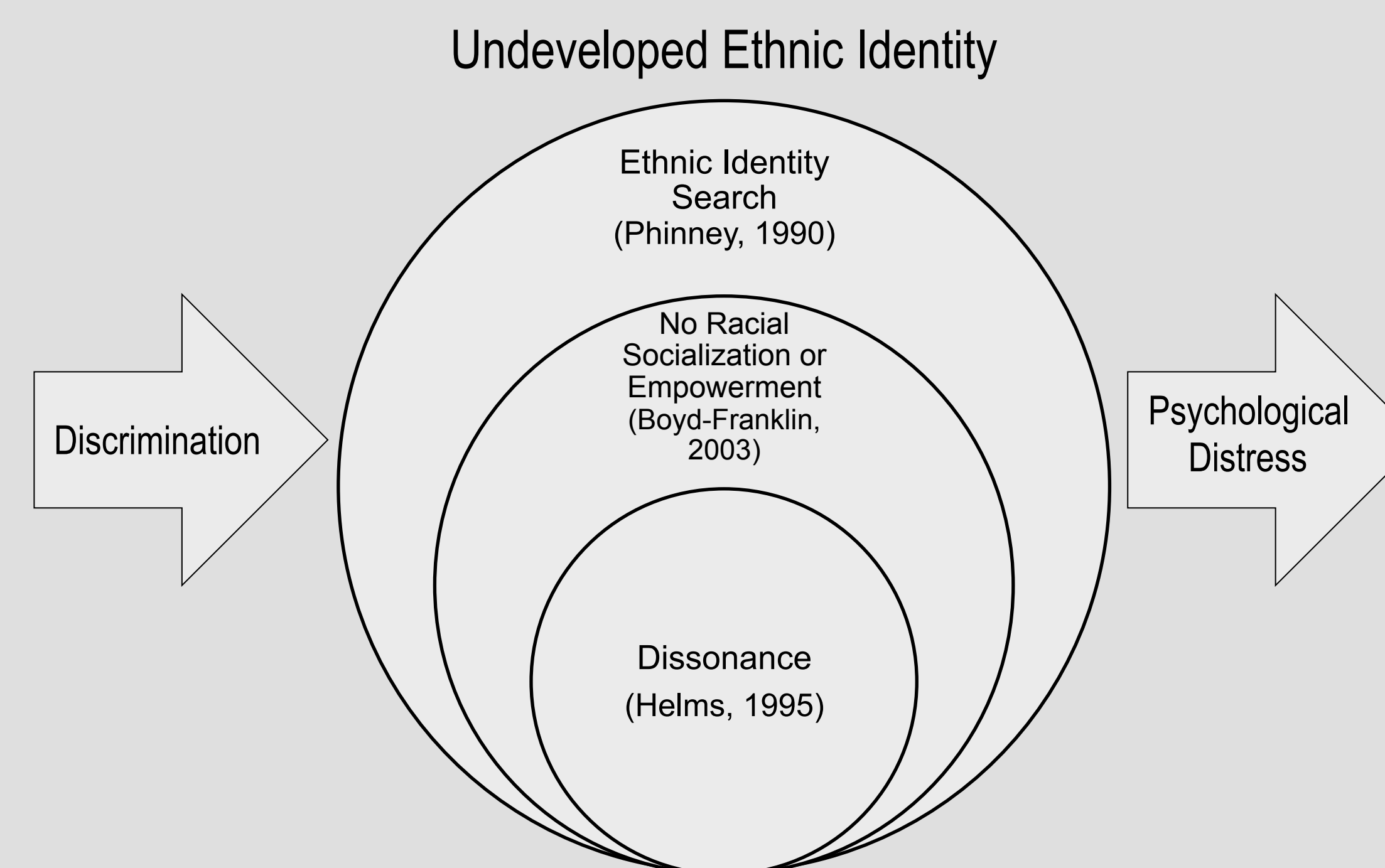
### Strong Ethnic Identity Development for Middle Eastern Adolescents

- Middle Eastern adolescents must maintain an achieved ethnic identity, must be provided with racial socialization and empowerment from the family, and possess an integrative awareness status, which will likely result in psychological wellbeing despite experiences of discrimination
- This model demonstrates how schools and families can support strong ethnic identity for Middle Eastern adolescents



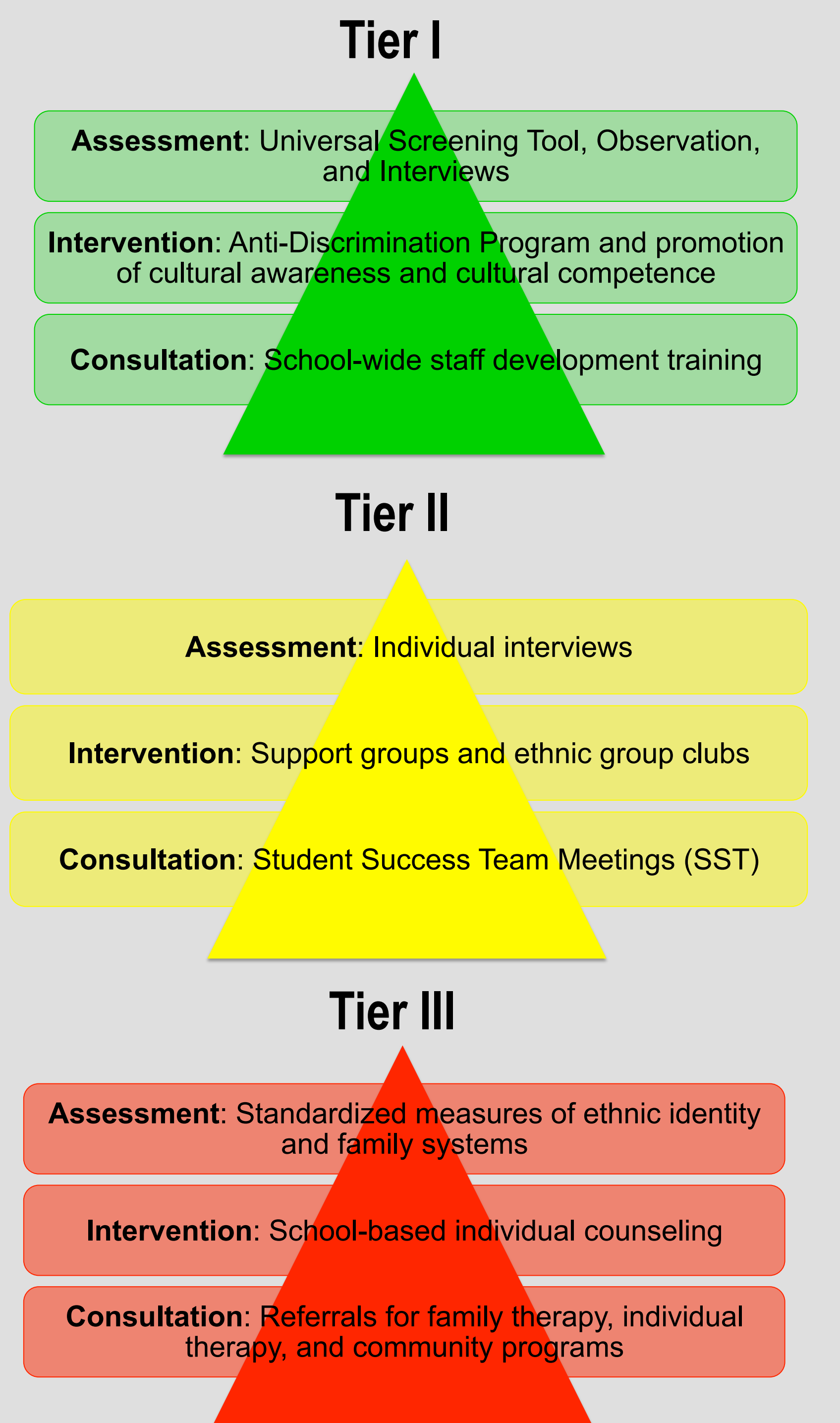
## Application of Integrative Model

The integrative model is applicable to Middle Eastern adolescents. Without a strong ethnic identity, Middle Eastern adolescents will likely experience psychological distress as a result of encounters with discrimination. When there is no support for strong ethnic identity development, Middle Eastern adolescents may be in search of an ethnic identity, not undergo racial socialization or empowerment from the family, and possess a dissonance status.



## Best Practices

### Response to Intervention (RtI)



## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

School psychologists and school staff must support Middle Eastern adolescents with the development of strong ethnic identities in order to lessen the negative impacts of discrimination.

### Recommendations

- Cultural, ethnic, and racial considerations must be taken into account
- An understanding of Middle Eastern culture may grant mental health professionals with greater trust and a stronger working alliance with this population

## References

- Boyd-Franklin, N. (2003). *Black families in therapy: understanding the African American experience*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Helms, J. E. (1995). An update on Helms' White and people of color racial identity models. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & G. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 181–198). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3), 499–514. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.499