

The six-stage model is also referred to as the “Bennett scale” (1998). It includes two stages, each of which comprises three steps. In the DMIS model, individuals may go up or down a continuum of six levels. As an individual makes progress upward on the scale, they become more able to more sensitively perceive and communicate with different cultures.

- a. In the *ethnocentric* stage, individuals assume that their respective culture is central to the reality perceived by all others.
 - 1) Denial: The most basic stage of ethnocentrism and reflects an orientation which assumes there are no real differences among people from different cultures
 - 2) Defense: Refers to a more explicit recognition of differences coupled with more overt attempts at erecting defenses against them. In this state, differences are not only viewed suspiciously; they are considered threatening to one's self-esteem and identity
 - 3) Minimization: Individuals in this level recognize cultural differences, but trivialize them. Individuals at this level believe that human similarities are more important than differences.
- b. In Bennett's (1998) ethnorelative stage, individuals experience other cultures as equally complex but different constructions of reality.
 - 1) Acceptance: Involves an acknowledgment that identifying significant cultural differences is crucial to understanding human interaction. The recognition of alternative cultural behavior involves an acceptance of deep cultural differences in language, nonverbal behavior, and styles of thinking and communicating.
 - 2) Adaptation: In the second level of the ethnorelative stage, individuals have achieved high levels of sensitivity. They may change their behaviors to communicate more effectively with people of another culture, use empathy by imagining another person's perspective, and go beyond empathy to internalize other cultural frames of reference.
 - 3) Integration: In the topmost level of the ethnorelative stage, individuals have achieved the ultimate level of diversity awareness. A person at this level has the ability to analyze and evaluate situations from more than one perspective. While this is the ultimate level of awareness, diversity individuals should continue to learn and build relationships with other cultures.

F. Individual Diversity Awareness Strategies

1. Effective personal development progresses along “head, hands, and heart.”
 - a. First, we approach diversity topics intellectually, as knowledge to be learned.