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## All Mixed Up: Multiracial Identity & Existential Isolation

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Multiracial individuals can experience adverse psychological consequences related to their racial identity. It can be difficult for their monoracial counterparts to categorize and accept them as one of their own race, contributing to feelings of “otherness” and perceptions of racial ambiguity (Root, 1990). We hypothesized this process may lead to feelings of existential isolation (EI; Pinel et al, 2017), the subjective feeling that other people do not understand your experience or perspective. EI has been found to predict worse mental health (Helm et al., 2020) and lower well-being (Helm et al., 2019). Three studies assess this general prediction. Study 1 found that multiracial students do report higher levels of EI than monoracial individuals ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = .99$ ),  $F(1,2819) = 6.60$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $d = .11$ . Study 2 further investigated if experiences of being miscategorized would explain this relationship. Results support this hypothesis. Racial identity indirectly predicted EI via the experience of being miscategorized, indirect effect = .28, 95% CI [.05, .54]. Specifically, multiracial identity predicted greater experience of being miscategorized, which then predicted higher EI. Study 3 is ongoing and uses an experimental design to test whether multiracial participants who are miscategorized will report greater EI than those not miscategorized. With a growing population of this marginalized group, it is important for research to foster understanding of the challenges multiracials may face as a result of their unique experiences by understanding the mechanisms underlying “otherness” can we create tools to navigate obstacles and improve their well-being.