The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) is a theoretical framework used for describing how individuals experience difference and develop intercultural competence. The model consists of five worldview structures: Denial, Defense, Minimisation, Acceptance, and Adaptation. The first one – Denial – is the state in which one’s own culture is experienced as the only real one—that is, that the patterns of beliefs, behaviours, and values that constitute a culture are experienced as unquestionably real or true.

Other cultures are either not noticed at all, or they are construed in rather vague ways. As a result, cultural difference is either not experienced at all, or it is experienced as associated with a kind of undifferentiated other, such as ‘foreigner’ or ‘immigrant’.

The main issue to be resolved at Denial is the tendency to avoid noticing or confronting cultural difference. Individuals at this stage need to attend to the simple existence of other cultures, both globally and domestically.