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*Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.*

*James Baldwin  
Poet, Novelist, Essayist*

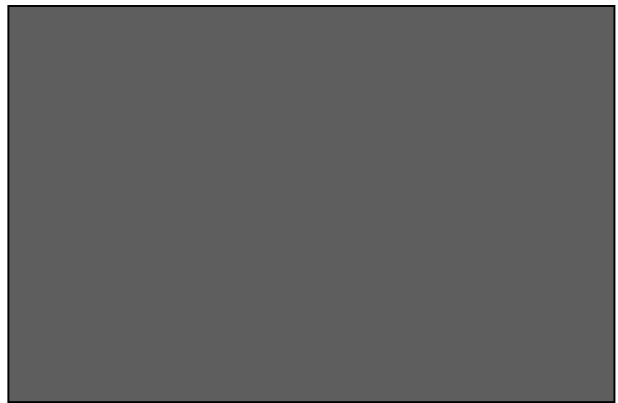
Across the nation, children of all backgrounds are

however, no longer allows for these tough conversations to be ignored. While uncomfortable for some, school psychologists are in a position to lead or at least participate in these conversations. By using their knowledge and expertise of systems-level change, school psychologists can facilitate the dialogue to bring

reactions (including violence) to these events. NASP seeks to help schools and families engage in constructive dialogue about privilege, prejudice, power, and the ways that all of us can work together to shift the conversation from hate and violence towards understanding and respect to ultimately bring about positive change and unity to our communities.

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In today's American society, each of us has an identity that shapes how we see ourselves and others. Not only do our social norms and cultural underpinnings influence our experiences, they also set the course for how we view the world. Differences in identity—and related struggles for place and power—are woven throughout our history and social and political culture. In fact, while diversity is a hallmark and strength of our nation, the path toward common ground, mutual respect, and equity has been rocky for nearly every religious, racial, and ethnic group that has become part of the American fabric along the way. The same is true for groups identified by specific experiences and characteristics, such as gender, sexual orientation, and



disability. In many respects, though, the disconnect in identity and experience between White Americans and those of nonmajority backgrounds is deeply intertwined in our most difficult challenges, such as poverty, disenfranchisement, isolation, inequity, and violence, and it isn't fully possible to address these issues without also addressing this reality.

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For many members of the majority culture (i.e., those who identify as White) in the United States, being made aware of one's classification as linked to privilege is likely not a common or welcomed experience. Indeed, many people have never been asked or required to reflect on their own privileged status, and in regards to racial identity, doing so might feel uncomfortable or even discordant with the common narrative regarding social and political changes over the years. For example, White Americans may attach the concepts of progress toward equality or being "color blind" as mitigating privilege. As a result, many White Americans either may not be aware of or may a

*Recognizing that you have privilege does not require feeling guilty for your privilege. Rather it is an essential step toward understanding how that privilege might shape your views or negatively affect others, even unintentionally, and what steps we can take to break down barriers created.*



As practitioners continue to develop and grow in their own self-awareness, the potential to change the current outcomes seen in disciplinary practices is promising. Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2009) suggest that culturally competent educational leaders should engage in the following:

- Assess one's own culture
- Value diversity
- Manage the dynamics of difference
- Adapt to diversity
- Institutionalize cultural knowledge

These practices allow culturally competent educational leaders to recognize their own cultural values, norms, and expectations, while allowing them to collaborate with students, staff, and families from other cultures. These interactions support the management of conflicts that may arise as a result of cultural differences. Adapting to diversity suggests embedding equitable practices in classroom management, instructional practices, and social-emotional learning. Finally, institutionalizing cultural knowledge speaks to informing school policies that are equitable and supportive of *all* students.

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Wildman & Davis (1995) explain that "the lives we lead affect what we are able to see and hear in the world around us." As such, an important first step to understanding the concept of group

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Engaging in thoughtful discussion with people of other backgrounds is essential to understanding privilege. Prior to the discussion, ask participants to read Peggy McIntosh's article, ["White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,"](#) or ["Waking Up White"](#) by Debby Irving.

1. Start by discussing how privilege looks in our society and which groups have privilege and which do not.
  - a. The first discussion should be about privilege, in general, in America and the reasons some groups have privilege and others do not. This lays a foundation before personalizing the discussion and may help participants be less defensive.
  - b. Next, ask participants to discuss examples of how they are privileged and how they are not privileged. Listen to the ways in which a person legitimately does and does not have privilege and validate any frustrations that are expressed, especially before offering your opinion or perspective.



McIntosh, K. (2016). How can we reduce racial disproportionality in school discipline? [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from: <http://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/IB%20intro%2045%20min%202016-2-9h.pptx>

Tomes, Y. I. (2013). *Cross-cultural interactions and understanding*. Poughkeepsie, NY: NOVA.

Wildman, S. M., & Davis, A. D. (1