



## Let's Talk About Racism

By: Hunter Tate

I had the opportunity to have a beautiful discussion with a brilliant young woman who identifies as a Hispanic/Latinx immigrant, who came to the United States from Mexico with her parents. We began our conversation by discussing how racism has affected the Hispanic/Latinx community in the country. Like other minority populations, Hispanics/Latinx communities have been impacted by the pay wage gap, childcare services and the process of assimilation to American culture. However, what really stood out to me was her experience with racism in Santa Barbara, California.

Despite this being a self-identified liberal community, the impact of racism can be seen particularly in relation to socioeconomic status and the educational system. Based on her own and her Hispanic/Latinx peer's experiences, the school districts in Santa Barbara have a division in resources and inclusivity. For students with Spanish-speaking parents, she found that there tended to be a lack of inclusivity at Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) events and minimal assistance when it came to seeking higher education, such as college. Another area of her story that related to racism lay in the transition from elementary to high school. In terms of assimilation, there was a cultural shock when transitioning from an elementary school that was predominately Hispanic/Latinx, to a high school that was more diverse. The shock was due to having only a few minorities in higher level courses, which was disheartening for her.

As our conversation came to a close, I asked what change she would like to see in our local clinical community. She mentioned the need for having more Spanish-speaking therapists in the area. She shared that, while the female Caucasian therapist that she has is delightful and empathetic; that therapist will never truly understand how it is to be a minority or the generational trauma of immigrants.

When it comes to talking about racism, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves rather than asking the members of that community to do so. Certainly, utilizing reliable sources and reading on these topics is effective, but what I find most impactful is learning through the stories and experiences of others. This is the reason why I decided to interview someone who has first-hand experience and could speak about this with me. Resmaa Menakem writes that community is built when we are able to offer people a better way of belonging and better things to belong to. We can combat anti-racism towards Hispanic/Latinx community through building a stronger community together and I can support the Hispanic/Latinx community by becoming a better ally.