

UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY

What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality describes the merging or intersection of multiple marginalized identities. Members of historically oppressed communities (e.g., African American, Latinx*, LGBTQI2-S**, women, disAbility***) have experienced discrimination. Holding one of these identities often results in facing discrimination. When these identities intersect, the likelihood of discrimination and oppression increases exponentially. Such experiences are distinct and often more intense than those related to a single marginalized identity and can magnify social and economic disadvantage.

Why is it important to be aware of intersectionality?

Intersectionality reflects the experiences of our most marginalized students and families. If we focus on only one aspect of marginalization and ignore the intersection of identities and their additive effects, we miss the mark. Addressing the multiple dimensions of identity and the potential for discrimination expands school professionals' ability to advocate for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), with accessible academic and mental health services, for all students.

How do we build resiliency?

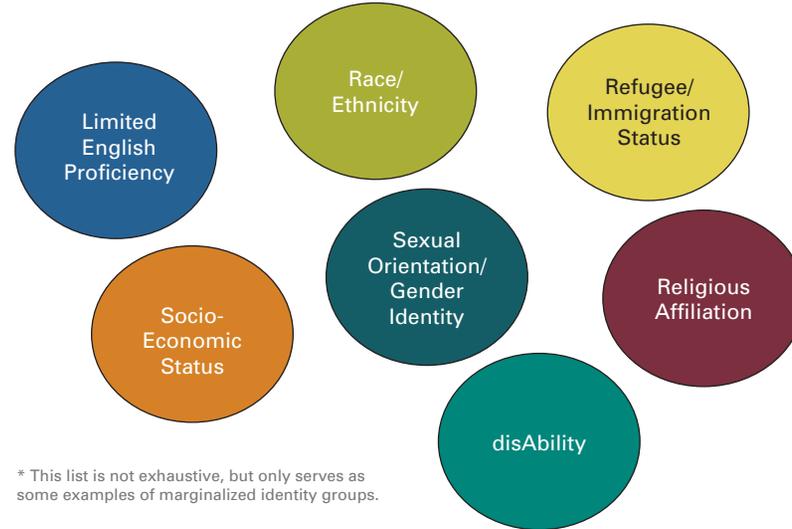
Resilience Guide for Parents & Teachers
<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience.aspx>

The Seven Ingredients of Resilience:
 Information for Parents:

<http://www.nasponline.org/publications/periodicals/communique/issues/volume-38-issue-6/the-seven-ingredients-of-resilience-information-for-parents>

Who experiences the impact of intersectionality?

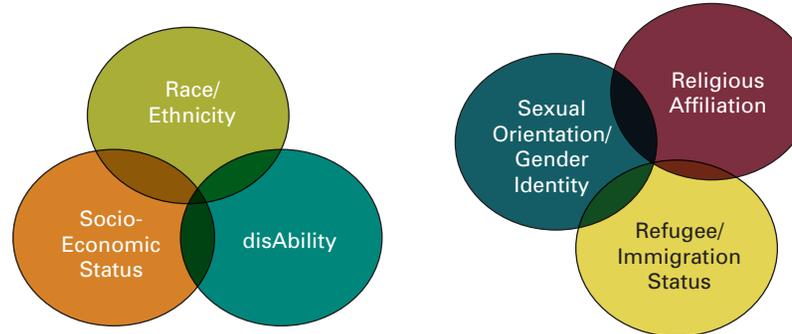
Individuals who identify as members of historically oppressed groups



* This list is not exhaustive, but only serves as some examples of marginalized identity groups.

What does intersectionality look like?

An individual who identifies as a member of multiple historically marginalized groups



Joey is a White youth with a learning disAbility who is eligible for free and reduced lunch services due to a family income below the poverty line.

Ameera is a Muslim youth of refugee status who identifies as gay.

What is the impact of intersectionality in schools?

Here are some examples of how children with multiple identities are impacted by intersectionality.

- Race is an important factor in disproportionate school discipline, particularly for Black female students. Black females are six times more likely to be suspended than White females. Black males are three times more likely to be suspended than White males (African American Policy Forum, 2015).
- LGBTQI2-S students of color have experienced more victimization based on race/ethnicity than their White/European American LGBTQI2-S peers (e.g., GLSEN, 2016). LGBTQI2-S youth are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, especially youth of color and females (Center for American Progress, Movement Advancement Project, & Youth First, 2017).
- Students of color and students who are non-Christian are more likely to be targets of bias and harassment in schools. Students who are immigrants or refugees may be at increased risk of bullying because many are children of color and non-Christian (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services, n.d.).

For references and additional resources, see *Intersectionality*, p. 2

*Latinx is a term inclusive of gender diversity among individuals with Latin American heritage.

**LGBTQI2-S refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and two-spirited people.

***The A is capitalized in disAbility to emphasize that limitations do not define people and they possess many strengths simultaneously.

Intersectionality References & Resources

African American Policy Forum (2014). *Black girls matter: Pushed out, over policed and under protected*. Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53f20d90e4b0b80451158d8c/t/54dcc1ece4b001c03e323448/1423753708557/AAPF_BlackGirlsMatterReport.pdf

This piece lays out the impact zero-tolerance policies within schools have on young Black girls in our country. Consequences of zero-tolerance policies and discipline rates for Black girls and boys are all reviewed. Recommendations from study participants are offered.

Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services. (n.d.). *Refugee children in U.S. schools: A toolkit for teachers and school personnel*. Retrieved from <http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/bullying.pdf>

This toolkit provides an overview of bullying toward refugee and immigrant youth. The authors urge educators to utilize school-based interventions that are inclusive of immigrants and refugees, and which recognize race, ethnicity, and religion as possible bases for harassment.

Center for American Progress, Movement Advancement Project, & Youth First. (2017, June). *Unjust: LGBTQ youth incarcerated in the juvenile justice system*. Retrieved from <http://lgbtmap.org/file/lgbtq-incarcerated-youth.pdf>

This report highlights the disproportionate incarceration of LGBTQ youth, especially youth of color and females.

GLSEN. (2016). *The 2015 National School Climate Survey executive summary: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. Retrieved from <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%202015%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20%28NSCS%29%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Beginning in 1999, GLSEN has conducted a school climate survey every 2 years measuring the school experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth. Findings of the 2015 National Survey indicate LGBTQ students experience various levels of victimization based on sexual orientation, gender expression, and race/ethnicity, including through school policies and practices.

Morris, M. W. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools*. New York, NY: The New Press.

This book captures portions of the lives of over 40 Black girls who have been pushed out of school and into the juvenile justice system. The author delves into the experiences of these girls, including sexual exploitation and disconnect from their schools, as well as evidence that the punitive measures being used inside schools are not working and are ultimately hurting students.

National Women's Law Center. (2016). *Let her learn: A toolkit to stop school push out for girls of color*. Retrieved from <http://nwl.org/resources/let-her-learn-a-toolkit-to-stop-school-push-out-for-girls-of-color/>

This toolkit highlights issues within schools causing girls of color to be pushed out into the juvenile justice system.

Whiteman, R. S., Thorius, K. A. K., Skelton, S. M., & Kyser, T. S. (2015, June 26). *The state of education: Equity considerations for Asian American, immigrant, American Indian, and dis/abled students*. Indianapolis, IN: The Great Lakes Equity Center. Retrieved from http://glec.education.iupui.edu/Images/Briefs/2015_06_26_State%20Of%20Brief_tk_rsw_Opt2.pdf

This brief highlights the disproportionate outcomes Asian American, immigrant, American Indian and students with disabilities face in the United States public education system. Recommendations for educators are provided to help facilitate equity within the schools for these four underserved populations.

Wildman, S. M., & Davis, A. D. (1995). Language and silence: Making systems of privilege visible. *Santa Clara Law Review*, 35, 881–906. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.law.scu.edu/lawreview/vol35/iss3/4>

In this essay, the authors argue that the discourse used to describe discrimination masks privilege and suggests the focus is on disadvantages within a group. Thus, the authors explain different forms of privilege and suggest intersectionality can help expose privilege and oppression within race, sex, and other systems. Finally, the importance of recognizing privilege in the classroom is identified as crucial for building a strong community of learners.

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Please cite this document as:

National Association of School Psychologists. (2017). *Understanding intersectionality* [Handout]. Bethesda, MD: Author.