At the Crossroads of Intersectionality: How Neuropsychologists Can Use Intersectional Thinking to Advocate for Social Change

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The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Black communities, the unveiling of chronic, systemic and institutional racism experienced by communities of color, and the recent historical election of the first African/South Asian American female Vice President have highlighted the multiplicity of being Black in America. An intersectional perspective has been used to explore and contextualize how individuals' multiple identities (e.g., sex, race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, etc.) integrate to create varying experiences of privilege, discrimination, oppression, and marginalization. While there has been much discussion related to utilizing intersectionality as a framework to dismantle social injustice and systemic inequities in the field of psychology as a whole, little has been discussed regarding how to apply these themes to neuropsychological practice. McCormick-Huhn and colleagues (2019) provided an intriguing perspective regarding how to meaningfully incorporate intersectionality into research practices within psychology. They proposed four 'perspective shifts' for psychologists to engage in intersectional thinking within psychology research (pg. 447):

(1) participants are multidimensional,
(2) participants' social group memberships are dynamic,
(3) power is a feature of participant's intersectional positions, and
(4) participants' intersectional positions create outcomes of systemic advantage and disadvantage.

Using McCormick-Huhn et al.'s (2019) perspective shifts as a framework, we will discuss potential pathways for neuropsychologists to engage in intersectional thinking when working with Black individuals. We will also discuss implications and considerations for using intersectional thinking as a tool for advocacy in neuropsychological practice and training.