

# Case Study Context

Jacob (Black male), the valedictorian and Katie (Asian female), the salutatorian of the 2021 senior class have both applied to Harvard, which has ~4% admissions rate.

Jacob gets accepted. Katie does not.

School ABC has a practice where students post their final college acceptance on the front door of one of the school buildings. They are also announced at a senior assembly.

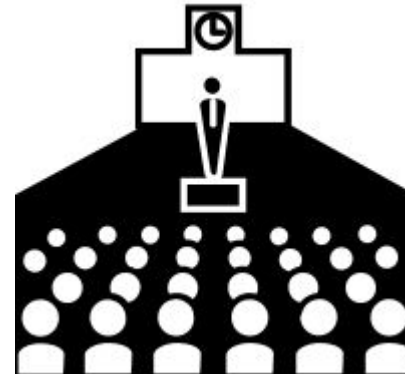


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After learning about Jacob's acceptance, Katie posts on social media and in the senior chat, that Jacob was only accepted into Harvard because he was Black and Harvard only did this because of the global BLM movement after what happened in the States with George Floyd.

During an assembly that week, Katie publicly expressed in front of the senior class, school counselors, college counselors, and administration her feelings of "not being accepted to Harvard due to Jacob being Black and that it was racist as ..."



# Counselor's Initial Response

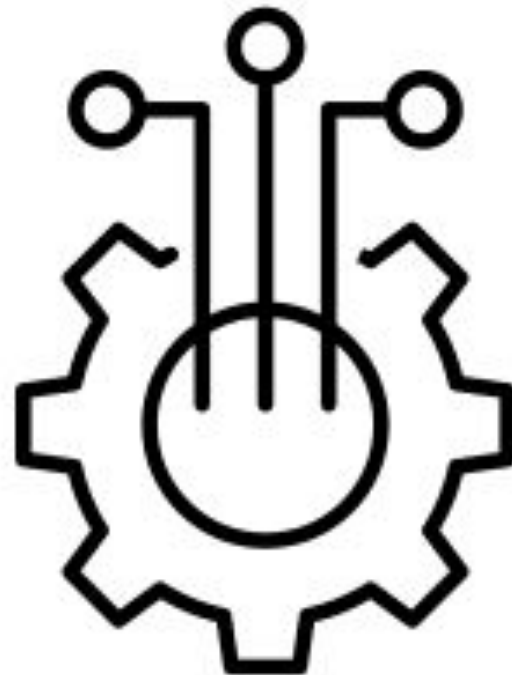
After calming down the senior class (which took about 20 minutes), Laura (a white woman) the upper school counselor and head of counseling convinced Jacob and Katie to meet for a counseling session. Laura's goal for the session was to be empathetic, understanding, and compassionate towards both students.



During their dialogue, Laura's main focus was repair and restoration of the relationship between the students, focusing on solutions. Due to the tension Laura did not feel comfortable bringing race into the conversation. Instead, she encouraged both students to focus on their feelings with the goal of finding a way to move forward together.

# The Aftermath

After word of the incident spread, several Black families at ABC school expressed their outrage. In a meeting with Laura and the HS principal Jacob's parents shared that their son's special moment was ruined and accused the school of racism and discrimination for allowing the incident to happen. The principal assured Jacob's parents this was not the school's intent and they were unaware of the social media and chat posts, otherwise they would have been more proactive.



# Counselor's Actions

After the meeting with Jacob's parents, Laura proposed that the school host a community circle dialogue focused on race and its impact. The principal was hesitant and apprehensive. Laura continued to push and two weeks later the first of several community conversations launched.



She also realized there was no proactive education at the school about race, to preempt and interrupt some of the false racial narratives students were being exposed to and absorbing. She set a goal to have a race education counseling focused program across the secondary school launch at the beginning of the following school year.

# Counselor's Actions

Lastly, Laura, along with the other high school counselor, convinced the administration to only celebrate student selections/admissions by region instead of by the name of the University, believing this shift would allow for an emotionally safer way to celebrate what can be a very sensitive situation for students.

