

Racism, Bias, and Discrimination in Manitoba

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SURVEY REPORT
MAY 2022

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Preface

This project attempts to broaden public perception that racism is not just an act of personal hatred but includes participating in and benefit from unjust systems.


This project, formally titled *Viral Vitriol? Using Online Platforms to Promote Peace*, is increasing the availability and accessibility of research-based insight around the disparities experienced by minorities in Manitoba. With increasing public visibility of hate crimes, which predominantly target race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation (*Statistics Canada, 2019*), and with only 28% of these crimes ever being solved (*Grant, 2019*), it is imperative to address the issue of racism, bias, and discrimination.

Alongside the horrific visibility of such crimes, it is also important to acknowledge that microaggressions and systemic discriminations occur with greater frequency than major hate crimes (*Slaughter-Acey, et al., 2017*).

This project attempts to broaden public perception that racism is not just an act of personal hatred, but also includes participating in and benefiting from unjust systems. In Canada, right-wing extremism, white supremacy, and hate crimes have a long history (*Barrett, 1987*), yet the current state of such extremism in Canada is increasing and has recently received a significant amount of media coverage (*Scrivens & Perry, 2017*). This interim report focuses on Manitoba's current state of affairs addressing the need for a benchmark of the current social climate.

This report details the results from a survey distributed province-wide in January 2021. The data and stories provided here explore current perceptions towards diverse groups in Manitoba, where people in Manitoba experience racism, bias, or discrimination, and how it occurs.

The authors are grateful to the many people who took the time to respond to the survey, call, or email the authors with personal stories around the topic. These reflections are often painful, and we are grateful to have been entrusted with these accounts.



One of the overarching purposes of this project is to educate the general public on the experiences of racism in Manitoba, and to continue discussions on racism through providing educational resources.

Following the survey, the data and stories provided were used to form the basis of video creation, which was tested through focus groups and then shared online through social media campaigns.

Research on social media use has convincingly shown that time spent on certain websites and the propagation of violence are linked (Müller & Schwarz, 2019). Online recruitment tools, websites, and social media are used to recruit members into white supremacist groups, and they are used effectively (Stewart, 2019). A response that occupies the same spaces and uses the same tools is needed.

The creation of anti-racism educational videos for public use is ongoing, and is combined with a facilitation guide and pledge to action. To keep up to date on this project, please visit bucares.ca/anti-racism



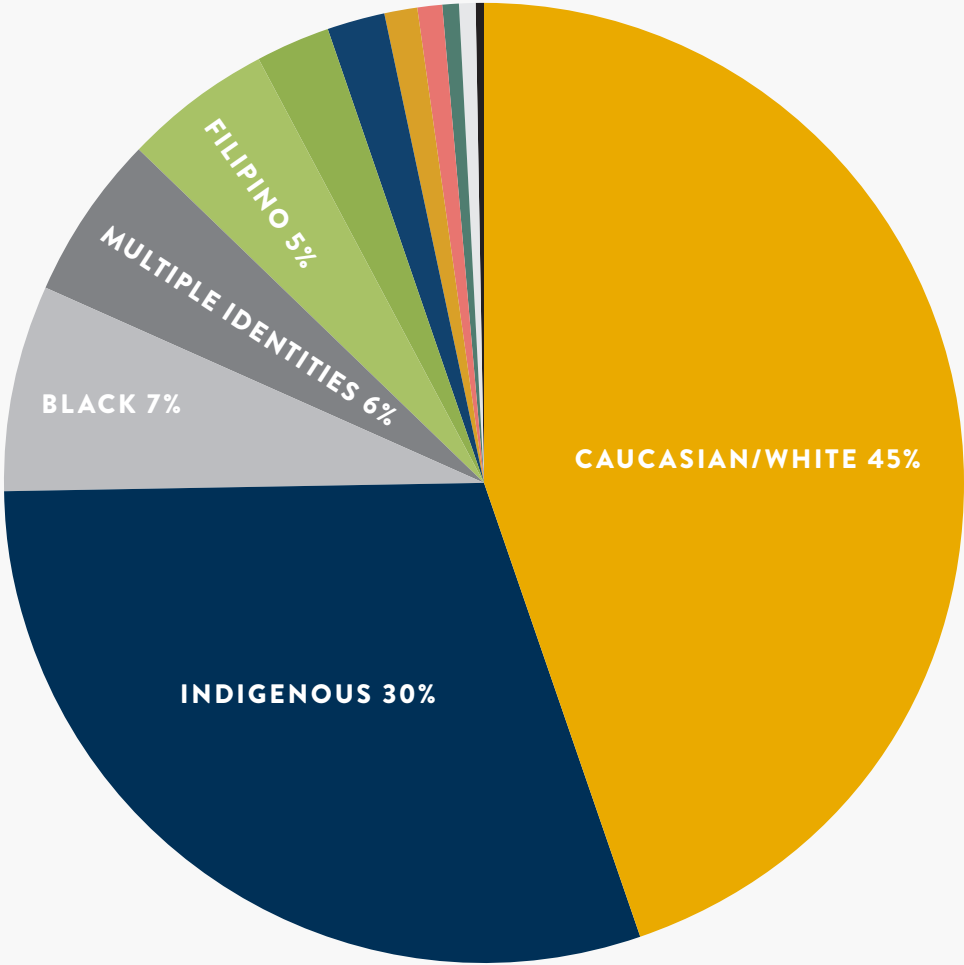
Multi-Stage Project

Demographics

OF SURVEY RESPONDANTS

The survey was distributed in both English and French and open to any Manitoba resident over the age of 18. It was promoted through the Brandon University CARES research centre and related networks, was shared widely through social media, and received media attention. The survey remained open from December 23, 2020, until January 31, 2021, and received exactly 500 responses.

ETHNIC IDENTITIES OF SURVEY RESPONDANTS

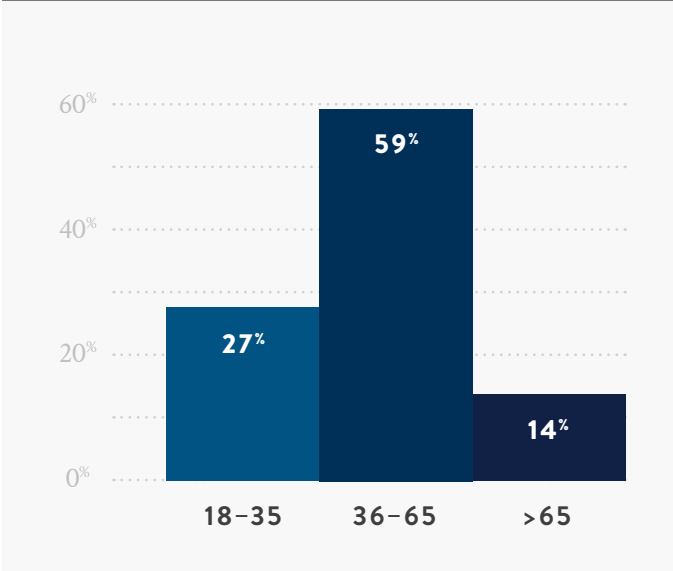


- CAUCASIAN/WHITE 44.9%
- SOUTH ASIAN
(East Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, etc.)
- CHINESE
- INDIGENOUS 30%
- LATIN AMERICAN
- WEST ASIAN
(Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
- BLACK 6.9%
- SOUTHEAST ASIAN
(Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, etc.)
- ARAB
- MULTIPLE IDENTITIES 5.5%
- JAPANESE
- FILIPINO 5.1%

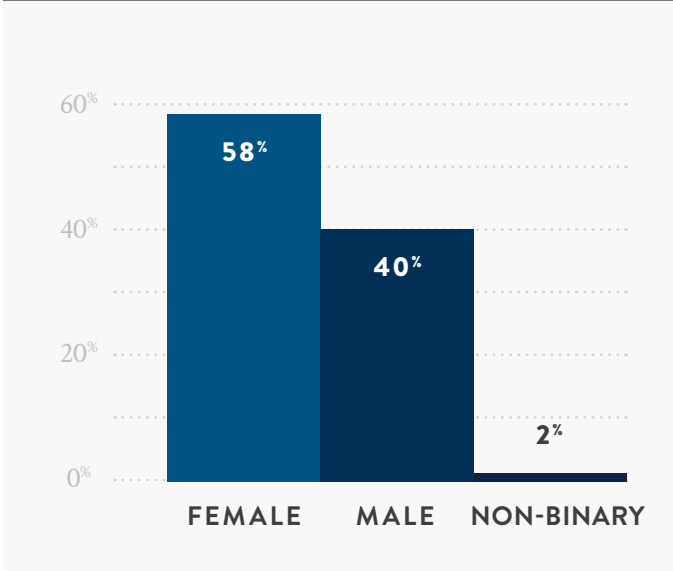
Demographics

OF SURVEY RESPONDANTS

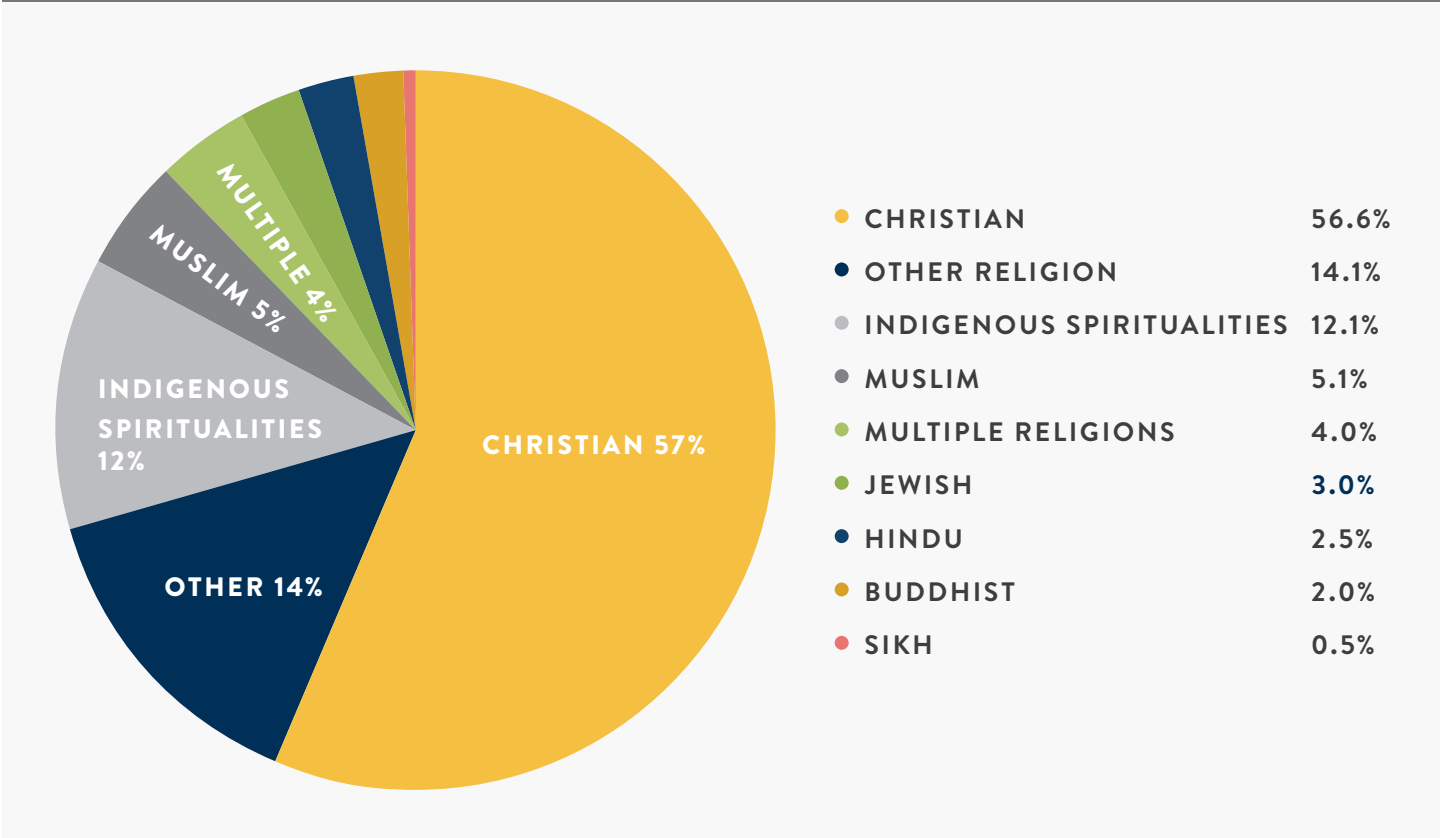
AGE



GENDER



RELIGION



Survey Results

The survey on bias, discrimination, and racism in Manitoba was adapted (with permission) from a similar long-term survey project from Western Sydney University in Australia. The survey explored both perceptions and experiences with racism and asked questions about views on racism, multiculturalism, religious diversity, assimilation, and linguistic diversity. It also asked questions about how and where people witness or experience racism, how frequently these incidents occur, and how often people respond in particular ways. Finally, the survey included space for people to share their personal experiences through open-ended text.

The analysis that follows explores notable differences in responses depending on ethnic identity, gender, rural/urban location, religion, and age. In the final section, we included descriptions from open-ended questions in which we asked participants to describe experiences of racism in their own words.

Racism is a problem in my area in Manitoba

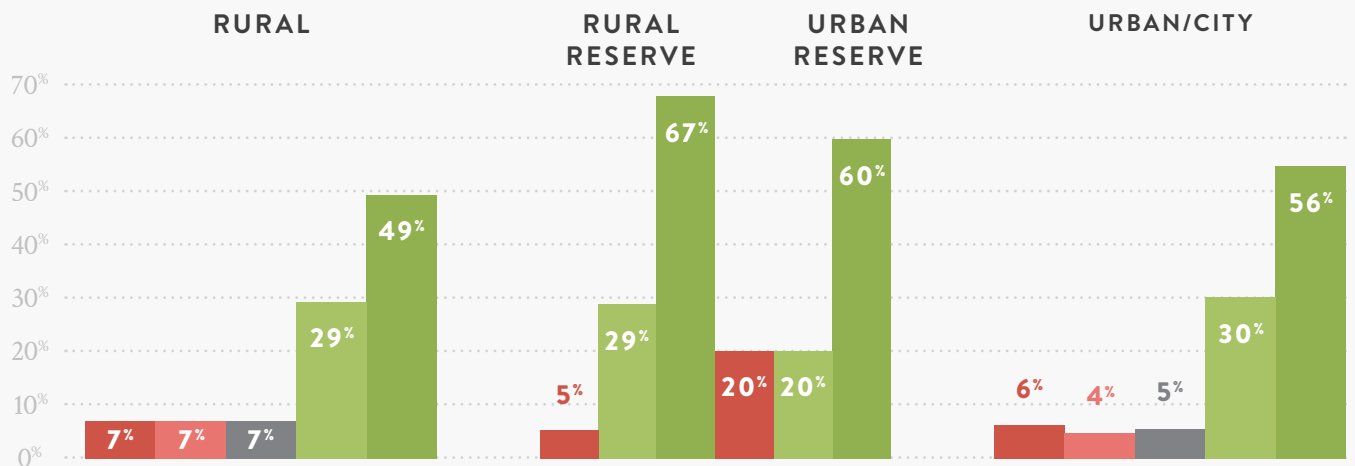
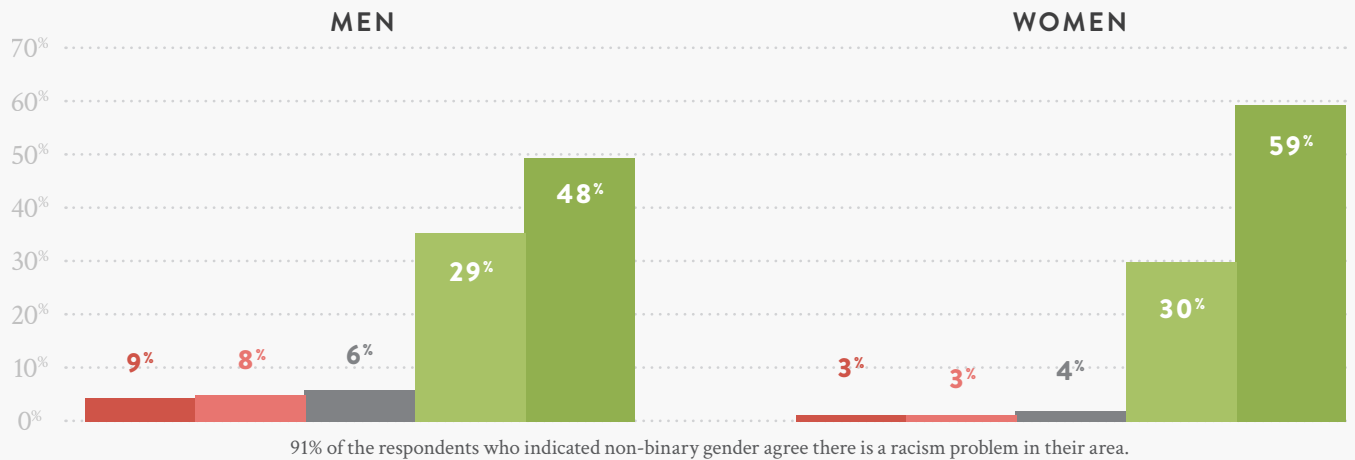
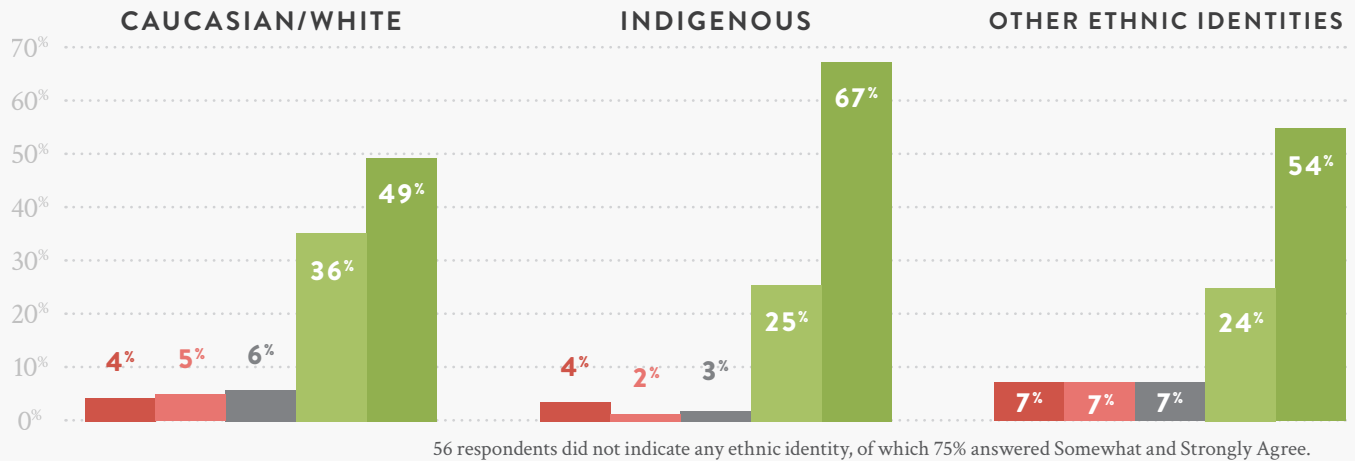
STRONGLY DISAGREE

SOMEWHAT DISAGREE

NEUTRAL

SOMEWHAT AGREE

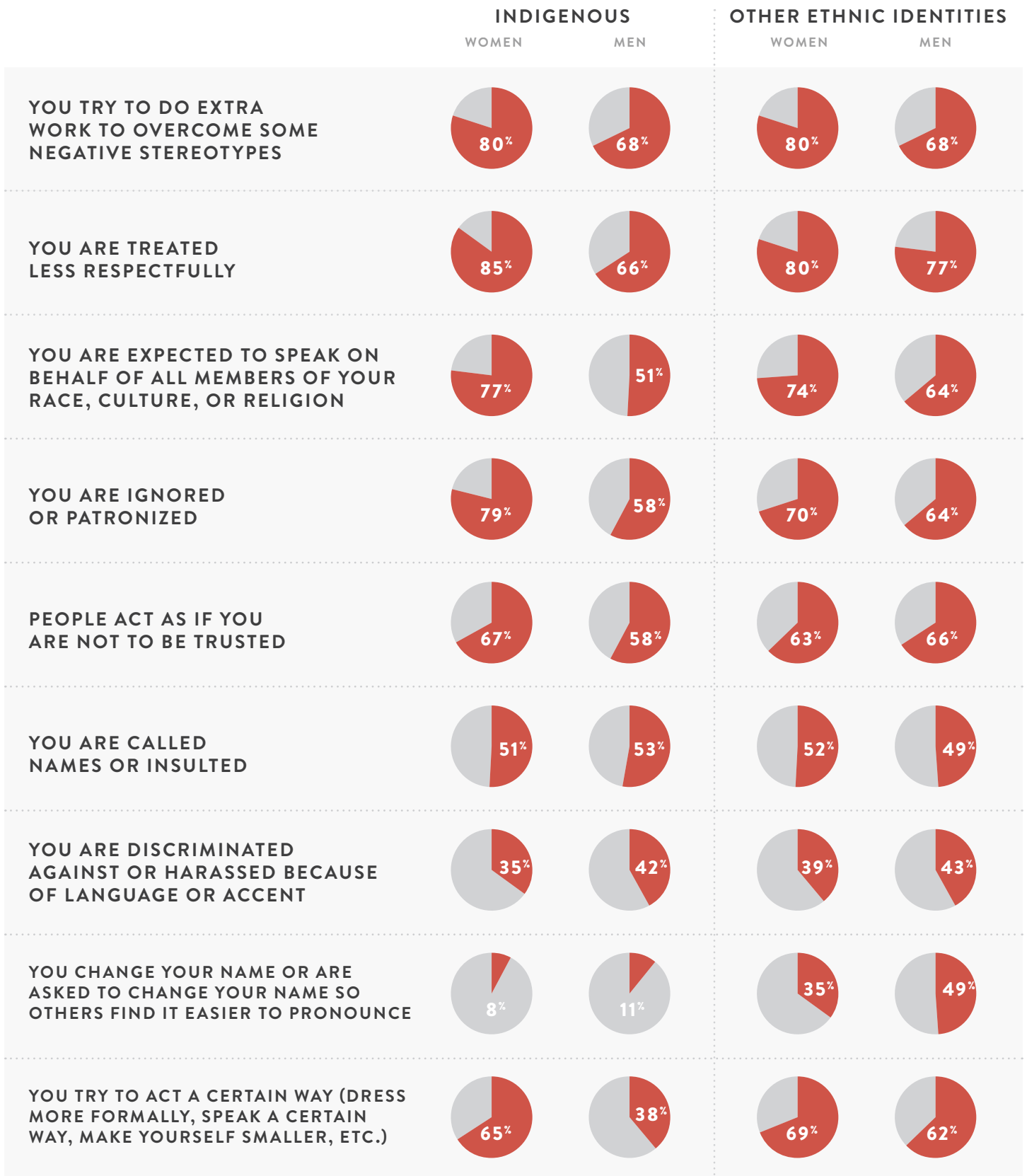
STRONGLY AGREE



How often do you feel that because of your race culture, or religion...

NEVER, NOT OFTEN

OFTEN, SOMETIMES, VERY OFTEN



Respondents who indicated non-binary gender reported experiencing these situations at a similar or lower frequency than men.

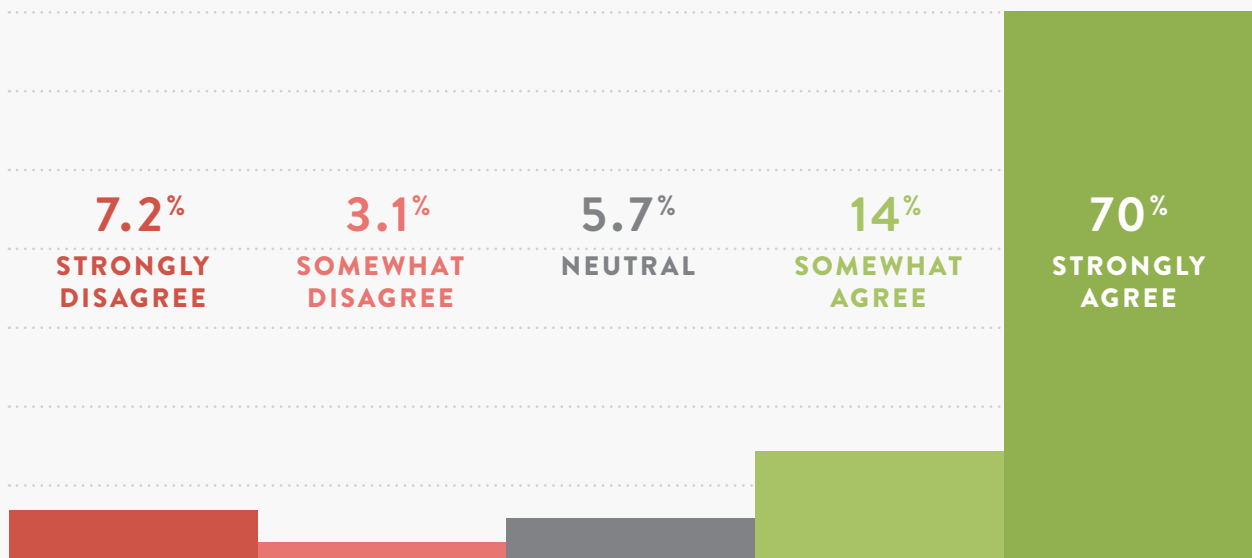
Views on Multiculturalism

SURVEY RESULTS

There is no noticeable difference in the percentage of respondents who disagree between white/Caucasian, Indigenous and other ethnic identities. Respondents who did not indicate any ethnic identity are the group with the highest % who disagree at 14.5% compared to the rest at around 10%. Respondents who did not indicate their gender, or who indicated they are men had the highest % of disagreement (13.3% and 13.2% respectively) compared to those who indicated they are women at 8.1% and non-binary at 9.1%. There is no notable difference by age.

SURVEY RESULTS | VIEWS ON MULTICULTURALISM

It is a good thing for our society to be made up of different cultures.



Views on Religious Diversity

SURVEY RESULTS

In the previous question about multiculturalism, only 6% of respondents replied with a neutral response. In this question, which is intentionally more concrete and local than the question prior, 34% of respondents are neutral. It is unclear whether this shift towards neutrality is because of the religious nature of the question, or whether it is because it is possible to support multiculturalism in the abstract, but less so when it involves local change.

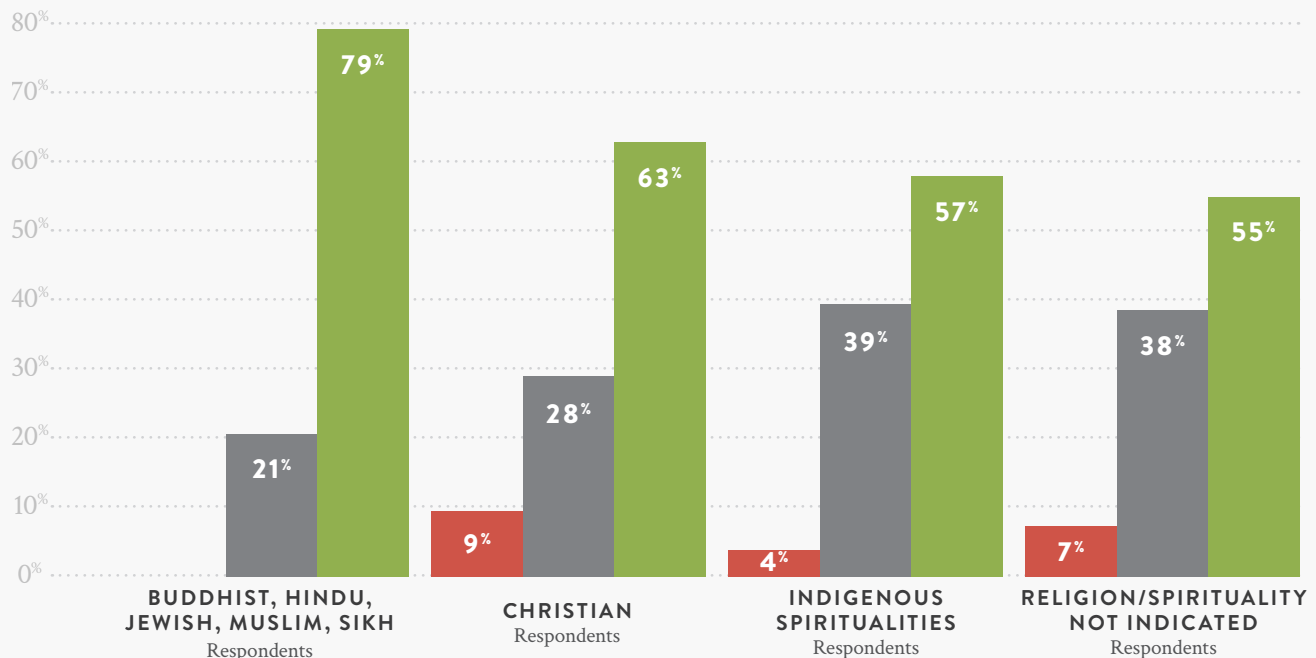
SURVEY RESULTS | VIEWS ON RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

If a temple, mosque, or another non-Christian place of worship was being built in my local community, I would...

OBJECT

NEUTRAL

SUPPORT



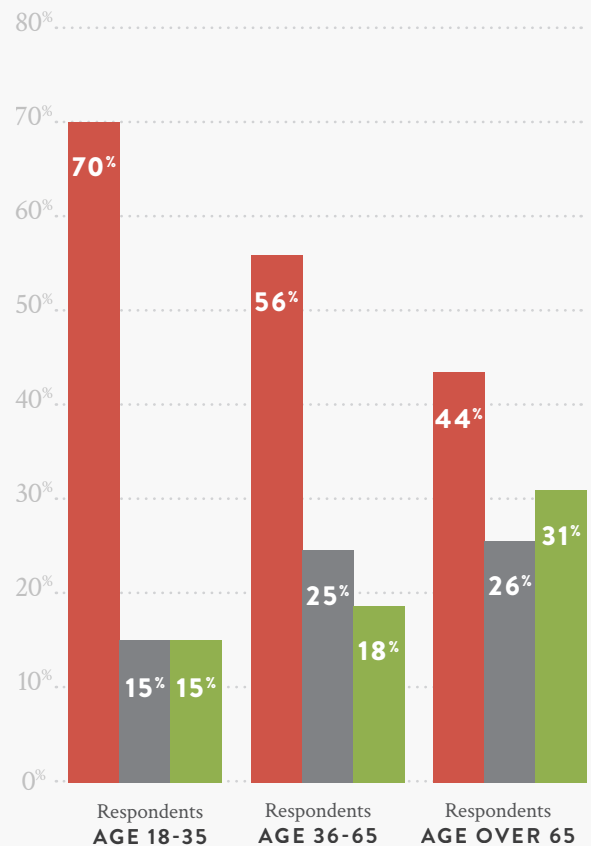
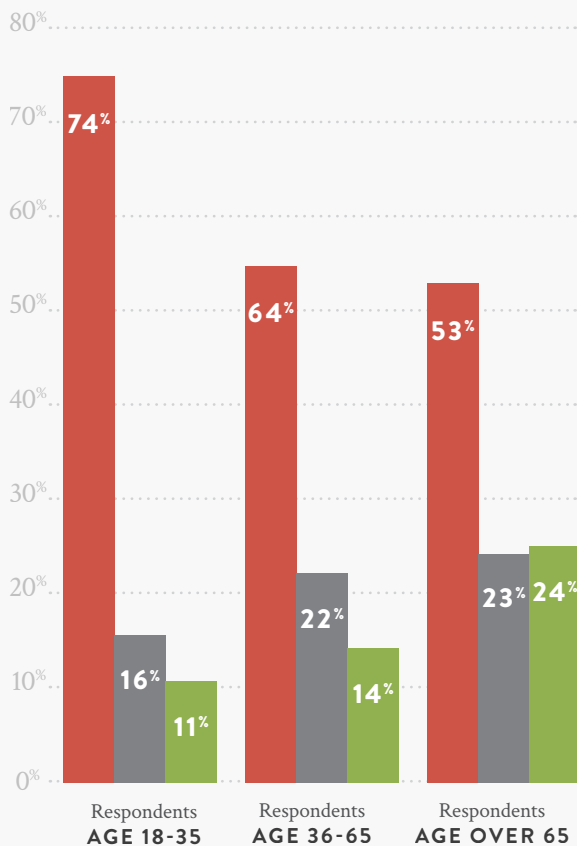
Views on Assimilation

SURVEY RESULTS

There were several comments in the survey responses about the wording of this question. The questions in this survey were adapted (with permission) from a similar study from Western Sydney University in Australia. The phrasing of “mainstream” was left intentionally vague. For more information, see Kamp, A., Alam, O., Blair, K., & Dunn, K. (2017). Australians’ views on cultural diversity, nation and migration, 2015–16. *Cosmopolitan Civil Services: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 9(3), 61–84 (<https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v9i3.5635>).

Indigenous Peoples should behave more like mainstream Canadians.

People from racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious minority groups should behave more like mainstream Canadians.



DISAGREE

NEUTRAL

AGREE

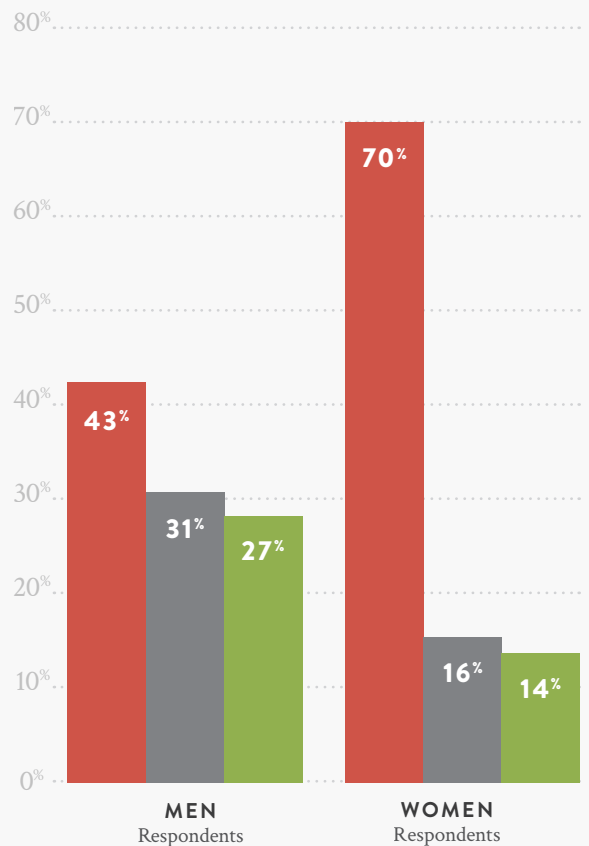
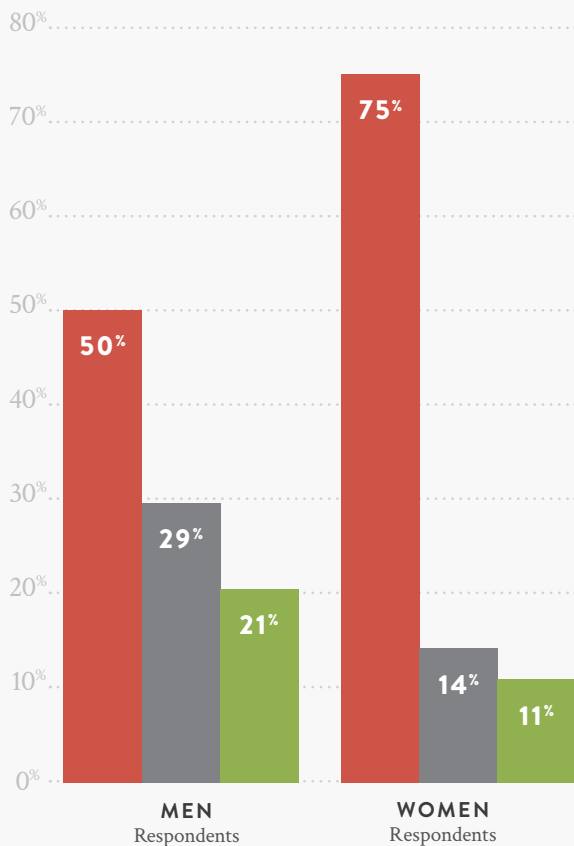
Views on Assimilation

SURVEY RESULTS

What is most notable in these two responses is the differences between the views on assimilation of Indigenous Peoples and those from other racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious minority groups. Respondents who indicated they were men were more likely to agree with assimilation of both Indigenous Peoples and peoples of other racial, cultural, and religious minorities. Despite disagreement with assimilation overall, there are still respondents who support assimilating minority groups and Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples should behave more like mainstream Canadians.

People from racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious minority groups should behave more like mainstream Canadians.



For both questions, 82% of respondents who indicated non-binary gender answered they disagree.

DISAGREE

NEUTRAL

AGREE

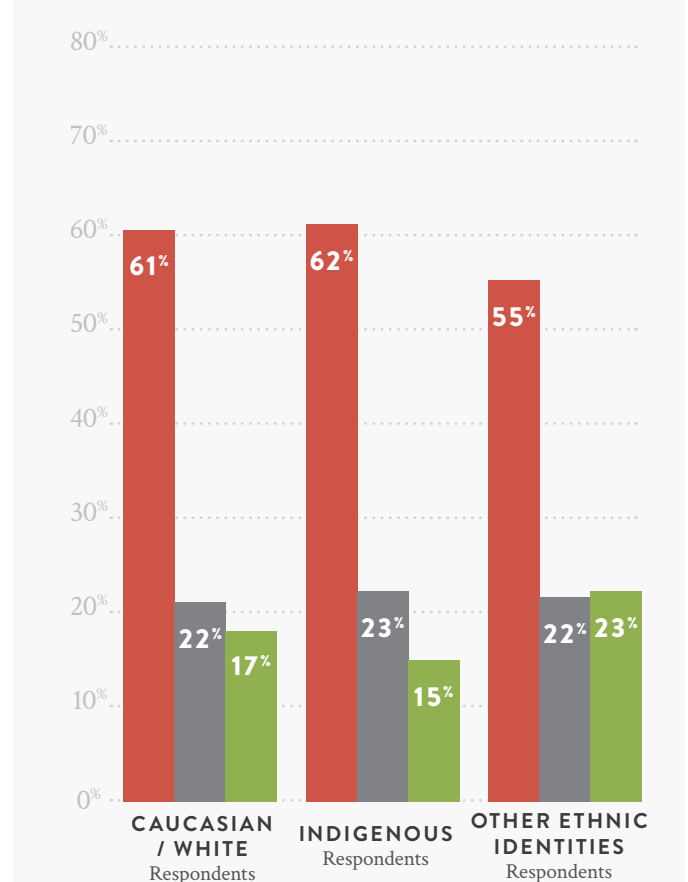
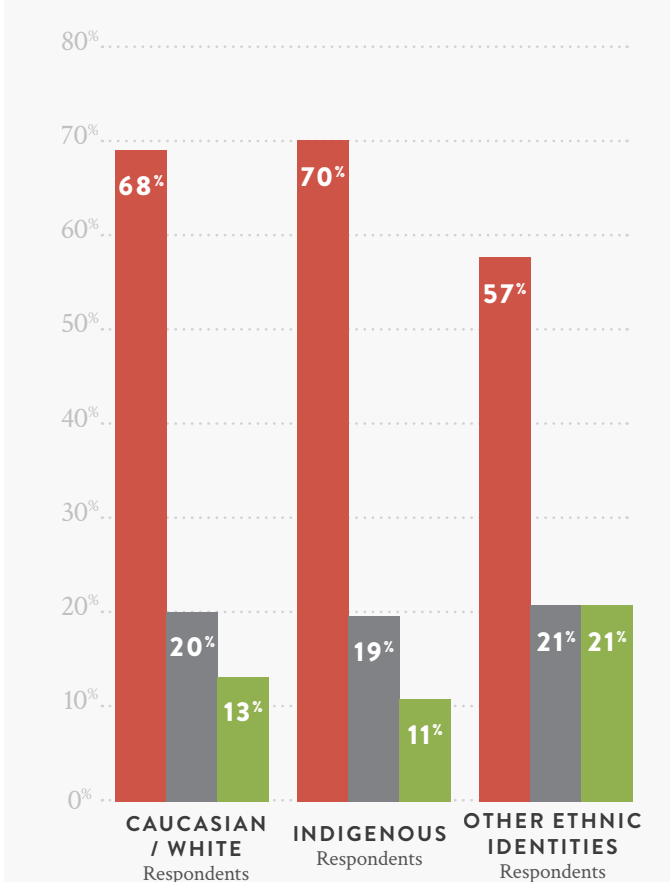
Views on Assimilation

SURVEY RESULTS

Comparing views on assimilation by demographics, respondents from non-Indigenous and non-Caucasian/ non-white backgrounds were more likely to support assimilation of both Indigenous Peoples and people from other racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious minority groups. Indigenous respondents were the least likely to support assimilation of both groups.

Indigenous People should behave more like mainstream Canadians.

People from racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious minority groups should behave more like mainstream Canadians.



Respondents who did not indicate any ethnic identities were removed from the chart due to small sample size.



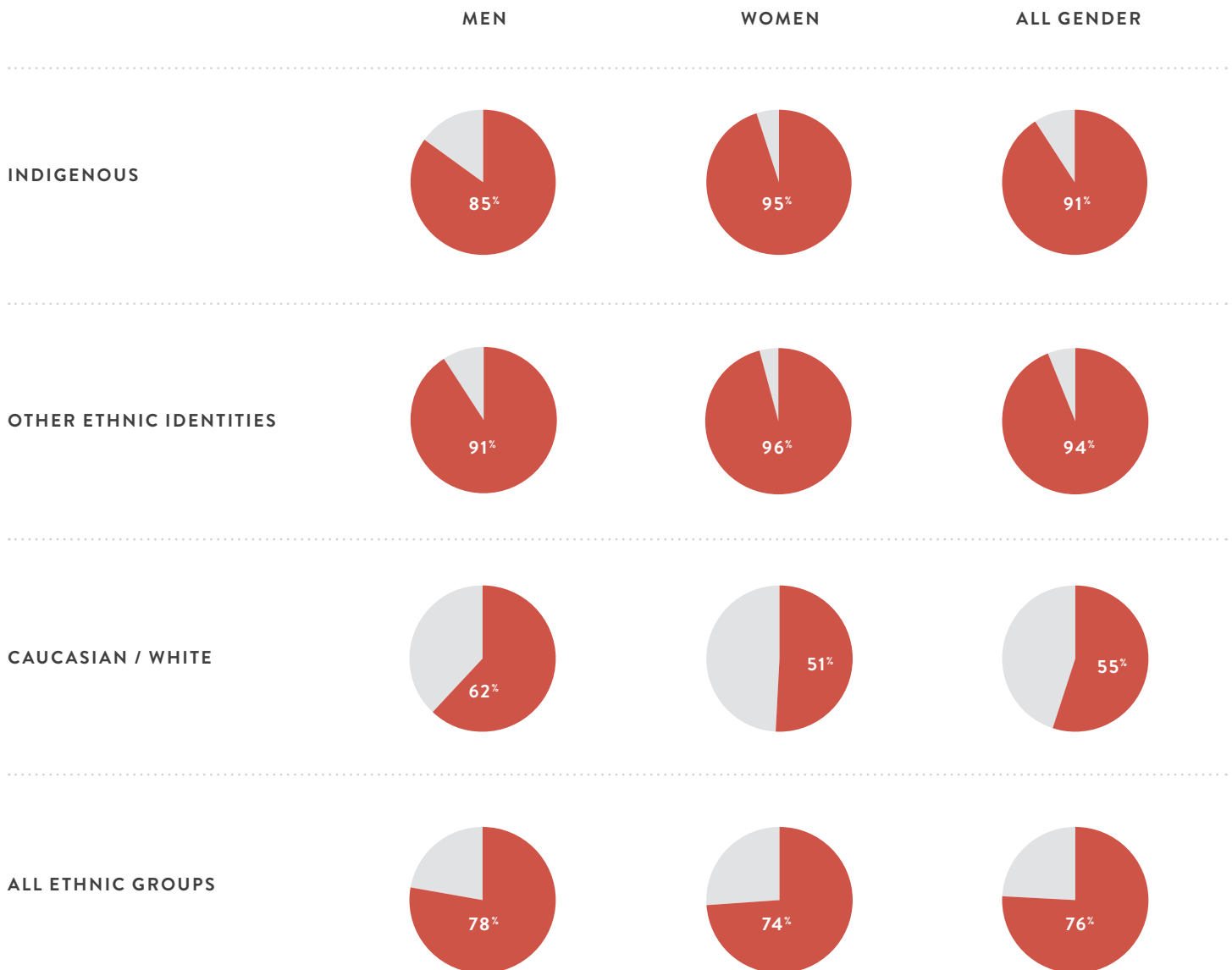
Views on Racism

SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents who indicated that they are Indigenous women and women from other ethnic identities are more likely than men from those backgrounds to experience discrimination because of their race, culture, or religion. Caucasian/white men reported experiencing this discrimination more frequently than Caucasian/white women.

How often do you experience discrimination because of your race, culture or religion?

% OF RESPONDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE RACISM VERY OFTEN, OFTEN, OR SOMETIMES



Respondents who indicated non-binary gender were removed from the chart due to small sample size.

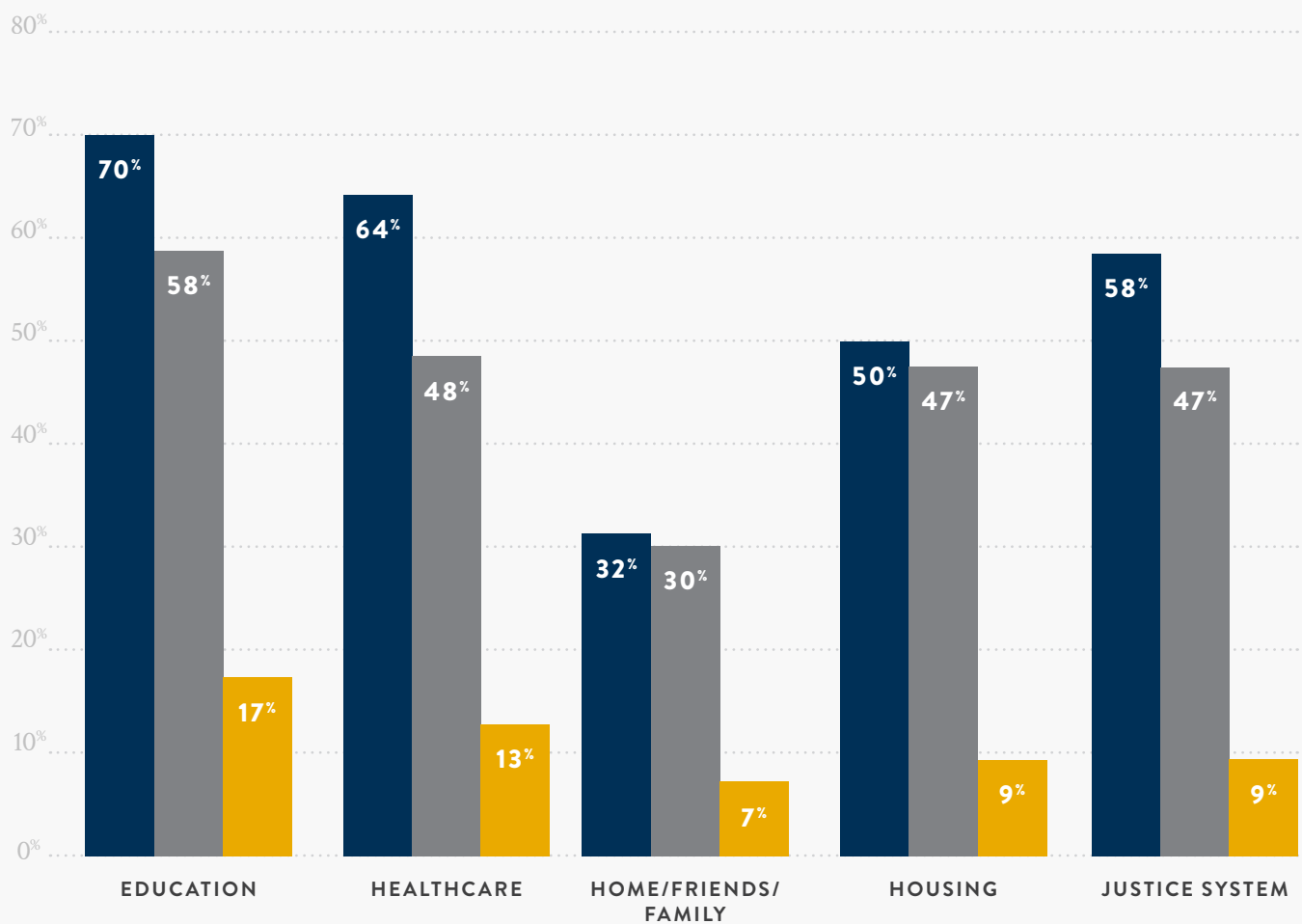
Views on Racism

SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents who indicated that they are Indigenous reported the most discrimination in education, online/ social media, healthcare, in restaurants/shops, in the justice system, housing, at sporting events, and at home, followed closely by respondents who indicated other ethnic identities.

How often do you experience discrimination because of your race, culture or religion in the following situations?

THE CHART BELOW DISPLAYS THE % OF RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWERED VERY OFTEN, OFTEN, OR SOMETIMES.



INDIGENOUS RESPONDENTS

OTHER ETHNIC IDENTITIES RESPONDENTS

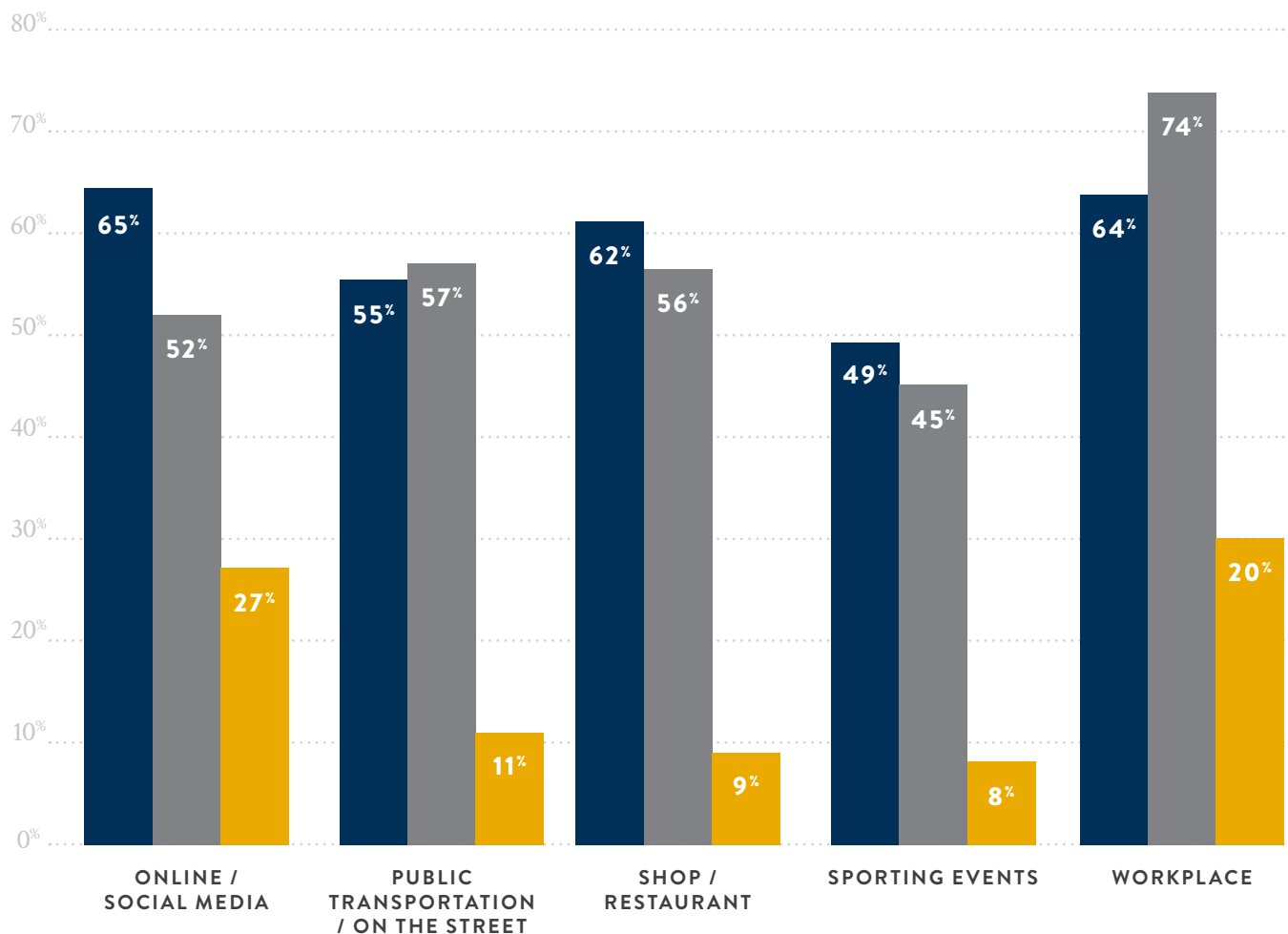
CAUCASIAN/WHITE RESPONDENTS

Views on Racism

SURVEY RESULTS

How often do you experience discrimination because of your race, culture or religion in the following situations?

THE CHART BELOW DISPLAYS THE % OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ANSWERED VERY OFTEN, OFTEN, OR SOMETIMES.



INDIGENOUS RESPONDENTS

OTHER ETHNIC IDENTITIES RESPONDENTS

CAUCASIAN/WHITE RESPONDENTS

“

Shared Accounts of Racism

FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS

”

RACISM

At Work

From the open-ended questions, the workplace was the most commonly reported location of experiences of racism. Examples of this include microaggressions, lack of recognition, exclusion, risk of suffering professionally if reporting incidents, and discriminatory promotion/hiring practices.

“

This happens often at my workplace mostly in the form of microaggressions. The most recent was a person who had a problem with the scent of smudging and felt they needed to express it in a disrespectful manner.

Survey Respondent

“

Every time my husband and I go into stores to shop, we can expect that 50 percent of the time we will be followed or treated indifferently. One week this summer it happened five times in one week.

Survey Respondent

RACISM

In Stores

Experiencing racism in stores was a common incident for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour). Many shared they were followed around the store by staff and security, stereotyped as thieves, and served last.

RACISM

In Healthcare

Respondents shared they received lower quality of care, denial of treatment, encountered stereotypes and rudeness from staff, and longer wait times than white patients.

“

I have been treated as though I would be a drug user trying to get meds to get high. My sister was treated the same way to the detriment of her health. She was in kidney failure and the medical personnel failed to treat this because they assumed that she was trying to get meds to abuse them.

Survey Respondent

“

So many times...

Having a spotless driving record, having a car in perfect working order and still getting stopped by police because “I was acting suspicious.”

Survey Respondent

RACISM

From Police

Police surveillance, stopping, violence and using slurs were experiences of racism many respondents shared. Often respondents shared they were deemed as suspicious without doing anything that would warrant any suspicion. Respondents also noted that they have seen white citizens breaking laws nearby BIPOC citizens, yet the police focused and approached BIPOC instead of addressing the illegal actions of white citizens.

RACISM

Against Indigenous Peoples

Incidents of racism against Indigenous Peoples were the most commonly reported incidents, both experienced and witnessed. Examples of this racism included overt slurs and racist comments/stereotyping, denial of services/lower quality of services, harassment, increased surveillance, avoidance, and violence, to name a few. White-passing Indigenous Peoples also shared they experienced white people sharing overtly racist comments with them because they did not realize they were Indigenous.

“

As a new resident to Brandon only a few years ago, I was informed by a stranger (Indigenous female) who overheard me phoning for a taxi and this woman told me whom to call and definitely which taxi company to avoid out of concern for our safety as Indigenous women.

I was also told where to avoid shopping or which restaurant is more welcoming or what doctor to go to...All these little points but so important to know how to navigate yourself away from potential devastating experiences regarding my race and identity.

Survey Respondent

RACISM

Against Black Peoples

Racism against Black Peoples was also very commonly reported. Examples of this racism included overt slurs, microaggressions, stereotyping, exclusion, lack of representation, police harassment, bullying, unwanted touch, and a rise of racist experiences since an increased media focus on the BLM movement in 2020.

“

I addressed three male staff members whose teasing was demeaning and condescending, and one came back to speak with me privately. He accused me of making it racial, when I had not mentioned race at all, and told me that he's tired of turning on the news seeing people who look like him getting in trouble for saying the wrong thing.

He then tried to convince me that I just had to learn how to take the insults. I appropriately handled all the aforementioned instances; however, navigating these situations is exhausting and unnecessary. I'm Black, not a dinosaur. I belong in the spaces I inhabit and will continue to do so

Survey Respondent

RACISM

Among White People

The words “whites”, “whiteness”, “white”, and “Caucasian” were explicitly mentioned 252 times by respondents out of 500 respondents who participated in the survey. White people were reported most commonly as perpetrators of overt racism. White respondents and white-passing BIPOC also reported witnessing that they received better treatment and better opportunities than their BIPOC counterparts.

“

...As I entered the class, the teacher was saying, your white skins are your greatest assets. Well, and as he saw me entering, he faltered and then I walked to my chair, and as I sat down, he repeated it.

Survey Respondent

“

Every day on social media “white people” are under attack these days.

Survey Respondent

Reverse Racism

There were multiple white respondents who shared they feel they are victims of “reverse racism.” Respondents expressed they felt this took place through personal encounters and systemically. There were also white respondents who also chose to express their personal experiences with other forms of discrimination (i.e., classism, sexism, ageism, etc.).

RACISM

Within the Survey

There were multiple instances in the open-ended responses of racist responses themselves, outside of reporting past incidents. Racist responses included racist comments, stereotyping, generalizations, pathologizing, and supporting assimilation. There were also respondents who openly admitted to being racist.

OVERT OR COVERT?

There were many instances of both overt and covert experiences of racism, almost in equal amounts. Although there may be a fine line as to what is considered overt or what is covert, the overall presence of racism in Manitoba was made clear. Some examples of overt racism included the many slurs said to the faces of respondents and their families. Covert examples include things like racist hiring practices or preferential service.

Racism, as described by respondents, could be seen as overt insults or violence, as silence, as internalized, or as systemic discrimination. Systemic racism, the type of racism woven institutionally into the fabric of Manitoba, was mentioned explicitly 44 times. Racism overall was seen as very prevalent in Manitoba, through individual experiences, unconscious bias, and as being built into society.

“White people need to confront their biases and actively work at being anti-racist. Racism is so much more pervasive than white robes, cross burnings, lynchings, and Confederate flags. Racism is built into the very system that we live in.”
– Survey respondent

“

Reactions to Racism

FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS

These quotes were selected as representative of themes present in the open-ended survey responses.

”

“

I don't know how to call out bias when there is not much concreteness to it.

”

“

I called and left a few messages for the manager to call. I called the head office and left detailed messages and never got a call back. I've taken my case to the human rights commission.

”

“

I wanted to make a scene but I sat there hoping others noticed the way I was being treated.

”

“

I complained about her to HR and they promised me to have the person go through training and they apologized but training will not be the solution for those who are racist.

”

“

Often I will speak out when I hear this garbage, but some days I do not have the energy.

”

“

I speak up loudly to make sure my voice is heard and I also question their integrity.

”

“

It is useless to speak up or offer other perspectives on situations that I face regularly with family. I can avoid my family or distance myself from those incidents. I do both regularly and find ways to care for myself and preserve the amount of connection I choose.

”

“

I think my best attempt at fighting against it is through my own personal actions, and acting as a good example for others.

”

“

I know that it is difficult; I have done it in a very public manner. I have no regrets and although I can retire from my employer; I am staying to complete my Human Rights fight. On principle I want to stay there and show other people that they should fight the organization - that is the only way that things will change.

”

“

I want to share my stories because I feel guilty that I couldn't respond in the moment.

”

“

It's so uncomfortable to talk about race and discrimination but it needs to happen and people need to feel comfortable talking together.

”

“

...What we must do is educate ourselves and become anti-racist. But when racist is this big scary word that causes people to shut down and retreat. I'm not exactly sure what steps to take to get there.

”

“

Education and respect for ALL is key to eliminating suspicion and jealousy of others.

“

“

Racism can not be eliminated without good communication in open way.

”

“

They cannot depend on people of colour to educate them on race-related issues.

”

“

Emergency department needs a lot of staff training about discrimination.

”

“

If we want to grow and fully address racism, bias and discrimination, we need to be fully open and transparent regarding the history of Canada in our education system.

”

“

Cultural sensitivity training is great, but white people need to understand the policies and structures that continue to support a culture of white superiority.

”

“

White people need to confront their biases and actively work at being anti-racist... read, listen to the lived experience of Black and Indigenous people, don't be dismissive, take a stand... even against your own family.

”

“

We have to all stick together and stand up for one another. Fix the healthcare issue and squash racism the moment it happens.

”

“

If only more Canadians can learn to respect before they open their mouth then everyone can get along.

”

“

When children in school are being bullied based on their race, gender, sex, etc. - not just the kids but their parents / guardians should be held to account and the incident(s) should be documented with the School Division.

”

“

Their unions need to do a complete overhaul of their best practices when dealing with First Nations people.

“

“

Our people need to have our OWN jobs and positions of power!

”

“

We want more BIPOC
representation within faculty.

”

“

How to fix it? Elected politicians can't/won't fix racism. We need affirmative action laws forcing political parties & all levels of government to have at least 50% Aboriginal representation. All federal & provincial Crown lands & parks & any owned by British royal families must be returned to the Native peoples of Canada & provided the same operating budgets with all profits from land exploitation go to Native coffers.

”



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Conclusion

With 84% of respondents indicating they believe racism is a problem in their area, it is clear that racism is a pervasive issue in Manitoba.

Respondents noted the detrimental effects of racism on their physical and mental health, participation in their communities and the quality of their everyday living.

Although many respondents have shared their resiliency in order to mitigate these detrimental impacts of racism, respondents shared a need for change. Respondents described the need for change to take place through confrontation, giving up comfort, education, and dismantling systems that uphold racism.

The goal of this project is to amplify BIPOC voices and to challenge white populations to confront their biases, privilege and learn how to be actively anti-racist.

Educational videos, resource toolkits, a facilitation guide, and pledge to action are available at bucares.ca/anti-racism



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