Niagara Region **//** January 2022

COMMUNITY DEI EXPERIENCES REPORT

Niagara Region

Authors:
Jayzer Flores, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Intern, Niagara Region
Shilini Hemalal, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Intern, Niagara Region
Cassandra Ogunniyi, Manager, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations, Niagara Region

Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

Executive Summary

The Niagara Region[1] and the 12 Local Area Municipalities joined the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities in 2020 and are currently working towards developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan. The data presented in this report focuses on the experiences of 1681 community members, 81 that participated in focus groups, and 1599 that contributed through an online survey. Both the focus groups and surveys asked questions about experiences of discrimination, barriers in the community, and experiences relating to reporting incidents of discrimination.[2]

Community Demographic Profiles

The survey sample was fairly reflective of the population distribution of Niagara, based on the 2016 Census, with the most responses coming from St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland. 32% of respondents were 35-49 years old, and 30% were 50-64 years old. Nearly half of the respondents were employed full-time (48%), 18% were retired, 11% were self-employed, 11% were employed part-time, and 6% were students. The majority (51%) of respondents had a degree from a college or university, 26% had a diploma, and 12% had a high school diploma.

The majority of respondents identified as White (74%), 5% were Black, 4% First Nations, and 2% each as Latin American, East Asian, and South Asian. Most participants have lived in Canada for 26 or more years (84%). Just under half (45%) of respondents do not receive government assistance, 38% reported not living with any of the identified disabilities. 37% of respondents experience mental health challenges, and 24% experience chronic conditions.

Approximately two-thirds of participants (65%) identified as heterosexual, 19% identified as part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. Most of the respondents identified as female (62%), 22% identified as male, and 7% identified as gender diverse, including transgender, non-binary, and two-spirit. Twenty per cent of respondents were not living in long-term, stable, and safe housing. There were 44 unique languages identified as first languages spoken that could still be understood, 85% of people spoke English, 2% spoke French, 2% spoke Spanish, 1% spoke Italian, and 1% spoke Polish.

---

[1] Niagara Region with a capital R refers to the Regional Municipality of Niagara as an organization, while Niagara region without a capital R refers to the geographical area of Niagara.

[2] The experiences of discrimination discussed in this report are self-identified and may be subject to personal bias and perception. The analysis is based on the responses to this specific research and may not be reflective of all people associated with that demographic group.

Experiences of Discrimination

Of the 1599 survey responses, 55% believe there is a lot of discrimination in Niagara, 40% believe there is some discrimination, and 4% believe there is no discrimination. Two-thirds of participants (66%, n=1048) had experienced discrimination, and 1193 participants (77%) had witnessed discrimination in Niagara.

The top ten types of discrimination respondents experienced:
1. Gender (41%)
2. Age (30%)
3. Mental health (25%)
4. Vaccination status (24%)
5. Ethnicity (24%)
6. Ability (23%)
7. Income level (23%)
8. Religion (18%)
9. Race (18%)
10. Sexual orientation (15%)

The top ten types of discrimination respondents witnessed:
1. Ethnicity (60%)
2. Mental health (48%)
3. Race (47%)
4. Ability (47%)
5. Gender (42%)
6. Sexual orientation (40%)
7. Income level (38%)
8. Religion (37%)
9. Age (36%)
10. Gender identity (33%)

Participants who identified as Inuk, First Nations, and Black experienced the highest amount of discrimination, compared to White and Canadian respondents who experienced the least. Respondents with physical conditions, and addictions experienced the most discrimination compared to respondents with hearing loss or no physical or mental health challenge. Gender diverse participants experienced the most discrimination, particularly those that are transfeminine, transgender, two-spirit, and those that chose to self-describe compared to males and cisgender respondents. Participants residing in Thorold, Fort Erie, and St. Catharines experienced the most discrimination, while those that lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Wainfleet, and Grimsby experienced the least amount of discrimination. Experiences of discrimination decreased as age increased.

Respondents who lived in Canada five years or less experienced the most discrimination, while respondents living in Canada 6-15 years experienced the lowest rates of discrimination. Respondents that identified as part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community experienced the most discrimination, particularly people who are two-spirit, lesbian, gay, and queer, compared to aromantic and heterosexual respondents. Respondents who are retired experienced the least amount of discrimination, while those that are disabled or injured, those who work multiple part-time jobs, those who are unemployed due to COVID-19, and students experienced the most discrimination.

The top five forms of discrimination respondents experienced were: 1) insulting comments (82%); 2) barriers to participation (59%); 3) teasing, mocking and bullying (58%); 4) verbal abuse (55%); and 5) hate speech (52%). The top five forms of discrimination respondents witnessed were: 1) insulting comments (86%); 2) teasing, mocking or bullying (70%); 3) hate speech (66%); 4) barriers to participation (64%); and 5) verbal abuse (63%). The top five places of discrimination respondents experienced were: 1) businesses (60%); 2) work places (60%); 3) interpersonal (55%); 4) social media (42%); and 5) health care (42%). The top five places of discrimination respondents witnessed were; 1) businesses (67%); 2) interpersonal (62%); 3) work places (57%); 4) social media (57%); and public spaces (50%).

Reporting

Less than a fifth of respondents (19%) who experienced discrimination reported the incident, 18% of respondents who witnessed discrimination reported it. Groups that identified that they had lower levels of reporting were:
- Biracial or Multiracial (0%), Black (19%), and Arab (25%);
- Gender diverse individuals (11%);
- New immigrants (12%);
- Those that identified as questioning (0%), bisexual (9%), or lesbian (11%)

Incidents were reported most often to their work place, about a quarter of reports were made to the Niagara Region Police Service. The majority of respondents (83%) who reported to any location, were not satisfied with the outcome of when they reported incidents they experienced, 78% of respondents were not satisfied with the outcomes of reported incidents they witnessed.

The top three reasons people did not report incidents were:
1. They felt that their complaint wouldn't be taken seriously
2. They felt their report would not have a good outcome
3. They feared problems for themselves

Sense of Belonging

Most of the survey participants (90%) felt accepted with their friends, the lowest places of feeling accepted were at school (65%) and in Niagara (68%). Populations that had lower levels of agreement to feeling accepted in Niagara were:
- Inuk (33%), West Asian (40%), and First Nations (43%)
- Two-spirit (13%), transfeminine (25%), and those that preferred to self-describe (29%)
- Unemployed due to COVID-19 (31%), stay at home participants (41%)

Respondents felt the safest at work (80%) and in their neighbourhood (79%), compared to at school (70%). Populations with lower levels of agreement to feeling safe in their neighbourhood were:

- West Asian (60%), Biracial or Multiracial (62%), and Arab (66%)
- Participants with learning disabilities (61%)
- New immigrants (0%)
- Transfeminine (50%), transmasculine (50%), and prefer to self-describe their gender identity (50%)
- Queer (59%), pansexual (59%), and prefer to self-describe their sexuality (57%)

Just less than half of respondents (47%) agreed that employers in Niagara do a good job of attracting people of diverse backgrounds, 42% agreed that employers do a good job of promoting people of diverse backgrounds.

Just over a third of respondents (35%) agreed that elected officials reflect the community they identify with, and 36% agreed that elected officials listen to them. The groups with the lowest levels of agreement with elected officials reflecting and listening to them were:

- Inuk (0%), Pacific Islander (0%), Biracial or Multiracial (8%), Black (15%), Arab (17%);
- People under 19 years of age (10%)
- Participants who stay at home (13%), students (20%), and those unemployed due to COVID-19 (7%)
- New immigrants (0%)
- Participants experiencing addiction (20%), learning challenges (23%), and developmental conditions (24%)
- Transfeminine (0%), transmasculine (0%), non-binary (10%), transgender (13%), and two-spirit (13%)
- Two-spirit (0%), queer (3%), and pansexual (10%)

Conclusion

People that experienced the most discrimination is this research were racial minorities, 2SLGBTQQIA+ identifying individuals, people with disabilities, new immigrants, older adults, and gender diverse individuals. Areas with the most opportunity for change to become more equitable were acceptance in Niagara, acceptance at school, places of employments, schools, and elected officials. The next step to develop the DEI Action plan will be to combine the community survey data with the Environmental Scan and the Staff Experiences and present the key themes and opportunities for change moving forward. Niagara Region staff will work with the DEI Advisory Committee and select community members to develop the Action Plan to be presented to Regional Council later in 2022.

1.0 Introduction

On September 18, 2020, Niagara Region and the 12 Local Area Municipalities joined the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. In response to joining the Coalition, the Region agreed to develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan. Research to create the Action Plan has included an environmental scan, community and staff focus groups, and a Niagara Region staff survey. From November 12 to December 1, 2021, the Region conducted a community DEI survey to hear from diverse community members about their experiences of discrimination, and find out some of their ideas on strategies to make Niagara more welcoming and inclusive. This report provides details about the methods used to collect and analyze focus groups and the community survey, with a focus on experiences of discrimination, sense of belonging, and current areas of success.

2.0 Methodology

The DEI work in Niagara Region is supported by multiple staff and community members. There is a DEI staff team that includes one Manager and two Interns, 13 additional Niagara Region staff form a DEI Working Group, while two Regional Councillors and 11 community members make up the DEI Advisory Committee (DEIAC). The work is also supported by a DEI Working Group with representatives from all 12 Local Area Municipalities (LAMs). DEI Staff and Working Group members organized and facilitated the community focus groups, with support from the Advisory Committee. To support the development, promotion, and implementation of the community survey a small team was put together that included staff and community members.

2.1 Survey Design

To begin the design of the survey, Niagara Region staff collated similar surveys from other municipalities from across Canada and compiled a list of potential questions. Support for this work came from multiple groups working on DEI at the Region. The Niagara Region DEI Working Group narrowed down the list of questions, and the final selection was made by the DEIAC.

These questions were translated into French and both versions were entered into the survey platform Alchemer. The survey was piloted with six individuals representing various diverse populations, including people who speak English as a second language, a Francophone, someone with visual impairments that uses a screen reader, older adults, people associated with various faith communities, and someone with Alzheimer's. The feedback from the pilot resulted in a few small adjustments to the survey.

The final survey had 42 DEI related content questions and 13 demographic questions in four sections: sense of belonging, experiences of discriminations, actions for change, and demographics. Multiple skip patterns were used, so not all respondents were required to answer all the questions. See Appendix A for the English version of the final questions. It was estimated that it would take 15 to 20 minutes to complete the survey.

2.2 Limitations

The pilot highlighted some limitations to the survey, which were not able to be adjusted. This included the length of the survey and the overall literacy level of the language used. Even though staff and Committee members tried to make the language as accessible as possible, most of the content was not able to be simplified further. Due to these two limitations, many people who started the survey did not complete it. The survey was also only available online due to the time constraints, COVID-19 protocols, and additional labour required for data entry when physical surveys are used. This resulted in some populations having lower participation rates than other populations, notably newcomers who are still learning English, older adults, and other adults who struggle with access to internet or mobile service.

It is important to note that the survey was conducted during the COVID-19 Pandemic, with multiple restrictions on public activities, as well as many employers restricting employment for individuals without proof of vaccination. This resulted in about a quarter of survey respondents including discrimination due to their vaccination status as part of their responses. Nine individuals provided inappropriate or illegitimate responses that were not related to the content of the survey and their responses were removed.

2.3 Survey Promotion

In order to foster community engagement, DEI staff developed a comprehensive list of DEI related organizations and networks in Niagara in collaboration with internal staff and local community partners. This list included more than 200 organizations in Niagara that perform work related to some aspect of diversity. These organizations were contacted to create a list serve, which was used to email information about the survey, promotional material, and links for online access. The survey was promoted through media releases and covered by local newspapers, through online media, and social media such as Facebook, Linked In, and Instagram. Reminders about the survey were sent out multiple times and paid advertisements were used on Facebook.

Posters and postcards were created with English and French content that were handed out and promoted at a minimum of two locations in each Local Area Municipality. The locations for promotion were selected to ensure that all of the diversity categories

identified in Niagara were represented. Postcards were provided for community members who visited a Public Health managed COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics while the survey was open. Local libraries, food banks, and community health centres were among the locations that had postcards to distribute. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, many organizations were not open for staff to visit and promote the survey in-person, however community organizations used online methods to promote the survey among their staff and clients.

2.4 Data Collection

2.4.1 Focus Group Data Collection

Focus groups were conducted either through Zoom or in-person. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all efforts were made to conduct the focus groups online in order to ensure that relevant public health and safety measures were followed. Accommodations were made to ensure that individuals that required a laptop to participate were able to access one.

Focus groups lasted between 30-90 minutes in length. Each of the focus groups had a designated facilitator and administrative support. To help facilitate conversation, the interactive presentation software, Mentimeter, was used to engage with participants using real-time voting and feedback while remaining anonymous. DEI staff used the transcription feature on Zoom to transcribe the interviews and reviewed the transcripts after each focus group session to ensure the transcription accurately captured the conversation. Not all focus group participants were able to use this technology due to technical difficulties, or the use of a phone to connect to Zoom rather than a computer. See Appendix B for a copy of the focus group script and questions. The questions were modified slightly to be relevant to each type of group.

2.4.2 Community Survey Data Collection

The survey could be accessed using any computer or mobile device. It was checked for accessibility and could be used with a screen reader or other assistive devices. When the survey closed, an initial report was provided by Alchemer using a web platform, as well as the data provided in Excel.

2.4.3 Data Confidentiality

DEI staff are committed to maintaining confidentiality at each stage of the data collection process. Focus group participants signed a consent form which outlined important information surrounding the focus group including what participants consented to by being part of the focus groups, how confidentiality would be maintained before, during and after the focus groups, how the information would be used to inform future direction, and other privacy considerations. See Appendix C for a copy of the focus group consent form. At the

start of the survey, participants were asked to consent to Niagara Region using the information provided. Participants were not asked at any time to provide their name, email address, or any other potentially identifying information. They were also provided information of how to contact Niagara Regional staff conducting the survey if they so desired. Only DEI staff have access to focus group and survey data in a restricted access, secure shared folder. DEI staff are committed to ensuring that no names, or any other self-identifying information from the focus groups will be used in any reports, references, presentations or material shared with anyone outside of the DEI staff.

2.5 Survey Sample

The Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community Survey had a total of 2304 responses. After removing response sets that answered less than six questions and nine response sets which were found to have illegitimate responses to questions asked, a total of 1599 surveys were included in analysis. Of these surveys, 1132 were 100% complete and 467 were partially complete, with the latter completing a large portion of the 50 questions asked in the survey. When considering all surveys included in analysis, the survey had a 71% completion rate. Thirteen demographic related questions were asked at the end of the survey, the responses are provided in section 3.0 Demographic profile of survey respondents. Compared to the most recent 2016 Census or other more recent data that is available, the survey can be considered to be fairly representative of the diverse populations in Niagara.

2.5 Focus Group Participants

A total of 11 focus groups were conducted with 82 community members. Table 1 identifies the topic area and total participants per group. Participants were chosen due to either having lived experience as part of the category, or being a staff member that works with community members from that category. Each focus group was centered around a specific diversity category, however individuals participating in one focus group may also identify as members of other diversity categories.

Table 1: Community Member Focus Group Participants

Diversity category	Number of focus groups	Number of participants
Race/Ethnicity	1	6
Born Outside of Canada	1	5
Gender	1	9
2SLGBTQQIA+	1	7
Disabilities	2	20

Diversity category	Number of focus groups	Number of participants
Individuals Experiencing Homelessness	1	5
Francophone	1	5
Low Income	1	12
Older Adults	1	6
All	1	7
TOTAL	**11**	**82**

2.6 Analysis

2.6.1 Focus Group Data Analysis

Transcripts from the focus groups were downloaded and saved in a secure location on the Niagara Region server. Transcripts were cleaned by DEI staff and any additional information from Mentimeter was added to the transcript. DEI staff analyzed the data using the qualitative analysis software NVivo, version 12. Analysis of interview data was primarily inductive, and transcripts were reviewed with material pulled out for further analysis, beginning with open coding, which became more focused and resulted in categorical coding.

A coding framework was developed by DEI staff. Data was coded with further categories created when necessary. There was a total of 81 different codes. Throughout the presentation of qualitative material, names were removed, and potentially identifying details about individuals' identities were omitted to ensure confidentiality. The rest of the document uses selected interview quotes, with context added where necessary.

2.6.2 Community Survey Data Analysis

Survey data was cleaned for duplicate responses and adjusted to a format that is compatible with SPSS. Questions that provided an 'other' option were analyzed thematically with additional categories added to the quantitative data where applicable. Quantitative analysis was completed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27, primarily using frequency and cross tabulation functions. Qualitative analysis of open ended responses was conducted using thematic analysis, comparing the themes identified within the survey, or in comparison to previous research conducted by the Niagara Region DEI team.

3.0 Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

This section provides details of the demographic profile of the DEI Community survey respondents that completed each respective question. These questions were at the end of

the survey and therefore not everyone answered all the questions. Each section identifies how many people responded to each question.

3.1 Municipality

Of the 1120 respondents who identified their home municipality, most participants came from the most populous municipalities, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and Welland. Except for Niagara Falls and Welland, which had lower response rates, the distribution of survey respondents was fairly close to the population distribution of the region (see table 2).

Table 2: Survey responses by municipality

Municipality	Survey Count	Survey Percent	Region Percent[3]
Fort Erie	81	7%	7%
Grimsby	54	5%	6%
Lincoln	51	4%	5%
Niagara Falls	183	16%	20%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	53	5%	4%
Outside of Niagara	7	1%	N/A
Pelham	48	4%	4%
Port Colborne	52	5%	4%
St. Catharines	367	32%	30%
Thorold	62	5%	4%
Wainfleet	17	2%	1%
Welland	104	9%	12%
West Lincoln	41	4%	3%
Prefer not to answer	29	3%	N/A
Total	**1149**	**100%**	**100%**

3.2 Age

Of the 1149 respondents who chose to identify their age, most (32%, n=369) were 35-49 years old, the second highest age range was 50-64 years old (30%, n=345). 20% of respondents were 20-34 years old (n=228), while 1% were each 0-19 (n=12) or 80 years or older (n=13). Only 3% (n=34) of people preferred not to answer (see Figure 1).

---

[3] Statistics Canada, Census Profiles (2016)
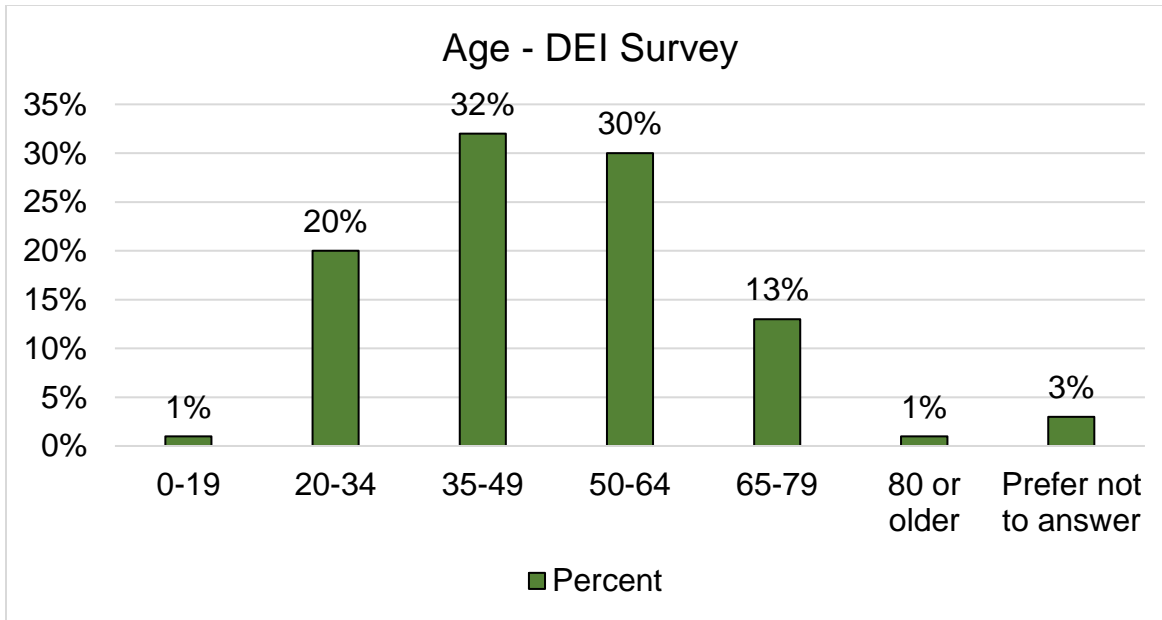
Figure 1: Age, DEI Survey Respondents

In comparison to the population of Niagara, 21% are under 19 years of age, 23% are between 20 and 39 years, 35% are between 40 and 64 years, and 21% are 65 years or more (see Figure 2).
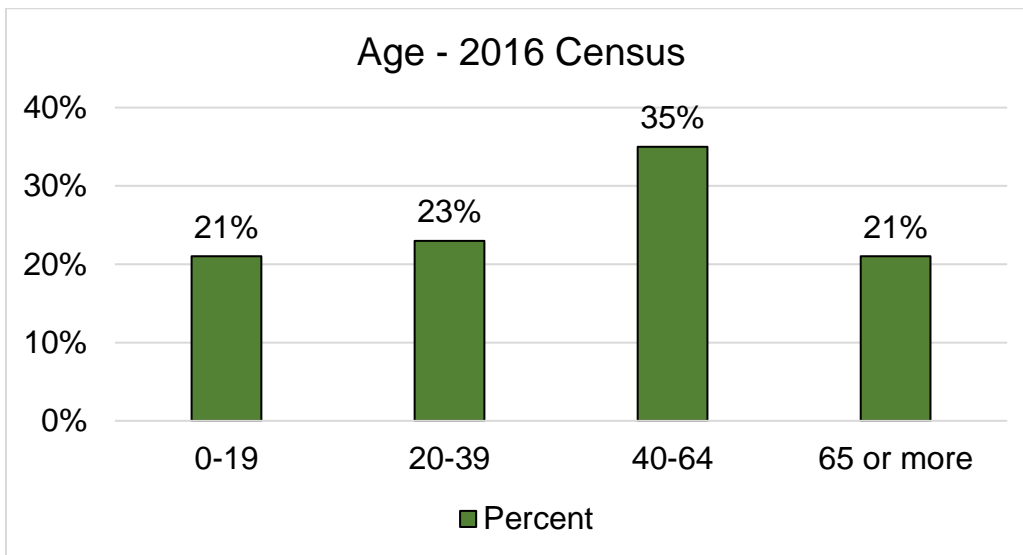
Figure 2: Age, Niagara 2016 Census

3.3 Employment Status

Nearly half (48%) of the 1149 respondents who chose to reveal their employment status, were employed full-time (see table 3). The second highest category was of those that were retired (18%). Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question.

Table 3: Employment status of survey respondents

Employment status	Number	Percent of Cases
Full-time	552	48%
Retired	208	18%
Self-employed	131	11%
Part-time	129	11%
Student	64	6%
Multiple part-time	55	5%
Prefer not to answer	50	4%
Stay at home	41	4%
Unemployed, seeking work	28	2%
Unemployed, not seeking work	19	2%
Disabled or Injured	16	1%
Other	15	1%
Unemployed due to COVID:	13	1%
Total	1321	115%

In Niagara, 93% of residents are employed and 7% are unemployed, this does not include those not seeking employment, such as students and retirees.

3.4 Education

Of the 1147 question respondents, roughly half (51%) had a degree from college or university as their highest level of education (see table 4).

Table 4: Education level of respondents

Education level	Number	Percent
Degree from college or university	580	51%
Diploma from college, CEGEP, university or another institution	294	26%
High school diploma or equivalency certificate	141	12%
Registered apprenticeship, trades, or other certificate	66	6%
Prefer not to answer	51	4%
Less than high school	15	1%
Total	1147	100%

Most of the participants completed their education in Canada (87%), while 11% completed it outside of Canada, and 2% preferred not to answer. According to the 2016 Census, 51% of Niagara residents have a post-secondary degree or diploma, 31% have a high school

diploma, and 18% have less than high school. The respondents from this survey had an average education level higher than the average in the region.

3.5 Race or Ethnicity

The majority (74%) of the 1138 question respondents, identified as being White, including European descent (see table 5). Of those that chose to self-identify, 14 people added the category of Canadian, 13 people identified as Biracial or Multiracial but did not specify those racial identities, and 16 people preferred to self-describe in other ways. Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question.

Table 5: Race or Ethnicity of survey respondents

Race or Ethnicity	Number	Percent of Cases
White, including European descent	840	74%
Prefer not to answer	118	10%
Black	52	5%
First Nations	42	4%
Latin American	27	2%
South Asian	27	2%
East Asian	26	2%
Métis	19	2%
South-East Asian	17	1%
Prefer to self-describe	16	1%
Canadian	14	1%
Biracial or Multiracial	13	1%
Arab	6	1%
West Asian	5	0%
Pacific Islander	5	0%
Inuk (Inuit)	3	0%
Total	1230	108%

According to the 2016 Census, 9% of people in Niagara identified as a racial minority and 2.8% identified as Indigenous. In Ontario, 29% of the population identify as a racial minority, and 2.8% identify as Indigenous. The most common visible minorities in Niagara are Black, South Asian, Chinese, and Latin American. As a note, Indigenous peoples are underrepresented in the Census due to multiple reasons that may include a lack of trust of Canadian government, migration between geographical locations and unclear definitions of different Aboriginal Identity Groups within the Census.[4] Although there was a higher rate

---

[4] Statistics Canada, Census Profiles (2016)

of racial diversity among survey respondents compared to the Niagara community data, it is expected that there will be an increase of diversity in the 2021 Census data.

3.6 Length of Time in Canada

Most participants have lived in Canada for 26 years of more (84%, n=957), with 7% (n=84) living in Canada for 16 to 25 years, 3% (n=37) living in Canada 6 to 15 years, 2% (n=24) living in Canada less than five years, and 4% (n=42) preferred not to answer the question. According to the 2016 Census, in Niagara, 82% of residents were born in Canada, and 18% immigrated to Canada. Although the comparison is not exactly the same, at least 12% of respondents have immigrated to Canada, while a proportion of the respondents who have lived in Canada for 26 or more years would have immigrated within that time frame as well.

3.7 Government Assistance

Of the 1142 respondents who chose to reveal what types of government assistance they receive, just under a half (45%, n=513) do not receive government assistance (see table 6). Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question.

Table 6: Government assistance received by survey respondents

Government Assistance Type	Number	Percent of Cases
I do not receive government assistance	513	45%
Canada Child Benefit (CCB)	215	19%
GST / HST Rebate	208	18%
Old Age Pension (OAP)	135	12%
Ontario Trillium Benefit (OTB)	135	12%
Prefer not to answer	108	9%
Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)	50	4%
Employment Insurance (EI)	25	2%
Canada Pension Plan	22	2%
Other	13	1%
Ontario Works (OW)	10	1%
Parental leave	7	1%
Canada Pension Plan Disability	7	1%
Total	1448	127%

3.8 People with Living with Physical or Mental Health Challenges

There were 1142 respondents who answered the question if they live with any of the following, which was a list of physical and mental health challenges, 54% (n=622) agreed to living with at least one challenge, and 38% (n=437) reported not living with any of the identified challenges. The most common challenge experienced was mental health challenges by 37% (n=418) of survey respondents. Twenty-four percent (n=274) of respondents experienced chronic conditions, 8% (n=95) experienced hearing loss, 8% (n=94) experienced learning challenges, and 7% (n=83) of individuals preferred not to answer. Respondents could chose more than one answer for this question (see Figure 3).
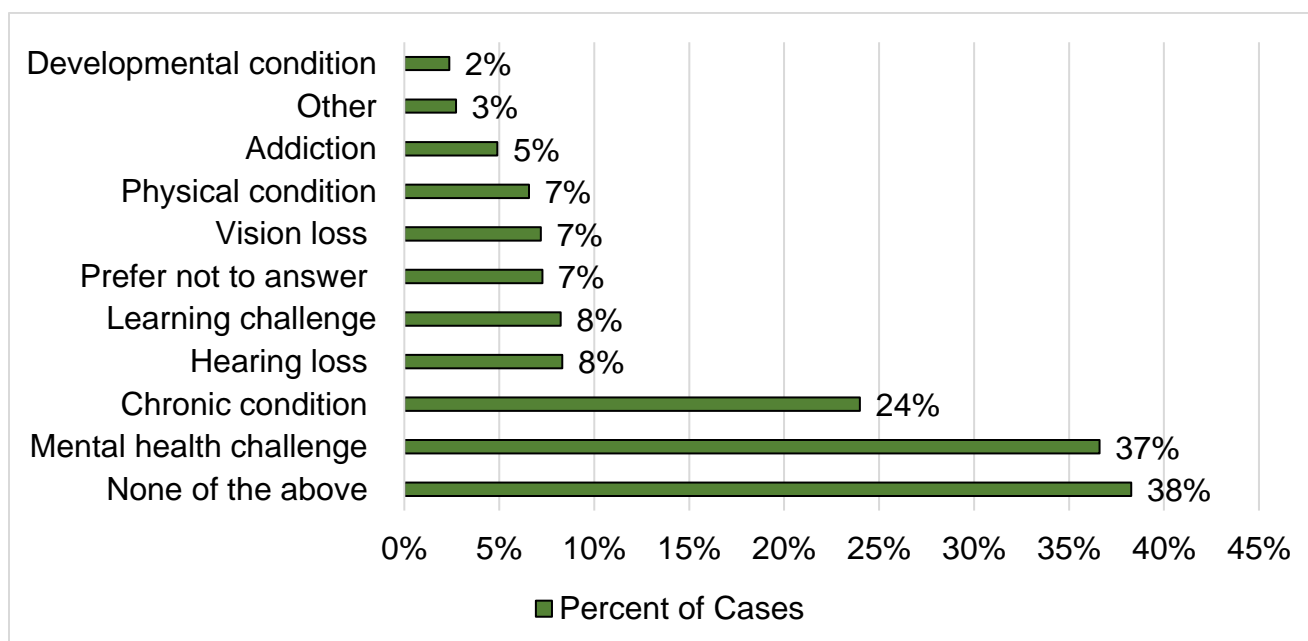
Figure 3: People with disabilities

The Canadian Survey on Disabilities measures individuals with disabilities according to Census Metropolitan Areas. As of 2017, 29% of people in St. Catharines-Niagara CMA (which excludes Grimsby and parts of West Lincoln) had a disability.[5] The top five disabilities that were reported were pain (68%), flexibility (48%), mobility (46%), mental health (33%), and seeing (26%).

3.9 Sexual Orientation

Approximately two-thirds (65%, n=738) of participants identified as heterosexual, 214 respondents (19%) identified as part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, this includes bisexual, gay, pansexual, queer, lesbian, asexual, questioning, two-spirit, and aromantic

(see table 7). Seven individuals chose to self-describe (1%) and 16% chose not to disclose their sexual orientation. No Niagara data is available.

Table 7: Sexuality of survey respondents

Sexuality	Number	Percent
Heterosexual	738	64.9%
Prefer not to answer	185	16.3%
Bisexual	60	5.3%
Gay	36	3.2%
Pansexual	32	2.8%
Queer	29	2.6%
Lesbian	20	1.8%
Asexual	13	1.1%
Questioning	8	0.7%
Prefer to self-describe	7	0.6%
Two-Spirit	5	0.4%
Aromantic	4	0.4%
Total	1137	100%

3.10 Gender Identity

Of the 1137 respondents who chose to reveal their gender identity, 62% identified as female, 22% identified as male, 14% identified as cisgender, 7% identified as gender diverse, and 9% preferred not to disclose their gender identity. Gender diverse individuals includes non-binary, transgender, two-spirit, and questioning (see table 8). Respondents were able to choose more than one answer. In Niagara, 52% are female and 48% are male, no alternative choices were provided in the 2016 Census.

Table 8: Gender identity of survey respondents

Gender	Number	Percent of Cases
Female	706	62%
Male	244	21%
Cisgender	158	14%
Prefer not to disclose	102	9%
Non-binary	30	3%
Transgender	16	1%
Two-Spirit	8	1%

Gender	Number	Percent of Cases
Prefer to self-describe	8	1%
Questioning	7	1%
Transmasculine	7	1%
Transfeminine	4	0%
Total	1290	113%

3.11 Housing

There were 1132 respondents who chose to answer if they are living in long-term, stable, and safe housing. Of these respondents, 20% (n=224) were not living in long-term, stable, and safe housing. Approximately three-quarters (74%, n=834) of respondents were living in long-term, stable, and safe housing, while 7% (n=74) preferred not to answer. The 2016 Census identifies that 25% of people in Niagara spend 30% or more on shelter costs, this is an indication of housing insecurity. With the rapidly increase of housing prices in the Region in the past five years, this number is expected to be higher in the next Census.

3.12 First Language Spoken

Respondents identified 44 unique languages that were the first language spoken and still understood. The top five languages identified were English (85%), French (2%), Spanish (2%), Italian (1%), and Polish (1%) (see Appendix D for the full list of languages identified). Of note, six individuals spoke English and French to start. According to the 2016 Census, in Niagara, 96% of the population spoke English as their first language, 3% spoke French, 0.3% spoke English and French, and 0.6% spoke neither English nor French.

4.0 Experiences of Discrimination

Most of the survey participants (95%, n=1521) agreed that there is discrimination in Niagara. Of the 1599 responses, 55% (n=886) believed there is a lot of discrimination, 40% (n=635) believed there is some discrimination, while 4% (n=57) believed there is no discrimination in Niagara and 1% (n=21) preferred not to answer. The survey included multiple questions asking if individuals had experienced or witnessed discrimination, what the discrimination was based on (types), what forms of discrimination, and where the discrimination took place. The experiences of discrimination discussed in this report are self-identified and may be subject to personal bias and perception. The analysis is based on the responses to this specific research and may not be reflective of all people associated with that demographic group.

Out of 49 community members that participated in the Mentimeter polls in the focus groups, 41 participants (84%) answered that they have witnessed or experienced what they would label as exclusion, discrimination, or another barrier. In the focus groups this question was used to initiate conversation and not to quantify experiences, the focus groups took place prior to the community survey and based on the discussions it was decided to ask more details questions about this in the survey.

4.1 Types of Discrimination

Two thirds of the 1599 respondents had experienced discrimination (66%, n=1048), while 30% (n=485) had not, 4% (n=66) preferred not to answer. Over three quarters of respondents had witnessed discrimination in Niagara (77%, n=1191), while 19% (n=297) had not, and 4% (n=66) preferred not to answer. There were 30 unique types of reasons why participants experienced or witnessed discrimination, plus an "other" category (see tables 16 and 17 in Appendix D for the full list of reasons). Sixteen of these reasons were originally provided within the survey options. Fourteen more additional categories were created from reasons consistently found within the "other" option. Categories were not mutually exclusive and participants were able to select as many reasons for their experience as they felt appropriate. Overall, more discrimination was witnessed than experienced, but the top ten reasons were almost the same, except for gender identity and vaccination status (see Figure 4).

The top ten types of discrimination respondents experienced:
1. Gender
2. Age
3. Mental health
4. Vaccination status
5. Ethnicity
6. Ability
7. Income level
8. Religion
9. Race
10. Sexual orientation

The top ten types of discrimination respondents witnessed:
1. Ethnicity
2. Mental health
3. Race
4. Ability
5. Gender
6. Sexual orientation
7. Income level
8. Religion
9. Age
10. Gender identity
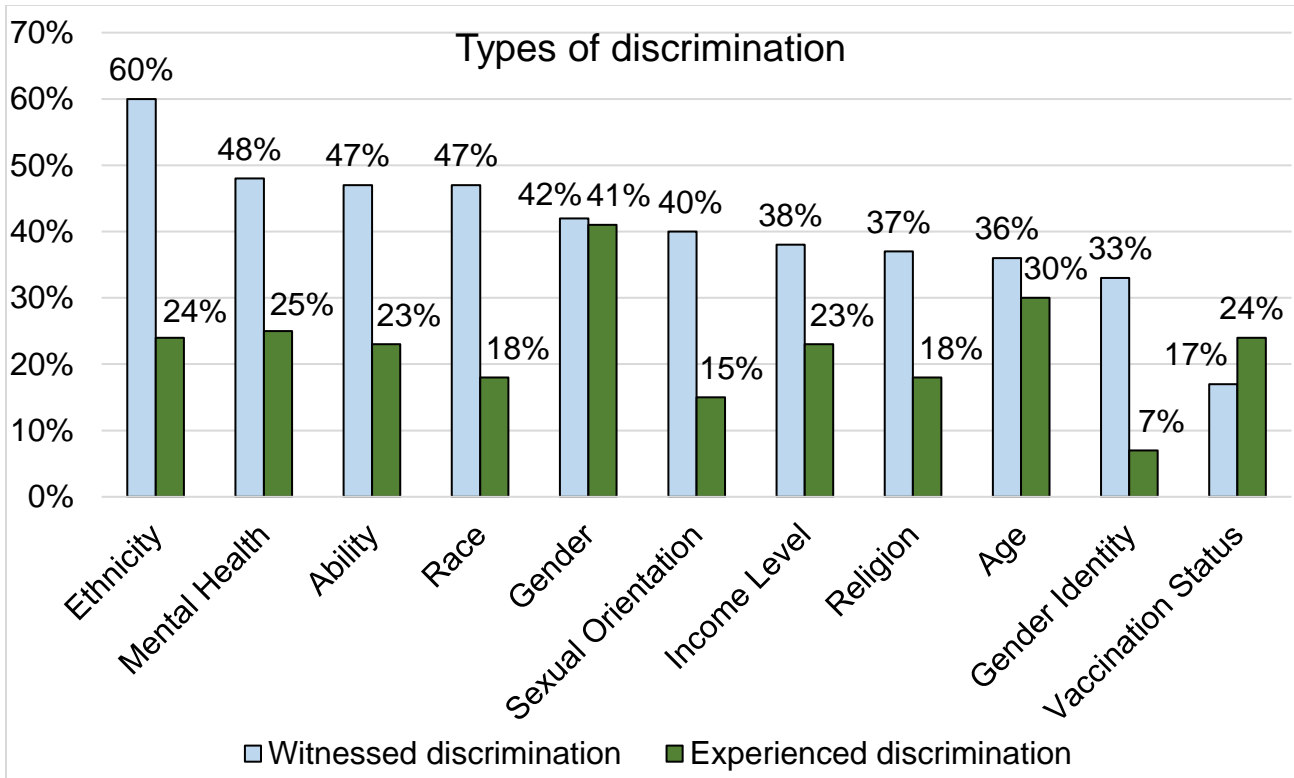
Figure 4: Types of discrimination witnessed and experienced

When analyzing the responses of individuals that experienced discrimination compared to the demographic data provided, a few patterns emerged.

4.1.1 Race or Ethnicity

There were 180 people (18%) that experienced discrimination based on race and 242 (24%) that experienced discrimination based on ethnicity. There were 537 people (47%) that witnessed discrimination based on race and 688 (60%) that witnessed discrimination based on ethnicity. An additional 42 people (4%) experienced discrimination due to their Indigenous identity, and 344 (30%) had witnessed discrimination based on Indigenous identity.

There were 1095 individuals who answered if they experienced discrimination and identified their race or ethnic identity. The three racial or ethnic identities that experienced discrimination the most were Inuk (100%), First Nations (91%), and Black (90%). The racial or ethnic identities that experienced the least amount of discrimination were White (63%) and Canadian (57%) (see Table 9).

Table 9: Discrimination experienced and witnessed compared to race or ethnicity

Racial or Ethnic Identity	Count Experienced Discrimination	Percent Experienced Discrimination	Count Witnessed Discrimination	Percent Witnessed Discrimination
Inuk (Inuit)	3	100%	3	100%
First Nations	38	91%	36	86%
Black	47	90%	41	79%
South-East Asian	15	88%	12	71%
East Asian	22	85%	16	62%
Biracial or Multiracial	11	85%	9	69%
South Asian	23	85%	21	78%
Pacific Islander	4	80%	5	100%
West Asian	4	80%	4	80%
Latin American	21	78%	19	70%
Prefer not to answer	94	78%	95	81%
Métis	14	74%	15	79%
Arab	4	67%	4	67%
Other	10	63%	11	69%
White, including European descent	530	63%	680	81%
Canadian	8	57%	9	64%
Total	**771**	**66%**	**904**	**77%**

There was a similar pattern for respondents who had witnessed discrimination, with 100% of Inuk and 86% of First Nations witnessing discrimination. In some racial or ethnic groups, less individuals witnessed discrimination than personally experienced it, this included Black, South-East Asian, East Asian, Biracial or Multiracial, and South Asian. While respondents in the remaining racial or ethnic groups had the same or more individuals that witnessed discrimination.

Although the individuals did not identify their racial group in their comments, multiple participants described their experiences of racism in Niagara, ranging from threats to microaggressions.

"People from the BIPOC community in Niagara often face micro aggressions in the community, education and workplace. A dichotomy of us versus them is still unfortunately prevalent."

"You can hear people mutter under their breaths racial slurs and threats. … Niagara has so many new immigrants now (which I think is wonderful) but when I was working I could hear the white staff making fun of the girls from Africa."

"My family is Interracial. My husband and I when we are out for dinner will sometimes get looks, especially from the older generation. Once an older white couple actually asked the server to switch tables away from us! My son has been called the "N" word from a random person while walking down the street. I've witnessed online and in person horrible comments about the hard working migrant farm workers that come here and put food on our tables. Niagara very much has a discrimination problem!"

Community focus group participants expressed the possibility of being a potential target of racism at anytime and anywhere in Niagara. Some individuals that migrated to Niagara from other places were quite shocked with the level of racism they experienced in Niagara.

"I've lived all over Canada and the world, and I have never seen overt racism like I have in Niagara."

4.1.2 People Experiencing Disabilities

There were 236 (23%) people who experienced discrimination based on their ability or disability, and 535 (47%) people that witnessed discrimination based on ability or disability. More specifically, 251 (25%) people experienced discrimination based on their mental health, and 58 (6%) people experienced discrimination due to substance use. While 542 (48%) people witnessed discrimination based on mental health and 362 (32%) witnessed discrimination based on substance abuse.

Of the 1142 survey respondents who had experienced discrimination and experience one or more disability, those with physical conditions such as cerebral palsy, spinal cord, injury, amputation, or other (87%, n=65) experienced the most discrimination. This was closely followed by those that preferred not to answer (86%, n=71), and people with addiction (alcohol, gambling, drugs, or other) (82%, n=46). People with addiction witnessed the most discrimination (93%, n=52), followed by people with learning challenges (88%, n=83), people with mental health challenges (88%, n=368), and people with physical conditions (84%, n=63). Survey respondents who experienced hearing loss experienced the least amount of discrimination (57%, n=54), followed by those with no

physical or mental health challenge (61%, n=268). These are also the two groups who had witnessed the least amount of discrimination (71%, n=67 and 73%, n=319 respectively).

Some participants described how they were discriminated against due to multiple factors, including race, sexuality, and ability.

> "I'm the son of Residential School Survivors and Survivor of the 60's Scoop, 2SPIRITED & a Survivor of Domestic Abuse, HIV+ for 20 years, Survivor of Homelessness living with PTSD and High Anxiety also living with Depression and loneliness & also have Epilepsy been put on medication for Seizures yet nobody can give me a definite answer to why I'm having serious seizures and have had bad experiences in the healthcare system many times. I was denied having an MRI in the St. Catharines Emergency department because it was too expensive. More like I'm Native and they just don't care. Racism, Homophobia & Discrimination exists highly in Niagara!!!"

Some participants voiced concerned over the negative treatment people have received who are not able to wear masks for medical reasons during the current COVID-19 context. Often this exacerbates an already difficult situation for individuals with disabilities.

> "A very close loved one has a disability that is extremely exacerbated by mask wearing. Many places in Niagara do not allow for exemptions though they are supposed to. It's really heartbreaking."

Focus group participants described discrimination based on health issues, including mental health and physical challenge. Participants noted structural issues related to an inability to access health care altogether for a number of reasons, including long waitlists. Others, specifically, people with chronic mental illness and mental health disabilities, feel they are treated differently by medical professionals and at the hospital, compared to when they go to receive treatment for a physical ailment.

> "I feel different treatment by medical professionals … depending if you're coming with something that's a physical versus a mental [ailment]."

> "For me, when I go in and I have a physical ailment as opposed to a mental health [problem] then they treat me differently."

Participants noted that service providers in the community can be abrasive and lack patience when providing services to an individual with a mental health disability. In addition to accessing services, participants with mental health challenges expressed barriers in the labour market, including being fired for having a brain injury.

"I didn't realize at the time, because I was young and uninformed that that was not actually legal. You can't fire someone because they have a brain injury."

Service providers that work with individuals dealing with addictions can be met with criticism too. Some participants criticized the Region's involvement in safe injection sites.

In addition, sidewalks are not always accessible to those with wheelchairs as they do not always have dips. Buildings are not universally wheelchair accessible. Participants noted that renovations for buildings need to take place with an accessibility lens but they don't always do. For instance, most shops in Niagara-on-the-Lake have one or two steps at the entrance.

4.1.3 Gender

There were 417 (41%) people who experienced discrimination based on their gender, while 482 (42%) people witnessed discrimination based on gender. Gender diverse individuals (70%, n=65) experienced the most discrimination while males (66%, n=160) and those that identified as cisgender (64%, n=101) experienced the least amount of discrimination. Survey respondents who identified as male (72%, n=176) or transmasculine (71%, n=5) witnessed the least amount of discrimination. The people who experienced the most discrimination were transfeminine (100%, n=4), transgender (88%, n=14), two-spirit (88%, n=7), and those that preferred to self-describe (88%, n=7). This is similar to the respondents who witnessed discrimination, with 100% of transfeminine (n=4), two-spirit (n=8), and questioning (n=7) individuals witnessing discrimination. High rates were also seen for transgender (94%, n=15), and non-binary (90%, n=27) respondents.

Some focus group participants discussed barriers experienced by transgender community members, including challenges with accessing shelters that are designated as male or female only, and using public bathrooms that lack a gender neutral option. Focus group participants expressed that women in leadership positions and Regional Council are more likely to face scrutiny, be targeted, and insulted in-person and online.

Understanding gender based discrimination needs to consider situations or systems that have biases that privilege women as well. One survey participant described the challenges he faced when going through a divorce.

"As a man who went through divorce from a woman suffering from mental health challenges, I received no support, found the system was rigged to deny me a fair hearing at all avenues. Encouraged lying and never subjected the mother of my

children to scrutiny. There was a complete power imbalance. It failed to look at evidence, used the system to destroy my self confidence and attempted to drive me to suicide from the relentless scrutiny on baseless claims and lack of support. The number of times I went looking for stress support only to be told men do not ask for help was astounding."

4.1.4 Municipality

There were 31 people (3%) that experienced discrimination based on rural location and 87 people (8%) that witnessed discrimination based on rural location. There was variance in experiences of discrimination based on the municipality of residence, with the least amount experienced in Niagara-on-the-Lake (49%), Wainfleet (53%), and Grimsby (54%). Municipalities where individuals experienced the most discrimination were Thorold (77%), Fort Erie (73%), and St. Catharines (71%), (not including those who did not live in Niagara or preferred not to answer) (see table 10).

Table 10: Experiences of discrimination by Local Area Municipality

Local Area Municipality	Count Experienced Discrimination	Percent Experienced Discrimination	Count Witnessed Discrimination	Percent Witnessed Discrimination
Thorold	48	77%	54	87%
Fort Erie	59	73%	64	79%
St. Catharines	260	71%	298	81%
Welland	73	70%	83	80%
Lincoln	34	67%	37	73%
Niagara Falls	123	67%	149	81%
Pelham	29	60%	36	75%
Port Colborne	31	60%	39	75%
West Lincoln	24	59%	32	78%
Grimsby	29	54%	41	76%
Wainfleet	9	53%	15	88%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	26	49%	31	59%
Total	**751**	**66%**	**886**	**77%**

More respondents witnessed discrimination in all of the Local Area Municipalities, with the largest increases seen in Wainfleet, where 88% of respondents witnessed discrimination, and in Grimsby, where 76% of respondents witnessed discrimination. Respondents from Niagara-on-the-Lake (59%) and Lincoln (73%) had the lowest rates of witnessing discrimination.

4.1.5 Age

There were 306 people (30%) that experienced discrimination based on age, and 405 (36%) that witnessed discrimination based on age. Experiences of discrimination decreased as age increased, with individuals 0-19 years experiencing the most (83%), compared to those 65-79 years (41%) and those 80 or older (23%) (see table 11). Overall, more people witnessed discrimination than experienced it, however the differences were less pronounced, with 85% of those under 50 years witnessing discrimination, 78% of people 50 to 64 years of age, and 62% of people 65 years and older.

Table 11: Discrimination experienced and witnessed by age

Age	Count Experienced Discrimination	Percent Experienced Discrimination	Count Witnessed Discrimination	Percent Witnessed Discrimination
0-19	10	83%	10	83%
20-34	171	75%	195	85%
35-49	276	75%	310	85%
50-64	229	66%	270	78%
65-79	60	41%	91	62%
80 or older	3	23%	8	62%
Total	749	67%	884	79%

Multiple participants described discrimination they witnessed or experienced relating to age, mostly focusing on discrimination towards people who are older adults rather than youth. One participant shared that they were prevented "from obtaining a safe place to call home" due to ageism expressed by their landlord. Another participant described the Senior's pension amount of $1500 a month, which is less than the $2000 received by people needing financial support during COVID-19.

> "The discrimination against seniors is incredible. I've been told 'I am just an old person, go home', … told I am entitled, go to [the] back of line. I've been told to get off the road, I am going the speed limit."

One participant described discrimination they experienced coming from a specific age group.

> "The entitled elderly make NOTL [Niagara-on-the-Lake] a pretty miserable place to live at times. … They speak down to you if you're younger. NOTL is not welcoming to non-cis, non-straight individuals and it is purely because of its elderly population. Perhaps some official memo stating NOTL's position as an ally would be in order, since many believe their hate speech is protected as free speech."

4.1.6 Length of Time in Canada

Respondents who have lived in Canada for less than a year experienced the most discrimination (100%), followed by respondents who have lived in Canada for 1 to 5 years (81%). The lowest rate of witnessing discrimination was new immigrants who lived in Canada one to five years (52%), while the second highest rate was in the group that have lived in Canada for at least 26 years (80%) (see table 12).

Table 12: Discrimination experienced and witnessed compared to length of time in Canada

Length of time in Canada	Count Experienced Discrimination	Percent Experienced Discrimination	Count Witnessed Discrimination	Percent Witnessed Discrimination
Less than 1 year	3	100%	3	100%
1 to 5 years	17	81%	11	52%
6 to 15 years	21	57%	25	68%
16 to 25 years	58	69%	67	80%
26 or more years	641	67%	766	80%
Total	740	67%	872	79%

Discrimination based on immigrant status and language barriers was a commonly referenced type of discrimination within the focus groups. Many participants highlighted that a major barrier for new immigrants is systemic discrimination, specifically related to employment. Most newcomers struggle to find employment. For those who are fortunate to find employment, it is often in low-skill and low-wage work that does not take into account their skills or experiences. This is largely due to the fact that Canadian work experience is valued more than International experience.

> "You'll find that Canada is opening to all these foreign nationals to come over but the moment they land here, where are the jobs, where did they go? So [in] the area of employment, there is discrimination."

> "I've worked with newcomers and have seen and heard so many first-hand accounts of racism, religious discrimination."

> "I live in Niagara-on-the-Lake - I have witnessed multiple incidents of harassment and abuse towards seasonal farm workers, actors from the Shaw (whom people in town have assumed do not "belong" there)"

> "I feel like people who have lived here for a while are very intolerant and treat newcomers and especially ethnicity diverse people badly."

Some barriers immigrants face include websites only available in English, Regional websites are difficult to navigate, and service providers sometimes struggle to understand their accents. The language barrier then becomes one of the barriers to accessing quality health care services. Temporary foreign workers also find that language barriers impede their ability to receive health care services. Due to the language barriers, private health related information is often transmitted through their employers, which can be a breach of privacy.

4.1.7 Sexual Orientation

There were 156 individuals (15%) that experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation, and 455 (40%) that witnessed discrimination based on sexual orientation. Respondents who identified as aromantic experienced the least amount of discrimination (25%). 62% of respondents who identified as heterosexual experienced discrimination, and 63% of respondents who are questioning their sexuality experienced discrimination. 100% of survey respondents who are two-spirit and those that preferred to self-describe experienced discrimination, while 95% of lesbians, 89% of gay respondents, and 86% of queer respondents experienced discrimination (see table 13). People could choose multiple categories.

Table 13: Experiences of discrimination by sexuality

Sexuality	Count Experienced Discrimination	Percent Experienced Discrimination	Count Witnessed Discrimination	Percent Witnessed Discrimination
Two-spirit	5	100%	5	100%
Prefer to self-describe	7	100%	7	100%
Lesbian	19	95%	19	95%
Gay	32	89%	27	75%
Queer	25	86%	28	97%
Asexual	10	77%	10	77%
Bisexual	44	73%	54	90%
Pansexual	23	72%	29	91%
Questioning	5	63%	6	75%
Heterosexual	455	62%	572	78%
Aromantic	1	25%	3	75%
Total	**626**	**66%**	**760**	**77%**

Only one group of respondents had less people who witnessed discrimination compared to experiencing it, 75% of gay respondents. All of the other groups had the same or more individuals that witnessed discrimination.

Survey participants provided some examples of their experiences of discrimination relating to sexual orientation in Niagara.

> "I volunteered for years for the LGBTQ community and witnessed most discrimination at that time. I also feel the municipalities in Niagara discriminate against older persons, of which I am one. And, in general, to women who run for office."

> "In Niagara, queer people (like myself) often feel compelled to have a confirmative gender expression / outwardly perceived orientation "veil". In my experience, we aren't usually outwardly targeted (except at Christian churches and schools), but we are looked down upon, made of mockery of, and treated as clowns; entertainment or novelty."

> "When the pride crosswalk downtown St. Catharines was defaced I was reading thousands of comments from bigoted people and it made me aware of just how many homophobic people there are in my city. Many of the comments were shocking and appalling. I don't identify as gay but I look gay and I have experienced derogatory remarks regarding that in my city."

4.1.8 Employment

Employment has a strong link to income level, 236 people (23%) experienced discrimination based on their income level, and 436 (38%) witnessed discrimination based on income level. Respondents who are retired experienced the least amount of discrimination (44%, n=92), compared to those who are disabled or injured and unable to work (88%, n=14), those who work multiple part-time jobs (87%, n=48), those who are unemployed due to COVID-19 (85%, n=11), and students (83%, n=53). This is similar to the pattern of witnessing discrimination, where the lowest rate was among retired respondents (65%, n=135), compared to respondents who were unemployed due to COVID-19 (100%, n=13), students (86%, n=55), those who were unemployed but seeking work (86%, n=24) and those who work multiple part-time jobs (84%, n=46).

Participants commented about the discrimination experienced in Niagara for people who are low-income or experiencing homelessness. Discrimination based on income was expressed in community focus groups. This type of discrimination often results in barriers related to access. Specifically, participants highlighted that low income can create barriers in accessing effective healthcare in addition to barriers in accessing housing.

> "There are some people that don't want to be on ODSP [Ontario Disability Support Program] or OW [Ontario Works] but have no choice. … The most a single person

gets is between $750 (OW) or $1220 (ODSP) and for a Bachelor apartment is between $1000 to $1500 plus hydro, or rent a room for $900 short term. Keep in mind landlords want credit scores, and as soon as they hear that you're on ODSP or OW you're told they won't rent to anyone on assistance."

"Being low income there's a lot of stereotypes and discrimination. Being a single mom I was denied multiple housing opportunities. … I have to utilize food banks and that had been made a "normal thing" that I and other low income should do. I'm suffering from dental issues that I don't have coverage for so it's another thing I cannot afford to be not in constant pain!"

Other participants highlighted the social stigma that came from being an individual with low income, and how in coming from a low income family, they were met with beliefs that they might steal at any moment.

"I was young and the parents of my friends' didn't want me in their home because of the part of town I came from, the poor part of town. Even at an early age, I could feel their eyes on me, watching me through their house to make sure I didn't take anything."

Other participants highlighted the concept of intersectionality related to income. That is, having a disability or deteriorating health condition could put individuals into lower income. In the same way, accessing services that require accessibility accommodations often requires greater expenses.

"I think that the paratransit is very lovely but I think that [it is] also very expensive."

4.2 Forms of Discrimination

There were 15 unique forms of discrimination participations were subjected to, plus an "other" category. Nine of these reasons were originally provided within the survey options. Six more additional categories were created from reasons consistently found within the "other" option. Categories were not mutually exclusive and participants were able to select as many reasons as they felt appropriate. See tables 18 and 19 in Appendix D for the full lists of forms of discrimination.

The top five forms of discrimination experienced were insulting comments (82%, n=826), barriers to participation (59%, n=598), teasing, mocking and bullying (58%, n=587), verbal abuse (55%, n=554), and hate speech (52%, n=526). The same top five forms of discrimination were witnessed, although at higher rates. They were insulting comments or actions (86%, n=988), teasing, mocking or bullying (70%, n=804), hate speech (66%,

n=756), barriers to participation (64%, n=731), and verbal abuse (63%, n=724) (see Figure 5).
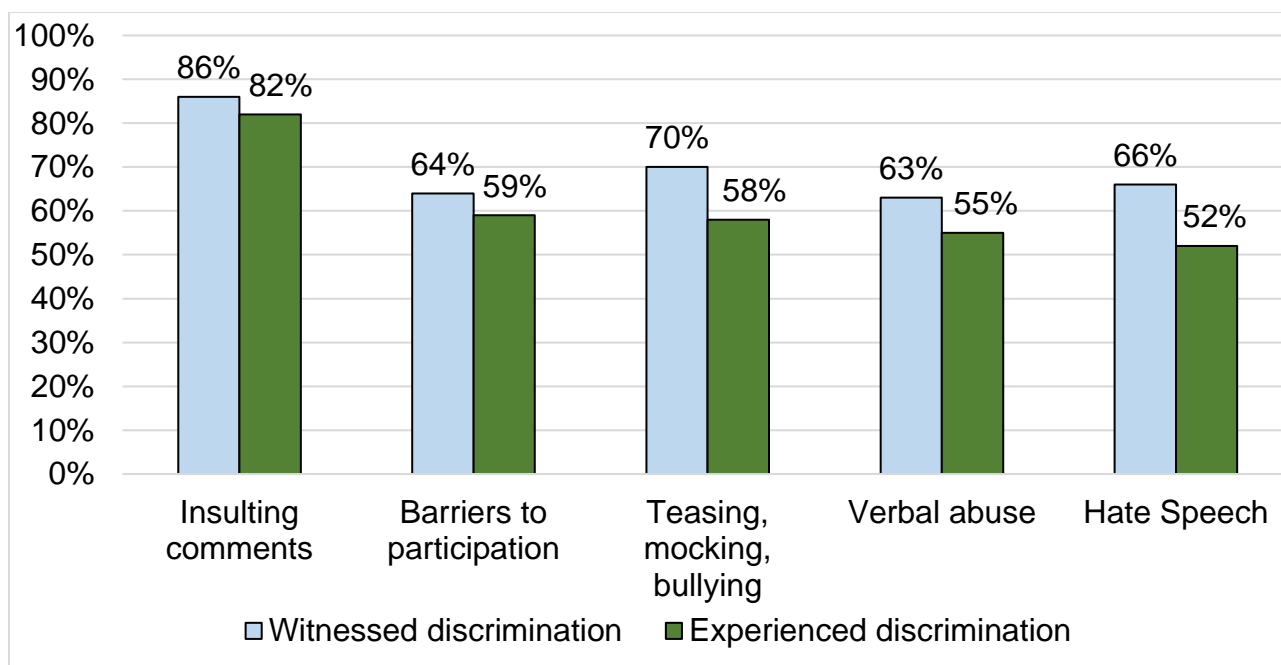
Figure 5: Forms of discrimination witnessed and experienced

4.2.1 Insulting Comments

One participant described how their negative experiences receiving insulting comments has led them to change their leisure activities after moving to Niagara.

"We used to go for long walks and hikes when we were living in Mississauga but after multiple incidents of people being rude, racist and abusive we've drastically reduced the amount of recreational time outside. One of my friends outright refuses to go out unless it's for groceries. It's bad."

"Some individuals have made derogatory comment[s] on social media about newcomers to the region with name calling."

4.2.2 Barriers to Participation

Barriers to participation took multiple forms based on the comments, this included physical barriers and lack of access, to being denied access to places during COVID-19 due to inability to wear a mask, as well as a few comments about being denied access to housing due to being transgender, gay, homeless, receive government assistance, or a student. The lack of accessible access was noted in multiple comments.

"I have been denied entry to locations because my sons inability to wear a mask. I have been argued with over it. They are 4 and 6. I have been touched, pulled aside, spoken down to and belittled."

"I live in Merritton. Disabled people are the main recipients of bias, simply by cutting the town in half with railroad tracks so badly maintained they are not passable by mobility vehicles!"

"The discrimination that I have experienced are related to access. I have had trouble getting into stores, older shops in the area because they are small and do not accommodate a person with physical disabilities or uses a wheelchair."

During the focus groups, participants discussed multiple barriers that block their abilities to access services. The main topics in this area were transportation and access to health care, which affected multiple groups of people. Other barriers include access to housing, technology, and child care.

4.2.2.1 Transportation

Some focus group participants commented that improvements have been made to transit in Niagara and they are grateful that the Region is making changes. However, many marginalized groups are particularly affected by transportation challenges that persist.

People that use wheelchairs or other mobility devices struggle. They appreciate paratransit, but consider it expensive, particularly if they need to travel between cities.

"I felt exclusion specifically, when it comes to transportation. … The paratransit in my own community, it's called 'Chairvan'. And I use them a lot. And that's all very wonderful, the services [are] quite good within the city limits of the town I live in, Niagara Falls. However, it's a whole new story to cross the boundary line, [which] to me should be simple. I don't see why they don't cooperate with each other in transit systems. But I've been told that our 'Chairvan' … is only funded to serve people within the city only, and therefore can't drive me out. So yes, that's exclusion."

Using mobility devices and public transit during the winter is particularly problematic, as participants described the challenge of not having clear bus stops and sidewalks after a snowfall.

"If you have a disability need a mobility device. Well our region doesn't manage a case that people shovel sidewalks. So in the winter. People who have to use mobility scooter or wheelchair or any device. I have a hard time getting around the

city, sidewalks are inaccessible … and then you're stuck inside for because you can't get out of your house. And that goes at bus stops as well, a lot of bus stops they can't put down the ramp because they're not properly shoveled out."

Participants noted how transportation is central to health care, education, employment, and housing, people who are living on low income, new immigrants, seniors, and students, especially if they live in areas that are more rural. Transportation issues are compounded with physical or mental disabilities and additional challenges when individuals require extra support to travel, or bus stops are not cleared of snow in the winter time.

Transportation was highlighted as a challenge for Francophone immigrants who had to travel between municipalities in order to access services in a language they could understand, as a Regional staff member described.

"I'm just thinking with new immigrants, not even having access to a car … then having to figure out how to get to Welland. … So my regular clients got the local bus pass, and I would give them [Francophone clients] the Regional bus pass so that they could access those other cities. Sounds like I'm doing them a solid but I'm really just putting them on the bus for what, like a three hour round trip."

The schedule of the buses was discussed in one focus group, as they mentioned the challenge of reduced hours of service on Sundays, but the need to get home after late shifts.

4.2.2.2 Barriers to Accessing Health Care

There are barriers to accessing quality health care for multiple marginalized groups. This includes people with transportation barriers, people who are part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, people who are experiencing homelessness, people with low income, older adults, and people with mental health challenges. During COVID, these barriers were further exacerbated.

"How they're treated in the emergency departments, by physicians and nurses, you know… I know they don't always have the best diplomacy and skills in terms of explaining their health conditions. But sometimes it's how they're treated before they even say a word. That makes them not want to come back and how we see them then in the community, is their healthcare conditions deteriorating, getting worse, because they won't go to the Emergency Department because of how they were treated last time."

One focus group participant recounted how the level of service received shifted once the pharmacy they had been going to became aware that the participant was getting benefits through community services.

> "When I first came to the region, the relationship between myself and that first pharmacy was good. And then once I went on to disability benefits for my benefits through community services. It just seemed like…our interactions changed. Like I just found them to be more abrasive and less patient with me."

Finding doctors, particularly ones that can care for complex medical cases, or those that can provide culturally informed services is a challenge. Participants discussed challenges with finding psychiatrists, family doctors, and doctors that have the experience required. One participant described how some health care practitioners will say that they don't have experience working with people who have developmental disabilities or FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder), and therefore refuse to take referrals for certain patients.

> "In the GTA [Greater Toronto Area], they are more likely to understand the need to be culturally sensitive, for instance. And so when I now engaged with midwives in the Niagara region, there was more of an education that needed to happen. In terms of cultural norms for what happens in my home."

4.2.2.3 Barriers Accessing Housing

A common barrier cited in multiple focus groups is regarding affordable housing. The challenge is compounded when factors of income level, receiving Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Plan (ODSP), experiencing disabilities and needing accessible housing, gender-based barriers, and language are considered.

> "For me, it always comes back to the housing piece, because if people don't have that affordable safe housing then…that creates barriers for them to be able to access other resources. Because they don't they don't have phones, they don't have meeting places. It just creates so many other problems…they're on the street…and then obviously more vulnerable. … And you know the rents are going up, people can't afford a one bedroom apartment anymore because [it is] over $1,000 and their own paycheck is $1100. So, I mean housing is such an issue and it's one thing that the clients want the most support with. Again, it's the one that I find the most challenging to support them with because the resources and the accessibility and availability, it just isn't there."

Housing has been recognized as a significant challenge in Niagara due to multiple reasons, however discrimination is also a factor.

"When I lived in a homeless shelter, many landlords wouldn't let me apply to rent from them after finding out where I lived, in spite of their friendliness before finding out. Then when I was in college a year later one landlord refused to let me view a place because I was a student."

"I had faggot written at work and spoken to me frequently. I am told I am unable to purchase a house and even though my income is good."

"SO many landlords will not rent to males and it makes it impossible to find an affordable place to live! Every time I find something in my budget the ad specifically states "females only" super discriminatory, especially when they would have rented to me prior to my transition but now won't because I present as male? I'm the same person, gender doesn't determine how good of a tenant you are."

Finding appropriate, affordable housing is also a challenge for new immigrants with limited financial options.

In response to this barrier, the Region is implementing a ten year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. For more details about that plan, you can visit the Niagara Region website: Niagara's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan - Niagara Region, Ontario.[6]

4.2.2.4 Barriers Accessing Technology

Technology and needing to access services electronically serves as a problem to people who are not able to afford internet, computer, phone, or printer access. Most commonly, this affects new immigrants, people who are experiencing homelessness, people with a low income, people who live in more rural locations, and older adults. If people do not have a cell phone, it is very difficult for service providers to connect with them. There are service providers, such as libraries, that allow access to computers, internet, and printers. However, they are unable to support every single individual who requires technology access, and not available at all hours or days of the week, and therefore the barrier remains significant.

4.2.2.5 Language and Communication

A number of communication related challenges were discussed in the focus groups. The main challenge is that Regional services and general successes are not communicated widely. There is a lack of knowledge about specific Regional services, including those

---

[6] https://www.niagararegion.ca/housing-homelessness/action-plan/default.aspx

available to more marginalized populations. Linked to this, the current website is very difficult to navigate, particularly for older adults, people who do not speak English, or those with intellectual disabilities. In addition, participants discussed different Regional resources not being produced in French which can negatively impact Francophone ability to be aware of and access services.

> *"I don't see any inclusion in French, even in my apartment building there's Niagara Region posters, there's no French subtitles, there's no translation, [and] you don't see anything being promoted to the French community. And I think that's where we lose a lot of community members, it is that there's no promotion, they have to dig for it. And if they don't know where to look, how are they supposed to find us?"*

With the COVID restrictions, this made communicating about specific services even harder, especially to those who lacked internet or computer access.

Another barrier to participation that was discussed in focus groups was relating to language, specifically for the Francophone population in Niagara. The French community feels insular and excluded both in terms of service provision, but also in terms of participation in decision making processes. When included, they often feel like a token presence, or an after thought.

> "We wouldn't have to each have 18 meetings to accomplish something. We shouldn't have to fight for the little things. For example having BIENVENUE on the Canada Games sign should be a given. Instead, we had to fight for it. Ridiculous."

4.2.2.6 Other Barriers

Access to affordable childcare is another challenge. People who are new to Niagara found it challenging to find child care. For instance, new immigrants who want to take English language classes and have children, either need to find childcare to attend, or choose only one parent to attend. Families that move from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) find it difficult to find culturally appropriate child care, or other supports for families such as Early Education programs that relate to their cultural backgrounds.

> "And I think we've heard a lot about it, but like just the barriers to participation on people with children, or caregiving responsibility, for our children or elders. Whoever is giving caregiving responsibility, and barriers that might [be in] place for them in terms of accessing service, or accessing employment or fully participating in employment…and statistically those tend to be women as well."

Other challenges with accessing services include long wait lists, individuals not meeting eligibility criteria for services, staff shortages, hours of availability not aligning with working parents, and complicated applications and processes. Physical access to locations, including bathrooms, is a challenge for many locations, both private and public. Sufficient and accessible bathrooms need to be available for people with accessibility challenges, or who are gender non-conforming or non-binary.

Another systemic barrier is the current ways of collecting or not collecting data about clients or participants. In medical related programs, such as Infectious Disease or Sexual Health, there are limited options for collecting information about gender or pronouns. Collecting accurate information about gender and pronouns impacts the ability of staff to be able to provide quality service tailored to the needs of unique clients. Being able to collect this data on a systemic level supports better program planning and evaluation. Even though staff have raised the issue multiple times, it is difficult to change when systems are linked to external forms or other organizations' data collection processes.

4.2.3 Teasing, Mocking, or Bullying

One participant shared how they have turned their negative experiences of bullying into opportunities to share and educate people across Canada.

> "From coming out at a young age in Fort Erie, Ontario. I had been a huge target into my community for being openly gay. From homophobic bullying, physically assaulted, the fears of returning to school knowing the out-come of fighting for my life and mental health. … I had tried taking my own life at the age of 13 and as I got older there was other attempts. Now I have been sharing my story across Canada taking my negative situation and turning it into a positive by creating a platform called Rise Against Bullying to bring more education, resources and creating a safe place for those in Niagara and all around the world."

4.3 Places of Discrimination

There were 16 unique places where participations experienced or witnessed discrimination, plus an "other" category. Fourteen of these reasons were provided within the survey options. Two additional categories were created from reasons consistently found within the "other" option. Categories were not mutually exclusive and participants were able to select as many reasons for what they witnessed as they felt appropriate.

The top five places where discrimination was experienced were businesses (60%), places of employment (60%), between individuals (interpersonal) (55%), on social media (46%), and in healthcare (42%) (see Figure 6). Table 14 lists all the places people identified where they had experienced discrimination.
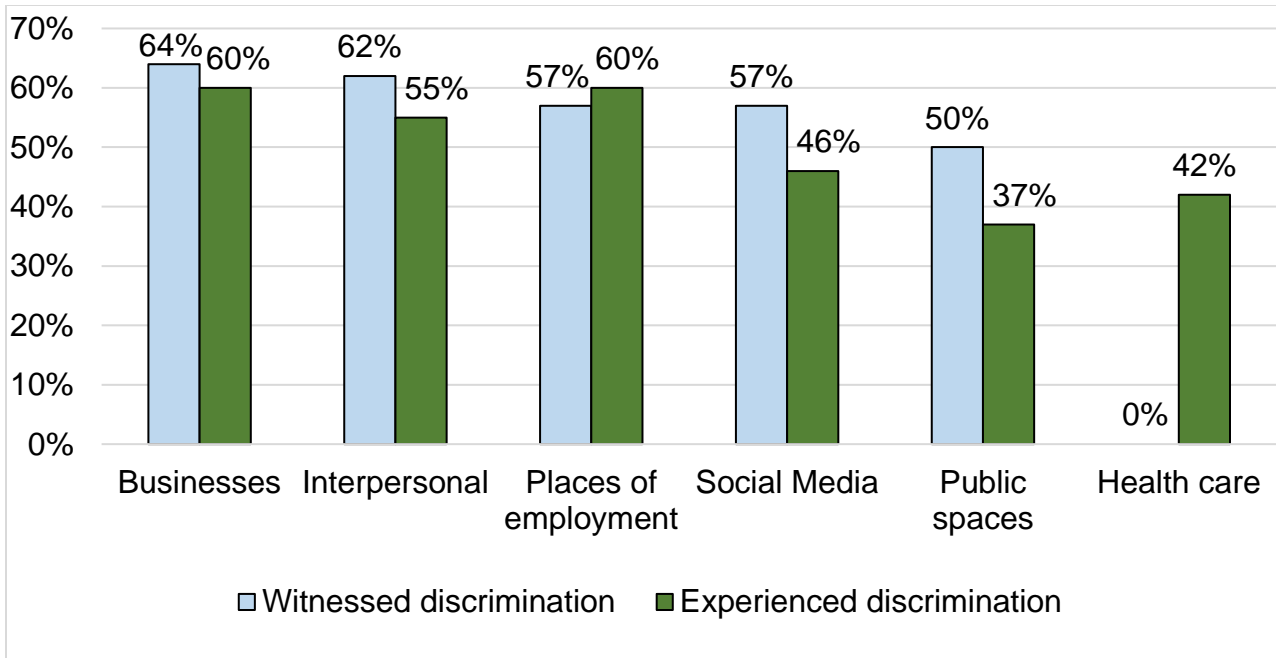
Figure 6: Places of discrimination witnessed and experienced

Table 14: Places where discrimination was experienced

Places of discrimination experienced	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
Businesses (stores, banks or other)	606	60%
Employment / workplace	605	60%
Interpersonal (between individuals)	560	55%
Social media	463	46%
Health care	426	42%
Public spaces (parks, sidewalk or other)	374	37%
Recreation facilities	325	32%
Neighbourhood	319	32%
Education	313	31%
Municipal services (including social services)	284	28%
Police	180	18%
Housing	154	15%
Religious institutions	153	15%
Law / court system	110	11%
Government buildings/processes	11	1%
Prefer not to answer	8	1%
Community organizations	7	1%
Other	5	1%

The top five places where individuals witnessed discrimination were businesses (64%), between individuals (interpersonal) (62%), in places of employment (57%) on social media (57%), and in public spaces (50%). See table 15 for a full list of all the places where discrimination was witnessed. People could select more than one answer. It is notable that only one respondent identified witnessing discrimination in health care despite many reporting that they have experienced it themselves.

Table 15: Places where discrimination was witnessed

Place of discrimination witnessed	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
Businesses (stores, banks or other)	768	67%
Interpersonal (between individuals)	702	62%
Employment / workplace	653	57%
Social media	651	57%
Public spaces (parks, sidewalk or other)	566	50%
Neighbourhood	490	43%
Education	434	38%
Recreation facilities	398	35%
Municipal services (including social services)	371	33%
Police	307	27%
Housing	295	26%
Religious institutions	272	24%
Law / court system	205	18%
Prefer not to answer	19	2%
Government buildings/processes	7	1%
Community organizations	3	0%
Other	3	0%
Health care	1	0%

4.3.1 Places of Employment

Multiple people with disabilities described their challenges with accessing employment that provided the accommodations they needed, or opportunities that allowed them to take public transit to their place of employment.

> "Discrimination based on disability and family status are common here, but it's not taken seriously, which means it won't get better anytime soon. I've tried for many years to find part-time employment within the scope of my education and experience, but can't find an employer willing to accommodate my disability in a meaningful position."

Collectively, the severity and frequency of these acts of racism often contributes to visible minorities choosing to seek employment in other areas, commonly the GTA. Participants highlighted instances of discrimination apparent in the community, particularly in work.

> "I am invited to an interview. When I get there, the first thing I notice for the first time in my life is that everyone is Caucasian. The receptionist directed me to sit down and the gentlemen that was supposed to be interviewing me, he comes out of the office and walks past me and didn't acknowledge me while I'm sitting right there. He comes to me and says good morning, no apology, no nothing. Takes me to a different cubicle. The interview was 3-5 minutes. I walk out and said 'I don't think I'm getting this job'. Not because I'm not capable but because of the colour of my skin and that still hurts a little bit. So that's been my experience in Niagara."

In some instances this caused individuals to leave Niagara entirely. One participant described a peer who is a visible minority man and struggled to maintain stable employment despite being a hard worker and multilingual.

> "He couldn't get a job until my wife hired him. He was her hardest worker but her boss consistently said, 'yeah I don't know if this guy's gonna work out. You know he seems like he's not fitting in.' Yeah, he ended up leaving the region."

4.3.2 Health Care Professionals

There were multiple negative encounters with health care professionals described by participants. Focus group participants described how individuals labelled as drug addicts or homeless face stigmatization and shame when seeking health care, and often receive lower quality of care.

> "I have severe fibromyalgia and severe anxieties about even going out of my house. It took me 4 days to finally muster up the courage to go to the hospital because i was in so much pain. I had to wait 6 excruciating hours and finally when i seen the doctor, he first asked what the issue was, and then asked me if I "did needles"….I do not do needles... but my sister, and other family members have passed away from doing them. Everywhere in Niagara I go, I get discrimination from having [my] last name … I had faith in the health system, but not anymore."

4.3.3 Public Places

One participant described how discrimination in public places that affects transgender individuals, also impact people with accessibility challenges.

"As a transgender male, the amount of times I have not been able to use a public bathroom because there is only 1 stall, and it's either full or broken, is ridiculous. Urinals are EXTREMELY ableist not only for people with physical disabilities but also for trans men who cannot physically stand to pee. It stops me from being able to use the washroom at work and in public spaces. … Secondly, the rental market it highly discriminatory."

5.0 Reporting

Of the 1007 individuals who experienced discrimination and responded to this question, most (69%, n=695) did not report the incident, 19% (n=195) reported it, and 12% preferred not to answer. A slightly lower percentage of the 1123 respondents who witnessed discrimination and answered the question, did not report the incident (65%, n=725), 18% (n=204) reported it, and 17% preferred not to answer.

Out of 49 community members that participated in the Mentimeter poll in the focus groups, 17 (35%) mentioned that they reported an incident of discrimination, while 19 (39%) indicated that they did not report or tell anyone about the experience. Thirteen people (27%) answered "not applicable" indicating they had not witnessed or experienced discrimination.

When analyzing the reporting data from the survey based compared to the demographic data, there are a few notable patterns to discuss. There were multiple groups that were less likely to report an incident they experienced, respondents with the lowest rates of reporting were Biracial or Multiracial (0%), Black (19%), Arab (25%), Pacific Islander (25%), and East Asian (27%). On the other hand, there were higher rates of reporting incidents among West Asians (50%), Canadians (38%), and First Nations (34%). Canadians had the highest rate of reporting incidents they witnessed (44%), followed by West Asians (25%). Respondents with the lowest rates of reporting incidents witnessed were Arab (0%), Latin American (16%), South-East Asian (17%), and East Asian (19%).

None of the new immigrants who lived in Canada less than a year reported incidents they experienced or witnessed. The group with the second lowest rate of reporting were those that lived in Canada between one and five years, 12% reported incidents they experienced, and none reported incidents they witnessed. The group who reported the most were those that have lived in Canada 6 to 15 years, 29% reported incidents they experienced and 20% reported incidents they witnessed.

Only 11% (n=7) people who identified as gender diverse (non-binary, questioning, transfeminine, transgender, transmasculine, two-spirit, and prefer to self-describe) reported the incidents they experienced, while 17% (n=12) reported incidents they witnessed. Respondents who identify as questioning (0%), bisexual (9%), and lesbian

(11%) had the lowest rates of reporting incidents of discrimination they experienced, while transmasculine (0%), transgender (7%), and questioning (14%) respondents had the lowest rates of reporting incidents they witnessed.

Nearly half of the 283 respondents who reported their experience of discrimination or preferred not to answer, reported the incident to their workplace (46%), 36% reported it to other places, 26% reported it to the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), 19% reported it to the media, 10% reported to another police service, and 9% preferred not to answer. Respondents could select multiple options. The majority (83%) of people who reported experiences of discrimination were not satisfied with the outcome of the reporting, while 10% were satisfied, and 7% preferred not to answer.

The pattern was similar for the 306 respondents who reported the discrimination that they witnessed or preferred not to answer. Nearly half reported the incidents to their workplace (44%), 36% reported to other places, 30% reported to the NRPS, 26% reported to the media, 6% reported to another police service, and 9% preferred not to answer. Respondents could select multiple options. Although still a minority, more people who reported incidents they witnessed were satisfied with the outcomes (15%) compared to 10% of those that experienced discrimination. However, 78% of respondents who reported incidents of discrimination they witnessed were not satisfied with the outcome of the reporting, 8% preferred not to answer.

Of participants who chose not to report incidents they had experienced, the top three reasons why they did not report were:

1. Feeling that their complaint would not be taken seriously (62%)
2. Feeling that their report would not have a good outcome (44%)
3. Fear of problems for themselves (37%)

The results were almost the same for participants who chose not to report incidents of discrimination they witnessed,

1. Feeling that their complaint would not be taken seriously (60%)
2. Feeling that their report would not have a good outcome (44%)
3. Fear of problems for themselves (34%)

Community members who participated in the focus groups provided additional context relating to fears of reporting, particularly for individuals in precarious work positions.

> "We hear that a lot from the migrant workers as well, that same kind of thing that they are afraid of reporting something or speaking up this year because if they do, then they aren't back the next year and that's their livelihood."

Fear of reporting for community members largely stemmed from beliefs that they would lose access to important services. These concerns arose most notably when discussing issues pertaining to older adults in Niagara.

> "Seniors really need the services that they're receiving and there is very much an underlying fear that if they aren't happy with it or complain about it, that somehow they could lose the opportunity. And they're not willing to risk that so often they will put up with things that they shouldn't necessarily put up with without saying anything."

Only a quarter (25%, n=397) of participants stated that they were aware of and understood the procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination or harassment in Niagara, 36% (n=572) did not know, 28% (n=447) were unsure, and 3% (n=47) preferred not to answer.

6.0 Sense of Belonging

Participants were asked to rate a set of questions relating to feelings of belonging in various settings on a six point Likert scale. The scale included the options: strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, strongly agree, as well as not applicable, and prefer not to answer. For the following analysis, the categories of prefer not to answer and not applicable were not included, and for simplicity sake the scale was dichotomized into agree/disagree. Further demographic analysis is provided for some of the key questions in this section. However due to capacity and time for analysis, this detail of analysis was not completed for every question. DEI staff selected the questions considered the most pertinent to do the additional analysis.

6.1 Acceptance

Most people who responded to these questions felt accepted with their friends (90%, n=1404), followed by feeling accepted in their neighbourhood (78%, n= 1226), and at work (74%, n=924), while the lowest places for feeling accepted was at school (65%, n=335) and in Niagara (68%, n=1067) (see Figure 7). The numbers vary due to not all questions being applicable for all respondents.
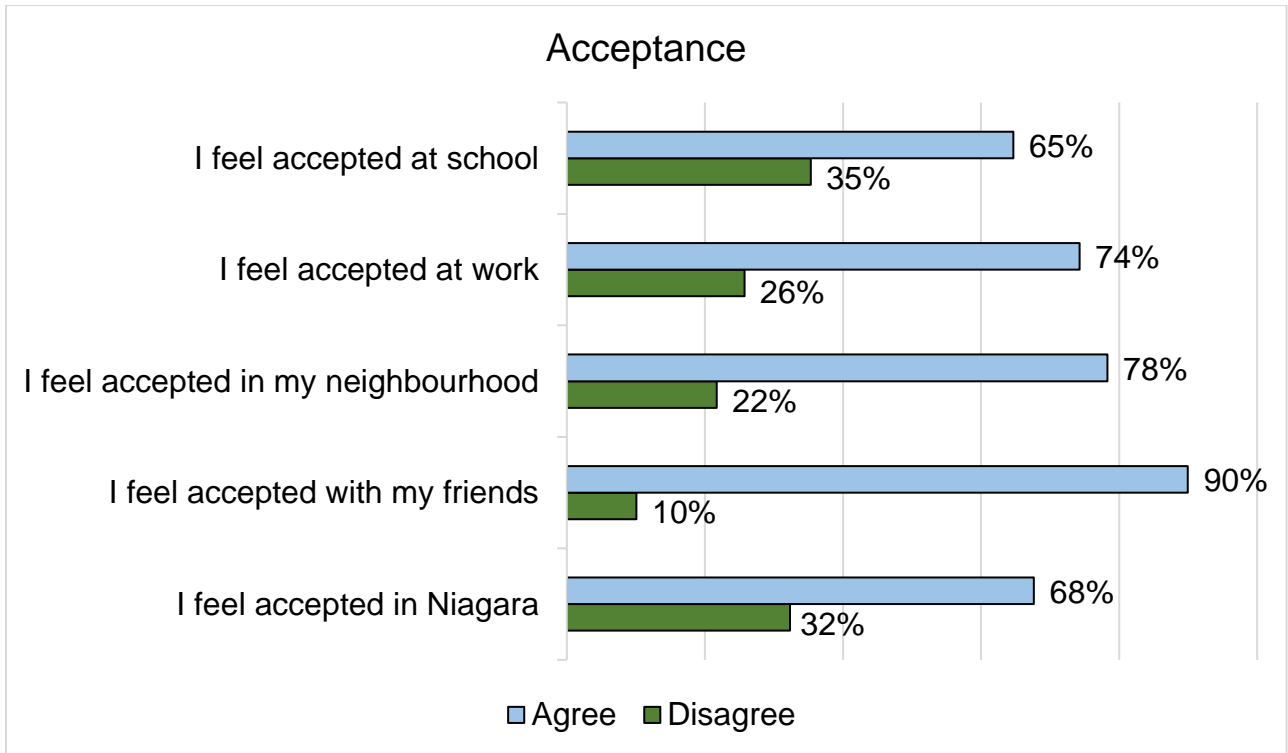
Figure 7: Areas of acceptance

When analyzing the demographic groups compared to respondents that agreed to feeling accepted in Niagara, the racial or ethnic identities with the highest rates of agreement were Canadian (85%) and White (72%). Conversely, Inuk (33%), West Asian (40%), and First Nations (43%) had the lowest levels of agreement.

Respondents who are cisgender (79%) and non-binary (76%) had the highest rates of agreement to feeling accepted in Niagara, whereas respondents who are two-spirit (13%), transfeminine (25%), and those that preferred to self-describe (29%) had the lowest rates of agreement.

Respondents who are unemployed due to COVID-19 had the lowest level of agreement to feeling accepted in Niagara at 31%. Respondents did not always specify if they were unemployed due to not being vaccinated or because their business closed due to COVID-19. This is followed by respondents who stay at home for their employment at 41%. Conversely, respondents who are retired had the highest level of agreement (80%).

6.2 Safety

The level of safety that participants felt was similar across various locations, with people feeling the safest at work (80%, n=966), and in their neighbourhood (79%, n=1241), compared to at school (70%, n=350) (see Figure 8).
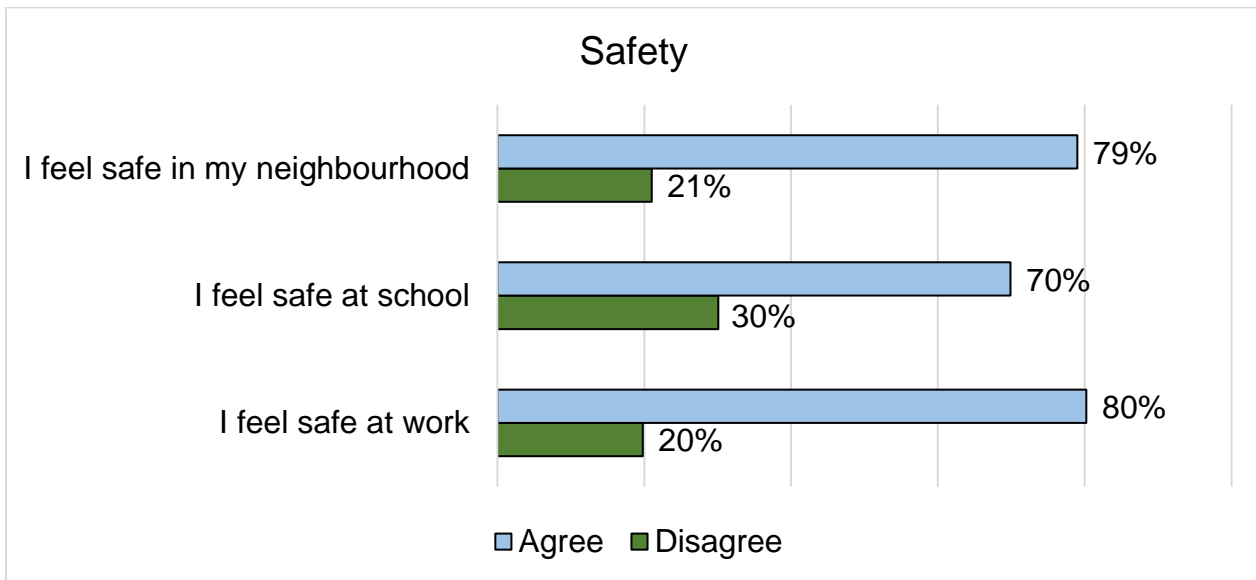
Figure 8: Areas of safety

There are some demographic populations who had notably lower levels of agreement in terms of feeling safe in their neighbourhood. The lowest levels of agreement among race or ethnicity were from respondents who are West Asian (60%), Biracial or Multiracial (62%), and Arab (66%). While Inuk (100%), Métis (88%), and White (81%) had the highest levels of agreement to feeling safe in their neighbourhood. Respondents with learning challenges, including dyslexia, attention deficit, and hyperactivity disorder, had the lowest rate of agreement to feeling safe in their neighbourhood at 61%, while those with no disabilities had an 83% rate of agreement. None of the respondents who moved to Canada in the past year felt safe in their neighbourhood, compared to 80% of respondents who have lived in Canada for 26 or more years.

Only 50% of respondents who identify as transfeminine, transmasculine, or preferred to self-describe felt safe in their neighbourhood. The rates were also low for non-binary and transgender respondents, both at 63%. When analyzing sexuality, 57% of respondents who chose to self-describe agreed to feeling safe in their neighbourhood, 59% of queer and pansexual respondents agreed, compared to 100% of two-spirit, 90% of lesbian, and 83% of heterosexual respondents.

6.3 Respect

Respondents felt they were equally treated with respect at work (75%, n=908), and in their daily lives (75%, n=1185), while 69% (n=315) of students felt that they were treated with respect at school (see Figure 9).
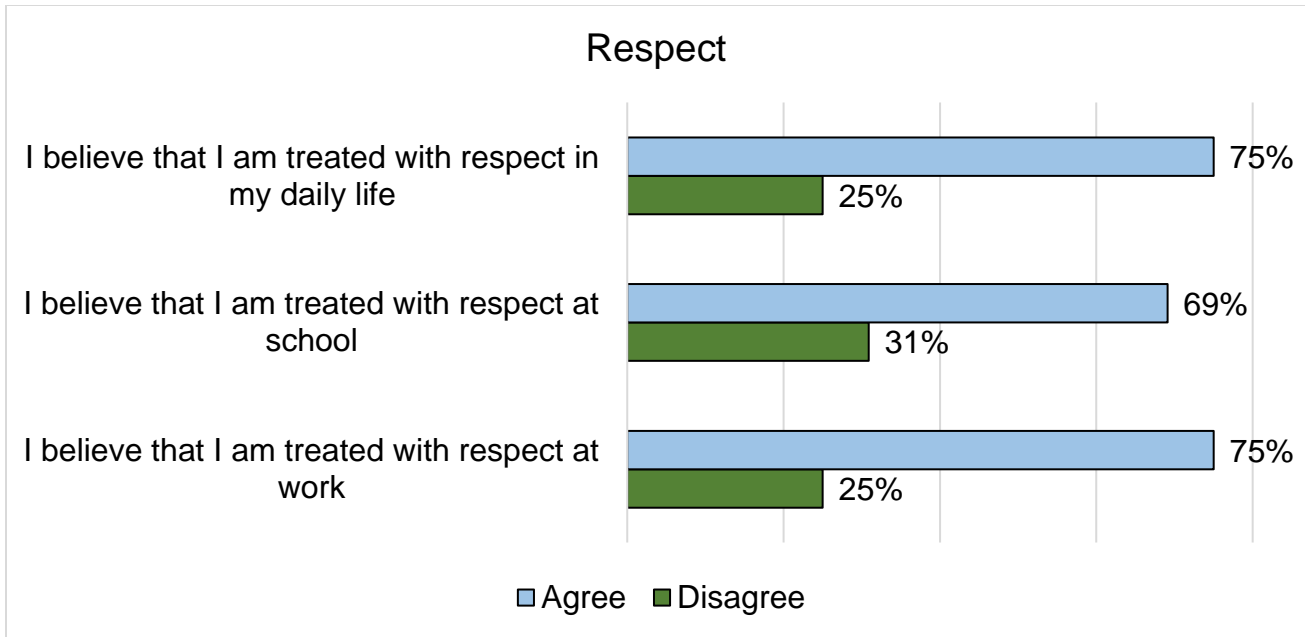
Figure 9: Areas of respect

6.4 Discrimination in Schools and Work Places

In terms of locations that are free from discrimination, survey participants had the lowest level of agreement (29%, n=436) to the statement that participants believe that places of employment in Niagara are free from discrimination. A slightly higher percentage (36%, n=178) of students agreed that their school was free from discrimination and 50% (n=609) of employees agreed that their work place was free from discrimination (see Figure 10).
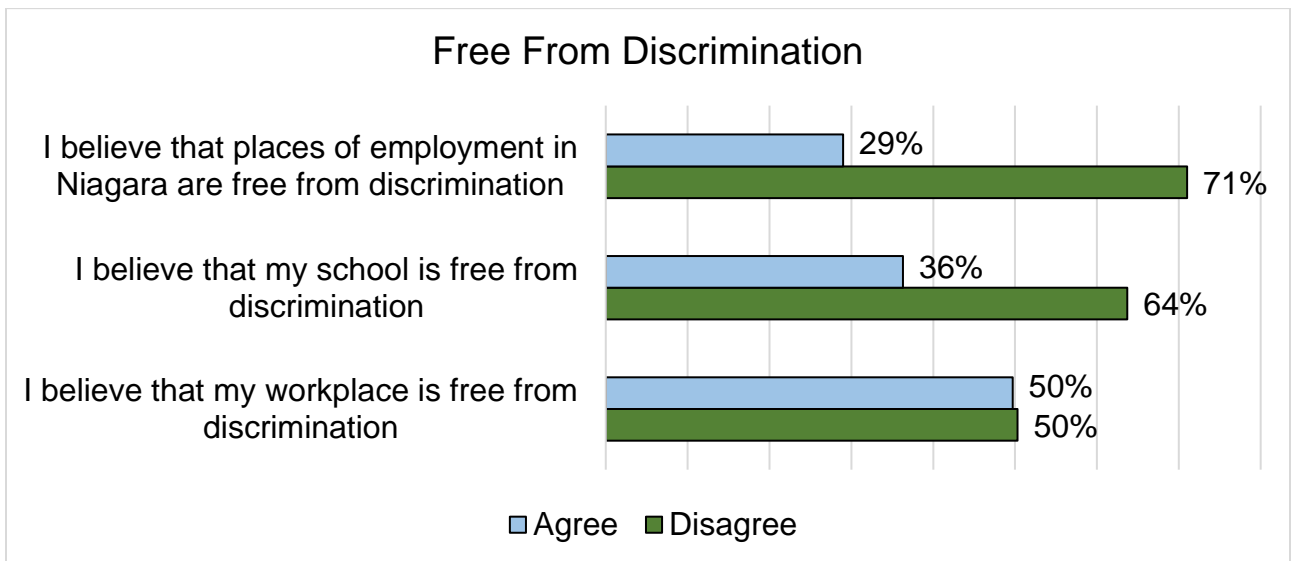
Figure 10: Free from discrimination

Slightly less people feel accepted at school compared to feel treated with respect and feeling safe. The pattern is the same in work places, where there is a slightly higher level of agreement to feeling accepted compared to being treated with respect and feeling safe. Workplaces appear to be slightly more inclusive, as there are higher levels of agreement in the work place responses compared to the school responses (see Figures 11 and 12).
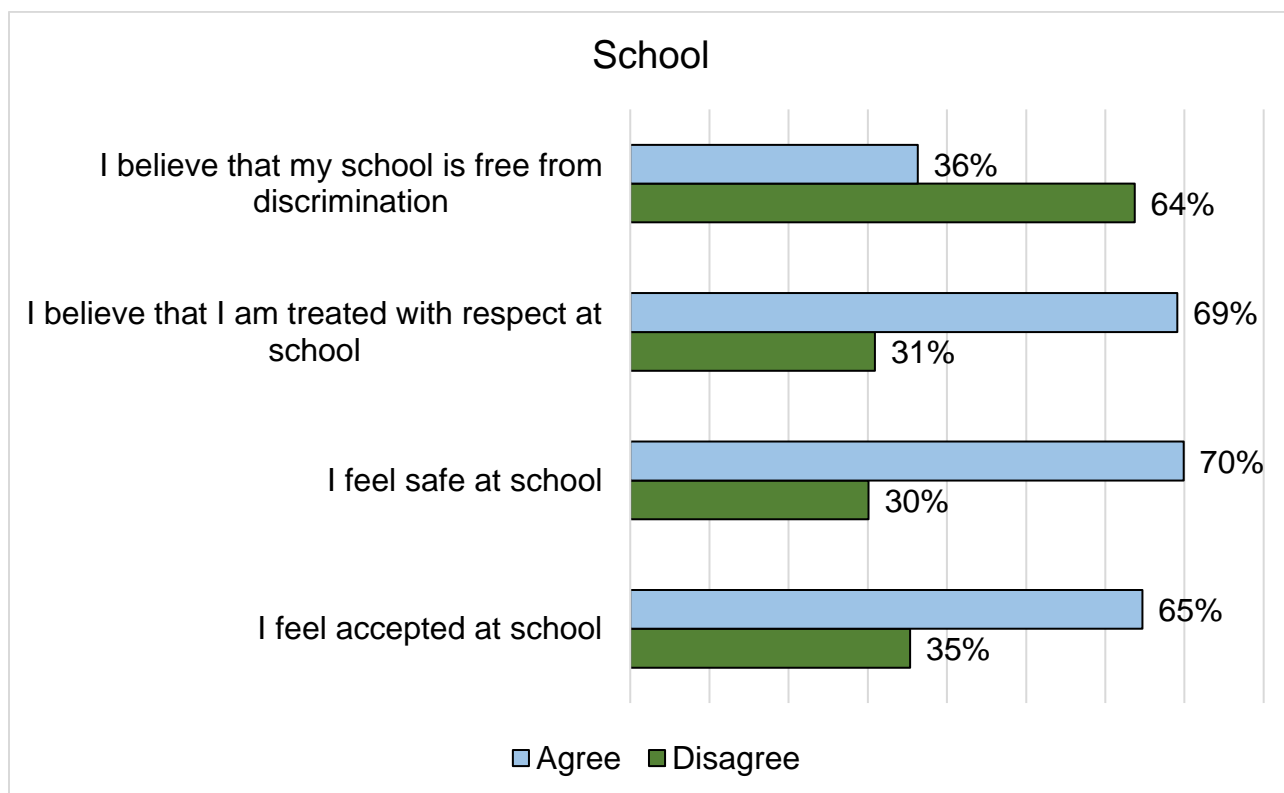
Figure 11: Sense of belonging at school

Work Places

I believe that my workplace is free from discrimination
- Agree: 50%
- Disagree: 50%

I believe that I am treated with respect at work
- Agree: 75%
- Disagree: 25%

I feel safe at work
- Agree: 80%
- Disagree: 20%

I feel accepted at work
- Agree: 74%
- Disagree: 26%
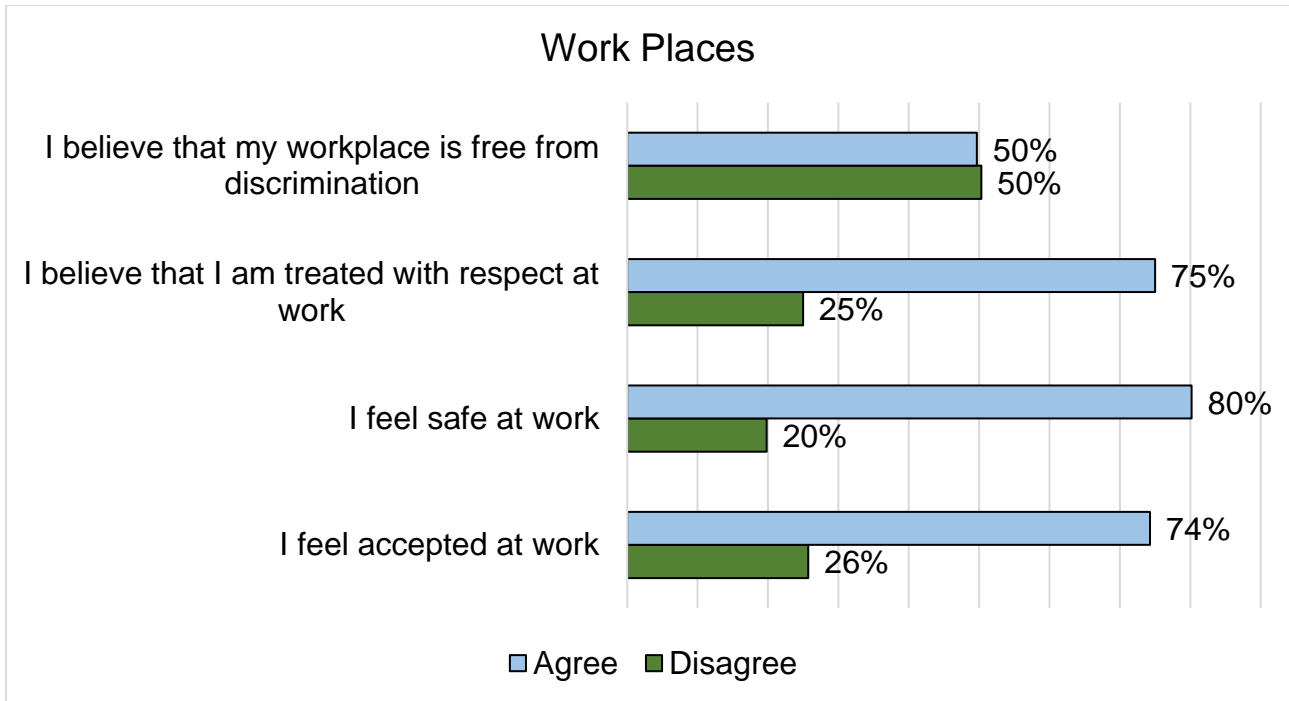
□ Agree ■ Disagree

Figure 12: Sense of belonging at work places

Just less than half of the respondents agreed that employers in Niagara do a good job of attracting people of diverse backgrounds (47%), while slightly less agreed that employers do a good job of promoting people of diverse backgrounds (42%) (see Figure 13).

DEI in Niagara Employers

I believe that employers in Niagara do a good job of promoting people of diverse backgrounds
- Agree: 42%
- Disagree: 58%

I believe that employers in Niagara do a good job of attracting people of diverse backgrounds
- Agree: 47%
- Disagree: 53%
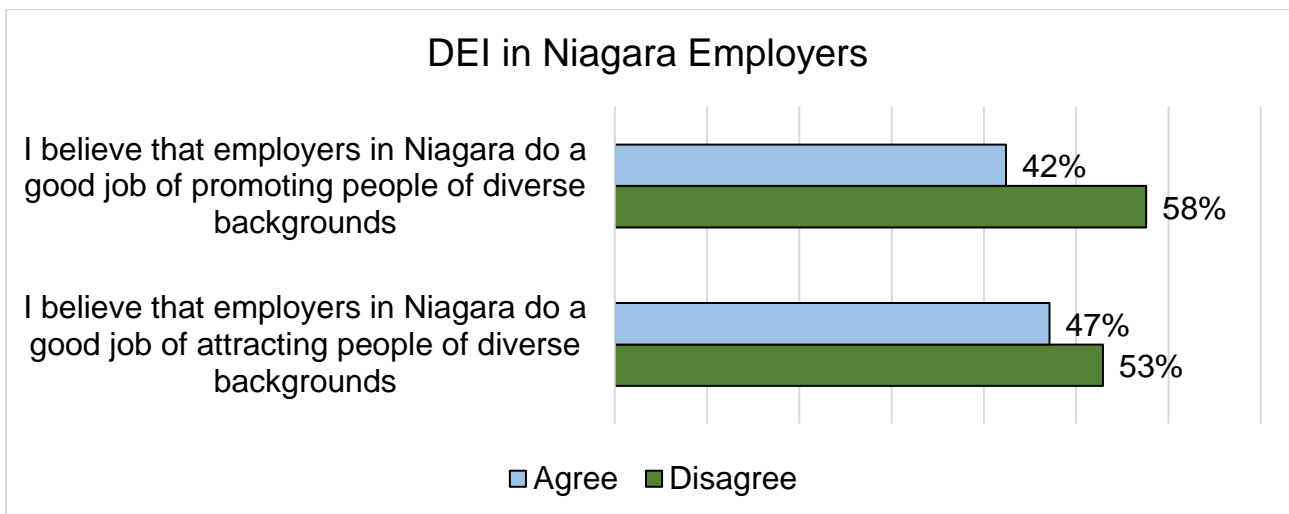
□ Agree ■ Disagree

Figure 13: DEI in Niagara employers

6.5 Elected Officials

Just over a third of respondents agreed that elected officials reflect the communities they identify with (35%, n=533), similarly 36% (n=559) of respondents agreed that elected officials listen to the communities they identify with (see Figure 14).

Elected Officials

I believe that elected officials (Councillors, Mayors, MPs, MPPs, or other) in Niagara listen to the communities I identify with
- Agree: 36%
- Disagree: 64%

I believe that elected officials (Councillors, Mayors, MPs, MPPs, or other) in Niagara reflect the communities I identify with
- Agree: 35%
- Disagree: 65%

□ Agree ■ Disagree
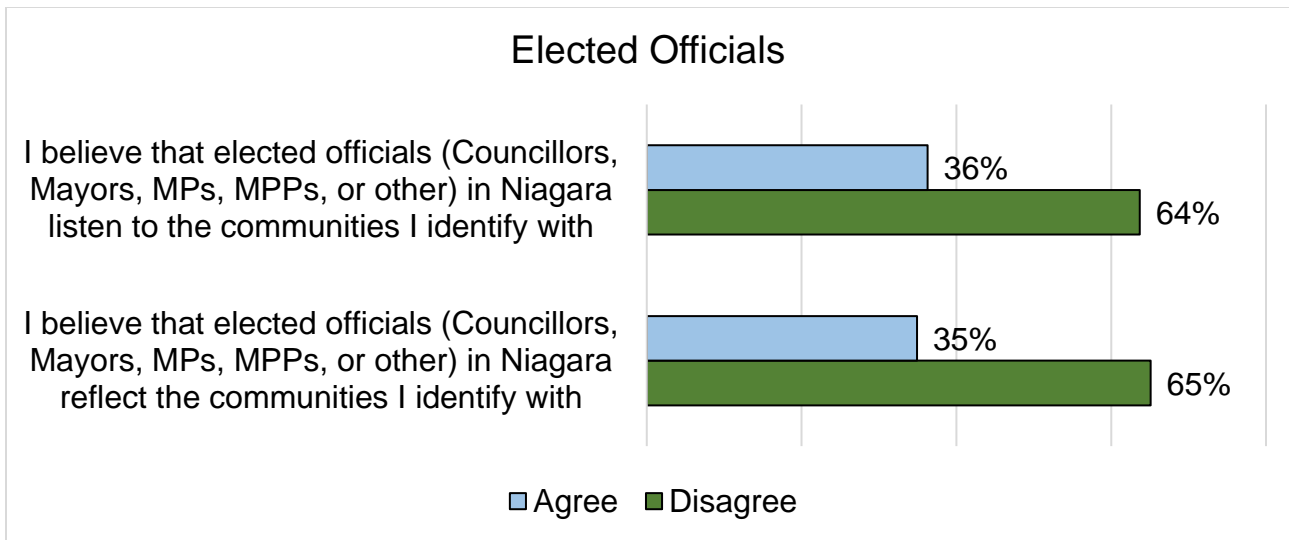
Figure 14: Elected officials

Analysis of the data comparing the two questions about elected officials to various demographics reveals a few groups with lower levels of agreement. In terms of race and ethnicity, Inuk (0%), Pacific Islander (0%), Biracial or Multiracial (8%), Black (15%), and Arab (17%) had the lowest levels of agreement with feeling that elected officials reflect them. Similarly, no Inuk or Pacific Islander, and 8% of Biracial or Multiracial respondents felt that elected officials listen to them. First Nations (15%) and Métis (17%) had low levels of agreement as well.

The level of agreement that elected official reflect them increases as age increases, only 10% of respondents 19 years old or younger agree, compared to 54% of respondents who are 80 years or older. The age group with the highest level of agreement to feeling that elected officials listen to them is 65-79 year olds (53%), compared to 23% of 20-34 year old respondents.

Retirees feel that they are most reflected in the elected officials (47% agree), while there are less than 20% of respondents that agree who stay at home, are a student, or are unemployed due to COVID-19. Similarly, retirees have the highest level of agreement that elected officials listen to them (49%), compared to 7% of respondents that are unemployed due to COVID-19 and 13% of respondents who stay at home.

None of the respondents who have lived in Canada for less than a year feel that elected officials reflect them or listen to them. While the highest levels of agreement are from respondents who have lived in Canada from one to five years, with 53% agreeing that they are reflected by the elected officials, and 50% agreeing that elected officials listen to them. There is a higher level of agreement that elected officials listen to them among respondents who have long-term, stable, safe housing (39%), compared to respondents who do not have long-term, stable, and safe housing (26%).

Respondents that experience addiction (20%), learning challenges (23%), and developmental conditions (24%) have the lowest levels of agreement that elected officials reflect them. The same three groups also have the lowest levels of agreement to elected officials listening to them, with 20% of respondents with developmental conditions, 24% of respondents with learning challenges, and 26% of respondents with addictions agreeing.

The lowest levels of agreement that elected officials reflect them based on the gender of respondents are transfeminine (0%) and transmasculine (0%). Non-binary (10%), transgender (13%) and two-spirit (13%) respondents also had low rates of agreement for elected officials reflecting them. The rates of elected officials listening to them was similar, with no agreement from transfeminine respondents, 13% from two-spirit respondents, and 20% from both non-binary and transmasculine respondents.

When comparing the sexuality of respondents to levels of agreement that elected officials reflect them, the lowest levels are from two-spirit (0%), queer (3%), and pansexual (10%). The same three groups had the lowest levels of agreement that elected officials listen to them, with no agreement from two-spirit, 17% of pansexual, and 19% of queer respondents.

7.0 Vision

There were 991 individuals who provided a response to the question "Write down one word or phrase of what you want Niagara to look like in five years". From these responses, there were 18 themes that had ten or more similar responses. The top five themes were inclusive, diverse, free, safe, and accepting (see Figure 15 for the top theme words).

Figure 15: Most Common Vision Themes

There were four comments that provided phrases in line with the top themes:
- Niagara is a place where all feel welcome, can thrive and be treated fairly
- Inclusive and accepting, prospering economically and socially
- Inclusive, anti-discrimination and barrier free for all residents and guests in Niagara
- Niagara – the region of compassion and inclusivity; where all are seen and heard

In the focus groups, there were 142 responses to "thinking of diversity, equity and inclusion, write down a word or phrase of what you want the Region to look like in five years". The top four words were: inclusive, diverse, safe, and welcoming.

8.0 Conclusion

There is evident overlap between the categories and questions asked in this survey. Across the questions, the people that experience the most discrimination were racial minorities, 2SLGTQQIA+ identifying individuals, people with disabilities, new immigrants, older adults, and women or gender diverse individuals. This affects their ability to access services such as housing, health care, transportation, and their experiences in businesses, places of employment, with other people, on social media, and in public spaces. While they experience insulting comments, teasing, bullying, verbal abuse, and hate speech.

In regards to sense of belonging the areas with the most opportunity for change include acceptance in Niagara, especially for Inuk, West Asian, First Nations, Two-Spirited, and transfeminine people. Other areas for improvement are:
- Acceptance at school
- Places of employment, schools, and elected officials
- Elected officials, especially racial minorities, young people under 35 years old, don't live in stable housing, people with addictions, learning challenges, developmental challenges, trans and non-binary individuals, 2 Spirit, Queer, and pansexual

The next step to develop the DEI Action plan will be to combine the community survey data with the data collected previously through the environmental scan, focus groups and staff survey. Key themes and opportunities for change moving forward will be summarized and presented in a consolidated report. Niagara Region staff will work with the DEI Advisory Committee and select community members to develop the specific goals, strategies, and indicators for the DEI Action Plan, which will be presented to Regional Council later in 2022.

Appendix A: DEI Community Survey Questions

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community Survey - Final

Introduction

The Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee thanks you for taking the time to complete this survey. We want to hear your ideas on how Niagara can be more welcoming and inclusive. We are interested in finding out if you have experienced discrimination while living in Niagara. We want to hear your ideas on how to address discrimination. As part of our commitment to being a member of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, we will use the survey information collected to create a 5 year Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan with strategies to make Niagara more welcoming and inclusive.

This survey will take approximately twenty (20) minutes to complete. You can take as long as you need. You may select "Prefer not to answer" for any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. You can stop participating at any time during this survey.

This survey is confidential. Only the research team will have access to the data. When information is shared, it will be reported in such a way that no single individual can be identified. Any personal information will be collected, used and reported by Niagara Regional staff in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Any information you share will be used only for the purpose for which it was provided. If you have any questions, email our Access and Privacy Office or call 905-980-6000 ext. 3779.The information gathered will be used by Niagara Region and the Cities and Towns in Niagara to direct next steps to address discrimination in Niagara. If you would like more information or have other information to contribute, please email Cassie Ogunniyi at [diversity@niagararegion.ca.](mailto:diversity@niagararegion.ca)

Some questions in this survey may be triggering, if you experience trauma relating to this survey, please contact Canadian Mental Health and Addictions Access Line at 1-866-550-5205.

Do you agree to participate in this survey and consent for Niagara Region to use the information that you provide.
- I agree
- I disagree [go to end page with the wording below]

For more information about the Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee click here. For information about the Niagara Region Diversity,

Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan click here. To contact someone from the Committee or a Niagara Region staff member from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team, please email diversity@niagararegion.ca.

Thank you,
The Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Sense of Belonging

Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly or differently because they are part of a particular group or have certain physical features. This includes racism, sexism, Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and more.

[Note: *denotes a Likert scale
(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree, prefer not to answer)

To what extent do you feel the following statements reflect your experiences in Niagara?

1. I feel accepted in Niagara.*
2. I feel accepted with my friends.*
3. I feel accepted in my neighbourhood.*
4. I feel accepted at work.*
5. I feel accepted at school.*
6. I feel safe at work.*
7. I feel safe at school.*
8. I feel safe in my neighbourhood.*
9. I believe that I am treated with respect at work.*
10. I believe that I am treated with respect at school.*
11. I believe that I am treated with respect in my daily life.*
12. I believe that my workplace is free from discrimination.*
13. I believe that my school is free from discrimination.*
14. I believe that places of employment in Niagara are free from discrimination.*
15. I believe that employers in Niagara do a good job of attracting people of diverse backgrounds.*
16. I believe that employers in Niagara do a good job of promoting people of diverse backgrounds.*
17. I believe that the elected officials (Councillors, Mayors, MPs, MPPs, or other) in Niagara reflect the communities I identify with.*
18. I believe that the elected officials (Councillors, Mayors, MPs, MPPs, or other) in Niagara listen to the communities I identify with.*

Discrimination Experiences

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly or differently because they are part of a particular group or have certain physical features. This includes racism, sexism, Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and more.

19. To what extent do you believe discrimination exists in Niagara? *
    a. I believe there is no discrimination in Niagara
    b. I believe there is some discrimination in Niagara
    c. I believe there is a lot of discrimination in Niagara
    d. Prefer not to answer

20. Have you **experienced** discrimination?
    a. No [go to Q25]
    b. Yes [go to Q21]
    c. Prefer not to answer [go to Q25]

21. I have **experienced** discrimination on the basis of: (select all that apply)
    a. Ability/Disability
    b. Age
    c. Education
    d. Ethnicity
    e. Gender
    f. Gender Expression
    g. Gender Identity
    h. Housing status
    i. Income level
    j. Indigenous identity
    k. Mental health
    l. Race
    m. Religion
    n. Rural location
    o. Sexual orientation
    p. Substance use
    q. Other, please specify: _____
    r. Prefer not to answer

22. Which of these have you **experienced**: (select all that apply)
    a. Barriers to participation
    b. Hate speech (targeted to your group)
    c. Insulting comments or actions

d. Physical assault (being touched/pushed)
e. Sexual assault
f. Sexual harassment
g. Teasing, mocking, or bullying
h. Threatening behaviour
i. Verbal abuse (targeted to you)
j. Other, please specify: _____
k. Prefer not to answer

23. In which areas have you **experienced** discrimination: (select all that apply)
    a. Businesses (stores, banks, or other)
    b. Education
    c. Employment/workplace
    d. Health Care
    e. Housing
    f. Interpersonal (between individuals)
    g. Law/court system
    h. Municipal Services (including Social Services)
    i. Neighbourhood
    j. Police
    k. Public spaces (parks, sidewalk, or other)
    l. Recreation facilities
    m. Religious Institutions
    n. Social media
    o. Other, please specify: _____
    p. Prefer not to answer

24. Did you report the incident(s) of discrimination that you **experienced**?
    a. No [If no, go to Q32]
    b. Yes [If yes, go to Q30]
    c. Prefer not to Answer [skip to Q33]

25. Have you **witnessed** discrimination?
    a. No [go to Q33]
    b. Yes [go to Q26]
    c. Prefer not to answer [go to Q33]

26. In Niagara, I have **witnessed** discrimination on the basis of: (select all that apply)
    a. Ability/Disability
    b. Age
    c. Education

d. Ethnicity
e. Gender
f. Gender Expression
g. Gender Identity
h. Housing status
i. Income level
j. Indigenous identity
k. Mental health
l. Race
m. Religion
n. Rural location
o. Sexual orientation
p. Substance use
q. Other, please specify: _____
r. Prefer not to answer

27. Which of these have you **witnessed**: (select all that apply)
a. Barriers to participation
b. Hate speech (targeted to a group)
c. Insulting comments or actions
d. Physical assault (being touched/pushed)
e. Sexual assault
f. Sexual harassment
g. Teasing, mocking, or bullying
h. Threatening behaviour
i. Verbal abuse (targeted to an individual)
j. Other, please specify: _____
k. Prefer not to answer

28. In which areas have you **witnessed** discrimination: (select all that apply)
a. Businesses (stores, banks, or other)
b. Education
c. Employment/workplace
d. Health Care
e. Housing
f. Interpersonal (between individuals)
g. Law/court system
h. Municipal Services (including Social Services)
i. Neighbourhood
j. Police
k. Public spaces (parks, sidewalk, or other)

l.   Recreation facilities

m. Religious Institutions

n.   Social media

o.   Other, please specify: _____

p.   Prefer not to answer

29. Did you report the incident(s) of discrimination that you **witnessed**?
    a. No [If no, go to Q32]
    b. Yes [If yes, go to Q30]
    c. Prefer not to answer [skip to Q33]

30. Who did you report the incident to?
    a. Another police service
    b. My workplace
    c. Niagara Regional Police Service
    d. The media
    e. Other: _____
    f. Prefer not to answer

31. Were you satisfied with the outcome of reporting the incident?
    a. No
    b. Yes
    c. Prefer not to Answer [skip to 33]

32. In the past five years, if you have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment but did not report the incident, what was the reason for not doing so? (select all that apply)
    a. Fear of being identified
    b. Fear of problems for myself
    c. Fear of problems for the perpetrator
    d. I did not think I would get a good outcome
    e. I did not think my complaint would be taken seriously
    f. I did not think the situation was serious enough to merit a formal complaint
    g. I had a bad experience when trying to make an official complaint previously
    h. I preferred just to ignore or distance myself from the perpetrator
    i. I preferred to settle the matter informally (e.g. educating the colleague that made an insensitive remark)
    j. Process seemed time-consuming
    k. Other, please specify: _____
    l. Prefer not to answer

33. I am aware of and understand the procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination or harassment in Niagara
    a. No
    b. Yes
    c. Unsure
    d. Prefer not to answer

34. Do you have any other comments regarding your experiences of discrimination in Niagara? [open ended, max 2000 characters]

Actions for Change

35. When thinking about reporting, resolving, and informing the community about incidences of racism or discrimination, please rank the following actions in order of priority, with number one (1) being the most important.
    a. Educate the offenders
    b. Have an independent organization that responds to reports of discrimination
    c. Have more a transparent, timely, or better process for how police respond to incidents of discrimination
    d. Improve access to legal clinics, human rights commission, or other supports for people who experience racism and discrimination
    e. Make it easier to report incidents of discrimination
    f. Support for police to respond better to incidents of discrimination
        o Do you have any other suggestions: _____

36. When thinking of ways to improve access to municipal services, please rank the following actions in order of priority, with number one (1) being the most important.
    a. Have clear signage so all people can move around in the community, this includes using Braille or other languages on signs
    b. Ensure that services are available regardless of income level
    c. Increase the number of local Intercultural Events
    d. Increase Interpreter/Translation Services
    e. Provide more mentorship opportunities
    f. Improve Region wide Public Transit
        o Do you have any other suggestions: _____

37. When thinking of ways for Municipalities to improve the design of programs and services to address barriers to community participation faced by people with diverse lived experiences, please rank the following actions in order of priority, with number one (1) being the most important.

a. Collect more data about people who are accessing services
b. Increase involvement of people with lived experiences in planning events and programs
c. Improve access to resources to support design of barrier free events
d. Review programs and services to identify barriers faced by people with diverse lived experiences
e. Support employers in Niagara to provide anti-discrimination training to their staff
    o Do you have any other suggestions: _____

38. When thinking of ways to address barriers to leadership roles faced by people with diverse lived experiences, please rank the following actions in order of priority, with number one (1) being the most important.
a. Review current processes to identify barriers faced in running for elected positions
b. Run a campaign to raise awareness and challenge the lack of diversity in staff employed in leadership roles within Niagara
c. Run a campaign to raise awareness and challenge the lack of diversity in elected leadership roles within Niagara
d. Provide mentorship opportunities targeted at people with diverse lived experiences
    o Do you have any other suggestions: _____

39. When thinking of ways to educate the public about barriers faced by people with diverse lived experiences and how to reduce the barriers, please rank the following actions in order of priority, with number one (1) being the most important.
a. Improve access for education for employees/employers on addressing discrimination
b. Improve access for community members to information on addressing discrimination
c. Run an anti-stigma campaign
d. Provide and promote anti-discrimination resources
e. Provide free workshops for any community member to attend
    o Do you have any other suggestions: _____

40. Rank the following areas of focus in terms of highest priority in order to address discrimination (1 being most important).
a. Education
b. Employment
c. Government services
d. Health care

    e. Housing

    f. Police

    g. Other: _____

41. Write down one word or phrase of what you want Niagara region to look like in five years.

42. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about Diversity, Equity, or Inclusion in Niagara?

Demographics

This section will ask some demographic questions so we can understand your point of view. We will use the information in this section to compare to your previous answers to find out more about barriers that may stop you from participating fully in your community in the way that you choose.

1. What do you currently consider your home community?
   a. Fort Erie
   b. Grimsby
   c. Lincoln
   d. Niagara Falls
   e. Niagara-on-the-Lake
   f. Pelham
   g. Port Colborne
   h. St. Catharines
   i. Thorold
   j. Wainfleet
   k. Welland
   l. West Lincoln
   m. Outside of Niagara
   n. Prefer not to answer

2. What is your age?
   a. 0-19
   b. 20-34
   c. 35-49
   d. 50-64
   e. 65-79
   f. 80 or older
   g. Prefer not to answer

3. What is your employment status? (select all that apply)
    a. Full-time
    b. Multiple part-time
    c. Part-time
    d. Retired
    e. Self-employed
    f. Stay at home
    g. Student
    h. Unemployed, not seeking work
    i. Unemployed, seeking work
    j. Other, please specify: _____
    k. Prefer not to answer

4. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?
    a. Less than high school
    b. High school diploma or equivalency certificate
    c. Registered Apprenticeship, trades, or other certificate
    d. Diploma from College, CEGEP, University or another Institution
    e. Degree from College or University
    f. Prefer not to answer

5. Where did you complete your highest level of schooling?
    a. In Canada
    b. Outside of Canada
    c. Prefer not to answer

6. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identity? Please select all that apply.
    a. First Nations
    b. Inuk (Inuit)
    c. Métis
    d. Arab
    e. Black
    f. Latin American
    g. East Asian
    h. South Asian
    i. South-East Asian
    j. West Asian
    k. Pacific Islander
    l. White (including European decent)
    m. Prefer to self-describe: _____

n. Prefer not to answer

7. How long have you lived in Canada?
    a. Less than 1 year
    b. 1 to 5 years
    c. 6 to 15 years
    d. 16 to 25 years
    e. 26 or more years
    f. Prefer not to answer

8. What types of Government Assistance do you currently receive? Please select all that apply.
    a. Canada Child Benefit (CCB)
    b. Employment Insurance (EI)
    c. GST/HST Rebate
    d. Old Age Pension (OAP)
    e. Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
    f. Ontario Trillium Benefit (OTB)
    g. Ontario Works (OW)
    h. Parental Leave
    i. I do not receive government assistance
    j. Other, please specify: _____
    k. Prefer not to answer

9. Do you personally experience with any of the following? Please select all that apply
    a. Addiction (alcohol, drugs, gambling, or other)
    b. Chronic condition (pain, epilepsy, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or other.)
    c. Developmental condition (autism, Down's syndrome, or other)
    d. Hearing loss
    e. Learning challenge (dyslexia, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, or other)
    f. Mental health challenge (PTSD, anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, or other)
    g. Physical condition (cerebral palsy, spinal cord, injury, amputation, or other)
    h. Vision loss
    i. Other: _____
    j. None of the above
    k. Prefer not to answer

10. How do you identify in terms of your sexuality?
    a. Aromantic

b. Asexual

c. Bisexual

d. Gay

e. Heterosexual

f. Lesbian

g. Pansexual

h. Queer

i. Questioning

j. Two-Spirit

k. Prefer to self-describe: _____

l. Prefer not to disclose

11. How do you identify in terms of your gender? Please select all that apply.

a. Cisgender

b. Female

c. Male

d. Non-binary

e. Questioning

f. Transfeminine

g. Transgender

h. Transmasculine

i. Two-Spirit

j. Prefer to self-describe: _____

k. Prefer not to disclose

12. Are you currently living in long term, stable, safe housing?

a. No

b. Yes

c. Prefer not to answer

13. What is the first language learned at home that you still understand? [open ended]

Thank you

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your experiences and ideas will help to make Niagara more welcoming and inclusive as we work together to create a five year Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

If you would like more information or have other information to contribute, please email diversity@niagararegion.ca. For information about the Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee click here. For information about the Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan click here.

Thank you,

The Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Appendix B: Focus Group Script and Questions – Community

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our discussion on diversity, equity and inclusion in Niagara Region. The answers to the questions below will help the Region develop a comprehensive five-year Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan. The plan will include goals, objectives, and implementation steps, to help Niagara become more welcoming and inclusive. We are currently in the midst of focus groups with Niagara Region employees, community organizations, and community members, and in the fall will be doing staff and community surveys.

These questions will provide information about your experiences, perspectives and insights on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Providing your responses gives us the consent to use the information in our reports. No names or self-identifying information will be included in any reports or references. Your comments are confidential. You do not have to answer all the questions, you can leave some blank.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Let's begin by finding out a little more about your colleagues by going around the room one at a time. Please tell us your name, your position, and a little bit about what motivated you to participate in this discussion today. We are going to start with a couple of questions using Mentimeter, please go to menti.com and enter the code _____, then answer the first two questions.

Niagara Region demonstrates its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (strongly agree to strongly disagree)
I feel accepted, comfortable, and safe within Niagara (strongly agree to strongly disagree)

1. As a community member, have you witnessed or experienced anything that you would label as exclusion, discrimination or another barrier? If yes, please provide more information.
2. Did you tell anyone about the experience or formally report it? Please elaborate on your experience.
3. What obstacles or barriers have you or other community members faced when trying to access Regional services or programs?
4. What current initiatives or training that encourage diversity, equity, or inclusion that you think are going well in the region?

5. What other initiatives or training do you think should be implemented to foster values of diversity, equity and inclusion in the region?
6. Are there any culturally or religiously important dates that you think we should be aware of and acknowledge at the Region?
7. Of the diversity, equity and inclusion issues that we discussed today, which is the most important to you, particularly thinking about the group you are representing today?
8. Thinking of DEI, write down a word or phrase of what you want the Region to look like in five years.
9. Is there anything regarding diversity, equity and inclusion that we did not get the chance to touch on today that you would want to highlight before we close?

Appendix C: Focus Group Information and Consent Form

You have volunteered to participate in a focus group conducted by staff at the Niagara Region. The purpose of the focus groups is to hear more about your experiences, perspectives and insights on diversity, equity and inclusion as an employee of Niagara Region. The information gathered in the focus groups will help the Region develop a comprehensive Action Plan that demonstrates the Region's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The plan will articulate goals, objectives and plans for implementation.

You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group and stop at any time. If everyone in the group agrees, we will be voice recording the session. Although the conversation from the focus group will be voice recorded, your responses will remain anonymous and no names or self-identifying information will be mentioned in the report or other communications. The focus groups will be expected to last between 60-90 minutes.

There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. However, you can choose to not answer a question. We hope that you can be honest even when your responses may not be in agreement with the rest of the group. In respect for each other, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group and that responses made by all participants be kept confidential. The success of these focus groups depends on shared trust that we can engage in meaningful, productive, and honest conversation.

I understand this information and agree to participate fully under the conditions above:

Please check:
☐ I consent to have the focus groups session voice recorded and transcribed.
Name: _____

Signed: _____   Date: _____

(You can insert a signature or just type your name)

Any personal information will be collected, used and disclosed by Niagara Regional staff in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). This information will be used for the purpose of developing a comprehensive action plan that conveys Niagara Region's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Any information you share will be used only for the intended purpose for which it was provided. If you have any questions, email our Access and Privacy Office or call 905-980-6000 ext. 3779.

Appendix D: Additional Data Tables

Table 16: Types of discrimination experienced

Rank	Type of discrimination experienced	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
1	Gender	417	41%
2	Age	306	30%
3	Mental health	251	25%
4	Vaccination status	243	24%
5	Ethnicity	242	24%
6	Ability / disability	236	23%
7	Income level	236	23%
8	Religion	181	18%
9	Race	180	18%
10	Sexual orientation	156	15%
11	Housing status	138	14%
12	Education	133	13%
13	Gender identity	66	7%
14	Substance use	58	6%
15	Gender expression	55	5%
16	Indigenous identity	42	4%
17	Rural location	31	3%
18	Prefer not to answer	27	3%
Other descriptions			
19	Pandemic regulations	15	2%
20	Appearance	11	1%
21	Immigration	9	1%
22	Health concerns	8	1%
23	Social values	8	1%
24	Weight	7	1%
25	Marital status	7	1%
26	Language	6	1%
27	Political values	4	0%
28	Urban location	3	0%
29	Employment	3	0%
30	Family history	2	0%
31	Parenting	2	0%

Table 17: Types of discrimination witnessed

Rank	Type of discrimination witnessed	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
1	Ethnicity	688	60%
2	Mental health	542	48%
3	Race	537	47%
4	Ability / disability	535	47%
5	Gender	482	42%
6	Sexual orientation	455	40%
7	Income level	436	38%
8	Religion	418	37%
9	Age	405	36%
10	Gender identity	371	33%
11	Gender expression	370	33%
12	Housing status	365	32%
13	Substance use	362	32%
14	Indigenous identity	344	30%
15	Education	266	23%
16	Vaccination status	188	17%
17	Rural location	87	8%
18	Prefer not to answer	28	3%
Other categories			
19	Pandemic regulations	17	2%
20	Social values	6	1%
21	Immigration	4	0%
22	Employment	3	0%
23	Language	2	0%
24	Health concerns	2	0%
25	Weight	2	0%
26	Political values	2	0%
27	Other	1	0%
Total		6918	607%

Table 18: Forms of discrimination experienced

Rank	Forms of discrimination experienced	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
1	Insulting comments or actions	826	82%
2	Barriers to participation	598	59%
3	Teasing, mocking, or bullying	587	58%
4	Verbal abuse (targeted to you)	554	55%
5	Hate speech (targeted to your group)	526	52%
6	Threatening behaviour	409	41%
7	Sexual harassment	192	19%
8	Physical assault (being touched / pushed)	149	15%
9	Sexual assault	98	10%
10	Barriers to employment	25	3%
11	Prefer not to answer	17	2%
12	Other	15	2%
13	Microaggressions	12	1%
14	Exclusion	10	1%
15	Poor living conditions/Eviction	5	1%
16	Barriers to healthcare	3	0%
17	Extortion	2	0%
	Total	4028	399%

Table 19: Forms of discrimination witnessed

Rank	Forms of discrimination witnessed	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
1	Insulting comments or actions	988	86%
2	Teasing, mocking, or bullying	804	70%
3	Hate speech (targeted to a group)	756	66%
4	Barriers to participation	731	64%
5	Verbal abuse (targeted to an individual)	724	63%
6	Threatening behaviour	535	47%
7	Physical assault (being touched / pushed)	259	23%
8	Sexual harassment	209	18%
9	Sexual assault	83	7%
10	Prefer not to answer	18	2%
11	Exclusion	14	1%
12	Barriers to employment	9	1%
13	Microaggressions	8	1%
14	Poor living conditions/Eviction	4	0%

Rank	Forms of discrimination witnessed	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
15	Other	3	0%
16	Extortion	2	0%
Total		5147	450%

Table 20: First languages spoken by survey respondents that they still understand

Language	Frequency	Percent
English	960	84.9%
French	24	2.1%
Spanish	20	1.8%
Italian	15	1.3%
Polish	11	1.0%
Prefer not to answer	8	0.7%
Arabic	7	0.6%
Portuguese	7	0.6%
Urdu	7	0.6%
English and French	6	0.5%
German	6	0.5%
Mandarin	5	0.4%
Dutch	4	0.4%
Turkish	4	0.4%
Ukrainian	4	0.4%
Japanese	3	0.3%
Romanian	3	0.3%
American Sign Language	2	0.2%
Chinese	2	0.2%
Greek	2	0.2%
Russian	2	0.2%
Swedish	2	0.2%
Tagalog	2	0.2%
Vietnamese	2	0.2%
Anishinabemowin	1	0.1%
Cebuano	1	0.1%
Croatian	1	0.1%
Enisb	1	0.1%
Farsi	1	0.1%

Language	Frequency	Percent
Filipino	1	0.1%
Gujarati	1	0.1%
Hindi	1	0.1%
Hungarian	1	0.1%
Icelandic	1	0.1%
Irish Gaelic	1	0.1%
Kuku	1	0.1%
Native	1	0.1%
Not English	1	0.1%
Pashto	1	0.1%
Punjabi	1	0.1%
Serbian	1	0.1%
Shona	1	0.1%
Sinhalese	1	0.1%
Swahili	1	0.1%
Swiss	1	0.1%
Twi	1	0.1%
Welsh	1	0.1%
Total	1131	100.0%