

Summary

Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants, Visible Minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in Niagara Region

**An Empirical Study by the Niagara
Local Immigration Partnership**

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Niagara Local
Immigration
Partnership

Partenariat local en
matière d'immigration
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Overview

This research was undertaken to support the development of evidence-based anti-discrimination initiatives at the local level.¹ A representative survey was conducted in March 2021 to examine the extent and context of discrimination experienced by immigrants, visible minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in Niagara region, in comparison to people who are not members of these groups. The survey also investigated the presumed basis for this discrimination, who is perpetrating these acts of discrimination, and whether specific forms of discrimination are taking place. In addition, the survey examined how individuals respond to these experiences of discrimination, including how they cope with discrimination and feel about it, and their more general feelings of acceptance and welcome in the community.

A methodological strength of this research was the targeting of substantial numbers of immigrants, visible minorities, and Indigenous Peoples for inclusion (immigrants and visible minorities: 423 respondents, Indigenous Peoples: 163 respondents), and the recruitment procedure that used random digit dialing, ensuring relatively representative samples. Immigrants and visible minorities were combined for the majority of analyses because of the substantial overlap between these two groups in Niagara region (though we of course acknowledge that not all immigrants in Niagara region are visible minorities and not all visible minorities in Niagara region are immigrants). In the Immigrants & Visible Minorities group, over 75% of respondents were both immigrants and visible minorities.

Summary of Findings

Immigrants & Visible Minorities

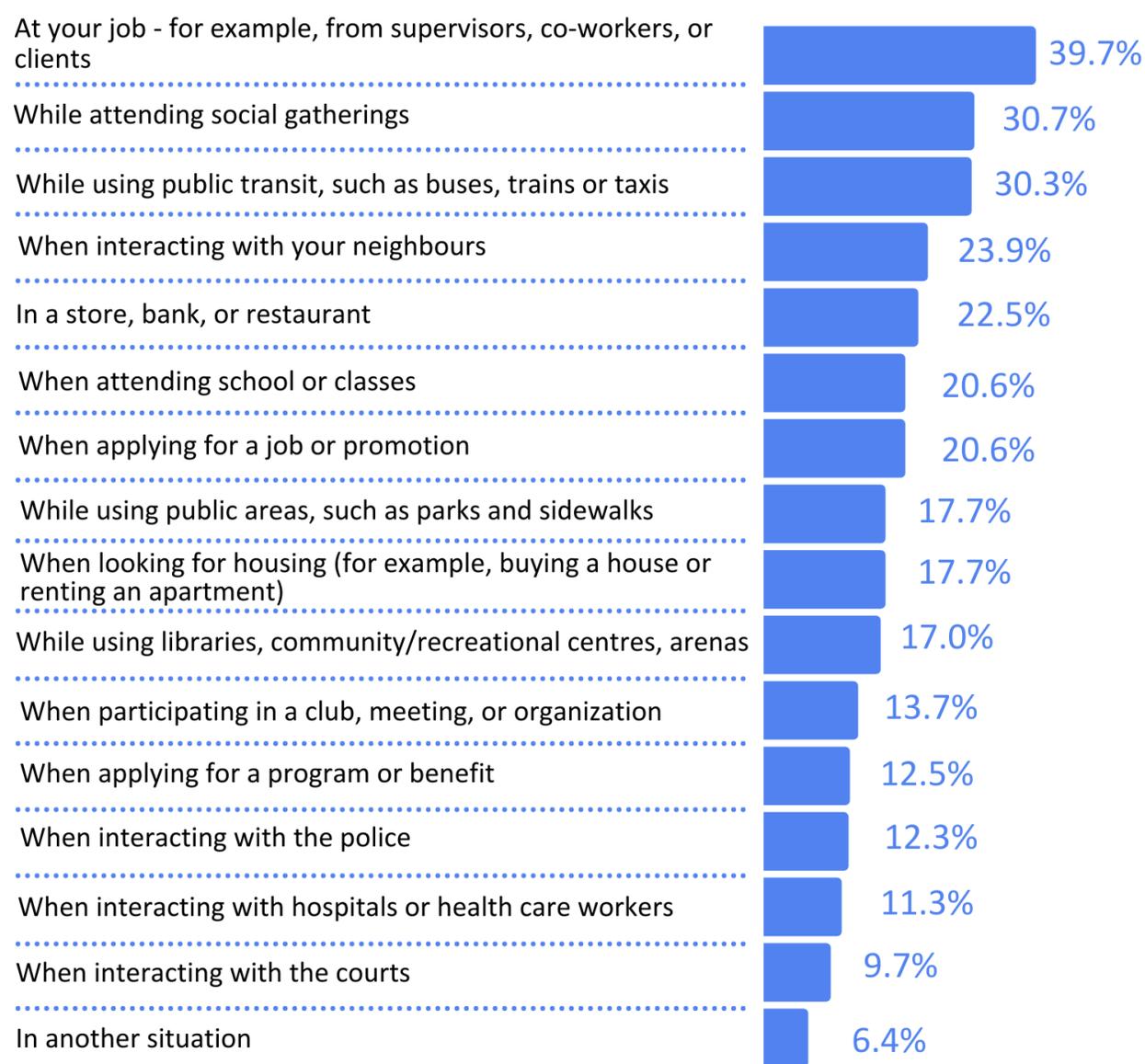
Approximately 6 out of 10 Immigrants & Visible Minorities reported experiencing discrimination in Niagara region in the past three years. Younger and female respondents, those with college or vocational education and undergraduate degrees, and respondents earning between \$45,001 and \$80,000 annually were more likely to report experiencing discrimination. Also, for Immigrants & Visible Minorities, ethnicity/race played a role. In particular, Black respondents were most likely to report experiencing discrimination in Niagara region. Of note, visible minorities who are not immigrants were most likely to report experiencing discrimination, followed by immigrant visible minorities. In terms of specific characteristics of immigrants, permanent residents and those who had lived in Canada between 5 to 10 years were most likely to report experiencing discrimination in Niagara region.

¹ The full report is available at www.welcomeniagaracanada.com.

The most common bases for discrimination reported by Immigrants & Visible Minorities were their ethnicity or culture and race or skin colour.

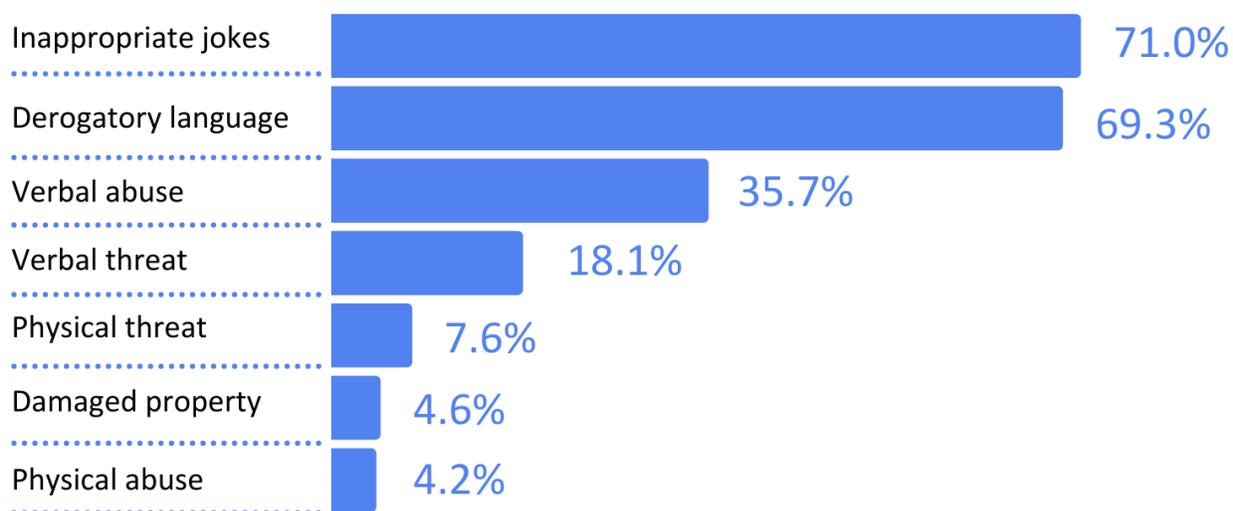
Immigrants & Visible Minorities were most likely to experience discrimination at their job (e.g., from supervisors, co-workers, or clients), while attending social gatherings, while using public transit (e.g., buses, trains or taxis), when interacting with their neighbours, and in a store, bank, or restaurant.

Immigrants & Visible Minorities: Contexts in Which Discrimination Occurred



In terms of the types of discrimination experienced, Immigrants & Visible Minorities were most likely to experience inappropriate jokes and derogatory language, followed by verbal abuse and threat.

**Immigrants & Visible Minorities Who Had Experienced Discrimination:
Percentage Who Had Experienced Each Type of Discrimination**



Both males and females were identified as perpetrators of this discrimination, although males were mentioned more frequently than females. In addition, perpetrators were most commonly reported to be middle aged and White.

Experiences of discrimination were especially likely to lead to feelings of discouragement, exclusion, and powerlessness. On average, Immigrants & Visible Minorities also reported experiencing some anxiety and depression as a result of their discrimination experiences. They indicated using both active (e.g., tried to do something about it) and passive (e.g., accepted it as the way things are) coping strategies to deal with their discrimination experiences, although they tended to rely more on passive than active coping strategies. Of note, those who had experienced discrimination reported lower feelings of being accepted and welcomed in Niagara region than those who had not experienced discrimination.

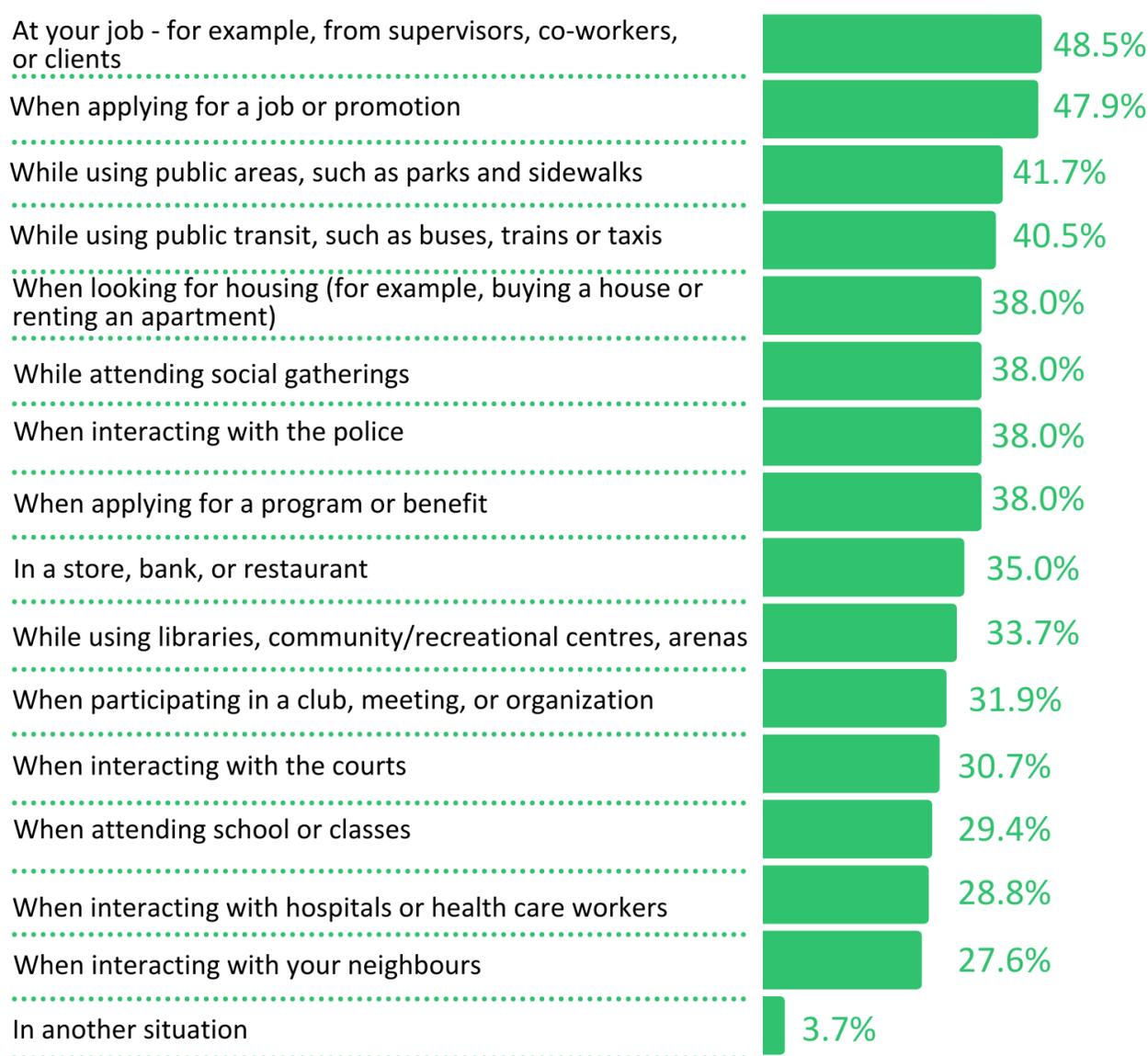
Indigenous Peoples

Approximately 8 out of 10 Indigenous Peoples reported experiencing discrimination in Niagara region in the past three years. Younger, female, and more educated individuals, those who were primarily employed and had higher incomes were more likely to report experiencing discrimination. On average, Indigenous Peoples also reported experiencing discrimination in more contexts than Immigrants & Visible Minorities and White Non-immigrants.

Indigenous Peoples indicated that the main bases for the discrimination they experienced had to do with their indigenous identity and ethnicity or culture.

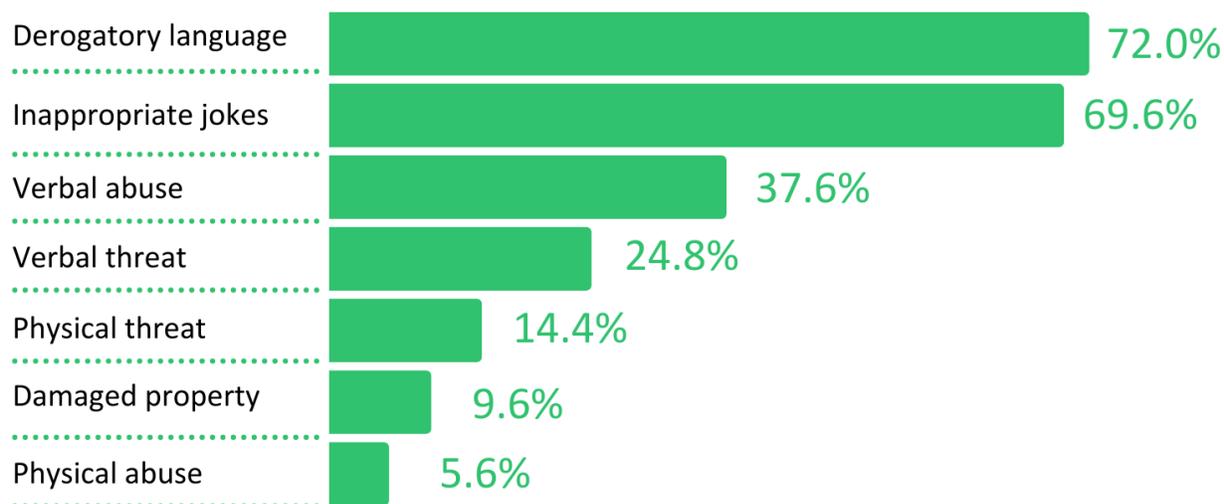
Indigenous Peoples were most likely to report experiencing discrimination at their job (e.g., from supervisors, co-workers, or clients), when applying for a job or promotion, while using public areas (e.g., parks and sidewalks), while using public transit (e.g., buses, trains or taxis), when looking for housing (e.g., buying a house or renting an apartment), while attending social gatherings, when interacting with the police, and when applying for a program or benefit.

Indigenous Peoples: Contexts in Which Discrimination Occurred



In terms of the types of discrimination experienced, Indigenous Peoples were most likely to report derogatory language and inappropriate jokes, followed by verbal abuse and threat.

**Indigenous Peoples Who Had Experienced Discrimination:
Percentage Who Had Experienced Each Type of Discrimination**



Indigenous Peoples identified perpetrators as male and female, although males were mentioned more often than females. In addition, perpetrators were most commonly reported to be middle aged and White.

Similar to the other two groups, Indigenous Peoples reported that experiences of discrimination were especially likely to lead to feelings of discouragement, exclusion, and powerlessness. On average, Indigenous Peoples also reported experiencing anxiety and depression to some extent as a result of their discrimination experiences. They indicated using both active and passive coping strategies to deal with their discrimination experiences, although they tended to rely more on passive than active coping strategies. Of note, those who had experienced discrimination reported lower feelings of being accepted and welcomed in Niagara region than those who had not experienced discrimination.

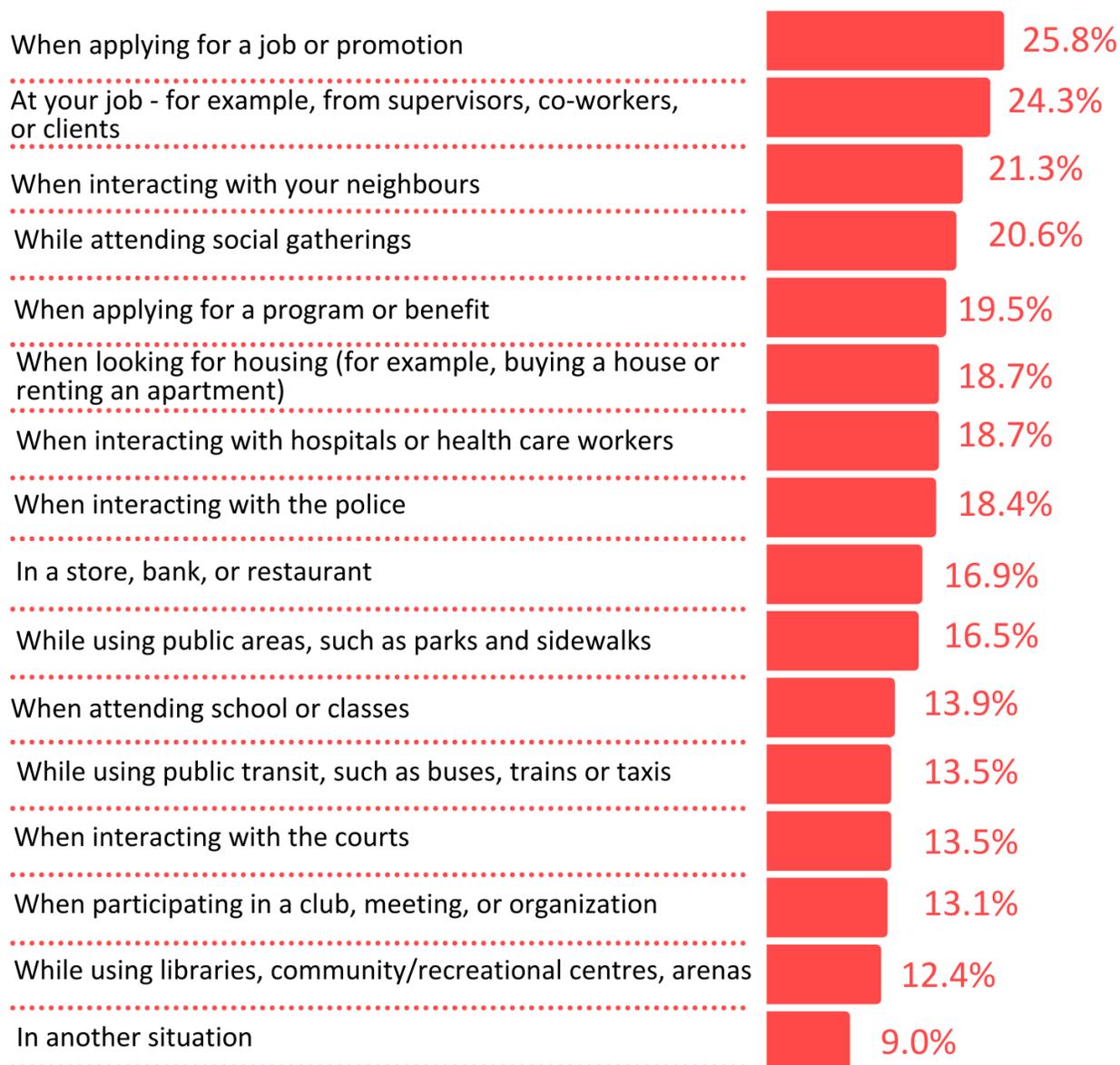
Comparison White Non-immigrants

Approximately 5 out of 10 comparison White Non-immigrants reported experiencing discrimination in Niagara region in the last three years.

Of note, White Non-immigrants reported that the main bases for the discrimination they experienced had to do with universal factors such as gender and age.

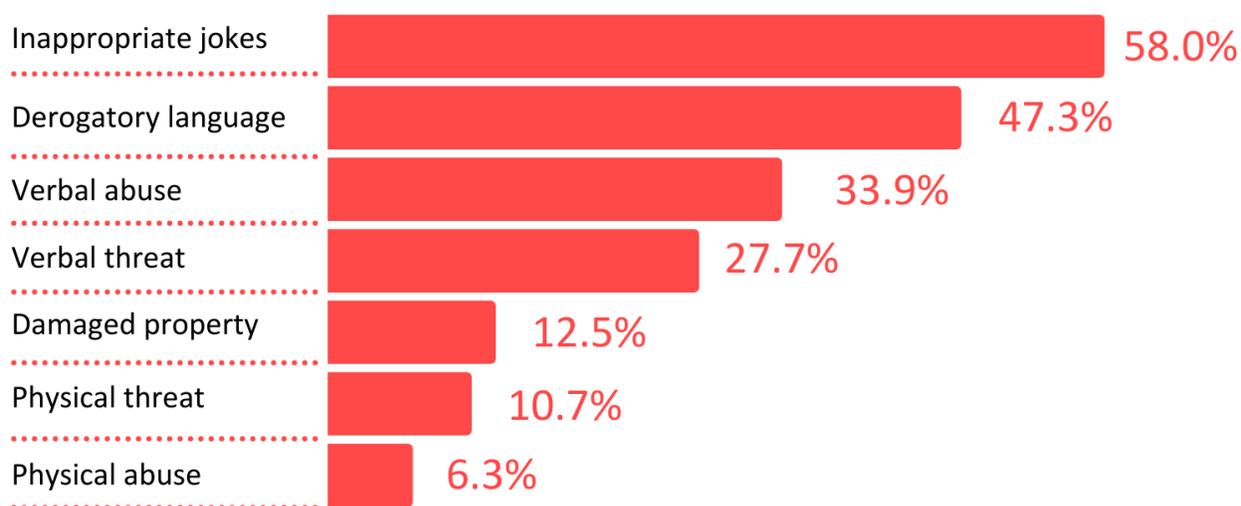
White Non-immigrants were most likely to experience discrimination when applying for a job or promotion, at their job (e.g., from supervisors, co-workers, or clients), when interacting with their neighbours, and while attending social gatherings.

**White Non-immigrants:
Contexts in Which Discrimination Occurred**



In terms of the types of discrimination experienced, White Non-Immigrants were most likely to mention inappropriate jokes, followed by derogatory language, and verbal abuse and threat.

White Non-immigrants Who Had Experienced Discrimination: Percentage Who Had Experienced Each Type of Discrimination



White Non-immigrants also tended to report, on average, higher feelings of acceptance and welcome in Niagara region than members of the other two groups.

Recommendations

Recommendations for counteracting this discrimination focus on three areas.

Recommendation #1

First, it is important to promote an environment that encourages reporting of discrimination that is taking place in the community. This can be facilitated by creating resources for reporting discrimination, such as an online reporting tool where discrimination can be described by victims and witnesses of discrimination. Only experiences that are acknowledged can be addressed.

Recommendation #2

Second, the findings suggest that it is important to help victims of discrimination to use effective coping strategies so that they do not internalize the discrimination that they experience. Mental health supports should be provided to victims of discrimination that help them engage in coping strategies that are most effective for their specific characteristics and circumstances. As such, coping strategies should be tailored to victims based on their gender, ethnicity, acculturation or ethnic identification, and personality traits.

Recommendation #3

The third recommendation focuses on strategies for preventing and counteracting the discrimination experienced in Niagara region. These strategies should take into account the findings of the current research in terms of the contexts and nature of discrimination in Niagara region, as well as the research literature on effective anti-discrimination strategies. In particular, based on the findings, strategies to prevent and counteract discrimination must be implemented in employment settings and social gatherings, which are primary locations for discrimination across groups. For Immigrants & Visible Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, anti-discrimination strategies should also target settings such as public transit. Targeted strategies for combatting the discrimination that Immigrants & Visible Minorities experience when interacting with their neighbours and in a store, bank, or restaurant, and that Indigenous Peoples experience when applying for a job or promotion, while using public areas (e.g., parks and sidewalks), when looking for housing, when interacting with the police, and when applying for a program or benefit should also be developed.

These strategies should aim to prevent microaggressions such as inappropriate jokes, derogatory language, and verbal abuse, as well as more blatant forms of discrimination such as threats. The results of this study also point to the importance of including those who tend to perpetrate acts of discrimination (e.g., middle aged, White, men) in anti-discrimination programming.

Strategies for preventing and counteracting discrimination should consider the research literature on effective anti-discrimination strategies. These include increasing facilitative intergroup contact, countering stereotypes, encouraging perspective-taking, and finding common ground.

Anti-discrimination strategies should take a multilevel approach, addressing the individual perpetrators of discrimination (e.g., by changing attitudes and behaviors), bystanders (e.g., by providing them with the tools to intervene effectively), and organizations/systems (e.g., by changing policies and practices). It would be useful for community agencies to collaborate on anti-discrimination initiatives in order to prevent duplication of effort and resources. Anti-discrimination initiatives should also be evidence-based and evaluated through short-term and long-term criteria. Indeed, we recommend the development of a toolkit of strategies for reducing discrimination within the community that can be tested, fine tuned, and utilized by a number of stakeholders in Niagara region.

In this way, Niagara region can work toward becoming a more welcoming community in which all groups are treated with respect, and discriminatory treatment becomes an exception rather than an everyday occurrence for members of certain groups.