

REFRAMING STORIES



FINAL REPORT
2024





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Executive Summary

In Summer 2023, Avinda De Silva approached the Mosaic Institute with the need to create space for youth who experience racism because they belong to communities assumed to be affiliated with gang activity. Through his community work and role as a youth worker in Toronto, Avinda noticed a recurring pattern of youth sharing experiences of racism, and thinking it was only their community or their identity as the target. Avinda identified a key gap in spaces for youth to know that they are not alone, and an opportunity to amplify their experiences to inform decision makers in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment.

Building on the Mosaic Institute's Model of Dialogue and its experience convening community groups to co-create actionable recommendations, "Reframing Stories" brought together 9 youth aged 14-29 from racialized communities who experience racism in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment because they belong to communities assumed to be affiliated with gang activity. The purpose of Reframing Stories is to:

- Increase public awareness of public policy issues related to race relations, anti-racism, or anti-hate nationally, regionally, or in local communities.
- Increase public awareness of Canada's cultural diversity.
- Increase awareness of factors such as race, culture, ethnicity, or religion that may be hindering full participation of the entire Canadian population in society and the economy.
- Increase knowledge and capacity within communities to address racism and discrimination.

Over the course of 3 dialogue sessions held in March 2024, participants:

- Shared experiences of racism in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment
- Developed networks and built relationships across communities and sectors.
- Explored the systems and ideologies at the root of their experiences.
- Developed actionable recommendations to help reduce experiences of racism in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment.

In addition to documenting racism experienced by youth from different communities in Toronto, we worked with participants to develop practical recommendations on what is needed to reduce experiences of stigma and racial bias.

It is our goal that the recommendations in this report will support decision makers in education, the justice system, policing, social services, and access to employment in their efforts to ensure youth in Toronto no longer experience racism because of who they are.

"Reframing Stories" was made possible by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation with funding provided by the Government of Canada.

Outcomes

After the Dialogue, we surveyed participants about their experience. As a result of participating in “Reframing Stories”:

- 100% increased their critical thinking skills.
- 80% increased their media literacy skills.
- 100% improved their ability to communicate through different ideas.
- 100% improved their ability to address discrimination and bias.
- 100% improved their ability to map social change.
- 100% increased their awareness of people who have experiences similar to their own.
- 100% increased their knowledge of systemic racism.
- 100% increased their knowledge of human rights.
- 80% increased their knowledge of different career options.
- 100% increased their knowledge of resources in the education, justice, social services, and access to employment sectors.

Please see Appendix for Evaluation results.

Key Findings

“Reframing Stories” documented the stories and ideas of 6 youth living in Toronto aged 18-29 who experience racism in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment because they belong to communities assumed to be affiliated with gang activity.

Please see the Appendix for the participants’ responses.

Documenting Racism in Toronto

Throughout the Dialogue, all of the participants shared similar experiences of racism, discrimination, microaggressions, and stereotyping in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment:

- Incorrect identification of their ethno-cultural heritage based on name and/or appearance.
- Increased surveillance based on their neighbourhood or ethno-cultural heritage.
- Assumptions of being dangerous because of their ethno-cultural heritage.
- Assumptions of being dangerous because of their neighbourhood/postal code.
- Assumptions of being less intelligent because of their ethno-cultural heritage.
- Assumptions of being less intelligent because of their neighbourhood/postal code.
- Being removed from or refused entry to public spaces because of their ethno-cultural heritage.
- 100% of participants indicated they have experienced microaggressions in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment.

Perceived Causes of Racist Incidents in Toronto

In Session #2, “Breaking Barriers: Mapping Social Change” participants identified the causes for the racist incident(s) they experience and witness:

- Learned behaviours: narratives and education that reinforces stereotypes and bias.
- Systemic gaps: laws and policies; complex processes that discourage change.
- Individual barriers: language barriers; fear; lack of critical thinking

Recommendations

- **Be evidence-based and trauma-informed.**
 - Train employees in trauma-informed approaches to their work and to ensure decisions are grounded in data.
- **Apply Reflexivity.**
 - Curate a culture of curiosity and understanding that rewards introspection, asking questions, and awareness of social location.
- **Value Relationships.**
 - Invest in formal and informal relationships across and in the community to build trust and intercultural understanding.

Sector-Specific Recommendations

Education Sector

- Taking the time to accurately evaluate needs and develop plans accordingly without making assumptions about aptitude based on where someone is from/the community(ies) they belong to & allowing options.
- Use culturally relevant materials in the school!
- Awareness of cultural sensitivities and making space for different approaches.
- Add lived experience to formal education.

Justice System

- Listening to all the facts instead of making assumptions based on one aspect of a person, such as where they live or their friends.
- Ensuring there is representation of communities in decisions made affecting those communities (both ethno-cultural and geographic).
- Adjusting training/organizational culture to focus on looking at individuals and not making assumptions based on the culture of that person.

Policing

- Diversify resources and approaches, with a focus on community policing initiatives, because this approach can help focus on building trust and collaboration between the law enforcement and communities.
- The naming of task forces by community should stop - leave out community names (e.g.: “the Tamil Task Force” or “Asian Organized Crime Task Force”)

Social Services

- Education around stereotypes based on certain “ethnic” names, to avoid continuing these stereotypes.
- Public education to reduce the negative stereotypes around accessing various social services

Access to Employment

- Evaluate work culture and demographics, and then make positive changes based on this data.

- Invest in cultural competency training.
- Reduce judgment and bias by creating a culture of acceptance for different cultures in the workplace.

Background

About “Reframing Stories”

Mosaic Institute’s 2014 research on the Perceptions and Reality of Imported Conflict confirmed that people who experience conflict and then arrive in Canada only to experience racism and systemic discrimination are at more risk of engaging in conflict-related activity here in Canada.¹ Additionally, these compounding experiences of exclusion and trauma reinforce reductionist views of other communities and reduce positive civic-social engagement in Canada.

Our research further confirmed that:

- the most powerful factors at work in reducing violence are social, economic, and political inclusion; and
- the shared struggle to fight racism and exclusion can have the effect of erasing community-related divides.

Almost 10 years later, we were approached by community advocate Avinda De Silva as he sees the same cycles of racism and systemic exclusion resulting in inter-community conflict through his own lived experience, volunteer work, and in his work as a Youth Facilitator in Toronto. In particular, racialized youth who are already at risk of engaging in gang-related activity experience significant barriers to fully engaging in Canadian society and the economy.

“Reimagining Stories” addresses this need to reduce prejudice within and racism against these communities through:

- Facilitated dialogue to increase inter-community trust and build relationships.
- Producing a Summary report to advise decision makers in education, justice, policing, social services, and employers on how to practically reduce instances of prejudice and discrimination.

These activities:

- Increased public awareness of public policy issues related to race relations and anti-racism experienced by at-risk youth in Toronto;
- Increased awareness of factors such as race, culture, ethnicity, or religion that may be hindering full participation of at-risk youth in Toronto, in society and the economy; and
- Increased knowledge and capacity within communities to address racism and discrimination experienced by at-risk youth from racialized communities who experience racism because they belong to communities assumed to be affiliated with gang activity.

¹ <https://www.mosaicinstitute.ca/the-perception-and-reality>

About the Participants (Demographic Profile)

9 people participated in the Dialogue, with 3-6 people attending each session. At the beginning of each session, the same anonymous demographic survey was completed by those attending that session. For additional demographic data, please see the Appendix.

- Participants ranged in age from 18-29 and were students or employed part-time.
- The majority (75%) identified as women and the remainder identified as men.
- Participants self-identified as South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, etc.); East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent); Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian); and Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent).
- 1 participant self-identified as having a disability; 2 chose not to disclose, and the rest indicated that they do not have a disability.
- 5 participants are students, and 3 are employed part-time. Some are both students and working part-time.

The Dialogue

Participants were invited from Mosaic's existing youth network and from partner organizations located in Toronto who work with youth from racialized communities who experience barriers to fully engaging in Canadian society and the economy, such as Sri Lankan, Tamil, Vietnamese, Afghan, Afro/Indo Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, Latinx and/or Somali youth.

These ethno-cultural communities were selected based on insight from our community partner, Avinda De Silva, and on the recommendation of partner organizations who work with youth from racialized communities who experience barriers to fully engaging in Canadian society and the economy.

The Dialogue sessions were held in March 2024. Participants were given the choice of attending in person or via Zoom. Due to personal circumstances, the majority chose to attend via Zoom and all dialogue sessions were conducted virtually. Between 3 - 6 youth attended each session, which were co-facilitated by Rachel Mansell, Vice President of Mosaic Institute and Avinda De Silva Mosaic Institute's community partner.

Each session began with an opening exercise designed to build trust among participants, and then moved to the main theme of the session. Each session built on the previous discussions, culminating in a series of action-oriented recommendations.

Following the first session, we shared an open resource with additional articles and supports that participants added to throughout the Dialogue (see Appendix).

Session 1 - Build Bonds: Understanding Issues and Experiences

The purpose of this first session was to develop initial relationships; understand instances of racism; and document narratives.

The session opened with a simple icebreaker exercise designed to generate conversation, and explored participants' motivations for joining the Dialogue.

We then reviewed key concepts such as: racism; human rights; discrimination; stereotypes; microaggressions; and systemic versus individual experiences. Lastly, we documented examples of different types of racism that participants experienced or witnessed in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment sectors.

While participants joined the dialogue because they knew they experienced barriers to full participation in society, they didn't necessarily have the language to describe their experiences. Participants indicated the value of learning these key concepts, as it equipped them to better identify, understand, and seek to address their experiences.

This first dialogue session:

- Increased knowledge of systemic racism and human rights;
- Increased data of lived experiences of racism in Toronto; and
- Increased cross-cultural awareness through understanding the similarities and differences of their stories.

Session 2 - Break Barriers: Mapping Social Change

The purpose of the second session was to work with participants to understand the systems, individuals, communities impacted by racism and the underpinning ideologies fuelling racist experiences. We focused on education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment sectors.

The session opened with a simple icebreaker exercise designed to generate conversation, and prepare to expand on the previous week's discussions. We then quickly reviewed the themes from the previous discussion and the goals for the second session.

Using the Mosaic Institute's "Problem Tree" activity from its "Mapping Social Change" workshop, participants discussed examples they have experienced or witnessed in each of the focus sectors. Participants then identified those impacted by the racist incident(s) and explored their opinions about the root cause(s) of the incident(s).

This exercise:

- Increased skills in critical thinking; media literacy; communicating through difference; addressing discrimination and bias; and mapping social change;
- Increased knowledge of systemic racism; human rights;
- Increased data of lived experiences of racism in Toronto; and
- Increased cross-cultural awareness through understanding the similarities and differences of their stories.

This second session:

- Increased awareness of public policy issues related to race relations, anti-racism, or anti-hate nationally, regionally, or in local communities;
- Increased awareness of Canada's cultural diversity; and
- Increased awareness of factors such as race, culture, ethnicity, or religion that may be hindering full participation of the entire Canadian population in society and the economy.

Session 3 - Take Action: Developing Solutions

The purpose of the third session was to amplify youth voices and opinions on practical recommendations for what is needed to reduce experiences of stigma and racial bias.

Similar to sessions 1 and 2, we focused on education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment sectors.

The session opened with a simple icebreaker exercise designed to generate conversation, and prepare to expand on the previous discussions. We then quickly reviewed the themes from the previous discussions and the goals for the last session.

Using the Mosaic Institute's "Mind Mapping" and "Ladder of Social Change" activities from its "Mapping Social Change" workshop, participants discussed ideas for individual and systemic changes they want to see in the education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment sectors.

This exercise:

- Increased skills in critical thinking; media literacy; communicating through difference; addressing discrimination and bias; and mapping social change;
- Increased knowledge of systemic racism; human rights; career options;
- Increased knowledge of resources in education, justice, social services, and access to employment;
- Increased data of lived experiences of racism in Toronto; and
- Increased cross-cultural awareness through understanding the similarities and differences of their stories.

This last session:

- Increased awareness of public policy issues related to race relations, anti-racism, or anti-hate nationally, regionally, or in local communities;
- Increased awareness of Canada's cultural diversity; and
- Increased knowledge and capacity within communities to address racism and discrimination.

Outcomes

After the Dialogue, we surveyed participants about their experience. As a result of participating in “Reframing Stories”:

- 100% increased their critical thinking skills.
- 80% increased their media literacy skills.
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- 100% increased their awareness of people who have experiences similar to their own.
- 100% increased their knowledge of systemic racism.
- 100% increased their knowledge of human rights.
- 80% increased their knowledge of different career options.
- 100% increased their knowledge of resources in the education, justice, social services, and access to employment sectors.

Participant feedback included:

- I had a great experience participating in Reframing Stories as it helped me to express my ideas, build my confidence, and contribute to the discussion.
- Participating in Reframing Stories gave me an insight into the different experiences of racialized communities, the discussions were eye opening, personal stories that touched close to home. It highlights the need for anti-oppression practices to be enforced and revitalisation of the method of approach and training in the social service sector, justice, health and education sectors.
- I really enjoyed participating in the Reframing Stories workshops because it made me feel heard and understood, and I realized there's a lot of people right here in my community who I can relate to.
- Reframing Stories was great as it made me feel less lonely regarding the experiences that I have faced in Toronto. Evidently, it is important to have safe spaces for marginalized groups.

In Their Words

We asked the participants: “This funding program is one way that the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) is investing in community-based projects in the fight against racism and discrimination in Canada. What do you think the CRRF should know about fighting racism and discrimination in Canada?”

Their responses:

- The CRRF should recognize the importance of localized, culturally sensitive approaches to combat racism and discrimination, acknowledging Canada's diverse demographic landscape. Promoting intersectional perspectives and fostering partnerships with Indigenous groups and racialized communities can lead to more effective solutions. Additionally, investing in education and awareness campaigns that address systemic barriers and highlight the lived experiences of marginalized populations can strengthen societal resilience against racism. Engaging in ongoing research to monitor progress and adapt strategies is also vital for sustained impact.

- We can fight against racism by celebrating everyone.
- Racism and Discrimination is an ordeal faced by Canadians in direct and subtle ways through out their lives, growing up in different areas of Scarborough gave me the experience that has shaped the way I approach the world. Understanding the effects of discrimination and the outcomes, there is a need for strengthening communities, breaking down divisive barriers that are placed to keep specific demographics contained in cycles of crime, poverty and abuse. Empowering the individuals in our community, learning and teaching about colonialism, the effects it has on the lives of immigrants, first/second generation Canadians.
- It can cause frustration, anger, acts of resentment, a rise in criminal activity, etc... because we who are affected by racism don't feel heard or seen.
- The most important factor that the CRRF must consider is intersectionality. As a person of colour and woman, there are many unique challenges that I face which my male counterparts do not. Racism and discrimination can only be effectively addressed by considering the multiple identities that a single person can hold.

We asked the participants: "What do you think the Federal Government (Government of Canada) should know about fighting racism and discrimination in Canada?"

Their responses:

- The Government of Canada should understand that fighting racism requires comprehensive strategies including education, legal reforms, community support, and accountability measures. Prioritizing inclusivity and actively listening to marginalized communities are crucial for effective change.
- Federal Government should invest and encourage everyone to fight against racism and discrimination.
- Racism and Discrimination is an ordeal faced by Canadians in direct and subtle ways through out their lives, growing up in different areas of Scarborough gave me the experience that has shaped the way I approach the world. Understanding the effects of discrimination and the outcomes, there is a need for strengthening communities, breaking down divisive barriers that are placed to keep specific demographics contained in cycles of crime, poverty and abuse. Empowering the individuals in our community, learning and teaching about colonialism, the effects it has on the lives of immigrants, first/second generation Canadians.
- We need more education on the matter and not just during one month of the year
- The Federal Government should take actions rather than informational campaigns. While disseminating knowledge is important, it must also be followed through with actions to be truly effective. For example, integrating anti-racism practices within our school curriculums.

Key Findings

“Reframing Stories” documented the stories and ideas of 6 youth living in Toronto aged 18-29 who experience racism in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment because they belong to communities assumed to be affiliated with gang activity.

Documenting Racism in Toronto

Throughout the Dialogue, all of the participants shared similar experiences of racism, discrimination, microaggressions, and stereotyping in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment:

- Incorrect identification of their ethno-cultural heritage based on name and/or appearance.
- Increased surveillance based on their neighbourhood or ethno-cultural heritage.
- Assumptions of being dangerous because of their ethno-cultural heritage.
- Assumptions of being dangerous because of their neighbourhood/postal code.
- Assumptions of being less intelligent because of their ethno-cultural heritage.
- Assumptions of being less intelligent because of their neighbourhood/postal code.
- Being removed from or refused entry to public spaces because of their ethno-cultural heritage.
- 100% of participants indicated they have experienced microaggressions in education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment.

Perceived Causes of Racist Incidents in Toronto

In Session #2, “Breaking Barriers: Mapping Social Change” participants identified the causes for the racist incident(s) they experience and witness:

- Learned behaviours: narratives and education that reinforces stereotypes and bias.
- Systemic gaps: laws and policies; complex processes that discourage change.
- Individual barriers: language barriers; fear; lack of critical thinking.

Recommendations

The recommendations below are based on the discussions in session #3 "Take Action: Developing Solutions." Participants were asked about the changes they think need to happen at individual and systemic levels to change the way they experience education, justice, policing, social services, and access to employment in Toronto.

We noted that the participants made a number of recommendations that either reinforce existing efforts, or offer suggestions on how to enhance efforts. While they recognize that some issues are systemic, they also noted that each person in the system has individual agency and can choose to break cycles and push against norms that reinforce stereotypes.

Themes across all sectors include:

Evidence-based but trauma-informed

- Ensuring diverse geographic, ethno-cultural and gender representation in all roles.
- Focus on systemic changes before requiring individual actions, since individuals within sectors will be better able to change behaviours once systemic changes are made.
- The goal should be to increase individual capacity to meet and support communities that they serve.

Reflexivity

- Be open to conversations with friends or members of communities, but also accept that not everyone is able/willing to have these conversations and that is also ok.
- Challenge stereotypes and speak against it when we are sure it is not true and support it with facts both on social media and in person interactions.
- Ask individuals what is actually helpful (compared to what people think is helpful)

One participant shared a time when their high school conducted a surprise locker search involving dogs and police officers for drugs which resulted in trauma to the students who did not have positive relationships or experiences with police. They shared that trauma could have been stopped by one person raising their voice/to advocate for those experiencing the police actions.

Valuing Relationships

- Provide materials that are youth-focused and youth-friendly less of a lecture "this is what you're doing wrong"
more effective to have space for reflection and feedback - focus on active learning vs passive learning "lecture style"
- Developing friendships with people from different neighbourhoods and ethno-cultural backgrounds.
- Educate ourselves about different cultures and their experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the root cause of racism and gang stereotypes.

Sector-Specific Recommendations

Education Sector

- Taking the time to accurately evaluate needs and develop plans accordingly without making assumptions about aptitude based on where someone is from/the community(ies) they belong to & allowing options.
- Use culturally relevant materials in the school.
- Awareness of cultural sensitivities and making space for different approaches
- Add lived experience to formal education

Justice System

- Listening to all the facts instead of making assumptions based on one aspect of a person, such as where they live or their friends.
- Ensuring there is representation of communities in decisions made affecting those communities (both ethno-cultural and geographic).
- Adjusting training/organizational culture to focus on looking at individuals and not making assumptions based on the culture of that person.

Policing

- Diversify resources and approaches, with a focus on community policing initiatives, because this approach can help focus on building trust and collaboration between the law enforcement and communities.
- The naming of task forces by community should stop - leave out community names (e.g.: "the Tamil Task Force" or "Asian Organized Crime Task Force")

In our area, there are two police officers who are often participating in the community and are very friendly with the children and everyone. I think that is a great approach. Everyone knows them if you have lived longer in the area. When those two police officers are around, nobody is alarmed because they are officers. They are more like dropping in and even playing around in the community centre.

Social Services

- Education around stereotypes based on certain "ethnic" names, to avoid continuing these stereotypes.
- Public education to reduce the negative stereotypes around accessing various social services.

In my experience, Child services handles calls differently depending on the community (based on stereotypes). I feel like a lot of times there is mistrust or misunderstanding between social services for example social workers or child and youth care workers are seen as this enemy because there's a threat to, for example separating a child from a family due to violence or abuse etc. Fostering better communication and understanding of the role.

Access to Employment

- Evaluate work culture and demographics, and then make positive changes based on this data.
- Invest in cultural competency training.
- Reduce judgment and bias by creating a culture of acceptance for different cultures in the workplace.

Multiple participants shared their experiences when assumptions were made about their ability to process/understand content based on cultural background. They shared that it affected their career path because they were often put in applied instead of academic courses, or put in ESL classes which caused them to miss important lessons.

Conclusion

“Reframing Stories” emerged in response to the acute need to build connections across communities, as observed by a Toronto Youth Worker.

The results demonstrate how critical meaningful, cross-cultural community consultation and involvement is to the fight against racism and discrimination in Canada.

Mosaic Institute is going to continue amplifying the recommendations in this report to our partners at all levels of government and leaders in the education, social services, policing, justice, and access to employment sectors.

We ask you to do the same.

Reframing Stories

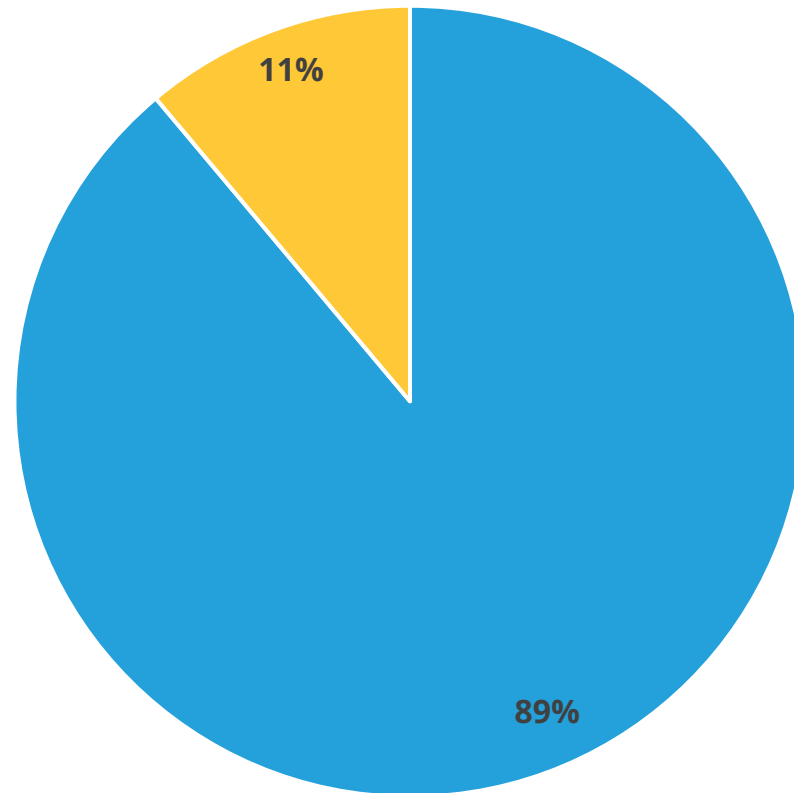
Appendix

Reframing Stories

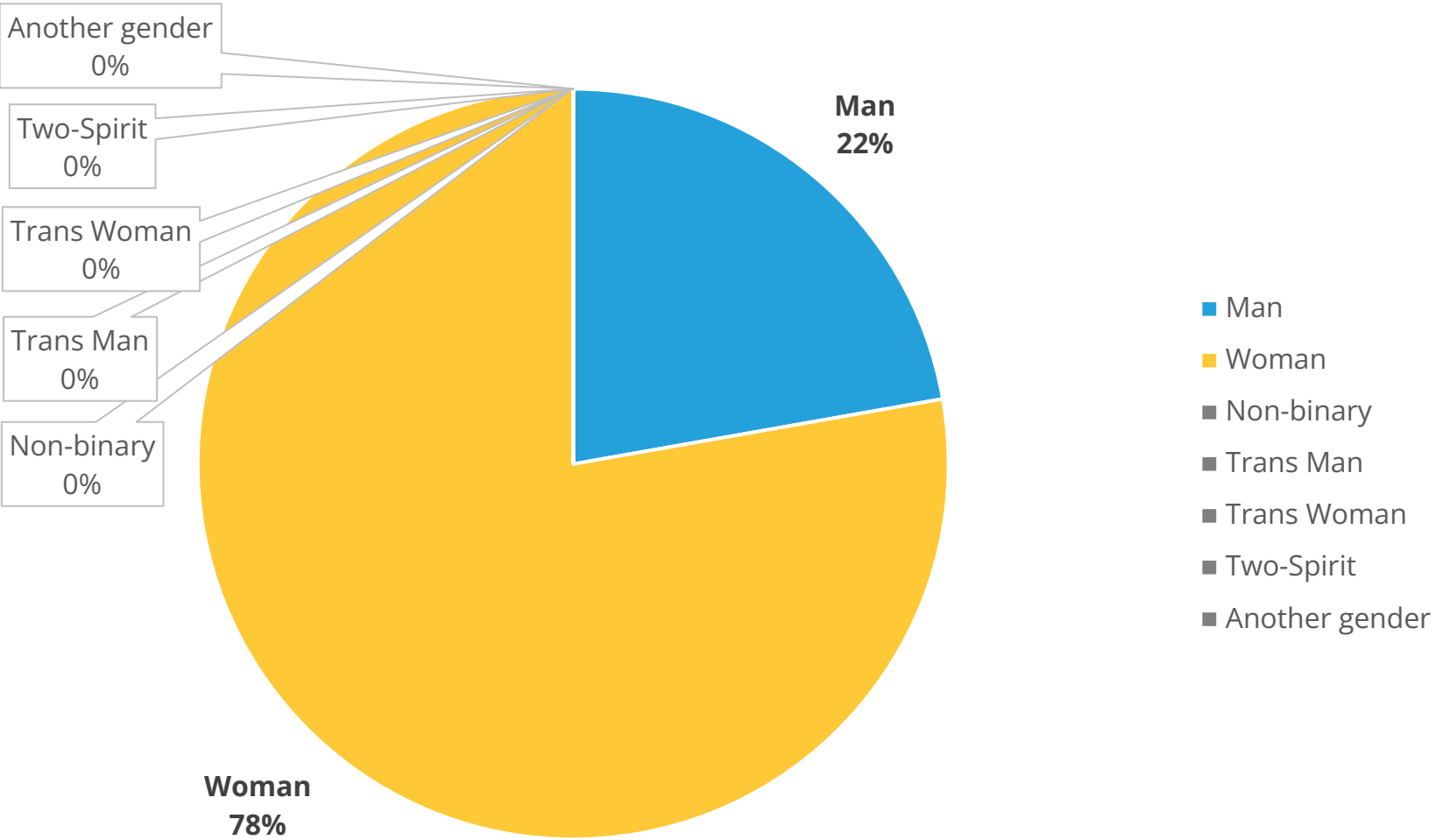
Demographic Profile of Participants

Age

■ 18-24 ■ 25-29

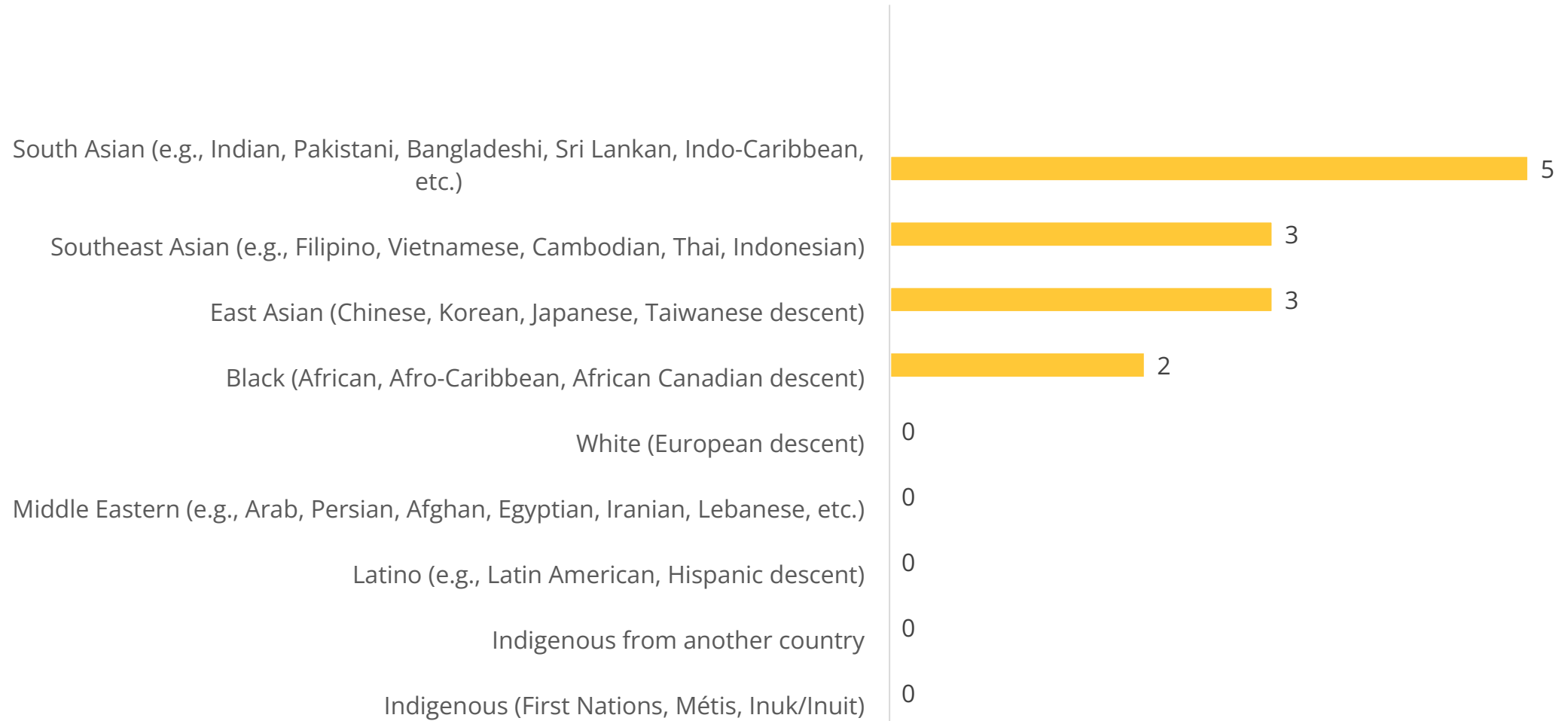


Gender



Race/Ethnicity

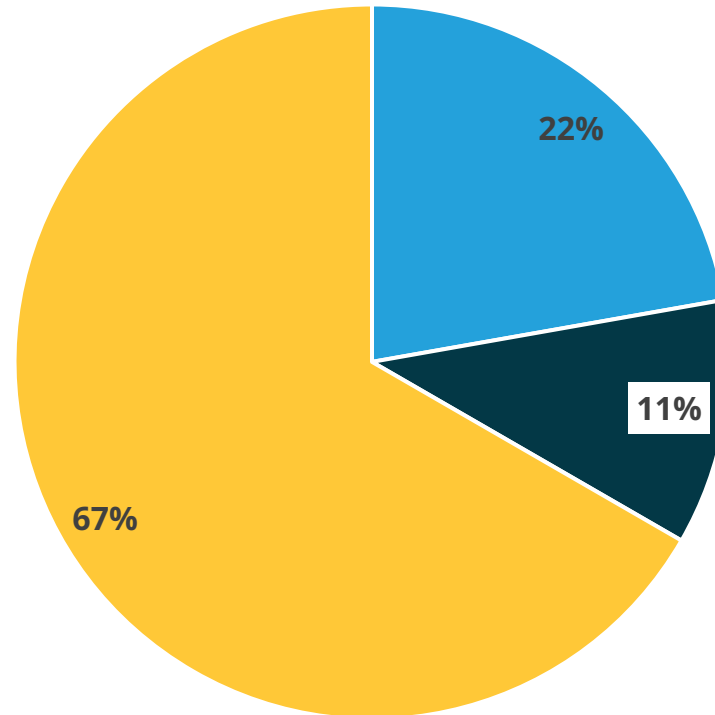
* participants could choose as many as applied



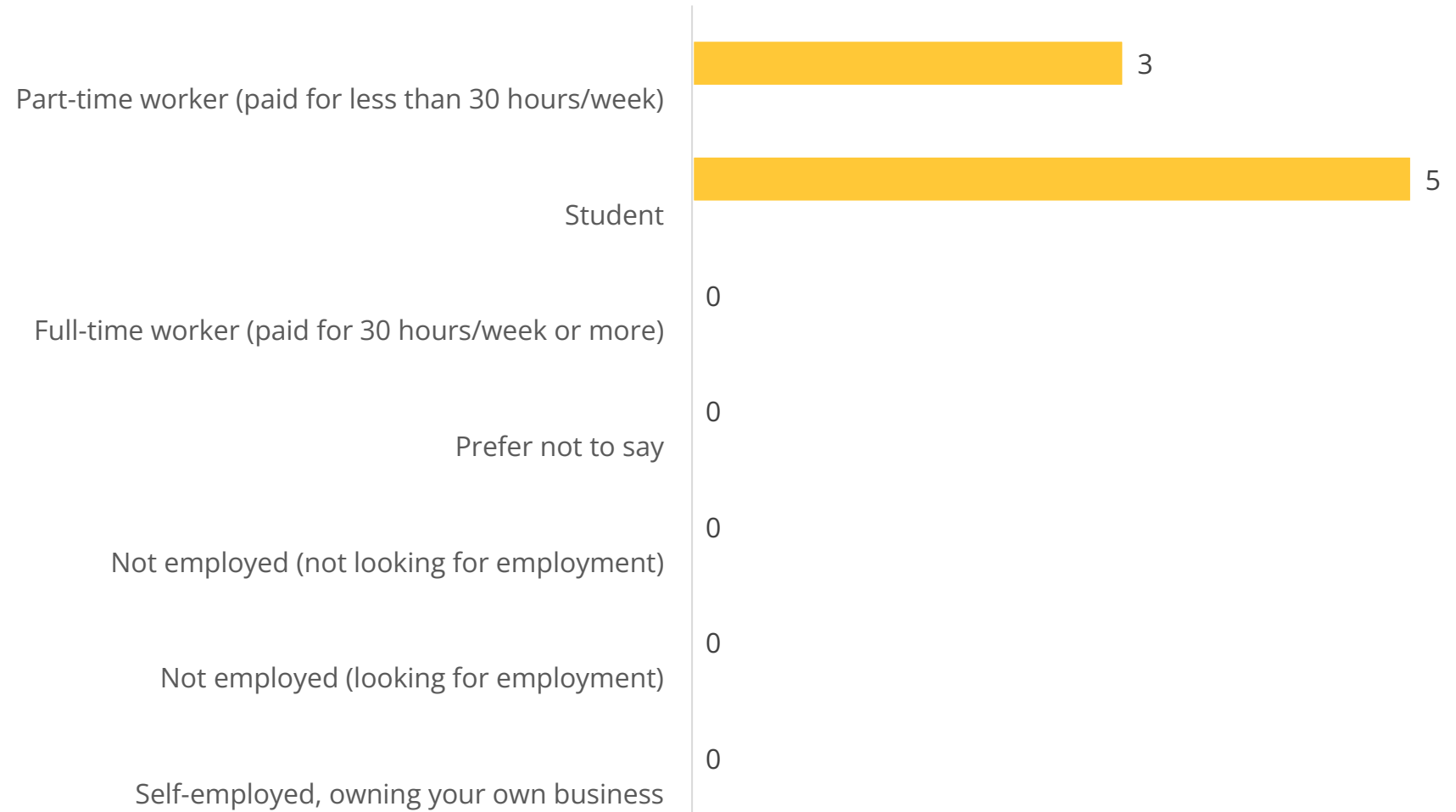
Ability

Do you identify as a person with a visible disability, invisible disability, or are you a person with accessibility needs?

■ Prefer not to say ■ Yes ■ No



Employment Status



Reframing Stories

Articles

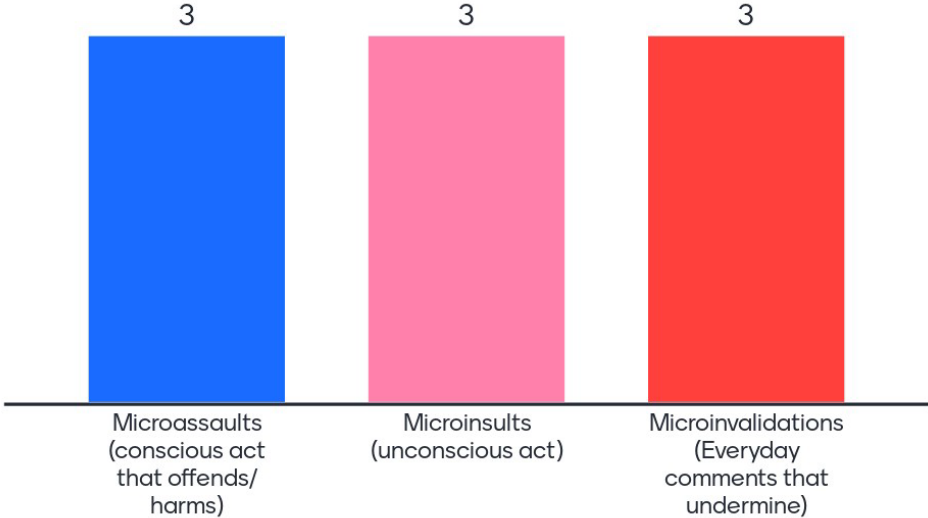
Articles shared by Participants

- [The 'Ghetto' Tamil Label: Tracing Its Roots in Scarborough News](#)
- [The Scarborough Curse | Toronto Life](#)
- [She lost her airport job when Transport Canada didn't grant her security clearance. But how can she answer for her brothers' crimes? | Toronto Star](#)
- [Racism, stereotypes hamper Latino students: Study | Toronto Star](#)
- [Counsellor fights stereotypes while aiding gang youth | Toronto Star](#)
- [Toronto neighbourhood progressing, but residents worry bus stop shootings will revive stigma | CBC News](#)
- [An explosive Star investigation exposed anti-Black discrimination in Toronto police. It changed the city | Toronto Star](#)
- [Toronto police used 'carding' far more than other forces, stopping Black people three times as often as white residents: human rights report | Toronto Star](#)
- [Community fears racist backlash after police release list of men who allegedly pose public safety risk | CBC News](#)
- [Documentary about Dixon unfair to Somali residents: Cole](#)
- [Guns, gangs and race - The Globe and Mail](#)
- [Gangs, the media, and the myth of community](#)
- [Communicating Crimes: Covering Gangs in Contemporary Canadian Journalism](#)

Reframing Stories

Participant Responses

Have you experienced:



How have you experienced personal racism?

"shock" when you are not behaving/acting a certain way

being chased out of places that should be safe for everyone

being categorized because of my race and gender

Being pushed into being a stereotype

Feared because of your cultural background

you become "too much" at places just because of your race



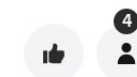
How have you experienced Cultural Racism?

the assumptions of your
neighbourhood

Stereotyped based off
the way you talk or dress

Prejudice and discrimination
at times because you are an
immigrant

narratives against ethnic
background that are
assumed to be "ok"



How have you experienced systemic racism?

Law enforcement
assuming a group of
friends is a gang

laws/policies that are made
to discriminate against a
group but not overtly

I always see police
around in my
neighbourhood

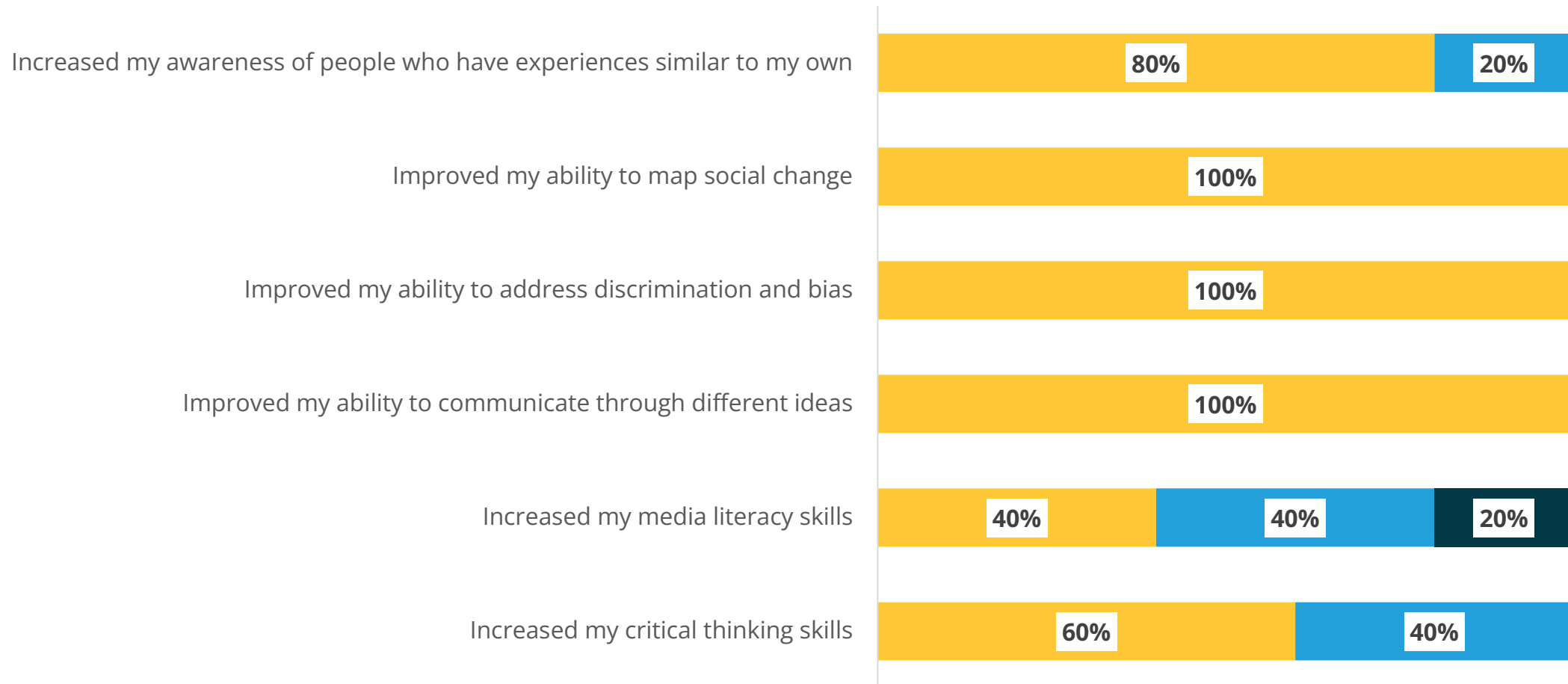


Reframing Stories

Evaluation

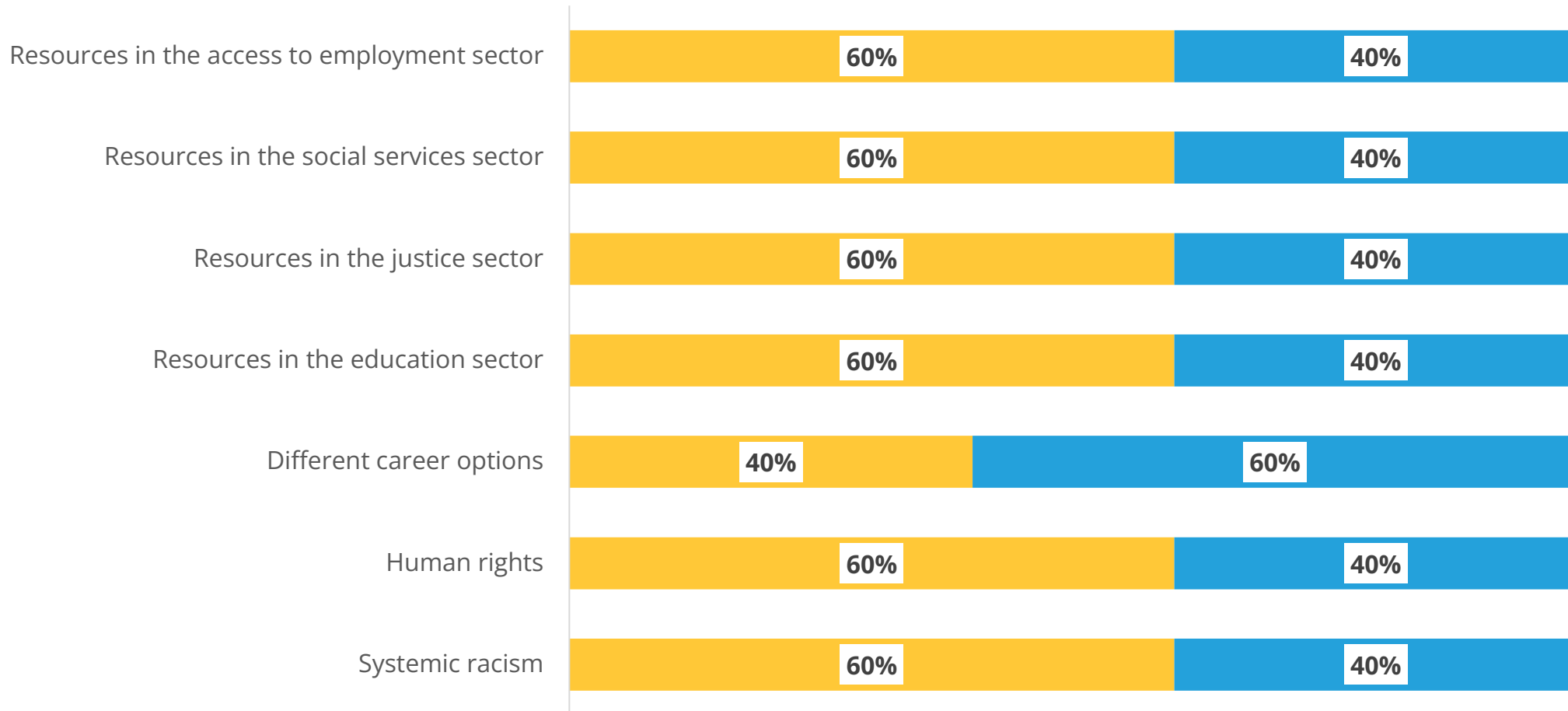
My participation in “Reframing Stories”:

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree



My participation in “Reframing Stories” increased my knowledge of:

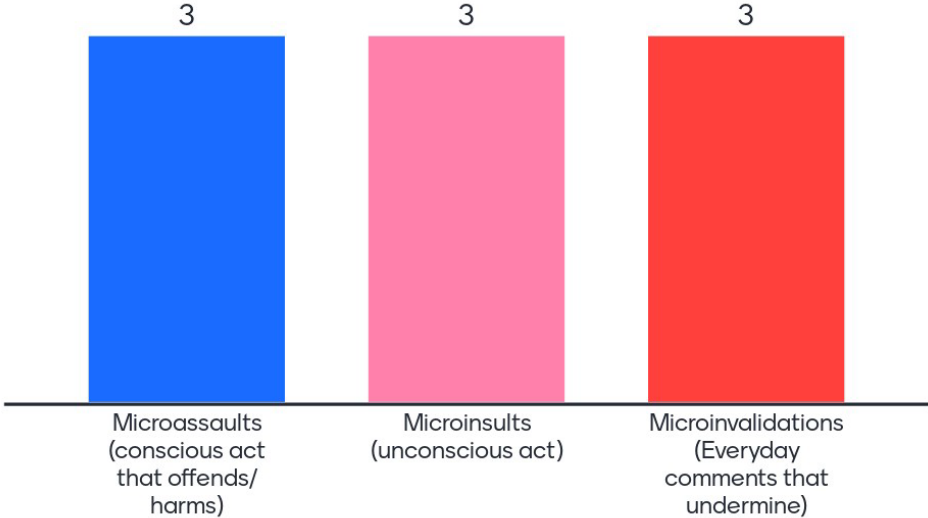
Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree



Reframing Stories

Participant Responses

Have you experienced:



How have you experienced personal racism?

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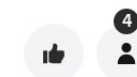
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background that are
assumed to be "ok"



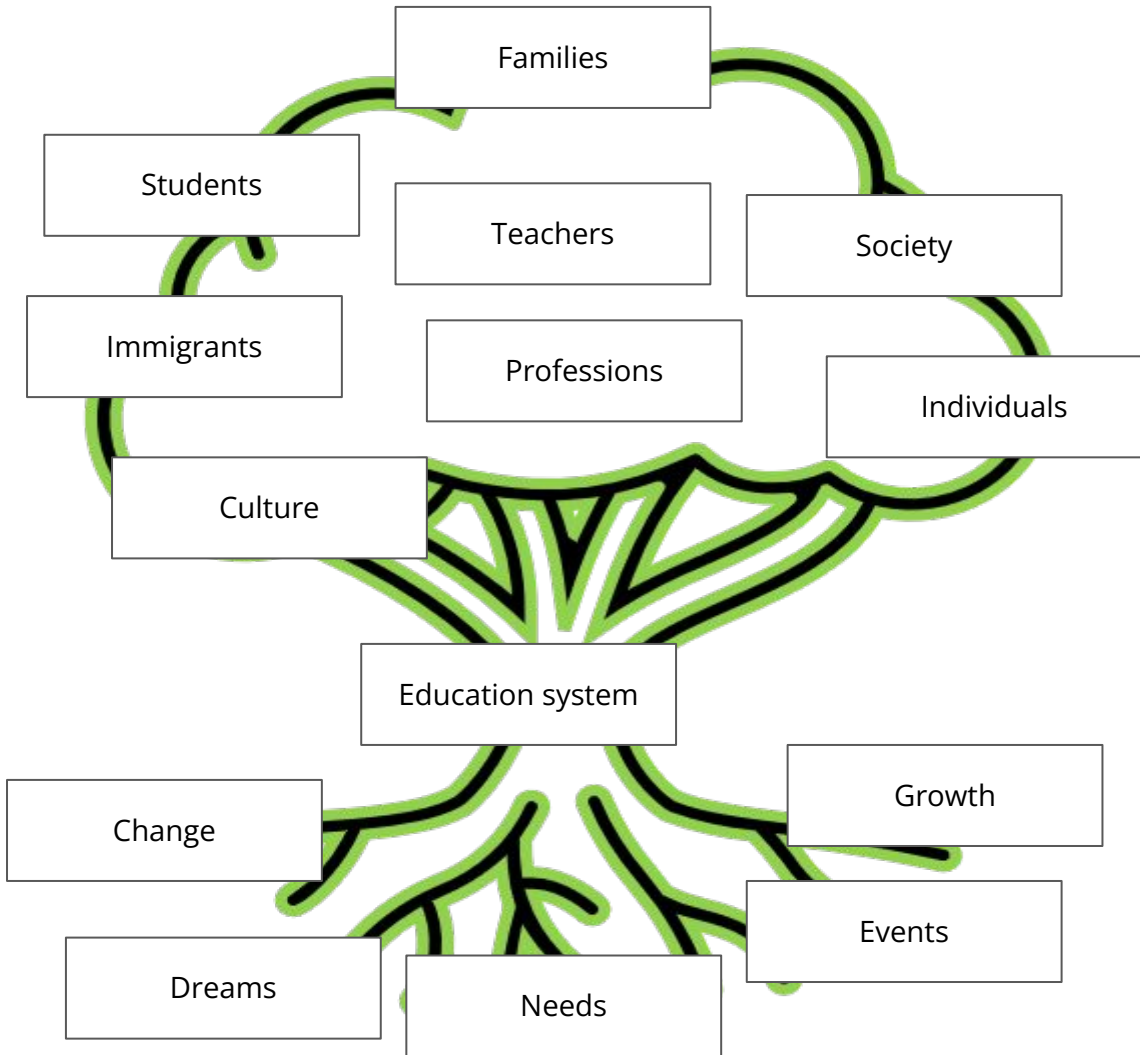
How have you experienced systemic racism?

Law enforcement
assuming a group of
friends is a gang

laws/policies that are made
to discriminate against a
group but not overtly

I always see police
around in my
neighbourhood

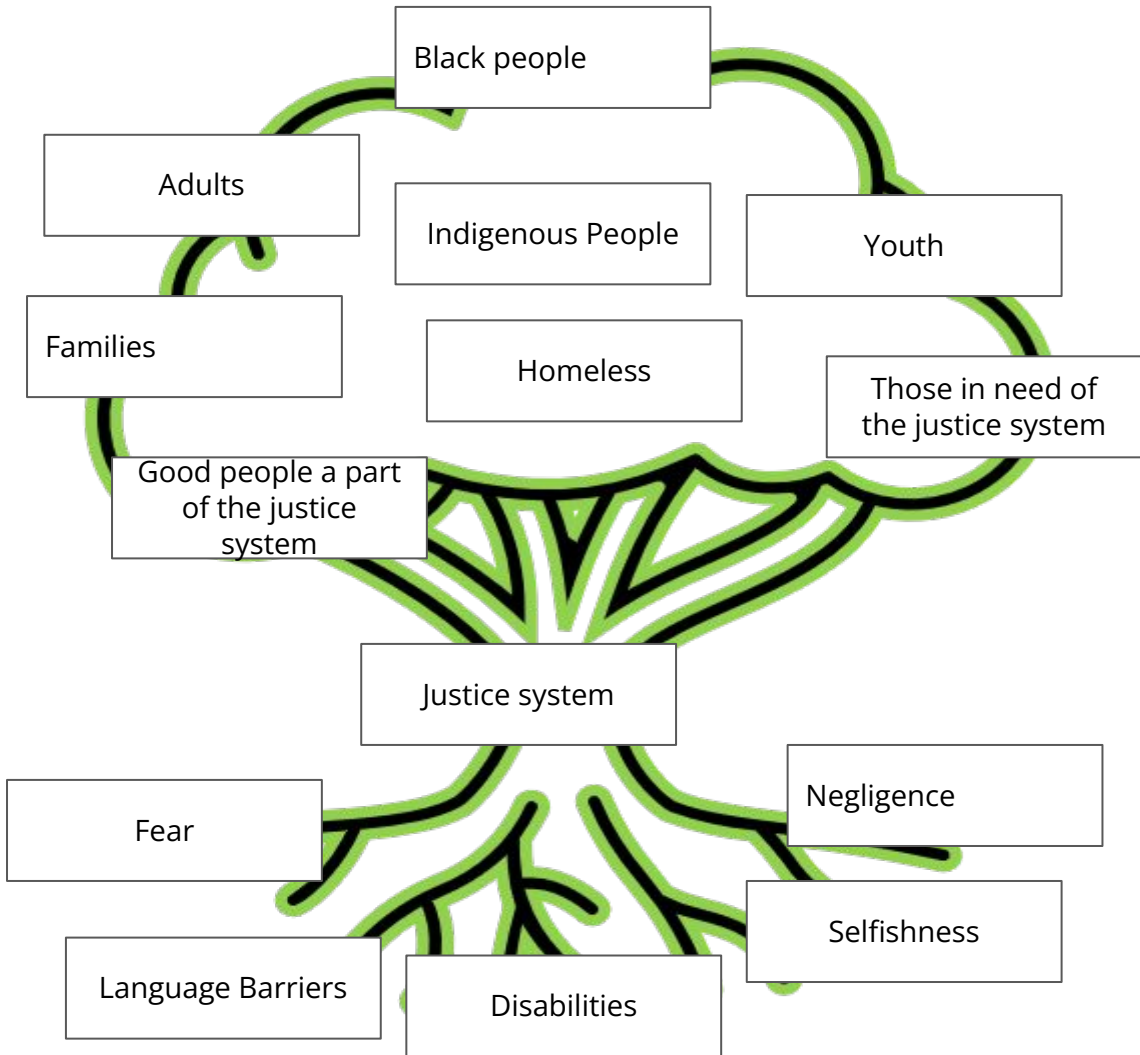




Impacts: The education system is essential for a society to grow. It has a direct impact on families, teachers, students, immigrants, society, professions, individuals and culture. It impacts your confidence and strives you in the right of what is right for you.

Problem (a real-world example): On example is ESL classes. As a newcomer to Canada, I have experience with staying in ESL classes for 5 years. It impacted my ability to grow and get to know my classmates. I believe the time frame of 5 years was not necessary. It would have been beneficial if I spent more time with my classmates and picked up the language from others.

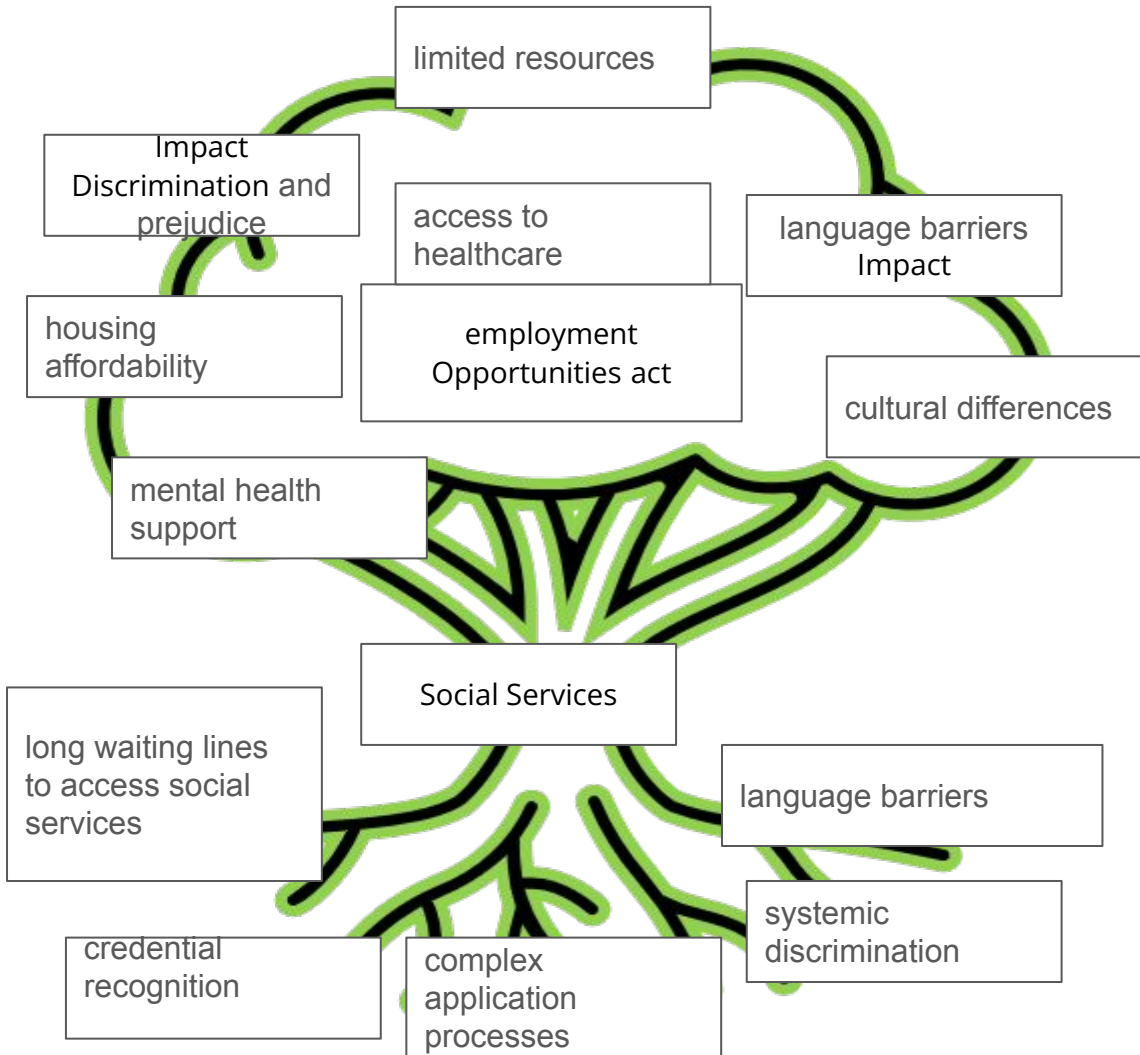
Causes: The causes for education system can be change, dreams, needs, events and growth.



Impacts: The justice system impacts many people of colour and causes a lot of disruption in our lives. It creates a fear of coming forth in legal situations and also poses high risk to us retaliating out of worry that we won't be treated right.

Problem (a real-world example): An example would be how we are dealt with when reporting incidents. A person of colour may be seen as the suspect before being seen as the victim, whereas a person who is not of colour will be considered the victim right away. Us people of colour tend to need more evidence and stronger arguments to be heard.

Causes: I think a few causes are fear, negligence to change of the system, racism because of difference and feeling challenged by someone who is different as well.

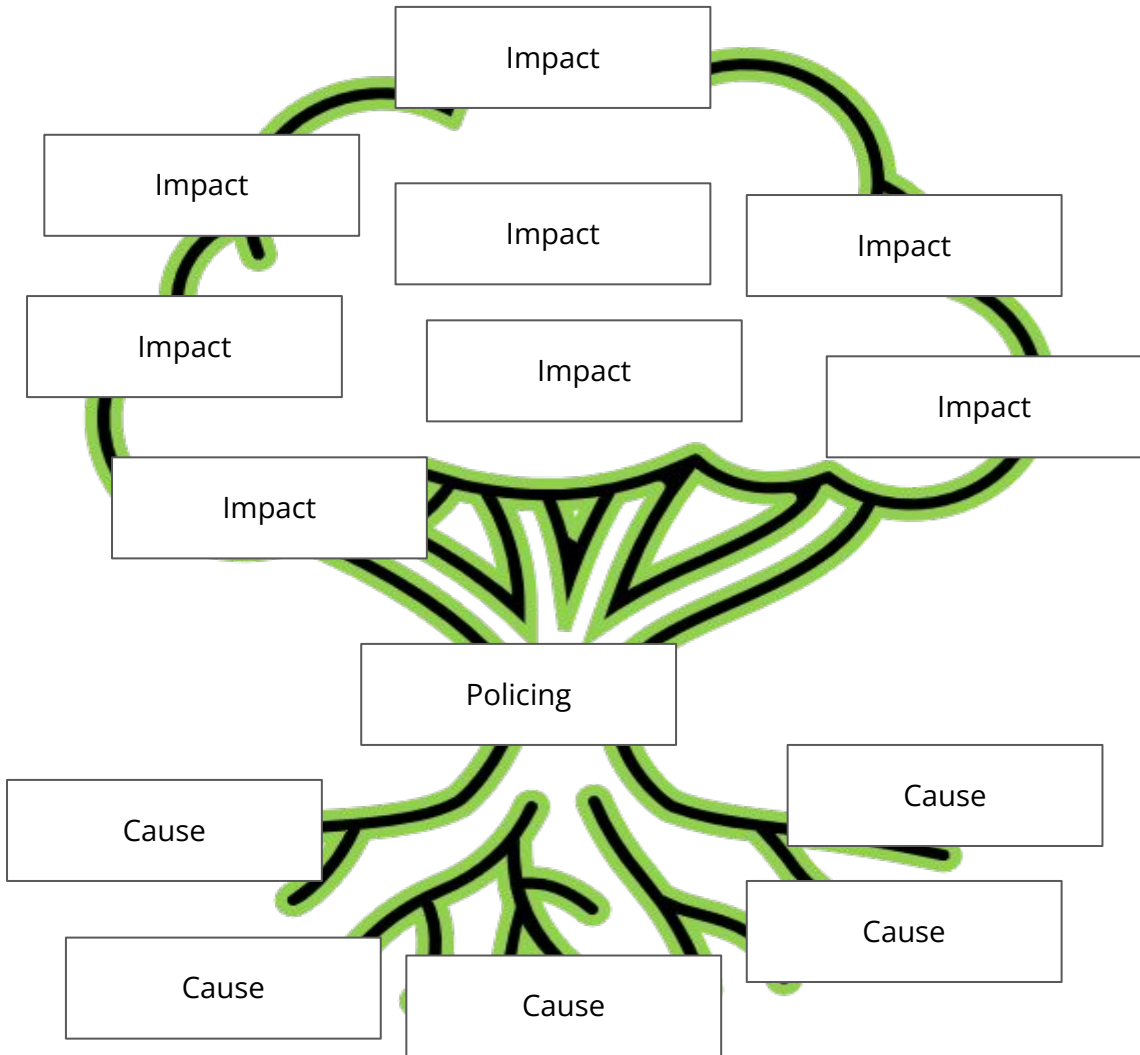


Impacts: social services (immigrants)

Problem (a real-world example): -limited resources -discrimination and prejudice -access to healthcare -language barriers -housing affordability -employment opportunities -cultural differences -mental health support

A real world problem in Canada right now is the issue of affordable housing especially in cities like Toronto and Vancouver, the cost of housing has risen significantly making it very difficult for low income families to find affordable housing.

Causes -long waiting lines to access social services -language barriers -cultural adjustment -limited access to information -systemic discrimination -complex application processes for social services -credential recognition

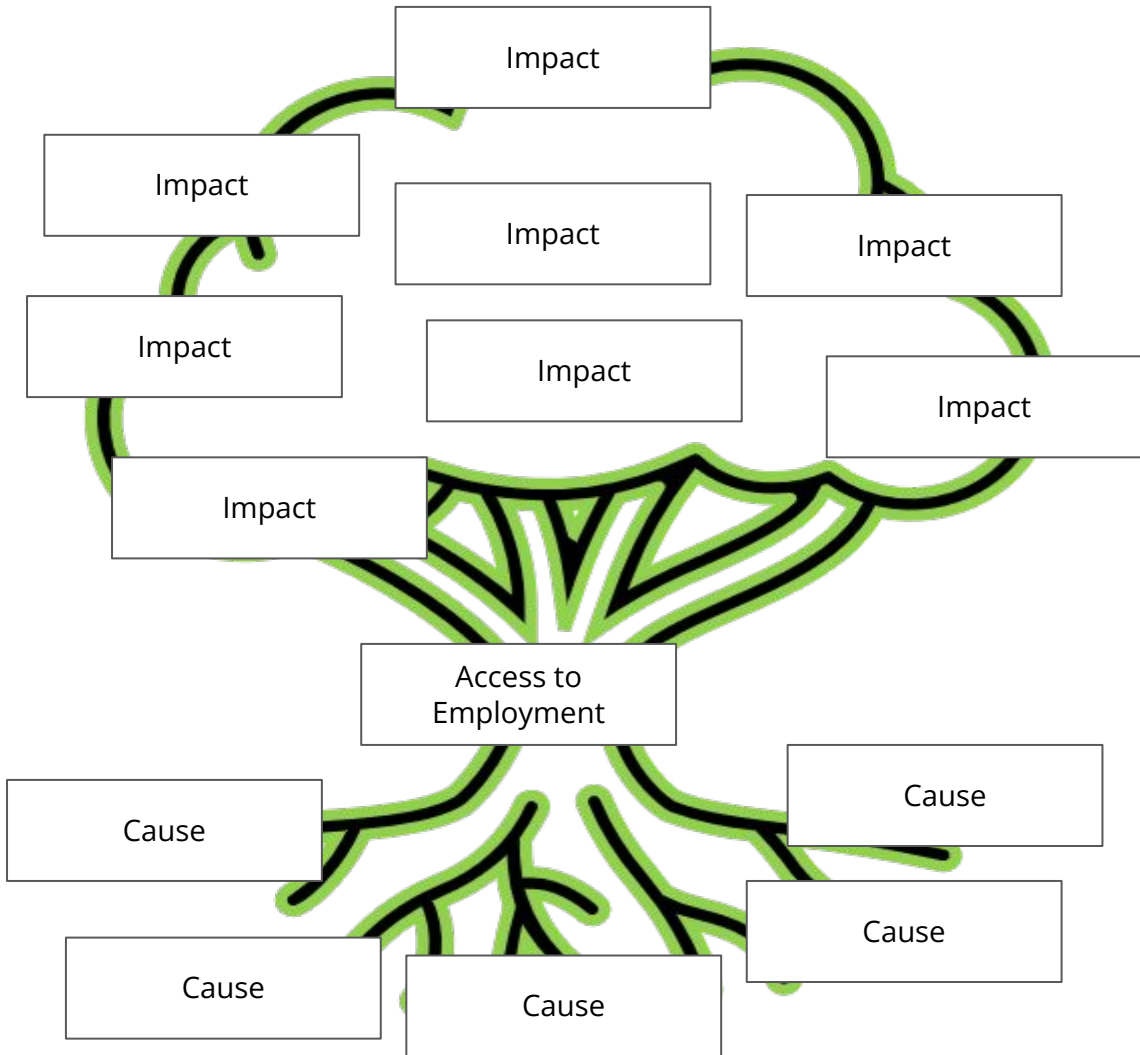


Impacts:
 Training response is to “protect” but there is a use of force when it comes to eliminating a threat (excessive force; breaking down the door of the wrong person’s house; shoot first)
 Understanding when it comes to reporting
 Lack of emotional awareness for police that are helping community
 People making assumptions because of race even though they are innocent

Problem (a real-world example): worked in Coburg from living Toronto and is a culture shock - you may not pick up on cues that could offend others

Yesterday: Toronto Sergeant released a statement of keeping the keys by their door to eliminate threat of burglary ; can just steal their car and not harm you (who is having oversight over a statement like that being issued)

Causes
 Bias
 Racial profiling
 Lack of government resources for teaching about culture & racism in different fields
 Power: they have the ability to affect people’s lives
 Lack of education about/lack of lived experience with multicultural environment



Impacts:

- Discourages people from trying to pursue certain career fields/options or even obtain higher positions in their workplace
- Can lead to people not obtaining meaningful employment => often leads to other issues like affecting mental health and dissatisfaction with life
- Not being able to get a job => leads to many issues like poverty, housing struggles, food affordability issues, etc.

Problem (a real-world example):

- Immigrants often cannot find meaningful work due to their education diplomas/certificates not being accepted in Canada
- Discrepancies in pay => gender-wage gaps
- TTC having one of the highest volumes of users in North America => showcases how important transportation is for navigating around the City

Causes:

- Education level
 - What education level you have
 - Where you obtain your education from
- Health issues
 - Can be hidden or overt
- Prejudice
 - Based on ethnicity, race, gender, age, etc.
- Daily life costs
 - Transportation, finding childcare givers, housing, etc.

Group Brainstorm: Education System

Developing solutions to racism experienced by youth from different communities in Toronto assumed to be from communities stereotyped as

Individual Action	Collective Action
<p>Having representation in different sectors</p> <p>having friendships with people from different background</p> <p>educate ourselves about different cultures and their experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the root cause of racism and gang stereotypes.</p> <p>what is actually helpful vs what do people think is helpful</p> <p>taking the time to accurately evaluate needs and develop plans accordingly without making assumptions about aptitude based on where someone is from/the community(ies) they belong to & allowing options</p> <p>Assumptions made about ability to process/understand content based on cultural background and where someone gets put - academic or applied</p>	<p>culturally appropriate material that is being used in the school</p> <p>breaking the prejudice by involving youth</p> <p>Breaking norms</p> <p>Provide material that are youth-focused and youth-friendly (not targeted towards youth, so don't feel connection) less of a lecture "this is what you're doing wrong"</p> <p>more effective to have space for reflection and feedback - focus on active learning vs passive learning "lecture style"</p> <p>Awareness of Cultural sensitivity</p>

Group Brainstorm: Justice System

Developing solutions to racism experienced by youth from different communities in Toronto assumed to be from communities stereotyped as affiliated with gang violence

Individual Action	Systemic Action
<p>we can educate ourselves about different cultures and their experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the root cause of racism and gang stereotype</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - also be open to conversations (friends or members of communities if are able) and to add lived experience to formal education (intent vs impact) - note that not everyone is able/willing to have these conversations and that is also ok <p>theme: reflexivity</p> <p>Awareness of Cultural sensitivity</p> <p>Listening to all the facts instead of making assumptions based on one aspect of a person</p> <p>challenge stereotypes and speak</p>	<p>Looking at individuals and not making assumptions based on the culture of that person (someone did what they did because of what others from their background have done)</p> <p>Listening to all the facts instead of making assumptions based on one aspect of a person</p> <p>Training those in the justice sector to approach from a non bias, nonstigmatized point of view</p> <p>Ensuring there is representation of communities in decisions (larger political decisions (https://thewalrus.ca/mary-simon))</p> <p>focus on community policing initiatives, this approach can help focus on building trust and collaboration between the law enforcements and the communities</p>
<p>against it when we are sure it is not true and support it with facts</p>	

Group Brainstorm: Policing System

Developing solutions to racism experienced by youth from different communities in Toronto assumed to be from communities stereotyped as affiliated with gang violence

Individual Action	Collective/Systemic Action
<p>Listening to all the facts instead of making assumptions based on one aspect of a person</p> <p>Looking at individuals and not making assumptions based on the culture of that person (someone did what they did because of what others from their background have done)</p> <p>In our area, there are two police officers who are often participating in the community and are very friendly with the children and everyone. I think that is a great approach. Everyone knows them if you have live longer in the area. When those two police officers are around, no body is alarmed because they are officers. They are more like dropping in and even playing around in the community centre.</p> <p>Trust based relationships with all communities, with special sensitivity towards youth.</p> <p>Example of surprise locker search (dogs, police officers, etc.) for drugs in high school which resulted in trauma to the students and it could have been stopped by one person raising their voice/to advocate for those experiencing the police actions</p>	<p>adjusting training/culture to be: Looking at individuals and not making assumptions based on the culture of that person (someone did what they did because of what others from their background have done)</p> <p>Training those in law enforcement to approach from a non bias, nonstigmatized point of view</p> <p>naming of task force by community should stop - leave out community names (eg: “the Tamil task force” or “Asian Organized Crime Task Force”)</p> <p>Collective approach & a policy of: Trust based relationships with all communities, with special sensitivity towards youth.</p>

Group Brainstorm: Social Services

Developing solutions to racism experienced by youth from different communities in Toronto assumed to be from communities stereotyped as affiliated with gang violence

Individual Action

we need more mentors, to guide youth to help them navigate challenges and help them access to more opportunities especially when they are newcomers and for all youth

Stereotypes of different names

focus on systemic changes before can indicate individual actions, since individuals will be better able to change behaviours once systemic changes are made

- **capacity to meet and support those marginalized communities that they serve**

I feel like a lot of times there is mistrust or misunderstanding between social services for example social workers or child and youth care workers are seen as this enemy because there's a threat to, for example separating a child from a family due to violence or abuse etc. Fostering better communication and understanding of the role.

Systemic/Collective Action

Child services: handle calls differently depending on the community (based on stereotypes)

international students, they cannot access food services or their is a limitation to it

Stereotypes of different names

Bias experienced by newcomers

Racialized groups overrepresented in not getting proper access to healthcare

heavy stigma surrounding accessing social services (assigning attributes such as laziness)

revamp the name of "social service" because it implies that we are doing a favour for someone vs it being a necessity and the name feeds into that stigma

improvement of social services for people because of growing population and inflation

advocate for equitable funding and resources from social services agencies

I feel like a lot of times there is mistrust or misunderstanding between social services for example social workers or child and youth care workers are seen as this enemy because there's a

Group Brainstorm: Access to Employment

Developing solutions to racism experienced by youth from different communities in Toronto assumed to be from communities stereotyped as affiliated with gang violence

Individual Action	Systemic/Collective Action
<p>Stereotypes of different names</p> <p>Bias experienced by newcomers</p> <p>Assumptions made about ability to process/understand content based on cultural background and where someone gets put - academic or applied</p> <p>Lack of representation of people of colour/from different cultures in higher-up positions</p> <p>evaluate work culture and demographics; reflect on data; and make changes based on the data</p> <p>securing specific percentage of roles exclusively for minorities/newcomers</p>	<p>Stereotypes of different names</p> <p>Bias experienced by newcomers</p> <p>More cultural competency training and doing more to be accepting of different cultures in the workplace to reduce judgment and bias</p> <p>support of how to access employment (work culture) in this country; provide skills & training to be successful in the workplace environment</p> <p>Having more entry level positions</p> <p>Lack of representation of people of colour/from different cultures in higher-up positions</p> <p>securing specific percentage of roles exclusively for minorities/newcomers</p>

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