THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

92% felt uncomfortable because of something negative on social media about their race and/or ethnic origin.

24% knew someone who had experienced online hate with respect to COVID-19

76% witnessed online hate speech towards Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Muslim communities.

1 in 5 sought mental health support for harmful or hateful content they experienced via the internet

Most people think that there is more harmful than helpful content about minorities on social media

People generally agree that that social media posts promoting physical violence against Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Muslims communities are increasing

Through Our Eyes: Understanding the Impact of Online Hate on Ontario Communities

with a focus on Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Muslim communities

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Methodology

Focus on those most affected

We captured the experiences and opinions of communities whose physical safety is at risk and who experience hate crimes disproportionately, with a focus on Black, Indigenous, Jewish and Muslim communities.

1,168 participants

Between February-August 2020 we recruited survey participants through extensive outreach across the Mosaic Institute's social media channels, newsletters, and website. In addition, the survey was shared with established partner organizations that work with the focus communities in Ontario. The sample was not designed to be representative, which is reflected in the higher response rate from certain communities over others. This is evident in that over half of respondents were in the Central West region of Ontario, roughly 80% were between 18-40 years of age, and roughly 80% of respondents from the communities of focus identified as Black.

Data Analysis

Survey data was collected and recoded to reflect the four focus groups as well as the four themes of the study. Descriptive statistics were obtained by tabulating the raw counts of the study participants across four geographic regions in Ontario, social media usage, and the various demographic groups to which they identified. Responses were compared between groups, and between individual groups and the overall average.

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Key Findings

- 92% of respondents felt uncomfortable because of negative on social media about their race and/or ethnic origin.

  - 42% of people felt unsafe because of negative on social media about their race and/or ethnic origin.

- 76% of respondents had witnessed online hate speech towards Black, Indigenous, Jewish and/or Muslim communities.

  - Only 25% of people think that social media posts promoting physical violence against Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Muslims communities are not increasing.

  - Most people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Jewish, or Muslim either feel unsafe or aren't sure if they feel safe responding to offensive content online

  - Most people think that there is more harmful than helpful content about minorities on social media

- 38% of Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Muslim respondents felt unsafe due to something the experienced online

- 24% of respondents knew someone who had experienced online hate with respect to COVID-19

- 1 in 5 respondents sought mental health support due to experiences with online hate

- Respondents generally feel that social media is a public place, and therefore subject to Canadian law

  - Only 35% think that people should be allowed to send any kind of message that they want, regardless of whether it is discriminatory

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Through their eyes, in their words

We asked open questions about experiences with online hate

It's easy to look at numbers. We wanted to hear their stories.

In their words

These vignettes are taken from 4 in-person interviews

In 2020, they published a content [online] coming from her [racial/ethnic] background. In response, an American white supremacist website published an article about her personally.

Their first teenage experience with online hate was not on social media platforms but through the Xbox online gaming platform. He was initially open about his Jewish identity. He later got sent pictures on the platform of Jews in ovens and/or baking.

She does not share their LGBTQQIAP2S+ identity in fear of her and her family, back in her home country, being threatened and/or attacked.

Reporting online hate on Facebook does not lead to much. When they report online hate on Facebook, Facebook later sends them a message stating that after reviewing the reported content, the content does not violate their terms and services.

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

In their words

These quotes are from optional open-text survey questions about the types of posts that make people feel negative and/or unsafe about their racial identity

➢ *I was asked to get out of Canada*

➢ *When my people of the same race were arrested for crimes the people under the news commented that people of that race were all damned.*

➢ *One of the Black male respondents witnessed a post on their social media platform that showcased a group of people beating up a black jogger. One of them even let their dog bite them.*

➢ *There is a lot of anti-Jewish posts out there. One time there was a drawing of me burning in the oven (obvious Holocaust reference), which was posted on a video game website that I used to write reviews for*

➢ *I've seen posts that talk about how people of colour are stealing jobs and spots in schools and have seen many comments about how white people should get those positions because their race means they are more deserving because if you are a person of colour then it is assumed that you are beneath the white man and are incapable of being intelligent/wealthy.*

➢ *Harmful ideologies such as killing black folks, decreasing the # of immigrants/refugees, and screening neighbours in Muslim communities*

➢ *Online comments that black people are trash*

➢ *A post that denigrated citizens who came with Arab descent because they considered them terrorists*

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

In their words

These quotes are from optional open-text survey questions about the types of posts that make people feel negative and/or unsafe about their racial identity

➢ *I have seen comments or posts on Reddit using/normalizing slur words against Chinese/people of Chinese descent.*

➢ *Social media posts saying "Jew-owned media" or negative Jewish comments*

➢ *I've been in hobby groups where the language was veiled in the context of hunting but was very clearly about killing Black people and thousands of people joined in to laugh. The vibe was similar to [a] lynching event.*

➢ *Posts criticizing Asian people for wearing masks during COVID-19, posts about Asian people being the root of COVID-19*

➢ *People were commenting on Asian features i.e., small eyes, weak*

➢ *When my people of the same race were arrested for crimes in the news, people commented that people of that race were all like this*

➢ *They call black people n******s.*

➢ *Posts sympathizing with individual vandalizing synagogues and Jewish spaces with swastikas*

➢ *Commenters say that people of that race deserve to die*

➢ *People post about how Muslims want nothing but to destroy Western society*

➢ *I saw someone posting about how there are too many Mohammeds in Mississauga*

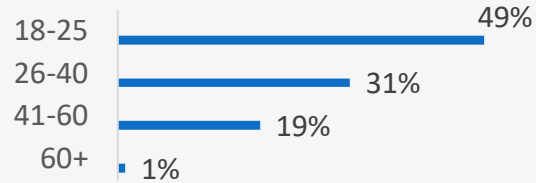➢ *Racism against Chinese people because of COVID*

Opinions about online content

Is social media more helpful or more harmful?

We asked whether content is helpful or harmful, and whether people feel comfortable engaging with harmful content online
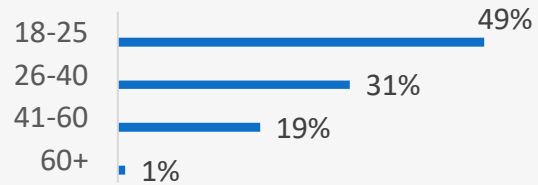
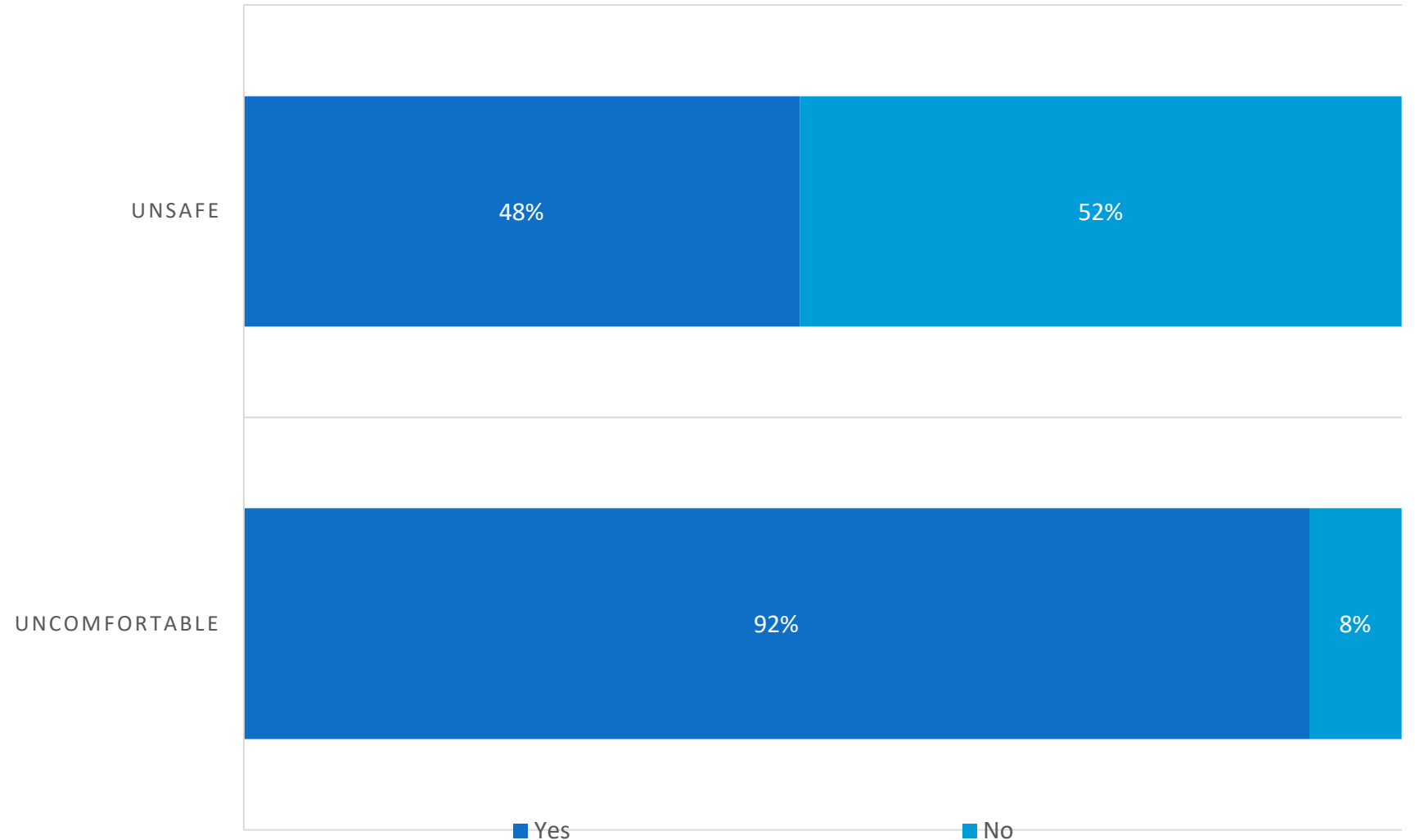Fewer people agree that social media has more helpful than harmful content about minorities

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

18-25	49%
26-40	31%
41-60	19%
60+	1%

Nonbinary	52%
Female	19%
Male	29%

Post-Secondary...	82%
Secondary...	10%
Elementary...	8%

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
RACIALIZED PERSONS/VISIBLE MINORITIES	6%	25%	38%	23%	8%
WOMEN	6%	26%	40%	21%	8%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	6%	26%	39%	23%	7%
GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION	6%	25%	40%	22%	7%
DISABILITY	6%	27%	39%	21%	7%
CREED/RELIGION	5%	24%	41%	22%	8%
CITIZENSHIP	6%	25%	40%	21%	7%
RACE	6%	24%	41%	22%	7%

I think social media has more helpful than harmful content about which of the following
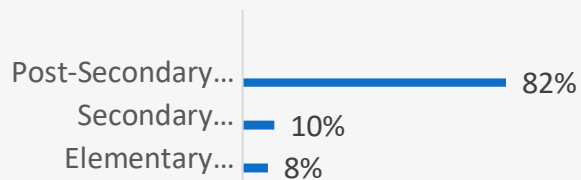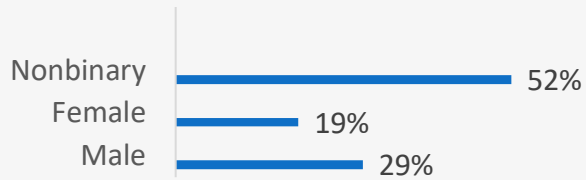
92% of people felt uncomfortable due to something online about their race/ethnic origin, with 48% feeling unsafe.

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

Age:
- 18-25: 49%
- 26-40: 31%
- 41-60: 19%
- 60+: 1%

Gender:
- Nonbinary: 52%
- Female: 19%
- Male: 29%

Education:
- Post-Secondary...: 82%
- Secondary...: 10%
- Elementary...: 8%

UNSAFE: 48% (Yes) / 52% (No)

UNCOMFORTABLE: 92% (Yes) / 8% (No)

■ Yes   ■ No

Have you ever felt uncomfortable/unsafe because of something on social media that said something negative about your race and/or ethnic origin?
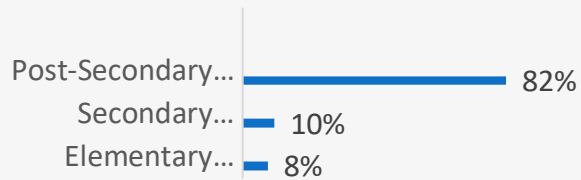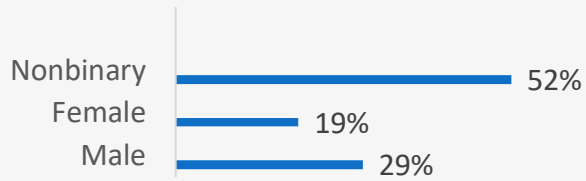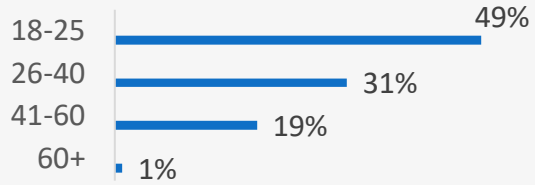
Posts and their Comments made people feel the most uncomfortable, while Comments and Direct Messages made people feel the most unsafe

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

18-25 49%
26-40 31%
41-60 19%
60+ 1%

Nonbinary 52%
Female 19%
Male 29%

Post-Secondary... 82%
Secondary... 10%
Elementary... 8%

UNCOMFORTABLE
44% 18% 16% 12% 10%

UNSAFE
20% 26% 20% 20% 13%

■ Comments on your post ■ Comments between others on your feed ■ Direct Messages ■ Shared Article/Post
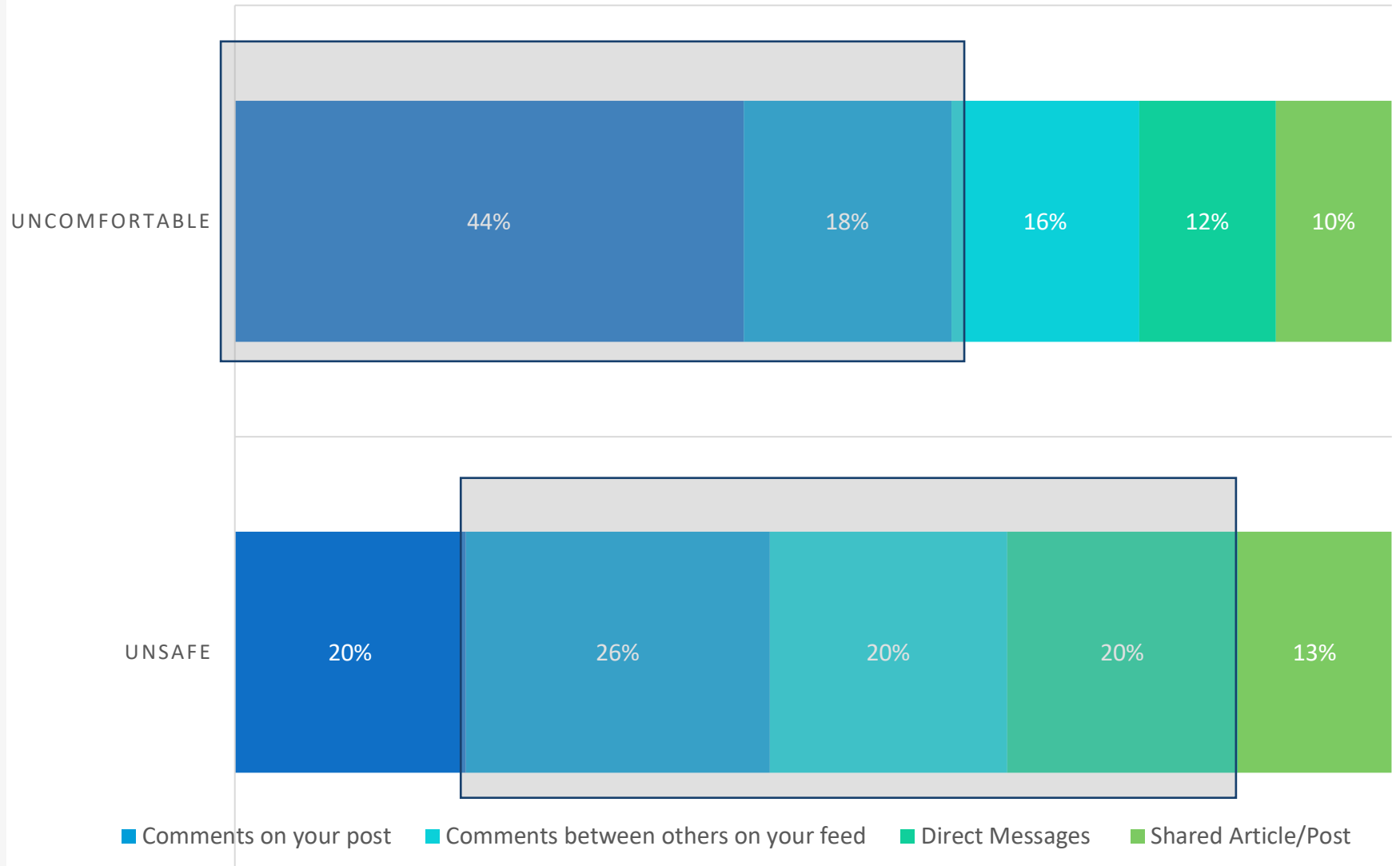
What kind of social media content made you feel uncomfortable/unsafe?
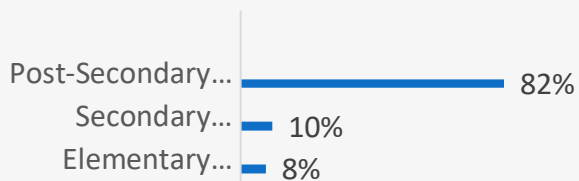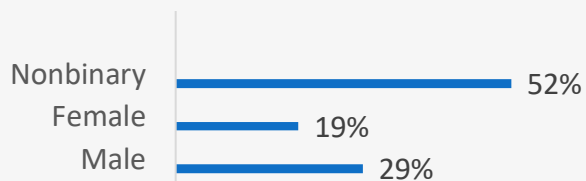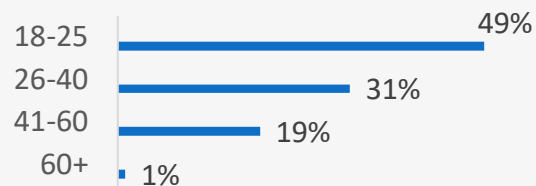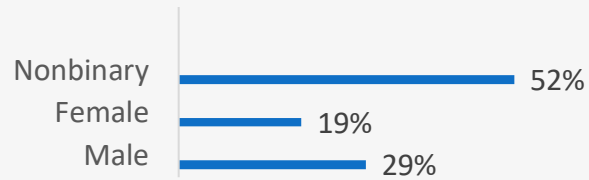
Most people see derogatory comments about minority groups on Facebook at least once per week

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

Age:
- 18-25: 49%
- 26-40: 31%
- 41-60: 19%
- 60+: 1%

Gender:
- Nonbinary: 52%
- Female: 19%
- Male: 29%

Education:
- Post-Secondary…: 82%
- Secondary…: 10%
- Elementary…: 8%

Group	Everyday	3-4 Times per week	Once per week	2-3 Times per month	Less than once per month
RACIALIZED PERSONS/VISIBLE MINORITIES	4%	20%	41%	28%	7%
ETHNIC MINORITIES	5%	20%	42%	27%	6%
MUSLIMS	5%	20%	41%	27%	8%
JEWISH PEOPLE	4%	18%	42%	28%	9%
BLACK PEOPLE	4%	19%	43%	27%	7%
MINORITY SEXUALITY	4%	19%	43%	27%	8%
INDIGENOUS	4%	18%	42%	27%	9%
WOMEN	4%	19%	43%	28%	6%
DISABLED	6%	20%	44%	24%	7%

Legend: ■ Everday ■ 3-4 Times per week ■ Once per week ■ 2-3 Times per month ■ Less than once per month

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

1 in 5 respondents have sought mental health support for hateful or harmful experiences online

18-25 — 49%
26-40 — 31%
41-60 — 19%
60+ — 1%

Nonbinary — 52%
Female — 19%
Male — 29%

Post-Secondary… — 82%
Secondary… — 10%
Elementary… — 8%

Yes
18%

No
82%
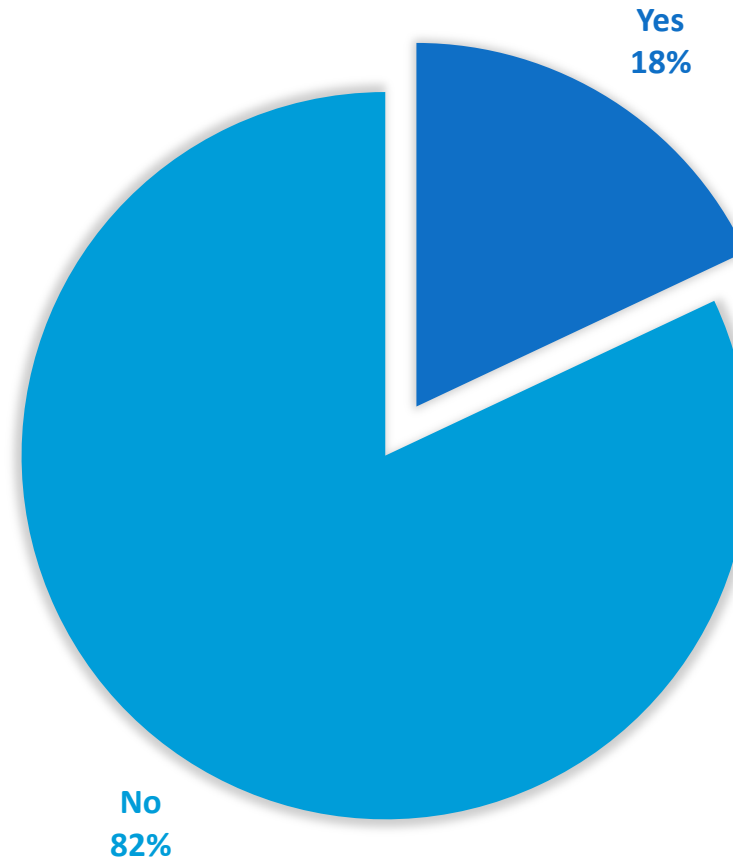
Have you sought out any form of mental health support because of experiences with online hate or harmful content on social media or elsewhere on the Internet?

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

Only 25% of people think that social media posts promoting physical violence against Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Muslims communities are not increasing.

18-25   49%
26-40   31%
41-60   19%
60+   1%

Nonbinary   52%
Female   19%
Male   29%

Post-Secondary...   82%
Secondary...   10%
Elementary...   8%

25%   36%
39.7%

28.9%

18.7%

7.0%
5.7%
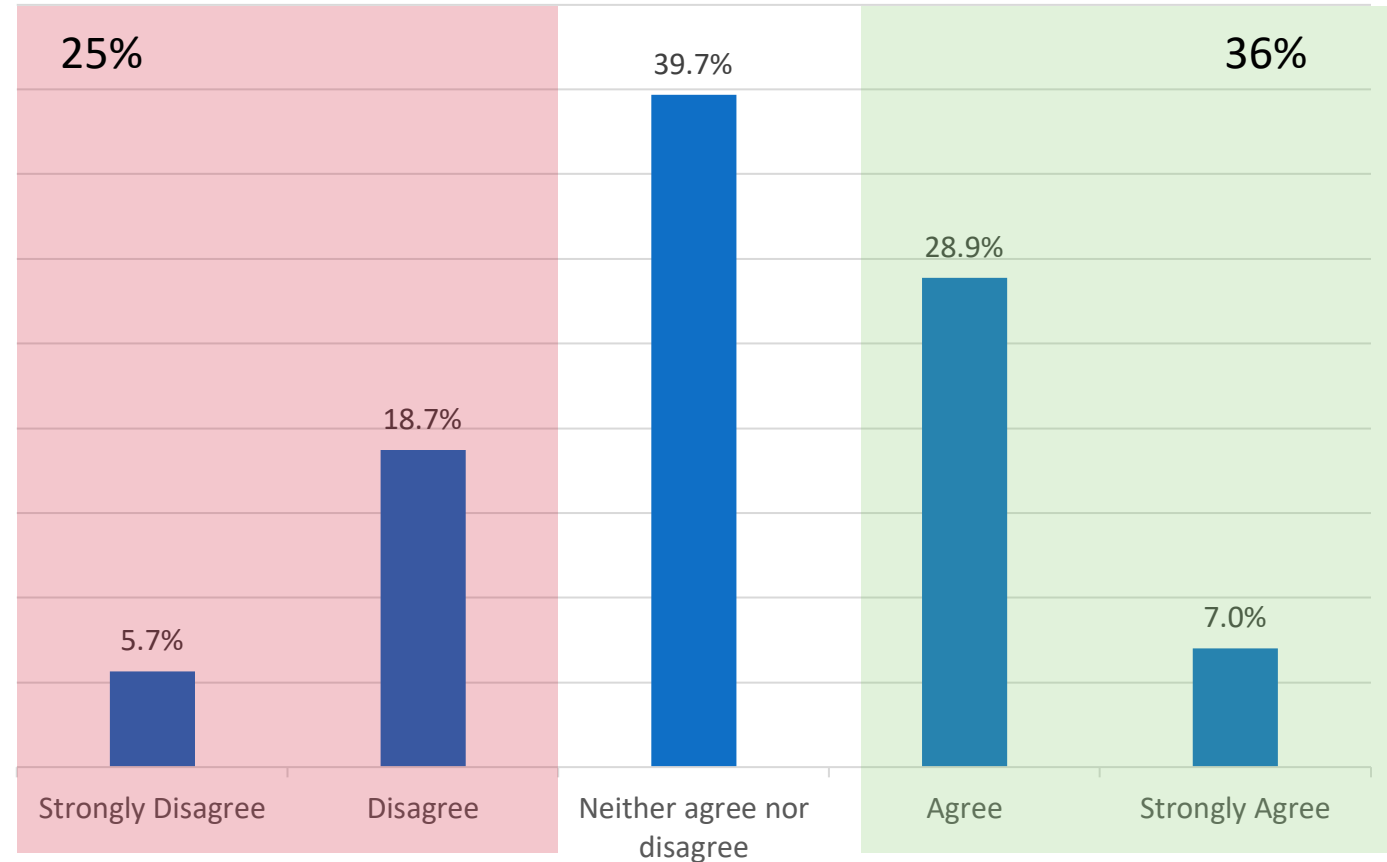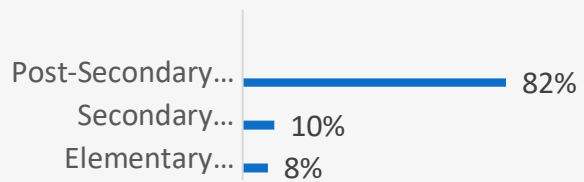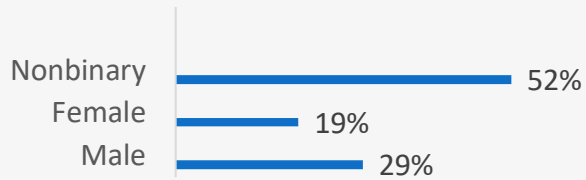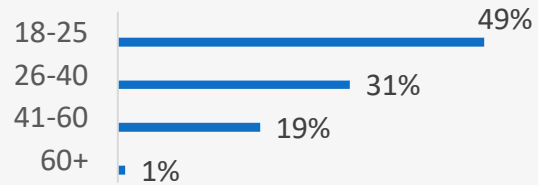
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

Online hate experienced by Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Muslim communities

Focus on those most affected

We captured the experiences and opinions of communities whose physical safety is at risk and who experience hate crimes disproportionately, with a focus on Black, Indigenous, Jewish and Muslim communities.

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

No 24%

Yes 76%

76% of respondents witnessed online hate speech towards one Black, Indigenous, Jewish, or Muslim communities online
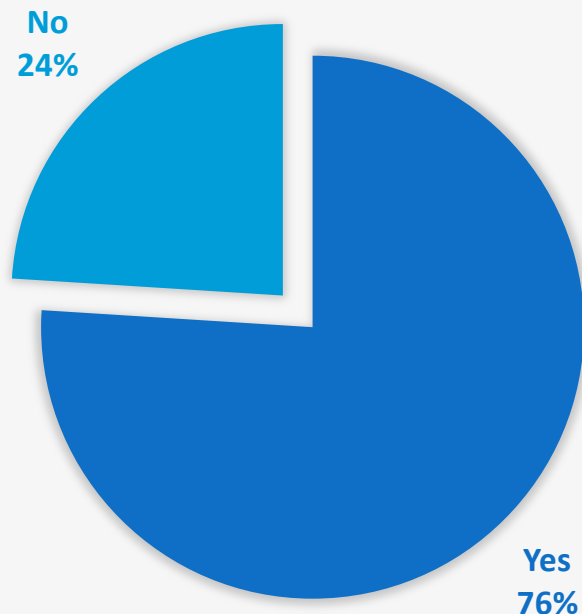
Were you ever the witness (not target) of an online hate speech towards one or more of the following communities: Black, Indigenous, Jewish, Muslim

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

38% of respondents from Black, Indigenous, Jewish, or Muslim communities felt unsafe due to something online

Yes 38%

No 62%

Have you ever felt unsafe because of something on social media that said something negative about your race and/or ethnic origin?

Most people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Jewish, or Muslim prefer not to engage in uncomfortable conversations on social media

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

BLACK — Strongly Disagree 3%, Somewhat disagree 29%, Neither agree nor disagree 37%, Somewhat agree 26%, Strongly agree 4%

INDIGENOUS — Strongly Disagree 12%, Somewhat disagree 59%, Neither agree nor disagree 24%, Somewhat agree 3%, Strongly agree 3%

JEWISH — Strongly Disagree 15%, Somewhat disagree 36%, Neither agree nor disagree 29%, Somewhat agree 14%, Strongly agree 5%

MUSLIM — Strongly Disagree 13%, Somewhat disagree 23%, Neither agree nor disagree 29%, Somewhat agree 29%, Strongly agree 6%

■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Somewhat disagree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Somewhat agree   ■ Strongly agree

I feel more comfortable engaging in uncomfortable conversations about my identity on social media.

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Most people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Jewish, or Muslim either feel unsafe or aren't sure if they feel safe responding to offensive content online

BLACK
- Strongly Disagree: 3%
- Somewhat disagree: 28%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 40%
- Somewhat agree: 25%
- Strongly agree: 3%

INDIGENOUS
- Strongly Disagree: 26%
- Somewhat disagree: 44%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 21%
- Somewhat agree: 3%
- Strongly agree: 6%

JEWISH
- Strongly Disagree: 13%
- Somewhat disagree: 31%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 38%
- Somewhat agree: 10%
- Strongly agree: 8%

MUSLIM
- Strongly Disagree: 13%
- Somewhat disagree: 29%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 44%
- Somewhat agree: 25%
- Strongly agree: 0%

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

If I see something offensive posted on social media, I feel safe responding

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Impact of COVID-19

Has the pandemic helped or harmed?

We included questions regarding COVID-19 centered discrimination to increase understanding of how the pandemic influenced marginalized groups' experiences online.

24% know someone who has experienced online hate related to COVID-19, with 17% experiencing it themselves

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

Age
- 18-25: 49%
- 26-40: 31%
- 41-60: 19%
- 60+: 1%

Gender
- Nonbinary: 52%
- Female: 19%
- Male: 29%

Education
- Post-Secondary...: 82%
- Secondary...: 10%
- Elementary...: 8%
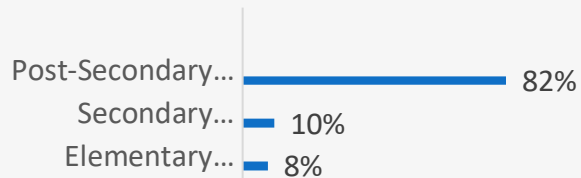
KNOWS SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED
- 24%
- 76%
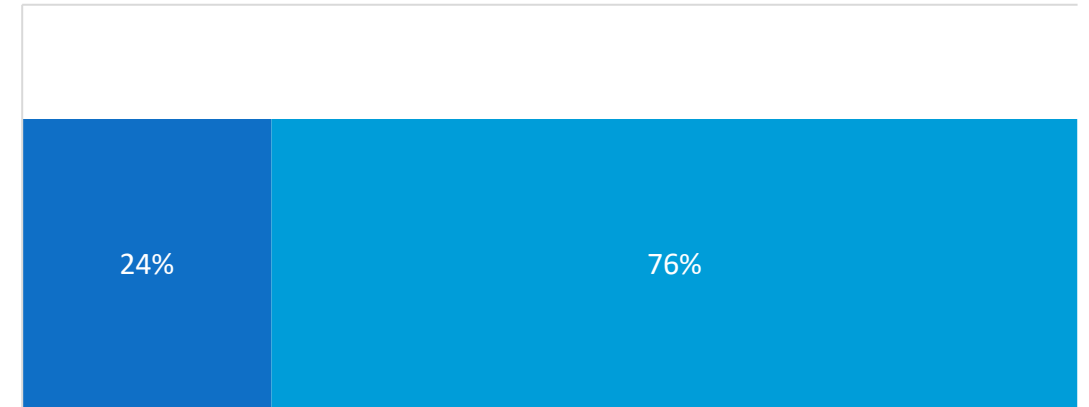
Do you know someone who has experienced online hate with respect to COVID19?

EXPERIENCED THEMSELVES
- 17%
- 67%
- 16%
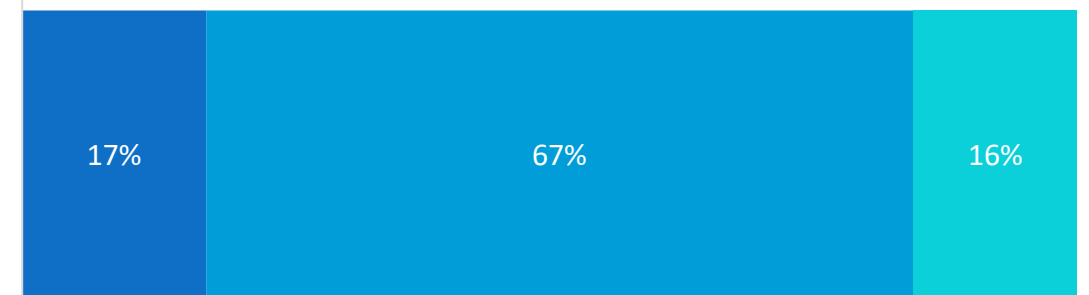
Have you experienced online hate related to COVID-19?

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Uncertain

Familiarity with Canadian hate law

How much do people know about Canada's current policies?

We asked people about various aspects of Canadian hate speech policies, to gauge their familiarity and knowledge

Fewer people (40%) think hate speech and offensive speech are the same
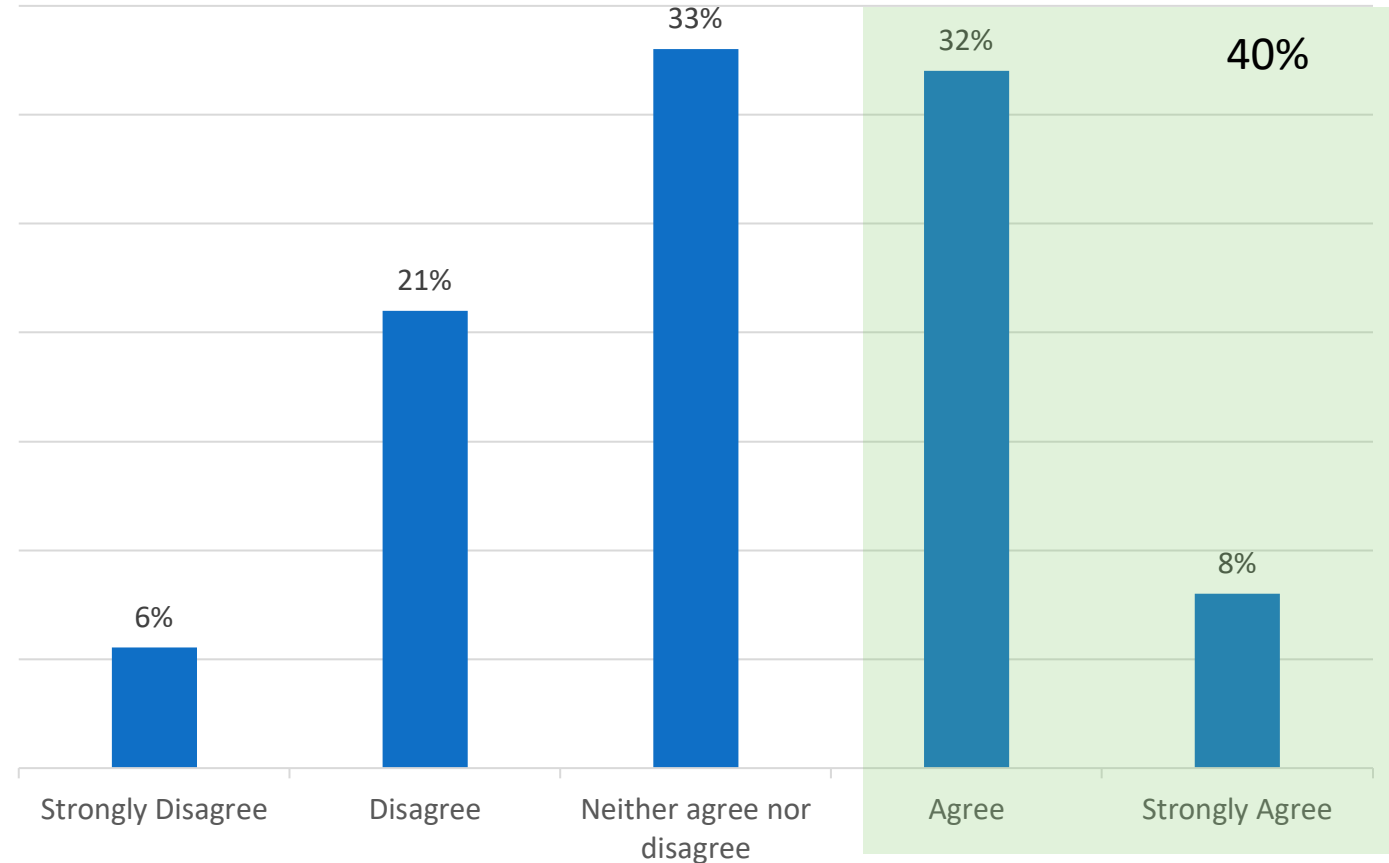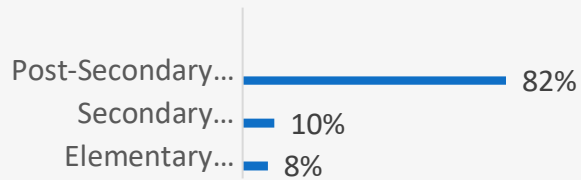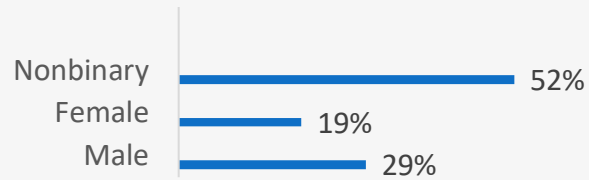
I think hate speech and offensive speech are the same thing.

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

18-25   49%
26-40   31%
41-60   19%
60+   1%

Nonbinary   52%
Female   19%
Male   29%

Post-Secondary…   82%
Secondary…   10%
Elementary…   8%

Uncertain
11%

Yes
43%

No
46%

Have you ever heard of or read Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act?
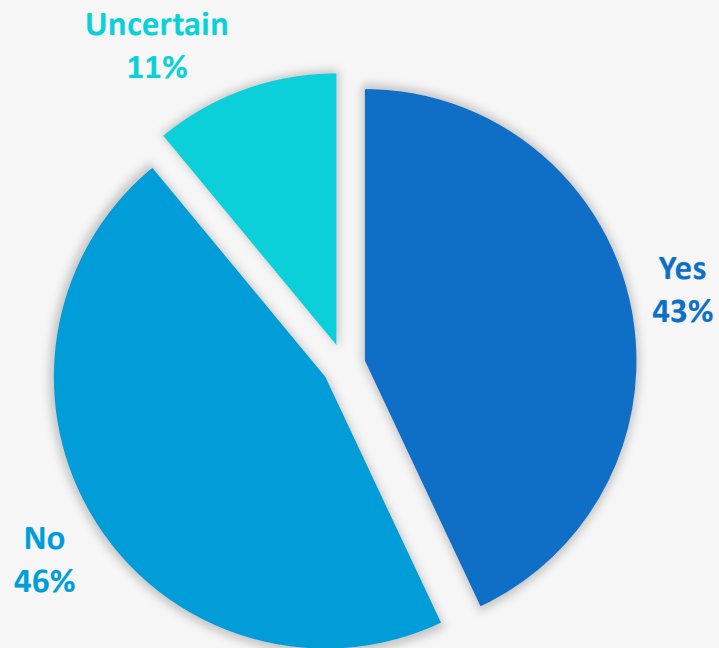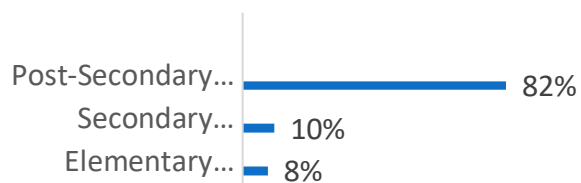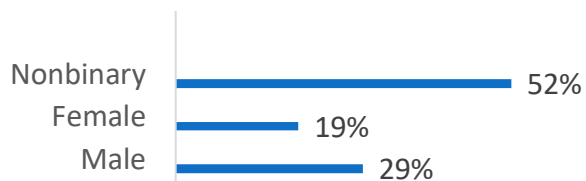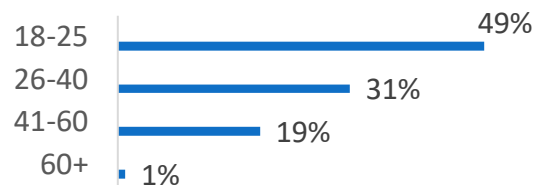
Most people don't know about Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act

Uncertain
15%

No
37%

Yes
48%

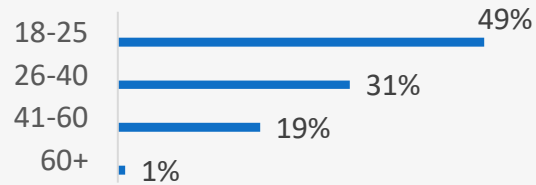Slightly fewer people are aware of Section 319 of the Criminal Code
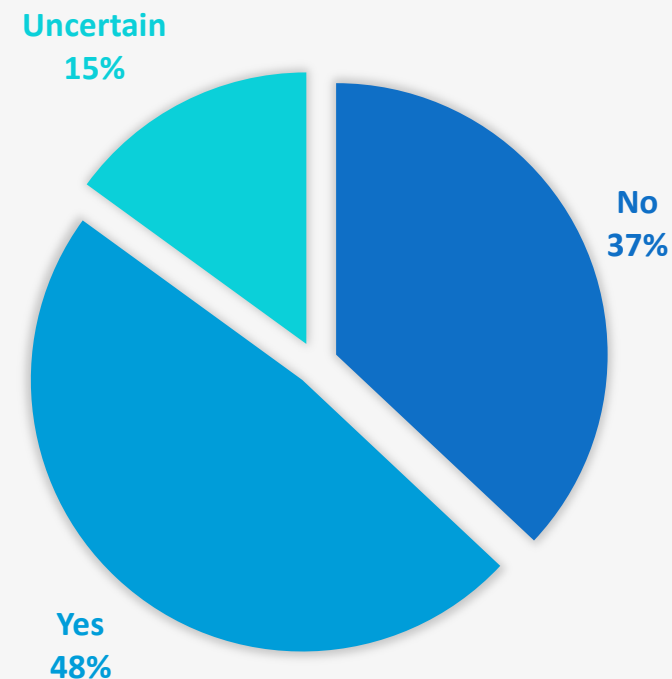
Have you ever heard of or read Section 319 of Canada's Criminal Code?

Fewer people (35%) think that people should be allowed to send any kind of message that they want, regardless of whether it is discriminatory
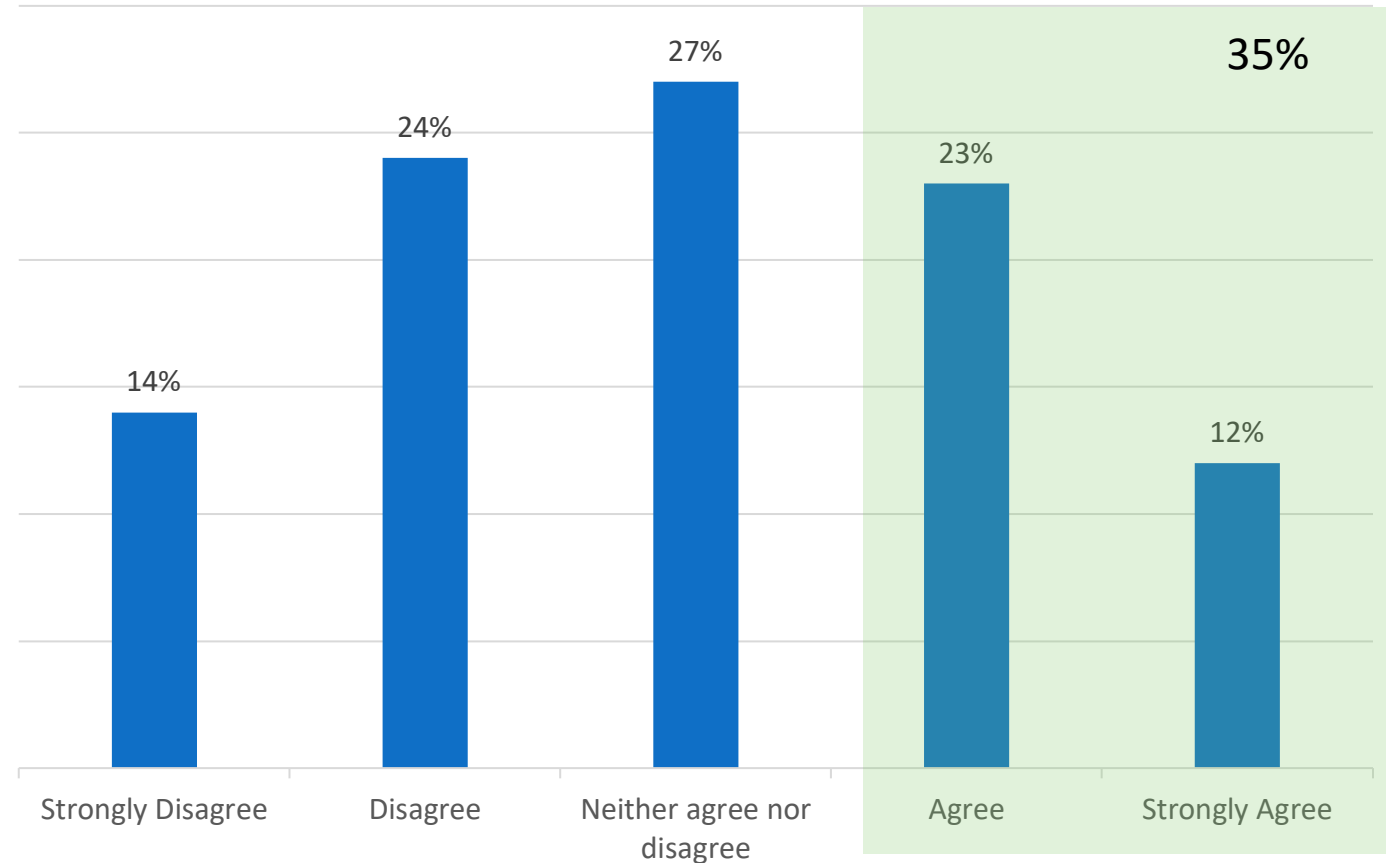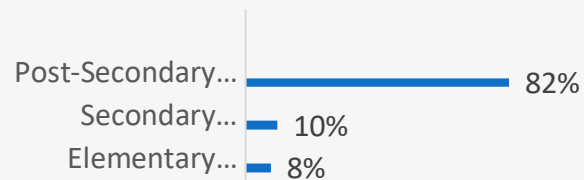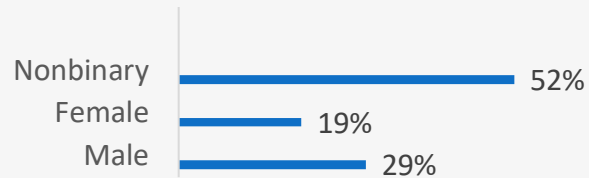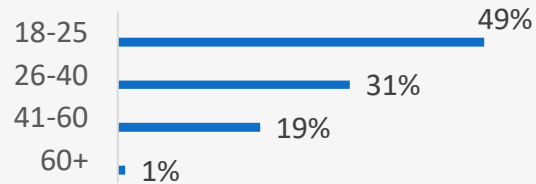
Under Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act it is a "discriminatory practice" to send hate messages via telecommunications equipment, including the internet. People should be allowed to send any kind of message they want.
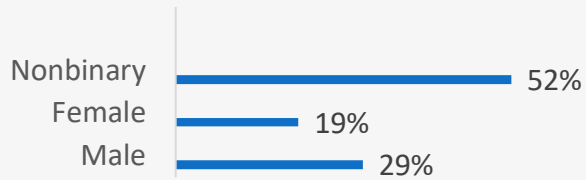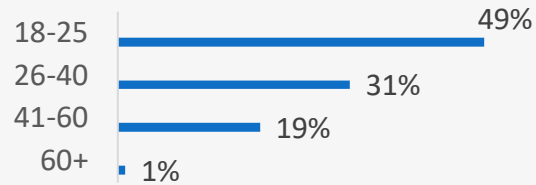
38% of people think that social media is public and therefore subject to Section 319 of Canada's Criminal Code; 27% are unsure and 34% disagree

Age:
- 18-25: 49%
- 26-40: 31%
- 41-60: 19%
- 60+: 1%

Gender:
- Nonbinary: 52%
- Female: 19%
- Male: 29%

Education:
- Post-Secondary...: 82%
- Secondary...: 10%
- Elementary...: 8%

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12%	22%	27%	25%	13%

34% (Strongly Disagree + Disagree)
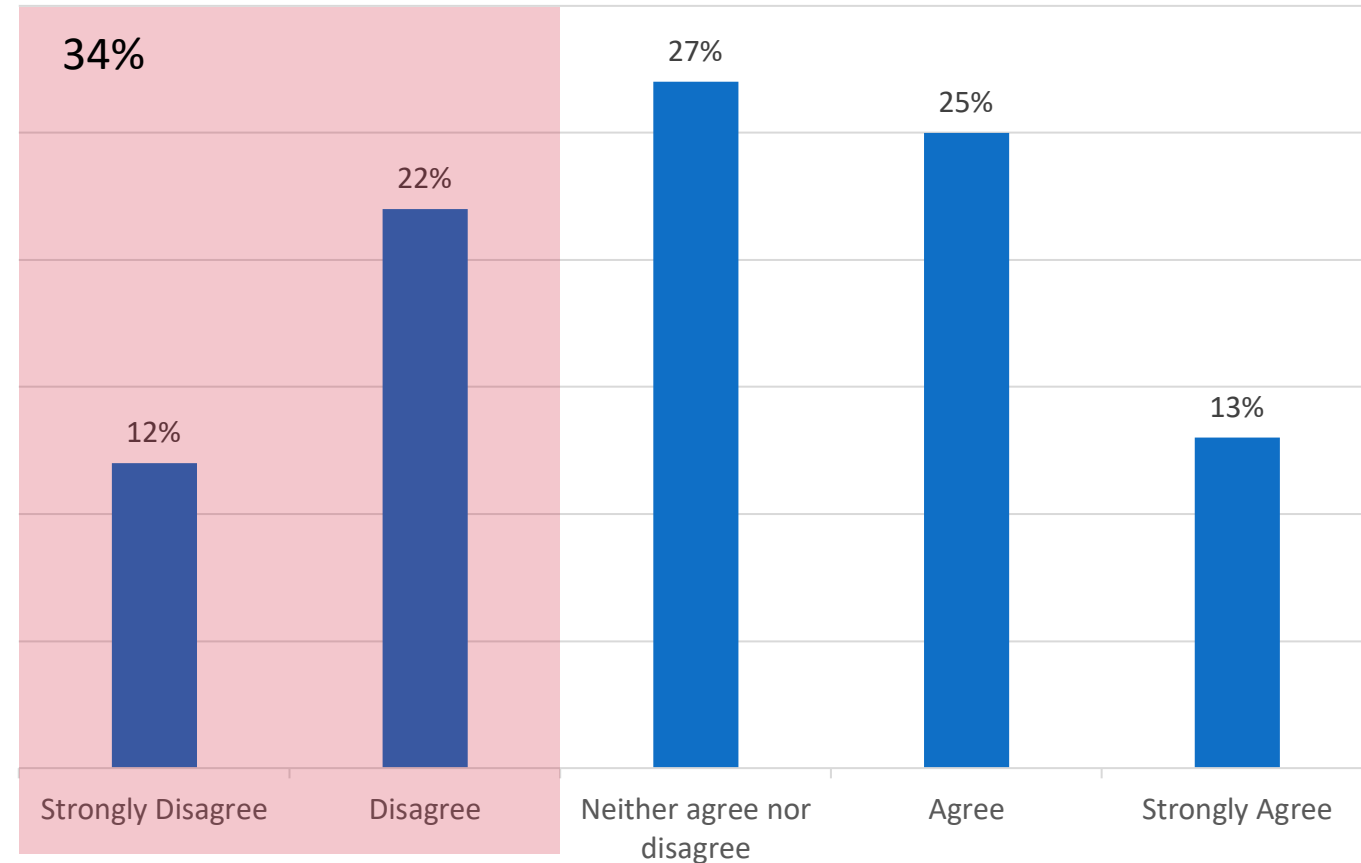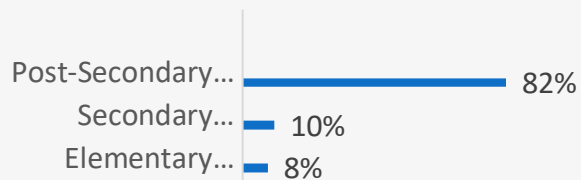
Section 319 of Canada's Criminal Code says that communicating statements, other than in private conversation, that willfully promote hatred against any identifiable group is an indictable or punishable offense. Unless it is a direct message, all social media communication is public.
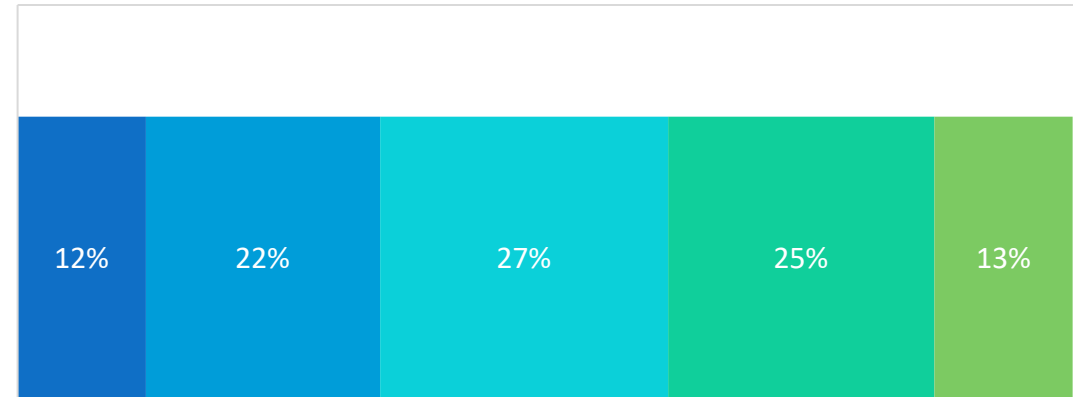
THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE
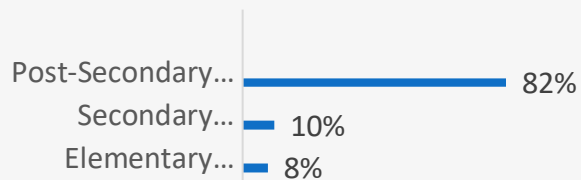
Respondents generally feel that social media is a public place,
It follows that online spaces should be subject to the same regulations as other public spaces.

18-25: 49%
26-40: 31%
41-60: 19%
60+: 1%

Nonbinary: 52%
Female: 19%
Male: 29%

Post-Secondary…: 82%
Secondary…: 10%
Elementary…: 8%

UNLESS IT IS A DIRECT MESSAGE, ALL SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION IS PUBLIC
12% | 22% | 27% | 25% | 13%

SOCIAL MEDIA IS A PUBLIC PLACE
13% | 22% | 25% | 25% | 16%
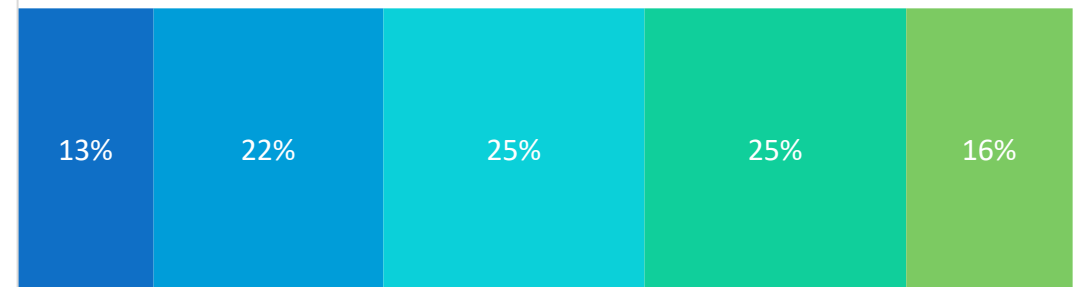
Strongly Disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

Demographics

We put out a call to those who have experienced online hate.

Designed as an opportunity for Ontarians to express their experiences with online hate, we put out a call.

Over 4,800 people responded, resulting in 1,168 survey respondents.

# Distribution of Study Sample across geographic and select demographic groups

Region in Ontario	Study respondents %
Central East	23%
Central West	59%
Northern	4%
Western	14%
Gender	Study respondents %
Agender	5%
Genderfluid	4%
Intersex	6%
Man	29%
Nonbinary	31%
Other	0%
Third Gender	2%
Transgender	2%
Two-Spirit	2%
Age	Study respondents %
18-25	49%
26-40	31%
41-60	19%
60+	1%

Disability Status	Study respondents %
Yes	65%
No	35%
Social Media Platforms Use	Study respondents %
Facebook	84%
Instagram	5%
LinkedIn	4%
Other	7%
Focus Communities	Study respondents %
Black	82%
Indigenous	11%
Jewish	4%
Muslim	2%

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE
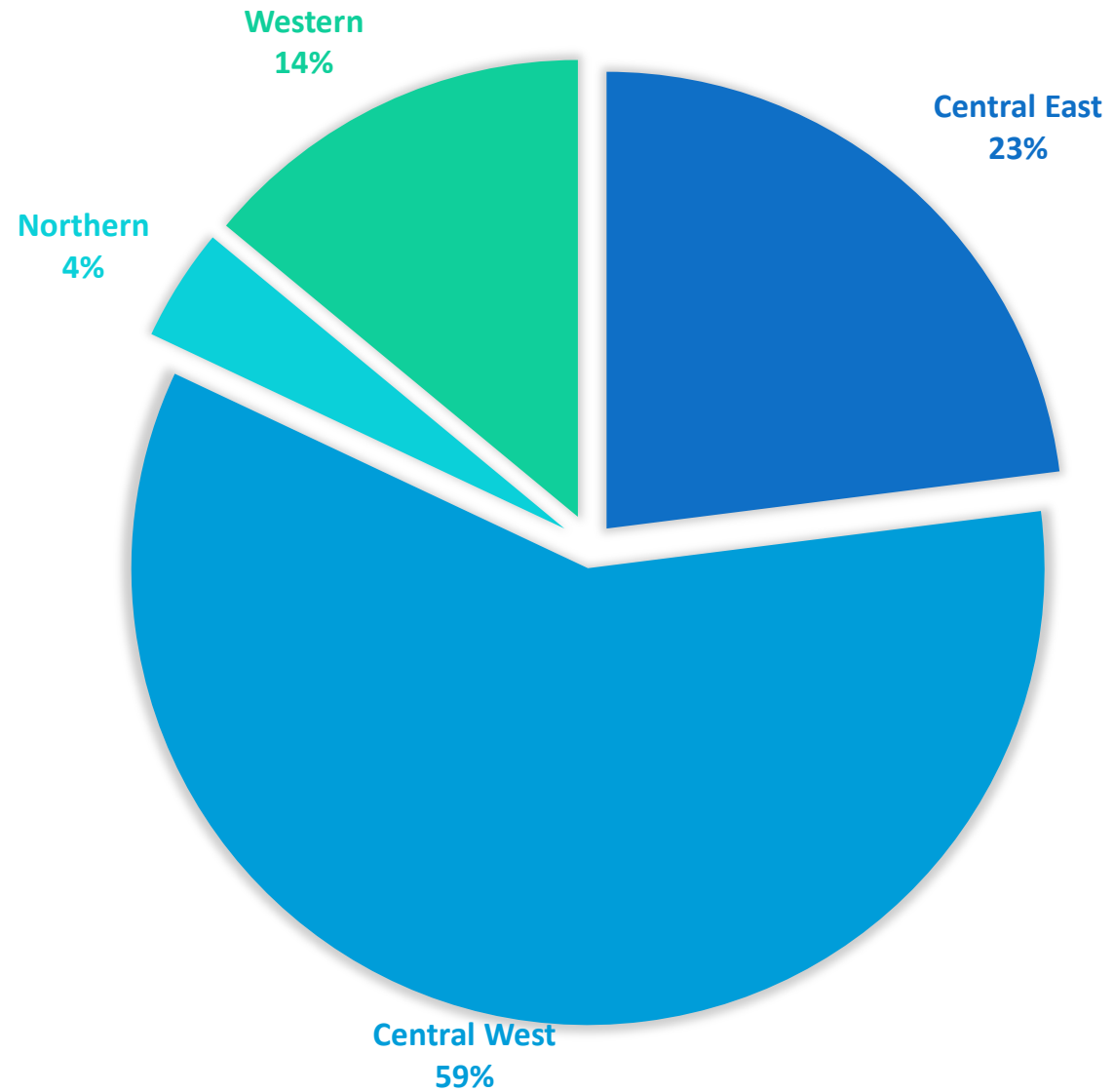
MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

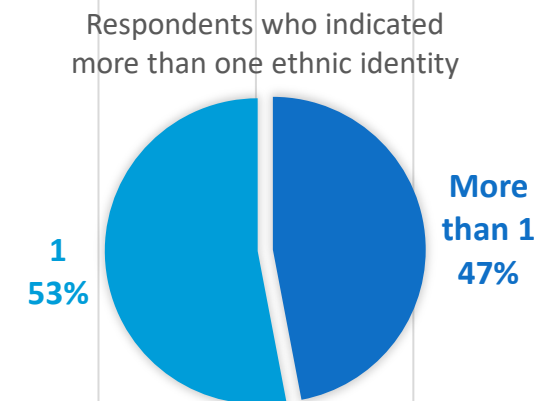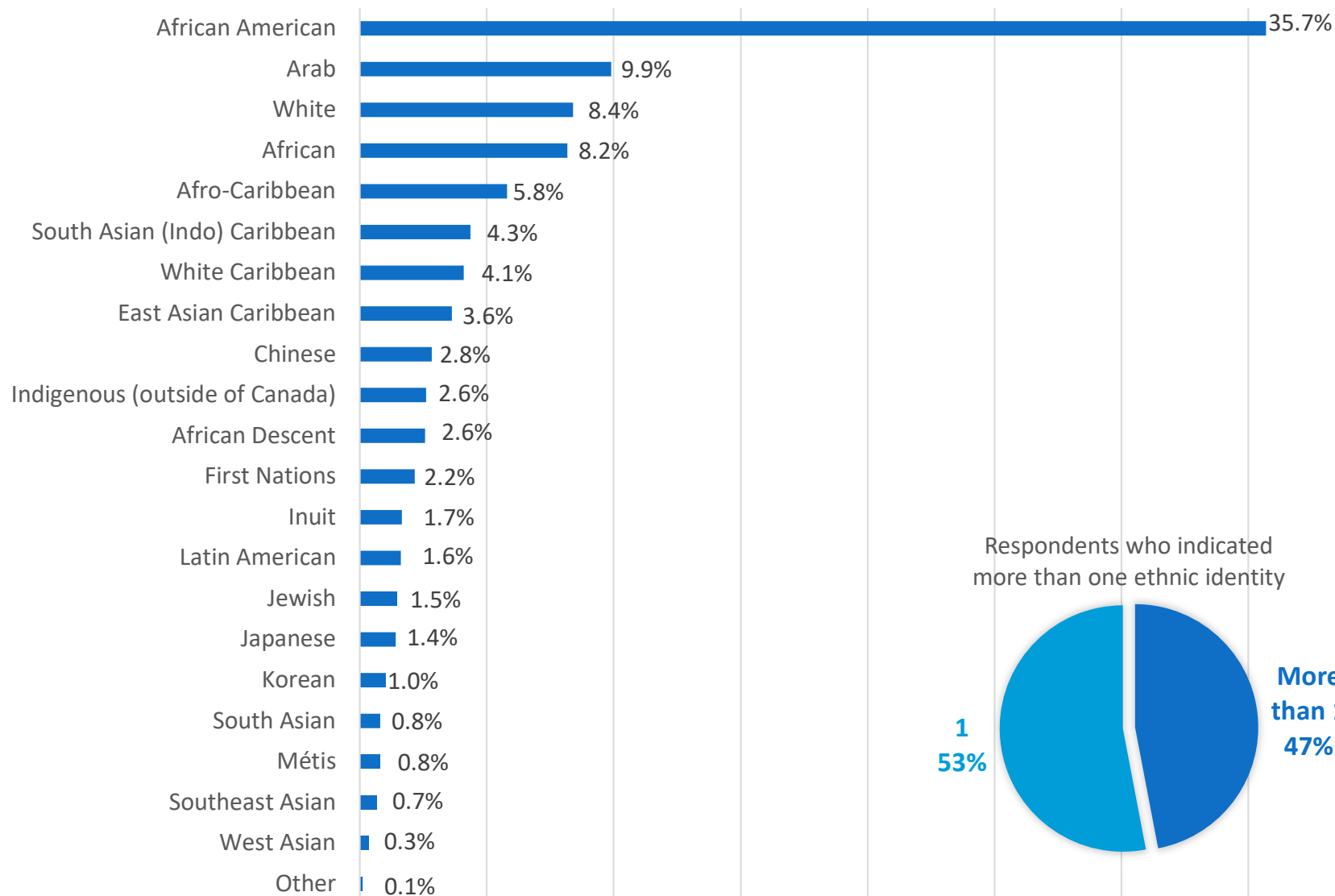@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Disability Status

No
35%

Yes
65%
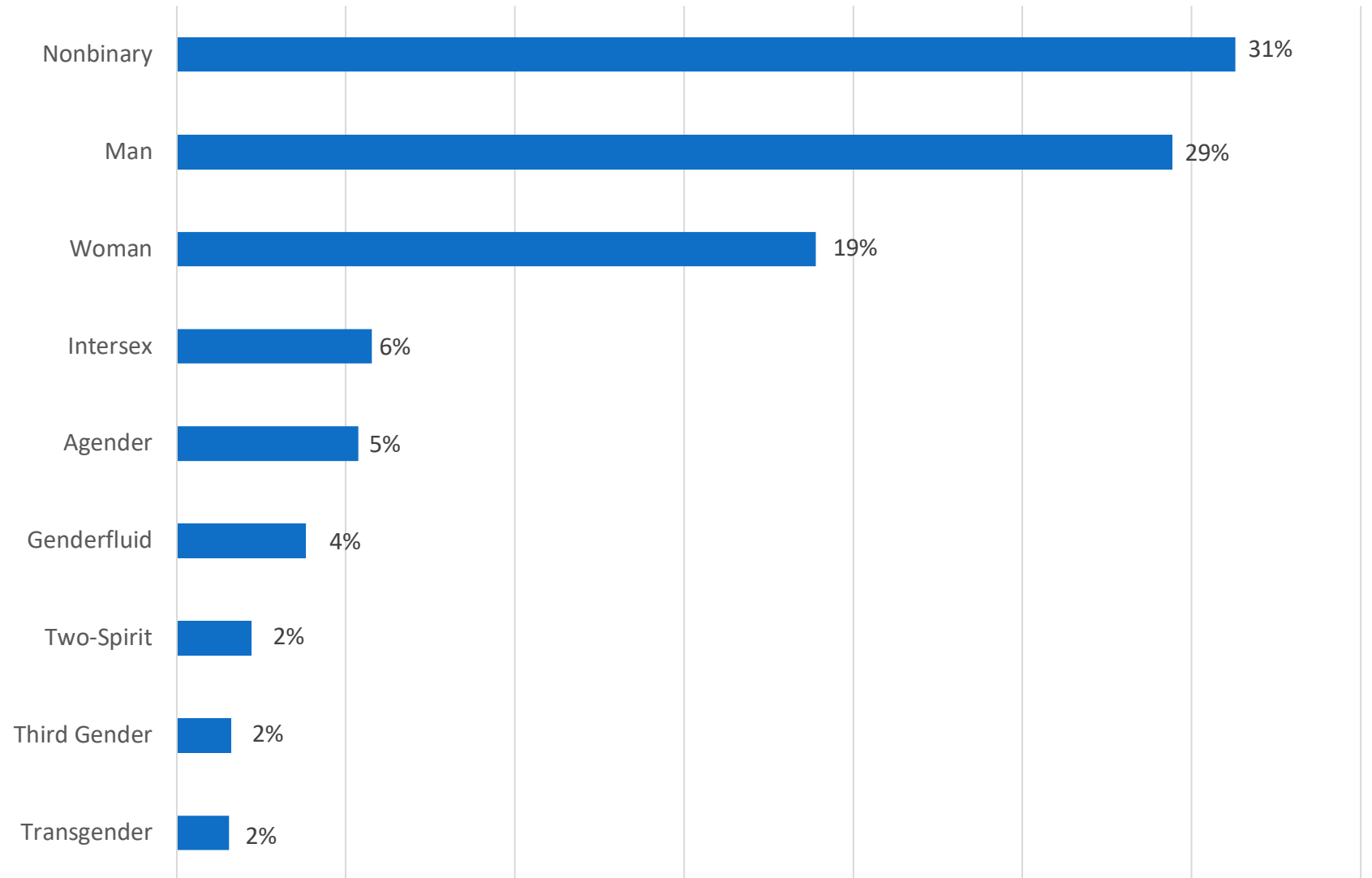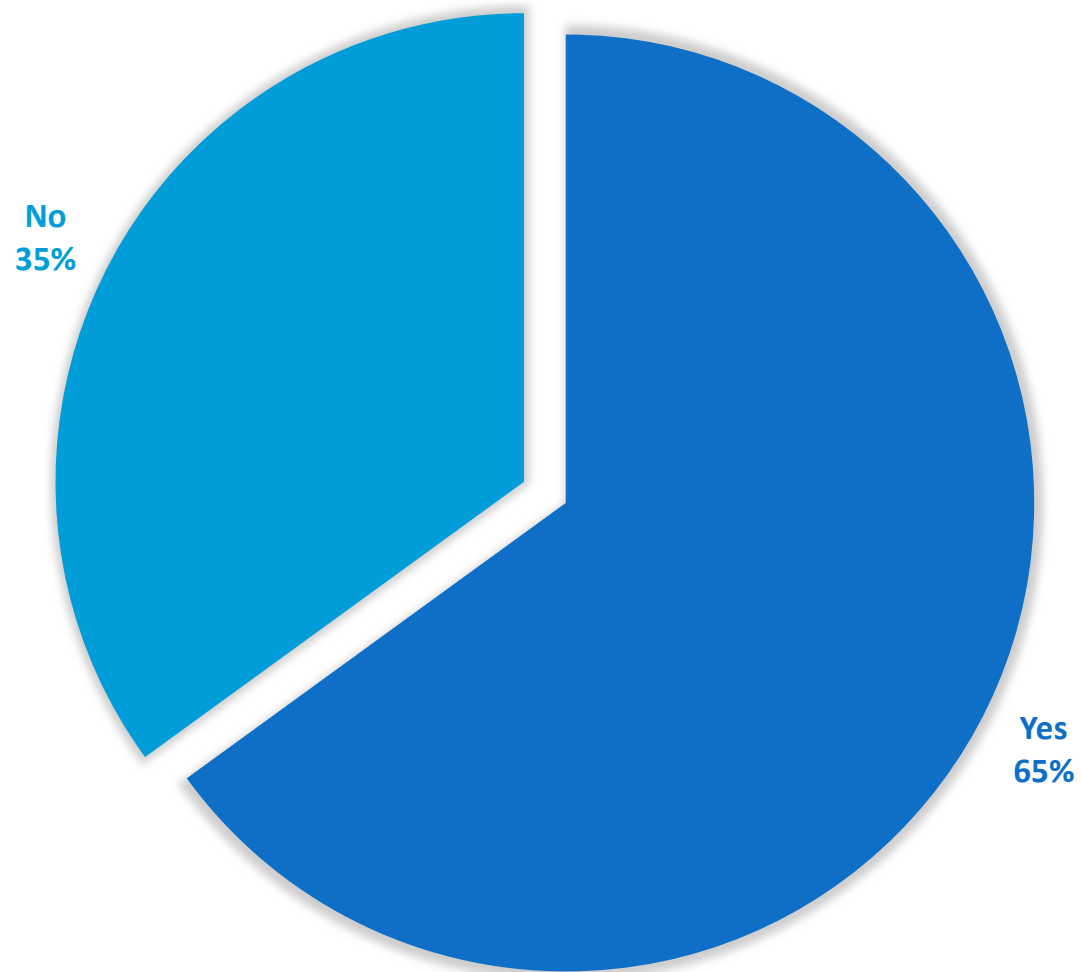
I identify as having a physical or mental disability

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage
African American	35.7%
Arab	9.9%
White	8.4%
African	8.2%
Afro-Caribbean	5.8%
South Asian (Indo) Caribbean	4.3%
White Caribbean	4.1%
East Asian Caribbean	3.6%
Chinese	2.8%
Indigenous (outside of Canada)	2.6%
African Descent	2.6%
First Nations	2.2%
Inuit	1.7%
Latin American	1.6%
Jewish	1.5%
Japanese	1.4%
Korean	1.0%
South Asian	0.8%
Métis	0.8%
Southeast Asian	0.7%
West Asian	0.3%
Other	0.1%

I identify as (Please select all that apply):
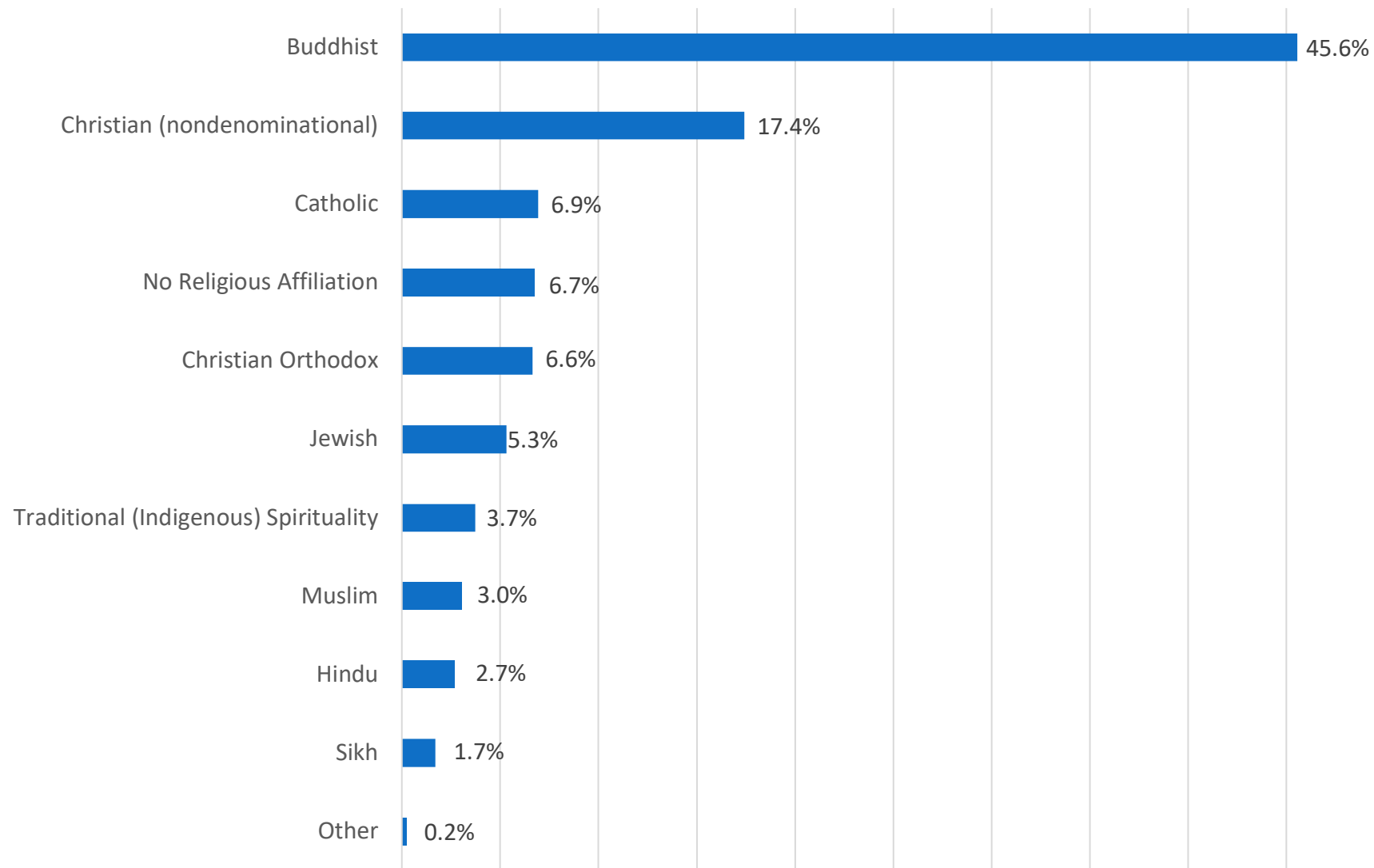
Respondents who indicated more than one ethnic identity

1 — 53%
More than 1 — 47%
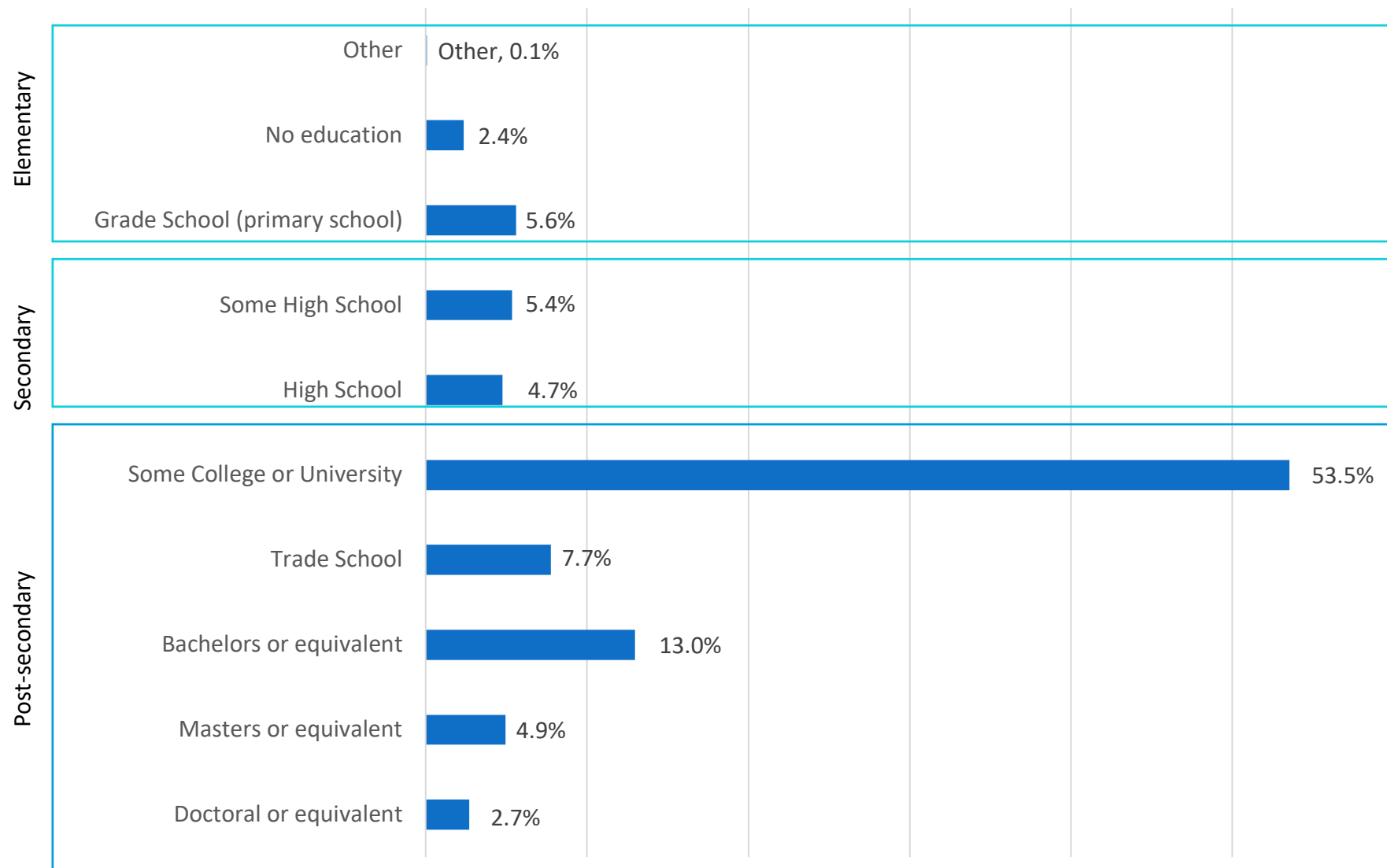
MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE

Social Media Platforms, by account type

Platform	Percentage
Facebook	84%
Instagram	5%
LinkedIn	4%
Pinterest	2%
Twitter	1%
Reddit	1%
Snapchat	1%
None	1%
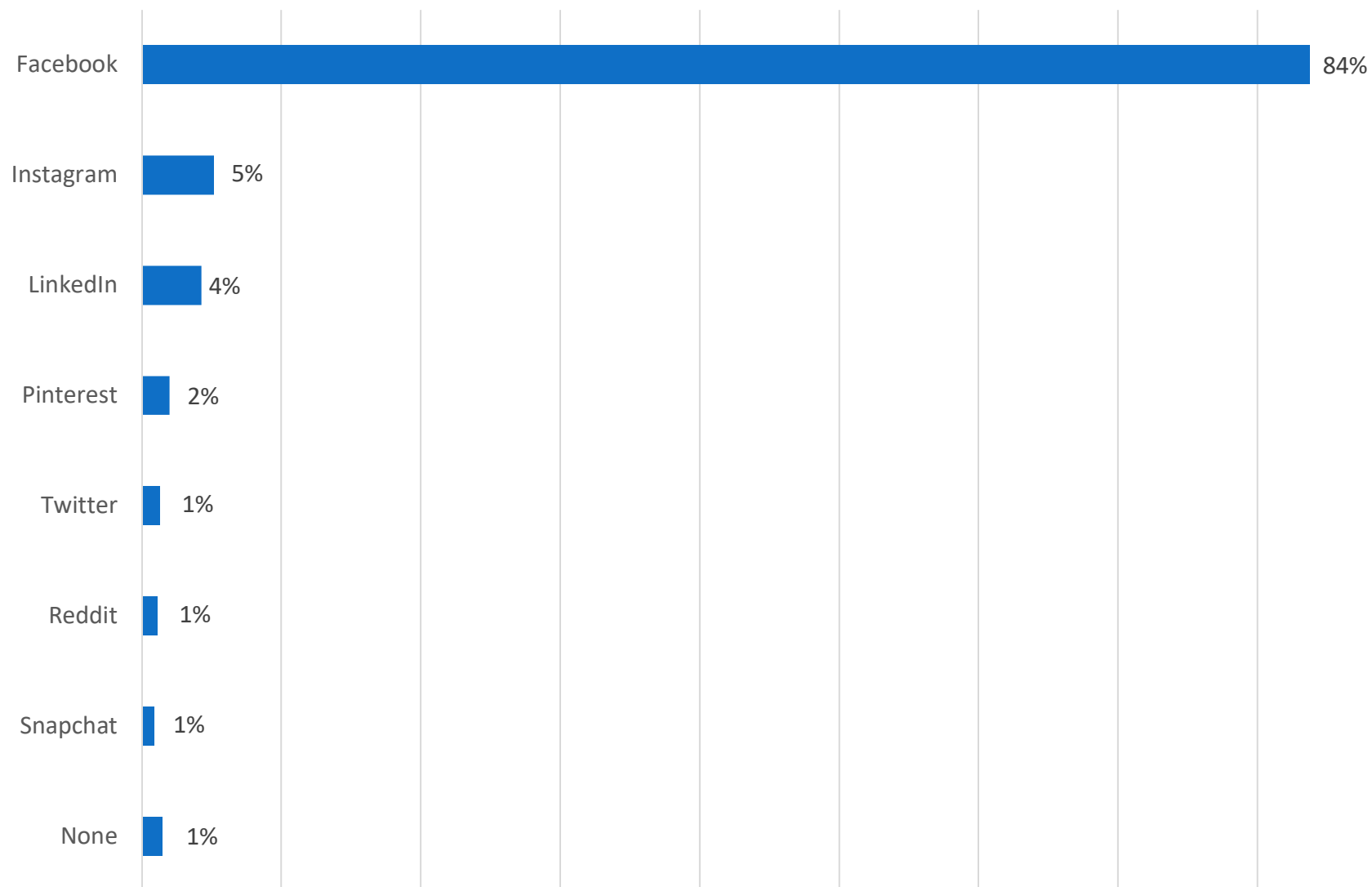
Do you have accounts on any of the following social media sites?

THE MOSAIC INSTITUTE
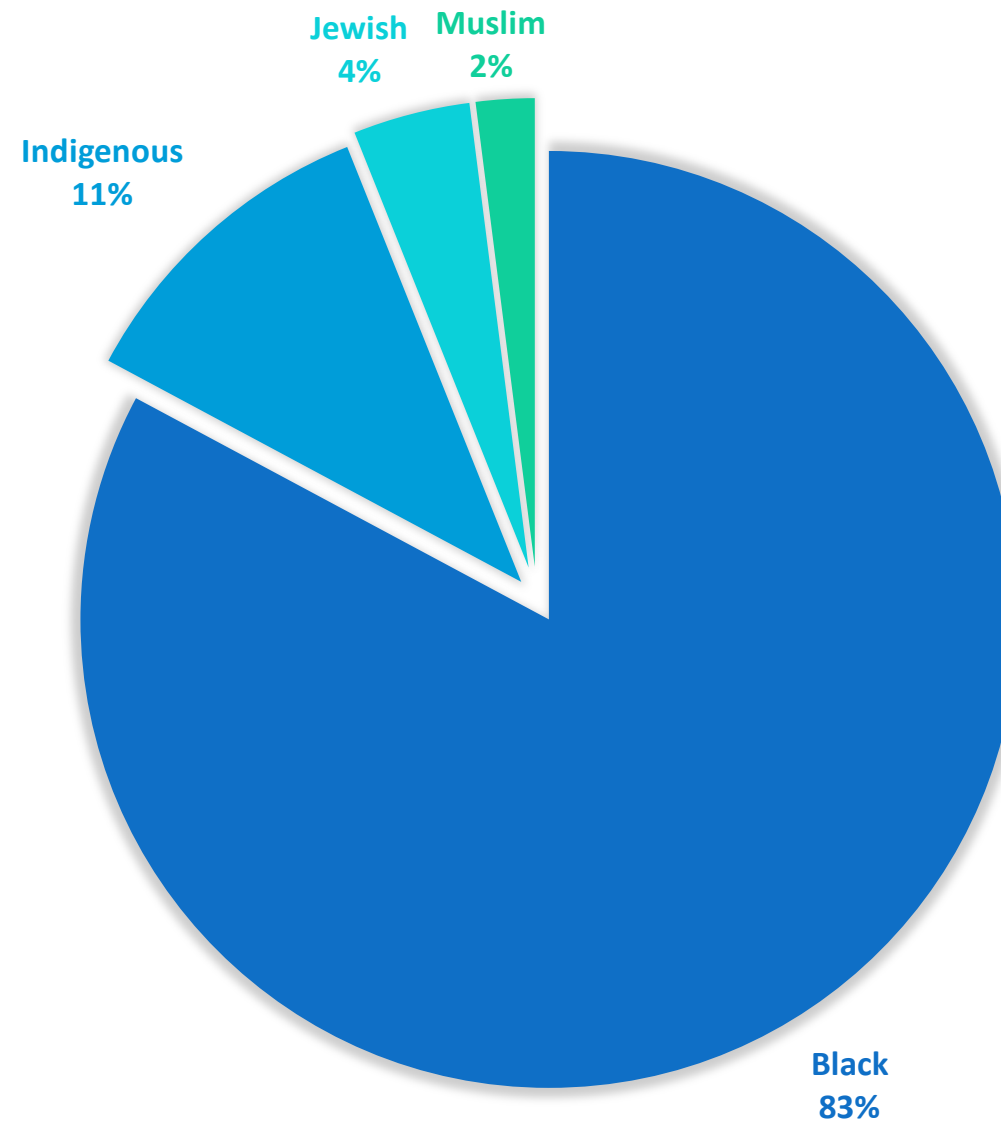
MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

Respondents from the communities of focus

Contact:

Akaash Maharaj
CEO, The Mosaic Institute
am@mosaicinstitute.ca | +1 416-644-6000 ext 620

The Mosaic Institute is a think-and-do tank which brings together people, communities, and nations to advance pluralism and reduce conflict. A charitable not-for-profit organization founded in 2007, we are a national platform operating through Track II diplomacy; people-to-people engagement to foster mutual understanding and to create strategies for peaceful coexistence.
We believe that Canada's diversity is not a problem to be solved, but rather the solution to many of Canada's and the world's conflicts. Our work is built on a foundation of rigorous, impartial, public research and we believe that the shortest path to peaceful solutions is the one that follows truth.

Our programs cultivate the skills and qualities in youth to become the next generation of leaders in inclusion and pluralism. We also hold public events to raise the level of discourse and engagement on issues related to conflict, our responsibilities towards one another, our legitimate expectations of one another, and Canada's place in the world.
For more information about our work, visit www.mosaicinstitute.ca

Research Assistants:
Rhoda Akuol Philip
An-Noûra Compaoré
Samuel Kearney
Harrish Thirukumaran

MOSAICINSTITUTE.CA

@MOSAICINSTITUTE

@MOSAICINSTITUTE