

An In-Depth Look at Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants and Racialized Individuals in London and Middlesex, and Strategies for Combatting this Discrimination

**Prepared for the London & Middlesex
Local Immigration Partnership**

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Overview and Goals

This qualitative study, involving in-depth interviews of 30 immigrants and racialized individuals in London and Middlesex, was conducted as a follow-up to a [survey](#) conducted in March 2021 examining experiences of discrimination in the region. The London and Middlesex survey was one of nine conducted in Southwestern Ontario at that time. Results of these surveys revealed that immigrants and racialized people often experience discrimination in workplace settings (i.e., when applying for a job or promotion and at their job) and in public settings (e.g., while using public transit, in parks, stores, restaurants), and that discrimination levels seem to be higher in these small and mid-sized communities than in large urban settings.

This study was then conducted to gain a more detailed understanding of the lived experiences of immigrants and racialized individuals in terms of the discrimination they are experiencing in these settings, the consequences, and possible strategies that would be effective for counteracting this discrimination. It is one of five qualitative studies being conducted to examine these issues in Southwestern Ontario. More specifically, the interviews explored discrimination that immigrants and racialized people have faced in workplace settings and public places in the past three years, including what happened and where, the perceived reason(s) for the discrimination, observers' reactions to the discrimination, and respondents' reactions to the discrimination. The interviews also explored individuals' sense of belonging to the region and desire to stay here, knowledge of strategies to respond to discrimination and knowledge of supports available, views on a possible tool for reporting experiences of discrimination in the region, and other suggested supports that could be put into place for people who experience discrimination. The findings provide a detailed portrait of the discrimination occurring in our region and its consequences. They also include practical information that will allow the London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership and its partners to take concrete steps in combatting discrimination so that immigrants and racialized individuals thrive and choose to live and work in the region.

Method

Procedure

Between November 2022 and February 2023, a total of 30 online interviews were conducted with immigrants and racialized individuals in London and Middlesex. To qualify for the study, respondents had to be at least 18 years old and report in a pre-screening survey that they had experienced discrimination in London and Middlesex in the last three years in a workplace setting or public place. Respondents were recruited by the London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership through email listservs, social media, newsletters, and word of mouth.

The online interviews were conducted via Zoom and all interviews were also recorded (with respondents' permission) so that central details and quotes could be confirmed after the interviews. Quotes have been used in this report to demonstrate the main points conveyed by respondents, and have been edited slightly for clarity. Almost all of the interviews were conducted in English, with one conducted in Spanish by a Spanish-speaking interviewer.

The interviews were semi-structured. The research team developed an interview guide consisting of central questions and follow-up probes in partnership with the five participating Local Immigration Partnerships. The questions focused on:

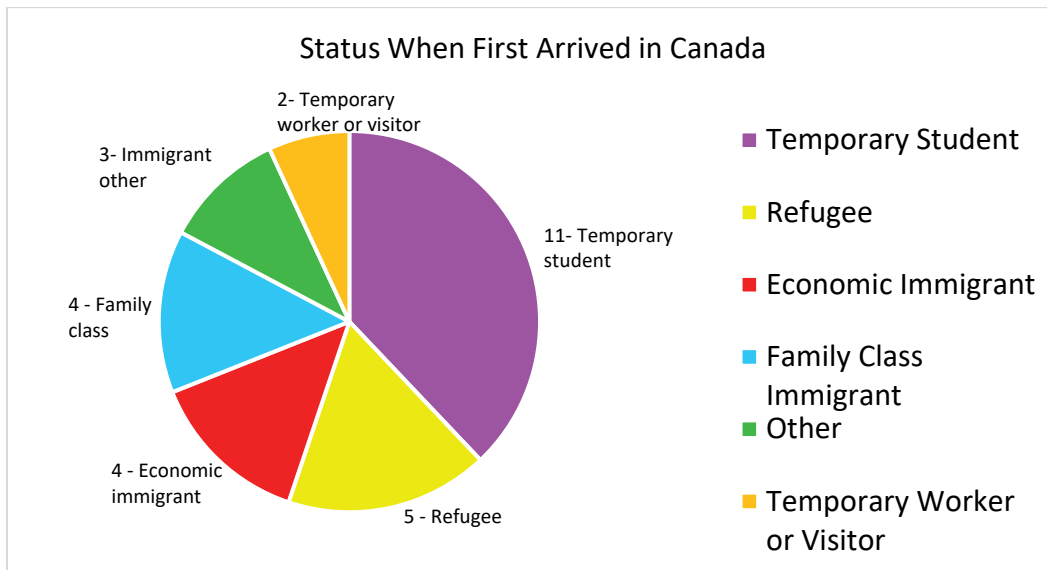
- Description of an incident of discrimination that the respondent had experienced, including the assumed reason for the discrimination, observers' reactions, and respondents' reactions
- Sense of belonging to the region and whether the respondent planned to stay
- Knowledge of strategies to respond to discrimination and supports available
- Characteristics of a reporting tool that would be most likely to be used by the respondent
- Useful supports that could be put into place for people who experience discrimination

At the end of the interviews, respondents were also asked a set of background questions. The interviews lasted approximately 1.5 hours, and all respondents were compensated with a \$30 Tim Hortons or Walmart e-gift card for their time.

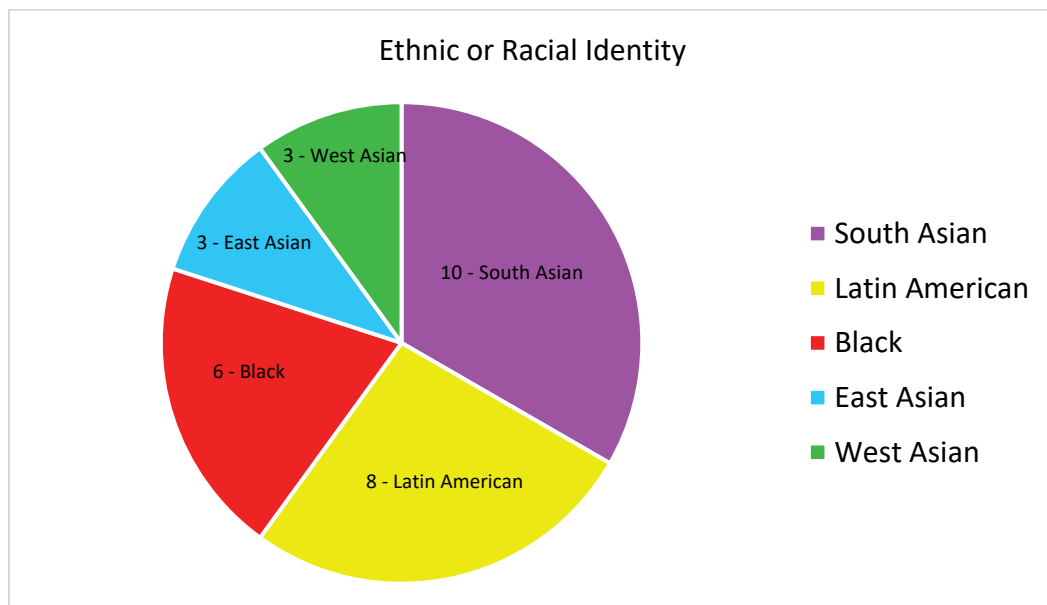
Description of Interviewees

Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 61 years old, with the average being 31 years old. Most respondents identified as female (27 female, 2 male, 1 non-binary).

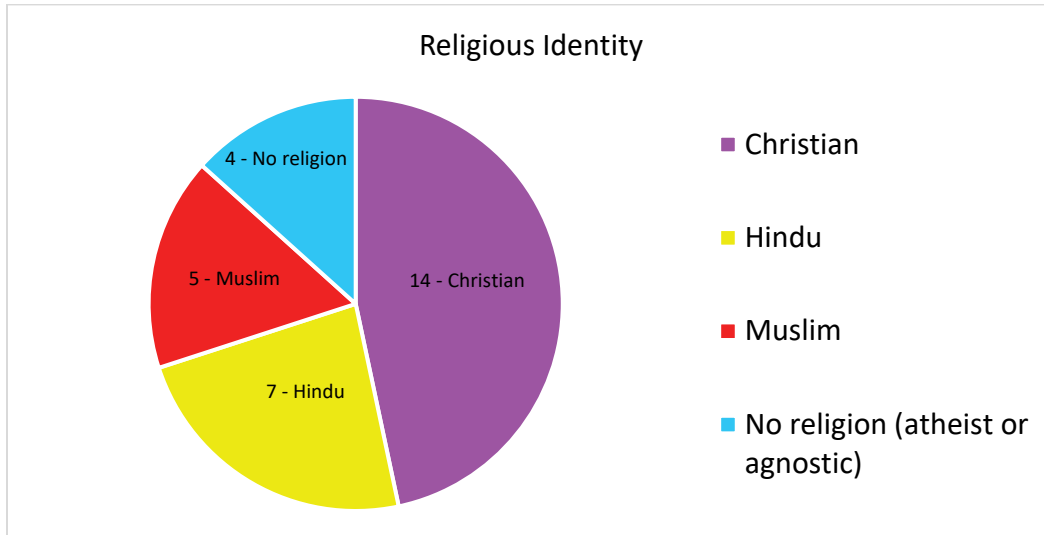
All but one respondent were born outside of Canada. Those born outside of Canada had lived here between 6 months and 30 years, with the average length of time residing in Canada being 7.3 years. Many had arrived in Canada on temporary visas, but more than half have since become permanent residents or citizens.



Respondents identified as South Asian, Latin American, Black, East Asian, and West Asian.



Respondents identified their religious identity as Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or indicated that they had no religion.



Many respondents were well-educated, with 8 having obtained university undergraduate degrees, 8 having obtained university graduate degrees, and 1 having obtained a professional degree. The remaining 13 respondents either had college/vocational training (3) or had completed secondary school education (10). Respondents were mainly employed or students, with 13 working full-time, 2 working part-time, 4 being students and working either full-time or part-time, and 9 being students who were not working (1 respondent was retired and 1 respondent was unemployed).

Most respondents reported their annual household income as being between \$45,001 to \$80,000 (8) or \$80,000 to \$130,000 (7), while some (6) reported an annual household income of less than \$45,000 (one reported no income and one reported an annual household income of more than \$130,000). Of note, 7 respondents preferred not to provide any information about their annual household income.

Specific Experiences of Discrimination in London and Middlesex

Many respondents (12 of 30) indicated experiencing discrimination in more than one context in London-Middlesex in the past three years. However, respondents were asked to describe only one experience of discrimination – 11 described an experience in a workplace setting (i.e., when applying for a job or at their job) and 19 described an experience in a public place (e.g., public transit, retail settings, common areas of shared residences).

Workplace Settings

Incidents of Discrimination

The most common forms of discrimination experienced by respondents in the workplace were derogatory language directed at them and being treated differently than peers. This included having their abilities questioned by patrons of their workplaces and patrons not wanting to be served by them. Respondents also reported being socially excluded, being stereotyped, being undermined, and in some instances even being yelled at and physically attacked by co-workers and superiors.

“So I asked them, ‘what would you like?’ And they immediately turned to my co-worker, and they were like, ‘I don't want her to take my order. I want you to make it’ . . . I went to put in the orders in the system for him, because he had a few orders. So when I was doing that he again told my co-worker, ‘no you put it and she might do it wrong.’ So then my co-worker was like, ‘no it's fine. She'll do it right.’ So when I did and I printed the bill he stood there for five minutes to check each and every one. He asked the price for each and every thing, and then he made sure that I put all the orders correctly.”

“So yeah I acknowledged him and he threw something at me. And then he did say he didn't want help from someone who wasn't from here.”

“She didn't allow me to work on my ideas . . . I never felt encouragement. I never felt motivation. I was never given training. I was never given procedures . . . She was never eager to do any of my ideas. I explain it to her. I created reports. Nothing.”

“But because I don't have ‘leadership skills’ you won't give me the position but ninety percent of what is on your job posting is what I do every day . . . for that ten percent it's something that I can get trained on. It's something that if you give me the time I can pick

up on.”

These experiences were more often described as being repeatedly perpetrated by the same person or as repeatedly occurring by different people, rather than as isolated events.

Perpetrators of discrimination were described mainly as White, males and females, who were middle aged or older.

Perceived Reasons for the Discrimination

Respondents were most likely to report that ethnicity and race were the bases for the discrimination incidents, indicated by 8 of the 11 respondents. The salience of ethnicity and race was clear to respondents based on the derogatory language they heard. It was also clear to them based on the fact that the only thing different about them in the specific context was their ethnicity or race.

“I think it’s because of my colour and because I’m Indian . . . Because they’re wasn’t anything wrong that I was doing or anything . . .”

“The way I look, the way I talk. I don’t look like them. I don’t dress like them. I’m not as rich as them. You can obviously tell . . . based on looking at me and just my hair.”

Observers’ Reactions to the Discrimination

Many respondents (7 of 11) reported that their co-workers observed the discrimination incidents. However, most of these observers did not intervene, with respondents suggesting that this was primarily because the co-workers did not necessarily perceive the incidents as being problematic.

“Because like I said it doesn’t click to everyone. Things like microaggressions, like I said it takes you . . . to know what’s happening to actually even acknowledge them. For me I don’t think that any of my colleagues . . . would recognize those. They’d . . . laugh it off, right? But these are technical terms that you’re learning and you’re made to feel aware and you’re doing diversity training and that kind of stuff and you learn then.”

“I think because it wasn’t anything very direct that he said to me right, it was really indirect. So I think that’s the reason no one really said anything.”

In one instance the respondent's co-worker tried to contact their manager; however, their manager was not available. In another instance, the respondent's co-workers tried to de-escalate the situation, which made the respondent feel supported. Their efforts also helped to prevent the perpetrator from repeatedly discriminating against her.

"I did feel it was useful. It was very helpful when he stepped in because it made me feel like someone has my back and it made me feel safer. That it's not just me against the world . . . It reduced it because the same patron still kept coming back and it never ended but it definitely reduced how often and how bad it was."

Respondents' Reactions to the Discrimination

Almost half of the respondents (5 of 11) did nothing at the time in response to the discrimination incidents for fear of making things worse.

"If I respond . . . I find out I put myself in more trouble because my supervisor is also from their community . . . So already one or two things happen that . . . are wrong thing but . . . he take his side. So I just ignore and try to be calm . . ."

"And I think also as people of colour . . . it almost comes back to us to not be very offended but if you feel offended, you have to communicate it in a very, I don't know, professional, if I may use that word, manner. Why? Why is the onus on me to correct you or tell you that that's not okay? But also these are older people, these are more senior people, and you think twice before you say something. And you let it go and you laugh it off like oh that's so funny or whatever."

Two respondents reported talking to someone about the experience of discrimination after the fact, one of whom also talked to the perpetrator a few days later, which resulted in some resolution.

"She say 'sorry', she recognize and be willing to work on this . . . I want to give her the chance to give a new meaning for all this stuff . . . and I could see that she was trying . . . and all the time now she was check on me."

However, for one respondent who talked to her colleague about it, the experience of discrimination was discounted.

“Everybody came to talk about me . . . None of them actually talked to me, they talked at me. It was all ‘we’re such an inclusive company, I’m sure she didn’t mean it’ . . . ”

Respondents reported feeling shocked, scared, angry, annoyed, hurt, offended, sad, ashamed, unappreciated, undervalued, stressed and anxious as a result of experiencing discrimination. Other consequences included feeling unsafe in London-Middlesex, having their career trajectory hindered or changed, burnout, and poor physical health.

“The emotional aspect is real and disheartening. And also it just makes me not want to even work or live in a public place, like kind of pushed me to going into remote work rather than being face to face with people . . . ”

“I was feeling awful. I was feeling uncomfortable especially because this happened . . . in front of someone else. I felt ashamed at that moment . . . ”

“Unappreciated. Made me just be like, okay why am I working so hard to advance and to move on or to move up in this company. Undervalued, like that you can tell when favouritism is being played.”

“At the end of the year, I was diagnosed with burnout . . . you are not immune for the consequence about aggression like this”

Respondents’ Reporting of the Discrimination

After the incidents, 5 of the 11 respondents reported their experiences of discrimination in an official way. Those who reported these experiences did so to their superiors or a human resources department. For some, the reporting resulted in action, such as discrimination response training and team restructuring to work with different people, as well as emotional support.

“They made us do a training on how to handle discrimination . . . I know they definitely wanted us to feel safe and have more information on how to go about it.”

“They find out that something’s really wrong going on here . . . now I have another supervisor.”

“There’s a lady in HR . . . and I told her and she is always checking on me to see how I’m doing.”

However, for others, there was no response to the reporting.

“So, it was just kind of brushed under the rug really quickly and I think they were just really afraid to talk about it. And it's a little weird because we have all of these trainings about DEI, and especially these are our leaders so they should have a little bit more specialized training to be able to handle situations or have these conversations but I don't think they're there yet.”

Those who did not report these experiences felt the incidents would not be perceived as inappropriate or discriminatory, were unsure of what difference reporting would make, had a distrust of management and human resources, did not want to be perceived as making trouble, and did not want to risk their employment.

“You get discouraged because the amount of work that is involved and the upheaval of, like, do you really just wanna piss off every manager and become the black sheep that later on you kinda screw yourself over when it comes to an opportunity of moving to a different department or applying for a job later. Do you wanna be known as the troublemaker? is basically what I’m trying to say.”

“Again, I just didn’t feel like it was gonna go anywhere and I felt like I personally didn’t have trust in the HR department to re-victimize me in that process.”

“I didn't want to go ahead with that. Supervisors they are big, they are powerful, and I was just new to the country . . . ”

Several respondents indicated that they might be more likely to report experiences of discrimination in the future if they thought the incidents would be taken seriously and there would be some resolution.

Public Places

Incidents of Discrimination

The most common public places in which respondents reported experiencing discrimination were public transit, retail stores, and in common areas of shared residences. Respondents also reported experiencing discrimination in healthcare settings, in parks, on the street, and at school. The most common forms of discrimination experienced by respondents in these settings were derogatory language directed at them and being treated differently than others.

Derogatory language directed at them included being yelled at for not speaking English, having racial slurs yelled at them, being told to go back to their country, being stereotyped, and being exoticized in a sexual manner.

“We were just talking in Spanish and he turn to me and he say ‘you are in an English speaking country so you have to speak in English, bitch.’”

“We were sitting on the side in the back row and they just started throwing out racial slurs and, out of nowhere, like we did not even talk to them . . . ‘You smell so bad, you’re smelling like curry’ . . . This went on for a very long time, for a good 15, 20 minutes or maybe even more than that. They started opening the windows and it was so cold that day.”

“I think I introduced myself and she’s like ‘where are you from’ and I was like ‘oh I’m a international student. I’m from Dubai, I come from the Middle East.’ And then she goes ‘oh yeah we take hygiene very seriously here.’”

Being treated differently than others included not being trusted and being treated rudely compared to others.

“. . . and then he looks at both of us and he just looked at the first person like okay but then when he looked at me he started shouting at me . . . and said ‘Can’t you see the sign? What’s wrong with you?’ And I was confused because the person in front of me was doing the same thing and he didn’t say anything at all . . .”

“And when we were putting all the products in the cart the person that is the assistant of the cashier she told me ‘I need that you open your bag because I need to check what is

inside.”

“ . . . she start to scream in my face. Speaking with me in unpolite way and you know when someone talk to you like you are not educated, you are stupid . . . ‘you need to learn the rules’ . . . in a very loud voice and everyone was looking . . . After she finished screaming she start to deal super politely with the rest of the people which is not wearing a hijab or a scarf.”

These experiences were more often described as isolated incidents rather than repeated events. Perpetrators of discrimination were described mainly as White, males and females, who ranged in age from younger to older adults.

Perceived Reasons for the Discrimination

All 19 respondents reported that ethnicity and race, religion, being an immigrant, and/or not speaking English well were the bases for their experiences of discrimination. The salience of these characteristics was clear to respondents based on the derogatory language they heard. It was also clear to them based on the fact that the only things different about them in the specific contexts were these characteristics.

“I think because I was different. I look different and I feel like they treated me differently and they were being not nice exactly because I identify as non-White . . . ”

“And he was just pointing at me and yelling ‘go back to China’ . . . ”

Observers’ Reactions to the Discrimination

Many respondents (11 of 19) reported that the discrimination incidents were observed by others. However, none of these observers intervened in these public places.

“I don’t find that people try to help other people here. They don’t like to get involved.”

“They just laughed and then the person that was sitting beside her, she left . . . I was seeing people at the back . . . but they weren’t paying attention. It could be just because they were busy or maybe just avoiding the situation.”

“ . . . because if you see someone shouting in public, sometimes your reaction is to avoid

that. You don't want to get into someone else's conflict because what if it turns onto you . . . and then also sometimes people don't care, I guess. So if it doesn't involve you, if it doesn't harm you in any way why bother in a sense."

"Probably because he was super loud and I guess . . . other people are also scared, like, not sure what to do at that moment."

Respondents' Reactions to the Discrimination

Many respondents (15 of 19) did nothing at the time in response to the discrimination incidents because they did not know how to respond.

"I just kept quiet. I was more so in a state of shock so I didn't know what to do. A state of shock and confusion, so I didn't do anything. I didn't fight back. I didn't talk back . . . I can't even remember if I said sorry or not, I truly can't remember. I was more so flabbergasted and like, okay, this is happening. That was my immediate response."

"And I did not respond to her because I don't know how to respond to her. And because I know that then she will not identify it as she was being racist . . . And she will not, you know, accept that she has taken a racial tone."

Two respondents reported talking to someone about the experience of discrimination after the fact, which helped them understand that what they had experienced was discrimination and helped them prepare to respond should a similar incident occur again.

". . . but when I came back and I had an opportunity to speak to my next door neighbour who is White, and she said to me . . . 'you need words to deal with something like this. The next time it happens don't let it go . . . I doesn't have to be aggressive. You could say I'm so sorry you're having a bad day, would you like me to speak or deal with your supervisor because I don't want to upset you further'"

Two respondents talked to someone after the fact and also talked to the perpetrators, either at the time or later. One respondent asked for clarification from the perpetrator when the experience of discrimination occurred, which resulted in escalating the situation.

"I had the choice of just walking out without saying a single word to him but I chose to just say 'have a nice day' and just head out and then he came at me that way . . . I sort of

engaged but at the end of the day, because I was asking him 'excuse me what do you mean I should go back to my country'. I was only trying to be nice, and then . . . he just started blabbing and I just walked out."

Another respondent asked for clarification from the perpetrator a few days later, which resulted in the perpetrator justifying themselves.

"I asked for a bit of clarification and they had more candor with their language and I was like, oh, so you meant that and that was not a slip of tongue or you misarticulated . . . She said 'yeah, you maybe misunderstood me' and then went on to say exactly the same thing in more colloquial language."

Respondents reported feeling shocked, confused, scared, angry, frustrated, traumatized, rejected and unwelcome, unlucky, uncomfortable, helpless, vulnerable, exhausted, demoralized, devalued, and inferior as a result of experiencing discrimination.

"And I am really upset about it and it's really hurting my heart. I remember I went home and I was crying . . ."

"Yeah, it made me really angry and I was scared because I didn't know how to react to this type of situation so I just didn't respond but then also even with no response I was scared that he was going to become violent . . ."

"But, you know, some situations makes you feel whatever you do you will never be treated like you are a native."

"There's just this sense of inferiority. And like we don't belong here and they're just better than us, or something like that. I know they might not feel it at all but we just think that they might also think that they're better than all of us . . ."

Respondents' Reporting of the Discrimination

After the incidents, only 2 of the 19 respondents reported their experiences of discrimination in an official way. Those who reported these experiences did so to the management of the public setting. Reporting experiences of discrimination tended not to result in any resolution.

"I called and I was just like 'I'm really unhappy. I'm super disappointed and I think you

really should talk to your employees.’ And he’s like you know ‘I’m really sorry that that happened. You can come back and I will fix the problem for you and I am sure she didn’t do it because you identify as a difference race.’ And I was like, ‘no I’m not gonna come back and fix it because I’m really too upset about it and that isn’t really going to help.’”

The majority, who did not report the discrimination incidents, did not know how, were unsure of the consequences and of what difference it would make, did not think the incidents were serious enough to report or did not perceive it as discrimination in the moment, and felt it was not worth the time and effort.

“Because I just thought it wasn’t significant enough to make a official report. Also didn’t know who I can report it to.”

“ . . . as I didn’t notice immediately I didn’t try to talk to a manager or something because I didn’t catch in that moment that it was a case of discrimination.”

“One, I don't know where to report it. Two, I don't know if I report it how much scrutiny I will have to go through, or also I don't have the details of this person. And the third thing, and maybe that's the major reason behind why I did not report it because you know, we kind of see the discrimination coming right, when we decided to move. We knew, that this will happen. And you know it's just something that you internalize right, and you feel that, you know, it's just a small little incident and it's fine. You know this will keep happening. How many times will go and report. And you know, is it even worth reporting? Is it even worth your time to go report and talk about it and live it again and again and again, or just, you know, kind of, shrug it off and move on.”

Six of the 19 respondents indicated that they might be more likely to report similar discrimination incidents in the future if they knew how to do so and if the process was constructive, sensitive and anonymous.

Sense of Belonging and Retention in Region

Sense of Belonging to London-Middlesex

The respondents from this study varied in their sense of belonging to the London-Middlesex region. Those who felt like they belonged in the region identified some factors that made them feel welcome in London-Middlesex and like they belong, including the ties they've established, the community, and the diversity of people and their cultures and foods.

"The sense of belonging has come, but a lot of that effort has been from us."

Respondents discussed having ties to the region, including their jobs or schooling, their properties or homes, and their family members and partners being in London-Middlesex.

"So it took me a while to feel it I belonged in London . . . I think once I had a child, it really helped me to embed myself more into London, just taking her to playgroup, taking her to (the) library, making friends for her, (and) making friends for me. I think that those experiences definitely shaped me to feel like, 'Wow, London is home, Canada is home. I belong here.'"

"I'm going to be really honest . . . there's not a lot of welcoming in London. I don't think I would live here if it weren't for my partner and my family . . . My parents are really happy here. My partner grew up here, and his whole family is here."

Some of the respondents identified inclusion as a factor that influenced their sense of belonging.

"People's responses to me, people wanting to be my friend, people inviting me to do things (is what makes me feel welcome here)."

"When I'm invited to share my stories and I'm being heard, that's what makes me feel welcome . . . When you're invited to participate and be included, and people are thinking about what you need to be in those spaces to be included, whether it's online or . . . 'are you able to walk that far' or 'is the temperature okay?' . . . Those things make me feel like people listen and hear me and see me and understand . . . My comfort and what I need matters."

Respondents also stated that the friendliness and helpfulness of strangers and those who they interact with made them feel like they belong in the region.

“People help you. They work with you. They have a smile. They help you without expecting anything in return, and you feel like home.”

“The experience here has not been always bad. People have been helpful, and sometimes people have gone out of their way to help us out . . . That kind of helps me keep my belief that not everyone is, does, say a racist thing.”

Respondents noted volunteering with the community and attending community events as having a positive impact on their sense of belonging. They emphasized the importance of being around diversity and multiculturalism.

“We have different events, especially in the summer, especially at the market, where they host different events, different countries, different tents with different organizations and stuff like that. I think more exposure to . . . different cultures and different food. I think it’s just being open to understanding and respecting and to explaining to the younger generation that it’s okay to try new things and it’s okay to be different.”

Several of the respondents also mentioned (ethnic) food when discussing their sense of belonging to the region.

“I’m actually happy to see that there’s a lot more Caribbean or African stores popping up that sell cultural food, food that I grew up eating . . . snacks and special drinks. While we do have Walmarts and whatever that might have those international food aisles, (I’m happy to see) a store dedicated, and people that speak the way my mother speaks, and having that sense of community.”

The respondents talked about the comfort of seeing other immigrants, racialized people, and other people from marginalized communities in the region.

“Just to the feeling of knowing that it’s an inclusive surrounding, cause I’m a visible minority, so I wouldn’t want, when I show up, it to be obvious that I’m an immigrant, or the way I get treated is determined by my colour or my race or my religion.”

"I would say the fact that there are a lot of other races, nationalities, immigrants here, so I sort of feel like I'm not the only visible minority, and especially if I go to places and . . . I get to see a person of my race or colour or a fellow immigrant in a managerial position or executive position."

The international students from this study expressed the positive impact that the university had on their sense of belonging to the region, including student-led initiatives and the university's international student offices and events.

"I would say more so my university experiences, rather than like outside of university, because I've been able to find clubs or other social things within the university that have helped me connect now with London, because from those clubs we go have social events, like let's say at Victoria Park for ice skating, or we go for dinner at this restaurant. So in that way, it helps me connect with the London community . . . I feel like with university, it's structured in a way that you can find very many groups you can connect with, whether it be from an activity like chess or ethnicity-wise."

However, some respondents did not feel like they belonged in the London-Middlesex region.

"I feel like I don't belong in London at all. It's very White and it's not every accepting. I often go to places where a lot of people don't look like me."

Respondents discussed some of the factors that made them feel like they do not belong and are not welcome in London-Middlesex.

"Whenever you go (out to eat), they make distance between (themselves) and racialized people. They don't make this distance with other White people. They welcome the White people. The White people are more welcome than me . . . I feel like they avoid me in public places because of my skin."

"If I'm in a conversation with someone, there are little microaggressions that I notice are directed towards me, and that makes me feel . . . like an outcast, like I'm this foreign entity. Sometimes when I'm speaking, and I make a small shrug or a small grammatical mistake, and I'm like, 'Oh, sorry, my bad.' . . . They're like, 'Oh, no, you speak good English,' and I'm like, 'but that's not what I was saying.' I was just excusing an error that I had made . . . It makes it feel like I'm being looked at from a different lens."

Impact of Discrimination on Sense of Belonging to London-Middlesex

Of the 30 respondents, 19 indicated that the discrimination they experienced made them feel less welcome and less like they belong in the London-Middlesex region.

“It made me realize that some people don’t necessarily see me as just having an equal right to be here.”

“Just outright being rejected, just because of your cultural identity or cultural group. (It) made me think (about) how certain people in London can be racist. I didn't really expect that . . . It made me cautious of who I go and meet, made me think I should screen people a little bit better, from a safety perspective.”

“People like that make you feel like you don’t belong, that you’re just a stranger, and that you’re not supposed to be there . . . You feel like they don’t want you here and like you are something that is bothering them, something that should be removed in a sense.”

Respondents shared specific instances when they felt like they did not belong and were not welcome in the region.

“When children look at me weird and ask, ‘Why does your hair look like that? Why are your lips so big?’ When people make comments that are inappropriate about something about yourself that you can't change about yourself. When people ask you stupid questions and when they are not accepting or inclusive.”

Impact of Discrimination on Desire to Stay in London-Middlesex

Half of the respondents indicated that the discrimination that they experienced in the region affected whether they were likely to stay in London-Middlesex long-term or move away.

“I feel like I'm just an outsider. I feel very sad because I leave everything to come here to make new friends and live a good life, but living in this situation, I just want to finish this work and leave this place as soon as possible.”

“I am out of here the moment I am graduating.”

Some respondents described wanting to move to other cities in Canada (primarily Toronto, but Ottawa and Calgary were mentioned as well).

“Within Canada, if I had the resources or if it made sense, I might move to somewhere like Toronto or even . . . Oakville, places where I can be around people that look like me . . . There is more diversity. There’s more racialized people. There’s people with different identities that would make me feel less like a sore thumb sticking out. It would also make me feel more connected because those people have a better understanding of my experiences.”

“I would prefer to stay in a more ethnically diverse place . . . It’s nothing against London but I would just prefer to stay in a place where I’m seeing people who I can connect with more.”

Some respondents even considered leaving Canada and returning to their home countries or elsewhere.

“I just wanna go back home. I just wanna move anywhere else. I just can’t be here. I don’t match them. I’m not that person for them . . . I don’t think I would move out of Canada just because . . . I know it’s not the smart move . . . But of course if it was my choice, if I was rich or anything like that, of course I would just want to move to Latin America again.”

“None of us are gonna stay here. We all are gonna move . . . (My roommate) is considering transferring . . . because she doesn’t feel like home here and she said she is having trouble making friends. All of us are . . . I might move back home, not sure, but I’m not staying in London for sure.”

Some respondents spoke about being afraid of experiencing discrimination again in the London-Middlesex region.

“I do think of moving away, because this happened to me and I don’t want it to happen again.”

“When this happened, I felt like if I was in my country, I (would be) able to take an action and I (would be) able to respond better than what happened . . . (I worry about) what would happen if my husband travelled anywhere and I stay alone here . . . You cannot

express yourself very well because your English is not good enough.”

On the other hand, respondents who were likely to stay in London-Middlesex long-term identified their experience of discrimination as singular and not reflective of everyone in the region.

“To be honest, it doesn’t feel like it’s that serious for me. It’s just one-off, so it wouldn’t affect my decision to stay or move.”

“I don't think I would move based on this one experience. I think that overall what I have seen in London (is that) people are overall nice and people have been supportive, they're caring. So there are good people here. It hasn't created a negative impact on me to think everybody's like this.”

Two other respondents who live in London described staying in the region but choosing the neighbourhoods they would live in.

“I guess in London it depends on where you live. I’ll be honest with you, I would not live in the west end of London . . . My mom lives in the northeast so there is a lot of different cultures on this side of town. I grew up in East London so there’s more low-income families there, so there’s a lot more culture, and then there’s White Oaks which is predominantly Middle Eastern . . . Like I said, totally would not live in the west side but totally would raise my kid in the east.”

“I think moving to the south of London was actually a great help, because I guess there's more diverse people out here.”

Knowledge of Strategies to Respond to Discrimination and Knowledge of Supports Available

Knowledge of Strategies for Directly Responding to Discrimination When It Occurs

More than two thirds of the respondents (21 of 30) knew of some strategies for directly responding to discrimination when it occurs, with over half of them having used these strategies themselves to respond to discrimination when it occurred.

The strategy most often referred to by the respondents was to walk away from the situation and ignore the perpetrator in an attempt to de-escalate the situation.

"I usually just try to not say anything much and to just let them speak their mind. Then leave from there, cause like the more I'm gonna speak, it's just gonna get worse. So I just try to ignore."

"I just walk away. As a Black person, I can't entertain people's stupidity, because when you respond, then it just gets escalated like, 'See, their people, they're angry Black women,' or 'their people, they're this or they're that.' So you just have to ignore it."

Respondents also mentioned not taking it too personally, staying calm, and not allowing the perpetrator to provoke a reaction from them.

"You have to stay calm of course and don't show that fear. Don't feel that you are less than them just because you are new to the country, and then probably just say that you are not alone."

Other respondents preferred to speak up, if it was safe to do so. The respondents indicated that they would call the perpetrator(s) out, sometimes ask them to repeat themselves, and explain that the behaviour is not okay, even by explaining their own perspectives to the perpetrator.

"I'm from Hong Kong, which I identify myself from Hong Kong, and a lot of people mix that up with China . . . When I introduce myself, I just say I'm from Hong Kong not that I'm from China, but sometimes people say, 'That's pretty much the same thing. Why are you making such a big deal out of it? Like just say you're Chinese.' . . . In that situation, I would step up and be like 'No, to me, I know it's kind of political, but I don't like it when you're just assuming my identity. I don't feel comfortable in that.'"

“Because I had some training in the all the places that I worked, I learned that when you feel that someone is not right, someone has crossed the line with you, for example, was disrespectful, you should always let the person know that you didn’t feel comfortable. This is what I use even nowadays.”

Other strategies included filming the incident as it is happening, talking to others about their experiences after the incident, and educating themselves.

“Reading stuff about the colonial process, what is the colonialism, reading the authors from Latin America, from the global south . . . Reading was the only possible way I was able to cope, realizing this is structural . . . When I don’t find like an explanation, when I cannot rationalize what is happening to me, when I can’t explain what has happened to me, the only answer is, the only pathway I follow though, it always works, again for me, is just trying to explain it . . . trying to do the research.”

“I know (that) the best thing is to record this incident. I shouldn’t make any physical contact with the person who is doing like that.”

Most respondents who used these strategies found them effective/useful, though a few had some reservations.

“For me, the best thing to do is just walk away . . . I would say in terms of de-escalating situations, yes (it’s been effective), but for how I feel, no, cause at the end of the day, when stuff happens and you go back and reflect upon it, you feel like you could have said this, you could have done this.”

“Most of the time after I say that, people would kind of be like ‘Woah.’ They would understand my perspective, that that makes me uncomfortable, and most of the time people would respect my boundaries.”

“They always say call them (out) and tell them why it is wrong and stuff, but also it takes so much energy, and then sometimes they get defensive, and sometimes you just don’t wanna deal with that.”

Knowledge of Policies and Procedures for Reporting Discrimination in London-Middlesex

Of the 30 respondents from this study, 14 of them did not know how to report the discrimination they experienced or what would be considered serious enough to report.

“I don’t remember anyone giving any information about discrimination experiences or, if they did, I misunderstood what the information was about.”

“I just thought it wasn’t significant enough to make an official report and I also didn’t know who I can report it to.”

“I don’t know if I classified it as something serious to report, because usually when you think of reporting a discriminatory experience, you think of it in the sense of ‘were you physically hurt?’ . . . I felt like I wouldn’t have been taken that seriously if I would have reported (the incident), because some may consider it on the level of just an argument.”

Some respondents had some knowledge of the policies and procedures for reporting discrimination but had not reported the discrimination they experienced, mainly because they did not think the reporting would be effective.

“I don’t know, remember the due process right now, but every contract I’ve signed, there’s definitely been like workplace and harassment and safety and that kind of stuff in the clauses and the contracts and everything . . .”

“How can I report them? First, I have to write to the grad chair. Then the grad chair denies it. Then I can go to the upper board with the help of the ombudsperson . . . (I think) somehow it’s effective but not so much effective. You can say it’s, if I give you a rating from 1 to 10, then I give it a 5 or 4 rating.”

“For my job, there is a complaint that you can present. Unfortunately, though, the person that is supposed to represent us or have our best interests at hand is in cahoots with our director. So if I take any complaint to HR, my director will know . . . so I can’t even . . . know in good faith that what I say will stay in private. It will get to my director. We are in a union so that shouldn’t be happening, but, like I said, it depends who’s playing favourites.”

Others had reported the discrimination that they experienced in London-Middlesex and did not find the reporting to be helpful or effective.

“On one particular occasion, I filed an anonymous complaint. Other times . . . I’ve spoken to professors in the same department.” When asked if these were helpful, the respondent continued, *“Mostly no. It was good to have the conversation, but on most occasions, I didn’t see it go through enough.”*

Knowledge of Supportive Organizations in London-Middlesex

Of the 30 respondents, 18 did not know of any groups or organizations in London-Middlesex that can provide support for those who have experienced discrimination.

“I’d call the police, let them know what happened, but then I feel like the police only comes to your location if you’re in an emergency. I don’t think they do discrimination or like I don’t know . . . Thinking of a whole organization that takes complaints on things that happen (like) you being discriminated, I don’t know any organization that exists.”

On the other hand, twelve respondents had some knowledge of such supports.

“I know the City of London - the police already does . . . I know there's a bunch of NGOs around here who help people just get over their trauma of being racialized, but other than that, I think that's all.”

Most of the respondents who indicated that they did know of groups or organizations that provide support in the region were international students. They stated that there were resources at the university that they could access, but were often not very clear on what those were.

“My knowledge in that sense is limited to things that, support that exists at Western. In that sense, I have a lot of knowledge, but I don’t think, aside from communicating with the government and local council or whatever, I think in that sense my knowledge is more limited.”

“I know Western has, in the school, they have I think an office for dealing with these sort of things. So, I know I can report instances that happen in school to them, but outside of school I’m not sure.”

Other respondents talked about supports from specific organizations or communities, such as their own workplaces, ethnocultural organizations, the local mosque, and support groups at the library.

“I know that we have the Somali community, for myself, and we have community outreach people in the mosque, but outside of those two things, for myself, I wouldn’t really know where else to go.”

“There’s an employee resource group at my work (that) I went to before COVID, where people talk about their experiences as immigrants. So that was a good thing for me to meet people and just get together (with people) from different nationalities. There is also counseling through work, a counseling service outside of the city that you (are) entitled to. I know of one of the counsellors in the city too. She’s not a counselor anymore . . . She’s a very nice lady, and she went through discrimination too. So, I know I can talk to people but not sure of specific organizations.”

Only five respondents had previously gone to the organizations they knew about for support. Respondents had mixed responses regarding how helpful they found the supports and resources.

“They have newcomers programs here in this, in this community center . . . I felt protected and helped. I felt that there was someone in the community that was ready to help me understand that that was discrimination.”

“I have (gone to the Somali community and the mosque for support) and they weren’t really much help either, because they only know so much. So they only can provide what they know and there’s really not a lot to know.”

Reporting Tool that Would be Most Likely to be Used

Respondents were told that the London-Middlesex region was thinking of setting up an electronic reporting tool (e.g., website, app) where people can report on discrimination that they experience. They were asked if they would use such a tool, and a large majority of the respondents indicated that they were likely to use such a tool. However, of the 30 respondents, 3 indicated that they would likely not use such a tool. They voiced concerns about the diversity of the committee who would be reviewing the reports and about the outcomes of the reporting process, suggesting that they would not see their perpetrators brought to justice or punished.

“But how do I know if the people who discriminated against me are punished, or brought to justice, right? So, I don’t think so. No, I’m not going to do that.”

More than half of the respondents (16 of 30) said that their usage of such a reporting tool would be conditional, depending on factors such as anonymity and confidentiality, ease of use and length of the reporting process, reporting tool host, and how the data would be used. Respondents further discussed features of the reporting tool that would encourage and/or prevent them from using it.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Respondents voiced the importance of confidentiality and anonymity in their likelihood of using the reporting tool, with some respondents indicating that they would not use the reporting tool if they had to provide their name and contact information. Twelve respondents preferred anonymous reporting, often for safety reasons.

“I would want it to be anonymous because I wouldn’t want someone who could potentially harm me having access to my name or using that to trace me to where I live or something like that.”

Six respondents preferred providing their name and contact information in the report, as they wanted to be followed up and updated on the outcomes of the reporting. Nine respondents suggested allowing those who are using the reporting tool to report anonymously, but providing an option to include their name and contact information if desired.

“I guess there should be an option for both because maybe something, it's not something that big that people want the name and stuff so it can be just anonymous.”

But maybe sometimes it's something so bad that they would want something to be done about it, and then they want their contact there . . .”

Reporting Tool Host

In reference to who would host such a reporting tool and handle the discrimination incidents' data that would be reported, respondents discussed the importance of the transparency, neutrality, and independence of the host (e.g., not from their workplaces or other affiliations).

“Also, this platform has to be neutral. They cannot be attached to the people I am reporting about.”

Moreover, six respondents emphasized the importance of diversity within the reporting tool host, wherein those receiving and reviewing the reports must represent “all walks of life,” be culturally conscious, and even potentially have previous experience with discrimination themselves.

“First of all, it's for whoever is reporting to be comfortable that where the report's going, people are going to be able to identify and understand . . . I want to be able to report this to people who would be able to do something about it, because they understand where I've come from. So, while it may not be possible to have a completely, you know, non-Caucasian organization doing it, I would like to see representation of people who are reporting, people who are facing the discrimination. Those are the ones who . . . you should have in the organization.”

Respondents had varied opinions on who exactly should be hosting this type of tool. Nine of the respondents indicated that they would prefer such a tool to be hosted by a local community organization, as they trusted them more and trusted that they would have integrity and not be influenced by politics.

“People who understand, and people who are part of the community, maybe not even part of the same community, but have similar experiences that can relate and can understand and help you on a more personalized basis.”

Four respondents indicated that it did not matter to them who hosts the reporting tool. Another four respondents indicated that it did not matter to them who hosts such a tool as long as it is not the police.

"I think I'll be cautious of the police, to be honest, like I would not want to get into trouble for this type of information."

"I would burn my phone if it was used by the police."

Moreover, five additional respondents indicated that it did not matter to them who hosts such a tool as long as it is not the police or a government institution.

"With the police or government, I feel more scared to report."

"(If) it's a city of London initiative, guess what, you guys are taking a 100,000 initiatives, but none of them have ever helped."

However, one respondent indicated that they would prefer it to be hosted by the police, as that would lead to a quicker response.

"I guess cause the government usually . . . don't really do things on time, but I guess the police . . . if there's something important, they can immediately take action."

In addition, one respondent indicated that they would prefer it to be hosted by the police or the London municipality, and three others preferred it to be hosted by the government.

"Yeah, well, if the London police is hosting it, or the city's hosting it, then that will make sense because not anyone randomly can come up with an app and be like, you know, tell us all the bad things you've experienced, and we'd want an authority to be associated with it."

Lastly, one respondent indicated that they would have more trust in an academic institution as a host, such as Western University or Fanshawe College.

Importance of How the Tool Data Would Be Used

A majority of the respondents (18 of 30) were concerned about what the outcomes of using the reporting tool would be. Respondents wanted to know what would happen after they submit the report, both for themselves and for the person(s) who discriminated against them.

“Be very clear about what the tool is and what it can and can’t do . . . What’s the point? Is there gonna be some kind of accountability? . . . If we’re just collecting (data) for the sake of collecting it, then . . . I wanna see action.”

“How is it going to identify the person? Is the person even getting identified? What is the repercussion to the person?”

“If it's just something like you keep on submitting a form into the void and nothing happens, you don't even wanna submit another form after that point.”

Some of the respondents also discussed the importance of validating the experiences of those who have experienced discrimination, and that having someone to talk to could be an outcome of the reporting tool.

“People would feel more encouraged to use these tools if they know that they're being heard, because most times people just want to be like ‘Hey. These are the things I am going through, and my peers are going through’ . . . I want to know that there's someone out there listening and acknowledging it.”

“(If) there's someone I could talk to directly, because I feel like at that moment you're going through a range of emotions, and, you know, (it) might work better if you process it, and just like, let someone know how you're feeling.”

Reporting Tool Type

The respondents indicated varied preferences for the type of reporting tool, such as a website, a smartphone app, etc. Seven respondents reported that they would prefer using an app, as it is more convenient to have it directly on their smartphone and they can instantly report the discrimination as soon as it happens.

“Actually, I think, an app might be easier in the sense that I'm on my phone all the time. So, even if I'm on the bus, things like that like I can do it quickly. So I guess an app might be some better choice.”

Other respondents indicated that they would not be comfortable downloading an app to their device and would prefer using a website instead. Ten of the respondents indicated that they would prefer using a website to report on discrimination that contained some kind of

questionnaire and allowed for documents to be uploaded. One respondent even suggested placing QR codes that link to the reporting tool all over public places, workplaces, residences, public transit, etc.

“I think a website would be good if there were some questions or something I could easily access, because an app . . . I don’t really know if I would want to download that type of stuff on my phone, just a website to refer to make it easier for me.”

While some respondents indicated that they did not have a preference between a website or an app, they noted that others may not be comfortable using these kinds of technology and suggested providing the option for calling a phone number/hotline or using text messaging to report discrimination, as well as providing an option for in-person reporting.

Reporting Tool Features

Regardless of the reporting tool type, respondents suggested some features to be included in the reporting tool, including the ability to upload videos and documents related to the discrimination incident. Moreover, some of the respondents addressed the aesthetics of the tool, stating that it should look nice and be colourful.

“I think this topic is kind of heavy and kind of depressing so maybe a friendly type of website would make people feel more encouraged, that okay this is something that would be helpful and I am happy to put my information.”

Three respondents suggested that the tool should have some information about what to expect from the report, including follow-up times, and on the different types of discrimination that could be reported using the tool.

“The link should include what certain kinds of racism are there because not everyone will know about microaggressions.”

Reporting Tool Accessibility

Apart from (lack of) access to the technology itself, respondents discussed accessibility factors that may encourage their use of the reporting tool. They suggested that the tool have an offline version alongside the online version to allow people to use it without requiring an internet connection. Respondents also suggested including an audio feature in the reporting tool,

wherein those who experience discrimination can record themselves speaking their report rather than having to type the text. Lastly, respondents voiced the need for the reporting tool to be translated to multiple languages, as some immigrants may not be comfortable reporting their experiences in English.

“I believe that the most important thing is that it should provide different languages . . . I think this language barrier hinders a lot of people from expressing their feelings and their anger.”

Ease of Use and Length of Process

Half of the respondents identified ease of use and the length of the reporting process as factors that would encourage or prevent their reporting. Respondents suggested that the reporting tool should be intuitive and easy to navigate, and that it should contain a few short, straightforward questions.

“Just like easy to report stuff like not way too many things you have to do, you know.”

“Depends on (how) hard the process is. If it’s (a) short form that I can fill out, then yeah for sure.”

Respondents also discussed that the tool (particularly an app or website) should not require the user to register or log in, and should have clear instructions.

“I think definitely having clear instructions as to what I have to do. I hate it when . . . just give you like a list of things to do . . . without explaining . . . I like if it's like a step-by-step sort of thing like: step one, they tell you what to do after you've done that, and go to step 2, step 3, and so on. Like, that's a lot easier.”

Lastly, the respondents from this study emphasized that the reporting process should not be too lengthy.

“If you are angry or sad you would want to report, but you don’t want to waste a lot of time.”

“(If) it takes like a whole hour to do it, I probably wouldn't do it . . . to me, less than 10 minutes will be ideal. Just because we are real busy, and it's kind of hard, and there is a whole lot that

we have to do just to report one incident . . . You might think to yourself if it's really worth it."

Useful Supports that Could be Put into Place for People who Experience Discrimination

Many respondents (15 of 30) indicated that the London-Middlesex region is not doing enough to make everyone feel like they belong and are welcome in the region. Respondents discussed the supports that might be useful for immigrants and racialized people who experience discrimination in London-Middlesex.

Some respondents suggested that it would be helpful to see those who are the perpetrators of discrimination face consequences for their behaviours.

"By eliminating the bad apples . . . If there is a serious (offence), for example if whoever says a hate speech towards someone . . . there's a serious consequence."

Support Groups and Community Spaces

Of the 30 respondents from this study, 10 respondents indicated that it is important to create spaces wherein those who experience discrimination can talk, both with mental health professionals and with other immigrants and racialized people who may have gone through similar experiences.

"You know how there's Alcoholics Anonymous, right? So a support group like that for the victims or racialized people maybe. You just sit in a circle. You discuss whatever happened to you, and then you have people giving you words of encouragement and also helping you combat it. Then, you drink coffee and cookies afterwards. I guess that would be a good thing."

"Maybe also having support groups is very important. Like in Toronto, there are a couple (of) Hong Kong support groups. Just having people of the same background can be helpful, especially for newcomers. They might not be familiar with the language, and it's hard for them already to be in a new country. So, having people who are experiencing the same things as they are could be very, very beneficial"

Some respondents suggested that it is helpful to create diverse spaces and events for immigrants and racialized people to come together, even if they are not discussing their experiences of discrimination.

“Events around London, like a barbeque or ice skating or something like that. I think it would just be nice fun events to help people . . . At times yes, you might want to discuss what you’ve been through but at times you just want to socialize with people who you think you can connect with on that level. You don’t necessarily want to talk about the bad but just to find that connection.”

The Importance of Being Heard and of Being Included in Solutions

The respondents emphasized the importance of being heard and being taken seriously when they do speak up about their experiences.

“I would say actually getting the point of view (of those who experience discrimination) from them instead of other people, because our voices are not heard. I would say that's probably a very important part to starting this process is actually talking to the people who were affected instead of sidelining them.”

“First, the people who have the power to do something have to identify and recognize that there is a problem and they don’t because they are White, and sometimes they’re men. When they tell you to prove to them that there is a problem, they are not doing enough . . . I think when people come forward and say they have experienced (discrimination), it needs to be taken seriously. I think there needs to be less onus on ‘prove it’ or ‘show us proof’ and just hear people sharing.”

Respondents indicated that there should be more funding for community initiatives that help those who experience discrimination in London-Middlesex. They also indicated that immigrant and racialized communities must be consulted when creating resources and that the resources must then be circulated back with the communities themselves.

“Consulting with community leaders and organizers. Acknowledgement but also showing the intent for tangible change. I think that the consultation is an important step for that. If you don’t, with good intentions, you can still mess up. So I think that that is a really important step. I think they need . . . a grant system for public initiatives that are led by racialized people, that are with some level of expertise and experience. Those are all ways that London should be approaching this . . . I really stress consultation because I think sometimes . . . outside of lived experiences, we can be blind to many things.”

“I think they need to have more support when it comes to people who go through racism and what that feels like so we’re not so we’re stewing in our own. ‘Why did that person say that to me?’ . . . I think the best way is to support the local communities so they can say it out in their weekly meetings with their people . . . giving (mosques, churches, temples) the resources first because they would then share it with their followers . . . For example, the Somali community they have a WhatsApp group.”

Education, Awareness, and Going Beyond

Many respondents (11 of 30) also emphasized that the issue is larger than the specific instances of discrimination that they have experienced. Instead, they spoke about addressing systemic level issues and being proactive to create change.

“I think we’re more of a reactive community instead of a proactive community. I think we do more ‘Oh, that bad event happened, we should do walks, we should do this, we should educate.’ Why can’t we do that beforehand?”

“It’s not you who’s supposed to be fixing that . . . The onus isn’t on you to get help or be supported. The onus is on your environment to change and make you feel welcome and make sure that that doesn’t happen. It’s a culture . . . That shouldn’t be the case when you’re feeling discriminated, or feeling uncomfortable, or feeling unsafe, or feeling unwelcome by a group of people, who literally are also settlers. This space does not belong to them and just (because) it don’t belong to you, doesn’t mean you do not feel welcome and you’re not made to feel welcome when you’re being used as a resource in the land, when you’re used for economic development, as human capital . . . (The City politicians) are not very accommodating of understanding the people who live in the city, of understanding the demographics. They look at the numbers and people are numbers to them.”

Many respondents spoke about educating and raising the awareness of the broader community, including those who are discriminating and those who have power to make change. They also suggested classes and workshops, and events and festivals to encourage education and interaction.

“One thing that I think is useful is training at workplaces and at schools, because those places are visited by everyone. Everyone is either studying or working, so some training at work, some training at school, since elementary, some training at the university, and

thinking about those people who don't have jobs or don't go to university or whatever, something at public spaces. For example, libraries could offer some workshops or short courses about 'Would you like to know more about immigration, immigrants or why immigrants are so important to Canada?' Some people have no idea. . . So maybe advertising some type of information 'Do you know that immigrants bring . . . a lot of money to Canada every year, either as students or permanent residents.'

"When we had the horrific attack on the Afzaal family . . . We were all absolutely stunned and shocked and so we were all in the neighborhood, we were talking about it . . . (My neighbour's) concern was not for the Muslim community in London, as to how frightened they might be, or for the broader immigrant community, how painful and how unsettling and absolutely upsetting it is . . . She was worried about the people who were mostly Caucasian who witnessed the accident and went to help, what has been done for them to help them deal with this horrific accident that they saw . . . This is where we need to work. Our work is really to help people like her who are powerful in the community to be able to see that there's more than one perspective that you can have, and that you should have. It should be a balanced perspective. And being able to help them to develop that perspective . . . Over generations of living within a framework, we have now got to live outside the framework, and that's where if we're looking for continued work to be done. It's not just in discrimination, it's also in bias and in being able to think of other perspectives that might help us move forward in London."

"They should stop focusing on newcomers and immigrants because that's not the key point. That's not the main focus and instead (focus on) educating the other party . . . I feel like the focus should be on them, to educate them or involve them with the actual community of immigrants or different cultures or something like that, instead of (asking) newcomers to go and find people in the community to make a connection with."

"The onus should be on racist people and the people who do these things need to learn to stop this stupidity because the onus can't be on me because people need to stop behaving badly. They need to figure out what their problem is, learn about their problem, resolve it, and leave me out of it."

Others spoke about the importance of educating immigrants and racialized people about their rights and what constitutes discrimination.

"It's very important for newcomers like us to attend more workshops or seminars to

learn about the regulations here in London and to give us more information about rights, what kind of rights we have and how we should react in these situations. Improving our knowledge, I think, will make people more comfortable, because newcomers know nothing about the regulations here in Canada. When they face this kind of discrimination, they start to be isolated. They prefer not to deal with this because they don't know what they should do in this situation so they prefer to be isolated and just deal with people from the same race or same religion . . . So next time if something happened like that, I can (have) the right reaction."

"Sometimes, we, as racial minorities, we sometimes don't understand that what just happened is not right. We also sometimes don't accept that 'okay that was racism.' So, you know, just to reach out to these people . . . for everyone to also be able to identify (discrimination) and then maybe look for support."

Summary and Recommendations

Discrimination in the Workplace

In workplace settings, respondents reported having derogatory language directed at them and being treated differently than others. Their abilities were questioned by patrons of their workplaces, and patrons did not want to be served by them. Respondents also reported being socially excluded, being stereotyped, being undermined, and in some instances even being yelled at and physically attacked by co-workers and superiors. Respondents perceived their experiences of discrimination as being based on their ethnicity and race.

Many respondents reported that the discrimination incidents were observed by their co-workers; however most observers did not intervene, with respondents suggesting that this was because their co-workers did not necessarily perceive the incidents as problematic. Similarly, a number of respondents did nothing in response to the discrimination at the time of the incident because they were afraid of making the situation worse.

As a result of the discrimination they experienced, respondents reported feeling a wide range of negative emotions. They also reported feeling unsafe in London-Middlesex, having their career trajectory hindered or changed, burnout, and poor physical health.

Some respondents reported their experiences of discrimination to a superior or a human resources department after the incident. For some, the reporting resulted in action, whereas for others, it did not. Those who did not report the experiences of discrimination indicated that they did not think it would have an impact and might even lead to negative consequences. They indicated that they might be more likely to report on discrimination in the future if they thought it would be taken seriously and there would be an impact.

To prevent discrimination toward immigrants and racialized individuals at work in London and Middlesex:

- **Businesses and other employers should display clearly visible notices informing patrons of their zero-tolerance of employee harassment policy**
- **Businesses and other employers should have a clear, explicit policy on employee non-discriminatory behaviour, with specific consequences laid out for those who violate the policy**

- **Businesses and other employers should provide employee training focused on countering stereotypes, encouraging perspective taking, and education about what constitutes discrimination, including microaggressions**

To support immigrants and racialized individuals who may be facing discrimination at work in London and Middlesex:

- **Businesses and other employers should disseminate clear information to employees on their policies surrounding non-discrimination, and provide clear instructions on steps to take if one does experience discrimination**
- **Businesses and other employers should implement a straightforward and confidential procedure for reporting experiences of discrimination that formally documents an investigation and the outcomes**
- **Businesses and other employers should provide bystander intervention training for all employees, including how to respond to incidents of discrimination and how to support targets of discrimination**
- **Businesses and other employers should provide confidential mental health supports for those who have experienced discrimination at work**

Discrimination in Public Places

The most common public places in which respondents reported experiencing discrimination were public transit, retail stores, and in common areas of shared residences. Respondents also reported experiencing discrimination in healthcare settings, in parks, on the street, and at school. Respondents reported having derogatory language directed at them (e.g., being yelled at for not speaking English, having racial slurs yelled at them, being told to go back to their country), and being treated differently than others (not being trusted and being treated rudely compared to others). Respondents perceived their experiences of discrimination as being based on their ethnicity and race, religion, being an immigrant, and/or not speaking English.

Many respondents reported that the discrimination incidents were observed by others; however, nobody intervened. Respondents thought people did not intervene because they did not want to get involved. Similarly, many respondents did nothing in response to the discrimination at the time of the incidents because they did not know what to do. As a result of the discrimination they experienced, respondents reported a range of negative emotions.

The vast majority of respondents did not report their experiences of discrimination in an official way after the incidents. These individuals indicated that they did not know how to report the discrimination, were unsure of the consequences and of what difference it would make, did not think the incidents were serious enough to report or did not perceive them as discrimination in the moment, and felt it was not worth the time and effort. Some indicated that they might be likely to report similar discrimination incidents in the future if they knew how to do so and if the process was constructive, sensitive, and anonymous. Those who reported these experiences did so to management of the public setting. Reporting experiences of discrimination tended to not result in any resolution.

To prevent discrimination toward immigrants and racialized individuals in public places in London and Middlesex:

- **Develop a zero tolerance of discrimination community protocol for the region – e.g., [RichmondCommunityProtocol v4.pdf \(iamrichmond.ca\)](#)**
- **Display clearly visible notices of the zero tolerance of discrimination community protocol in public places**
- **Provide workshops and events for members of the public focused on countering stereotypes, encouraging perspective taking, and education about what constitutes discrimination, including microaggressions and one’s right to be treated in a non-discriminatory manner**
- **Provide training for staff of public facilities focused on countering stereotypes, encouraging perspective taking, and education about what constitutes discrimination, including microaggressions, as well as bystander intervention training**

To support immigrants and racialized individuals who may be facing discrimination in public places in London and Middlesex:

- **Provide bystander intervention training sessions for members of the public, including how to respond to incidents of discrimination and how to support targets of discrimination**
- **Disseminate information widely on the specific steps to take if one experiences discrimination in the region**

- **Develop a discrimination reporting tool that is widely advertised and provides information on supports available for targets of discrimination**
- **Provide publicly funded confidential mental health supports for those who have experienced discrimination in the region**

Sense of Belonging and Retention in Region

Respondents varied in their sense of belonging to the London-Middlesex region. Those who felt a stronger sense of belonging to London-Middlesex explained that they had established ties within the community, appreciated the diversity and sense of inclusion in the region, and enjoyed the kindness of others. They also mentioned volunteering in the community and attending community events as having a positive impact on their sense of belonging. In addition, international students mentioned the positive impact the university has on their sense of belonging to the region, including student-led initiatives and the university's international student offices and events.

Those who did not feel like they belonged in the London-Middlesex region focused on their minority status, a lack of acceptance and welcome, and experiencing microaggressions. Indeed, many respondents indicated that the discrimination they experienced made them feel less welcome and less like they belong in the London-Middlesex region. Moreover, approximately half of the respondents indicated that their experiences of discrimination made them want to move away from the region.

To support a sense of belonging in London and Middlesex among immigrants and racialized individuals

- **Publicly celebrate the diversity in the region, including through community events**
- **Provide volunteer opportunities for immigrants and racialized individuals and specific opportunities for them to develop social ties in the community**

To retain immigrants and racialized individuals in London and Middlesex:

- **Decrease discrimination toward immigrants and racialized individuals, and increase their sense of belonging to the region**

Knowledge of Strategies to Respond to Discrimination and Knowledge of Supports Available

Most respondents identified walking away from the situation or ignoring the perpetrator as their strategy for responding to discrimination when it occurs. However, some mentioned confronting the perpetrator if it seemed safe to do so, documenting the incident, and talking to others about the experience after the incident.

Many respondents were unaware of how to officially report their experiences of discrimination or felt the incidents would not be viewed as serious enough to report. Those who had knowledge of reporting procedures tended not to report the discrimination they experienced primarily because they believed there would be no resolution.

Many of the respondents were unaware of any groups or organizations in London-Middlesex that they could turn to for support after experiencing discrimination. Those who did, noted supports at places such as their academic institution, their workplace, and ethnocultural groups. However, few respondents reported using these supports and those who did noted that they were not necessarily helpful.

To support immigrants and racialized individuals who may be facing discrimination in London and Middlesex:

- **Ensure effective supports are available to them by consulting with immigrants and racialized individuals in the region as to whether supports currently available, and new supports being considered, are useful to them**
- **Disseminate information widely (and in multiple languages) about local groups and organizations that can provide support to those who have experienced discrimination**
- **Once a discrimination reporting site is set up in London and Middlesex, disseminate information widely (and in multiple languages) about the site, including what types of behaviours should be reported**
- **Provide information to immigrants and racialized individuals about what constitutes discrimination (including microaggressions) and one's right to be treated in a non-discriminatory manner**
- **Provide information and training to immigrants and racialized individuals about how to most effectively respond to discrimination when it occurs**

- **Provide opportunities for immigrants and racialized individuals to get together to talk about their experiences and share information**

Reporting Tool that Would be Most Likely to be Used

Respondents were asked if they would use an electronic reporting tool (e.g., website, app) where people can report on discrimination that they experience. A large majority indicated they would be likely to use such a tool. However, many also explained that their use of such a tool would be conditional upon factors such as anonymity and confidentiality, ease of use and length of the reporting process, reporting tool host, and how the data would be used.

Respondents voiced the importance of confidentiality and anonymity in their likelihood of using the reporting tool, with many indicating that they would not use the reporting tool if they had to provide their name and contact information. However, some indicated they would want to provide their information so they could track the outcome of the reporting.

Respondents also indicated that their likelihood of using an electronic reporting tool would depend on who was hosting the tool, explaining the importance of transparency, neutrality, and independence of the host from incidents of discrimination. Some also described the importance of those hosting such a tool having diverse staff who are culturally conscious. In addition, some indicated that they would prefer such a tool to be hosted by a local/community organization, as they trusted them more. Most did not want the police or government to host the tool, although a couple preferred the police and a few preferred the government. Many respondents emphasized the need for the tool to clearly state what concrete outcomes would result from the reporting, and the need to provide supports to those who report their experiences of discrimination.

Respondents indicated varied preferences for the format of the electronic reporting tool in terms of it being a website or smartphone app. Some key features that were suggested included the ability to upload videos and documents, and accessibility, such as being able to report experiences of discrimination in multiple languages and potentially verbally responding to reporting tool questions. Respondents also indicated that the tool should be easy to use, containing just a few short and straightforward questions.

A few respondents noted that others may not be comfortable using these kinds of technology and suggested providing the option for calling a phone number/hotline or using text messaging to report, as well as providing an option for in-person reporting.

In order for a reporting tool to be used and to be effective:

- Information about the reporting tool must be widely disseminated (in multiple languages) in London and Middlesex, and describe the different types of discrimination that could be reported using the tool
- The reporting tool should be easy to access as a website and as an app that can be downloaded to a mobile device, with clear instructions and a few straight-forward questions to answer (available in multiple languages) that would not be too time consuming
- The reporting tool should be confidential and anonymous, with an option to provide personal information if one desires to be contacted for follow-up
- The reporting tool should be hosted by a local community organization that is transparent, neutral, and as independent as possible, and should not be hosted by the police or government
- The reporting tool host should have diversity within its staff and ensure that its staff is culturally conscious
- The reporting tool must clearly state who has access to the information being provided and what they will do with the information, including what concrete outcomes will result from the reporting
- The reporting tool should be linked with information about supports available for those who experience discrimination, including groups that would allow them to discuss their experiences and mental health supports
- The reporting tool should include the ability to upload videos and documents
- Consideration should be given to providing alternative methods of reporting discrimination, including through a hotline, text messaging, and in-person reporting

Useful Supports that Could be Put into Place for People who Experience Discrimination

Respondents discussed the importance of having spaces and support groups for those who have experienced discrimination to talk with mental health professionals and other immigrants and racialized people who have had similar experiences. Others suggested creating spaces for

immigrants and racialized people to come together in general.

Respondents emphasized the importance of being heard and being taken seriously when they do speak up about their experiences of discrimination. They indicated that there should be more funding for community initiatives to help support those who have experienced discrimination in London-Middlesex, and that immigrants and racialized people should be consulted on these initiatives.

Many respondents also emphasized that the issue is larger than the specific instances of discrimination that they have experienced. They spoke about addressing systemic level issues and being proactive to create change. Many also spoke about educating and raising the awareness of the broader community, including those who are discriminating and those who have power to make change. In addition, they suggested classes and workshops, and events and festivals to encourage education and interaction. Others spoke about the importance of educating immigrants and racialized people themselves about their rights about what constitutes discrimination.

To prevent discrimination toward immigrants and racialized individuals in London and Middlesex:

- **Provide education to the broader community about the benefits of immigration to the community, the discrimination that is being experienced in our community, and the damage caused by this discrimination – this can include classes, workshops, and events**

To support immigrants and racialized individuals who have experienced discrimination in London and Middlesex:

- **Provide immigrants and racialized individuals with support groups and spaces to discuss their experiences with mental health professionals and with those who have had similar experiences**
- **Provide information to immigrants and racialized individuals about what constitutes discrimination, including microaggressions, and their rights in this regard**
- **Ensure that reports of discrimination are taken seriously and acted upon**
- **Provide funding for community initiatives to help support immigrants and racialized individuals who have experienced discrimination, and ensure that these individuals**

are involved in consultations and leadership on these initiatives

To support immigrants and racialized individuals in London and Middlesex more broadly:

- **Provide spaces for them to come together to share information, create social ties, and for social support**