

An In-Depth Look at the Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants and Racialized Individuals in the Niagara Region, and Strategies for Combatting this Discrimination

**Prepared for the Niagara
Local Immigration Partnership**

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Overview and Goals

This qualitative study, involving in-depth interviews of 31 immigrants and racialized individuals in the Niagara region, was conducted as a follow-up to a [survey](#) conducted in March 2021 examining experiences of discrimination in the region. The Niagara 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 and, as suggested by the Local Immigration Partnerships, by the police, as well as the consequences of this discrimination and possible strategies that would be effective for counteracting 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, public places, and by the police 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 the region and its consequences. They also include practical information that will allow the Niagara 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 August 2023, a total of 31 online interviews were conducted with immigrants and racialized individuals in the Niagara region. 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 Niagara in the last three years in a workplace setting or public place or by the police. Respondents were recruited by the Niagara Local Immigration Partnership through email listservs, social media, newsletters, posters, 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 two conducted in Spanish by a Spanish-speaking interviewer and one conducted in Urdu by an Urdu-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:

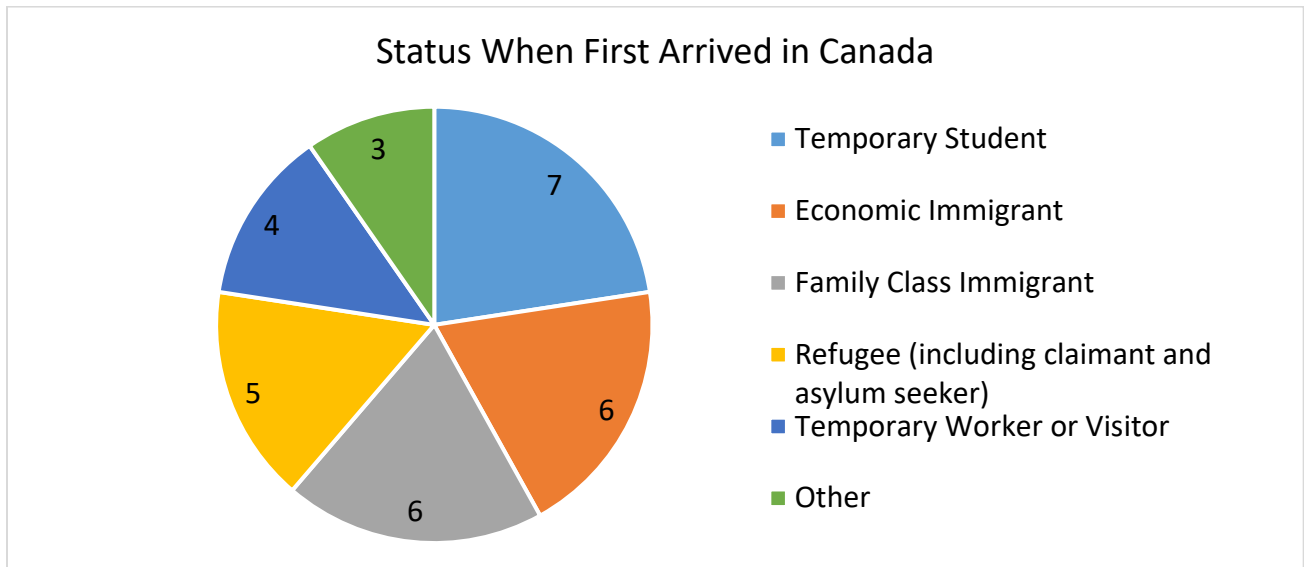
- Description of an incident of discrimination that the respondent had experienced, including the assumed reason for the discrimination, observers' reactions, and respondents' reactions
- Sense of belonging to the region and whether the respondent planned to stay
- Knowledge of strategies to respond 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.

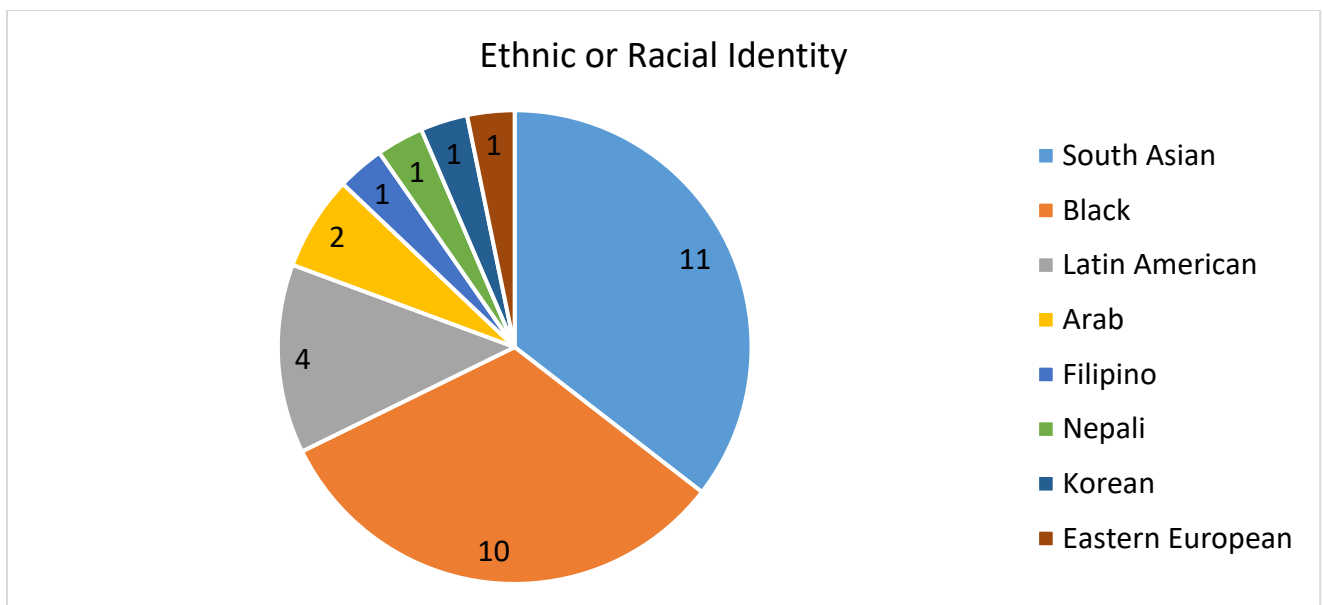
Description of Interviewees

Respondents ranged in age from 21 to 79 years old, with the average being 43.6 years old. Many respondents identified as female (21 female, 10 male).

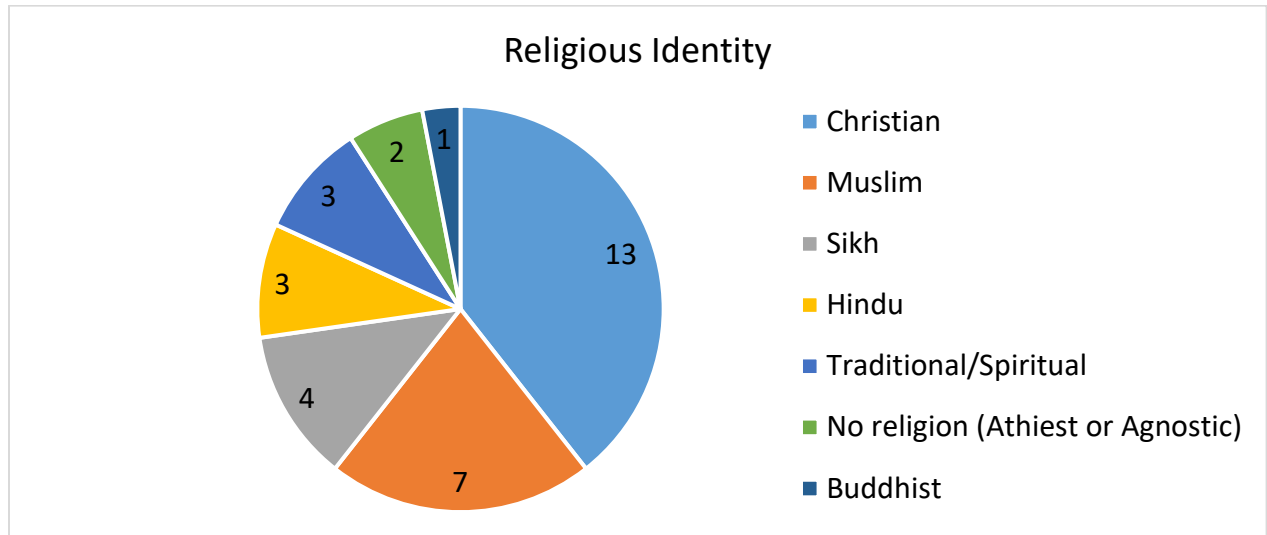
All but one respondent were born outside of Canada. Those born outside of Canada had lived here between 1 year and 53 years, with the average length of time residing in Canada being 17.8 years. A number had arrived in Canada on temporary visas, but the majority have since become permanent residents or citizens.



Respondents primarily identified as South Asian or Black, with several being Latin American, Arab, Korean, Filipino, Eastern European, and Nepali.



Respondents identified their religious identity as Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Traditional/Spiritual, Buddhist, or indicated that they had no religion. Note that the total in the chart below is greater than 31 as one participant indicated their religious identity as Sikh, Hindu, and Traditional/Spiritual.



Many respondents were well-educated, with 10 having obtained university undergraduate degrees, 8 having obtained university graduate degrees, and 2 having obtained professional degrees. The remaining 11 respondents either had college/vocational training (6) or had completed secondary school education (4) or elementary school education (1).

Most respondents were employed full-time (17), with 1 respondent employed full-time while also being self-employed and a student. Some respondents were employed part-time (6), with 3 of them being students and employed part-time and 1 of them being self-employed as well. The remaining respondents were self-employed (4) or unemployed and looking for work (3).

Most respondents reported their annual household income as being less than \$45,000 (8) or between \$45,001 to \$80,000 (7), while some reported an annual household income of between \$80,000 (5) and \$130,000 and of more than \$130,000 (5). Of note, 6 respondents preferred not to provide any information about their annual household income.

Specific Experiences of Discrimination in Niagara

Many respondents (17 of 31) indicated experiencing discrimination in more than one context in Niagara in the past three years. However, respondents were asked to describe one experience of discrimination – 15 described an experience in a workplace setting (i.e., when applying for a job or at their job), 14 described an experience in a public place (e.g., retail settings, parks, on the street), and 2 respondents described an experience of discrimination by the police.

Workplace Settings

Incidents of Discrimination

The most common forms of discrimination experienced by respondents in the workplace were derogatory language and being treated differently than peers. Respondents also reported being racially stereotyped and being undermined in the workplace.

“She complained to the manager, and she started saying, “these Africans can be very rude sometimes.” Everybody heard that. I was like, ‘okay, that was not necessary.’ And that really triggered me. What do you mean by saying these Africans can be rude sometimes? That is not something that should come out of your mouth.”

“My manager had a racist attitude and behaviors towards me compared to the other colleagues . . . As a Valentine’s Day gift, she gave me a candy and put a monkey on top of it. I was like, ‘okay, that’s weird,’ and I didn’t say anything about it . . . a few weeks after we’re going home and she’s like, ‘Have a good day, my monkey’.”

These experiences were often described as being repeatedly perpetrated by the same person or as repeatedly occurring by different people. 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

Respondents were most likely to report that ethnicity and race were the bases for the discrimination incidents in the workplace, indicated by 12 of the 15 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.

“The manager discriminated against me because I am Black. At first, I would question if it was because of another reason but after learning that I am the only person she would treat this way . . .”

“I think one of the things is because I am Black, because the color of my skin.”

“It speaks to the fact that they don’t even see me, they see my colour. Do you understand what I’m saying? Because if you see me, you would know my name.”

“It’s because of my skin colour . . . I look different. It’s that simple.”

Several respondents also indicated that they experienced forms of discrimination, including microaggressions, because of their accent and/or not speaking English well.

“I feel discriminated because of my accent. I know I don’t speak English properly . . . These are the forms of microaggressions and forms of racism that we have to deal with.”

“My supervisor said my Excel experience was not very good in a very aggressive tone . . . One time she said my English is not good. Of course, my mother tongue is not English.”

Observers’ Reactions to the Discrimination

Several respondents reported that their co-workers observed the discrimination incidents. However, most of these observers did not intervene, with respondents suggesting that this was primarily due to subtle forms of discrimination that lead to a sense of workplace exclusion. This might mean that people often don't make overtly racist or discriminatory comments but show their biases in less explicit ways, such as through body language or changes in tone. In addition, co-workers may feel too powerless to intervene.

“It’s very surface level, right? What would people say? Your body language or your tone changed, or you don’t smile as much. Nobody wants to go into that. Maybe somebody will stand up to him if he said, ‘Go back to your country or you people are taking away our jobs.’ Other than that I’m not sure.”

“The forms of racism we experience are more subtle forms of racism that is hard to explain. For example, it’s a way of speaking or it’s a look, it’s an active exclusion of the individual in the space and that’s how I feel in my workplace.”

“Several co-workers were around me during the time. But the Latina workers, my friends, they don’t speak English very well, so I speak on all our behalf . . . I feel very isolated in my work because I speak English and Spanish. I can defend myself and the other workers because no one defends them.”

In one instance, a respondent reported that their colleagues offered support after the discrimination incident occurred. In this instance, the respondent indicated that support during the incident would have been more helpful.

“Other colleagues were in the room, and they asked me how I was feeling after the supervisors left but nothing really changed after this. I know somebody noticed the interaction with the supervisors in the meeting . . . they don’t speak up . . . It’s not something I think would change.”

Respondents’ Reactions to the Discrimination

The majority of respondents did nothing at the time in response to the discrimination incidents for fear of making things worse.

“I did nothing because it is racism on the surface level but its magnitude is not referred to it as it is because it doesn’t seem intense . . . but it does affect you in one way or another because you get treated differently from the crowd.”

Respondents reported feeling angry, invalidated, sad, abused, worthless, disappointed, uncomfortable, stressed, isolated, impotent, depressed, and vulnerable as a result of experiencing discrimination. Other consequences included feeling socially excluded, having mental and physical burnout, poor physical health, and leaving the workplace.

“This made me feel sad and upset that in a country like Canada there is much division of people, language, and ways of expressing.”

“It felt so different . . . I felt so bad. I felt so wrong . . . In those instances, I feel I’m different. Just the way you feel you’re not part of them. I’m Black. I’m different. I’ll never fit in . . . I always felt so worthless.”

“This situation distressed me because I never thought this would happen . . . I decided to leave the job because it was not worth it.”

"This made me feel terrible. I feel impotent in my situation at work. I felt I could be replaced, and no one would say anything . . . I felt abused and taken advantage of."

"After I complained about the negligence against my health, (my manager) treated me and the other Latina women terribly. I feel she is against me."

Respondents' Reporting of the Discrimination

After the incidents, 8 of the 15 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 a response to the discrimination from higher management.

"Yes, I did, I reported it to my boss, and he was fired."

However, for others, there was no response to the reporting and even negative consequences for those who reported.

"I wrote the letter to the management, and no one got back to me for a long time. . . Nobody asked me anything and nobody asked the people involved that day. A few days later, once I tried to complain, they tried to write me up for workplace disruption."

"After I reported the incident, HR was contacted. HR interviewed me and asked what happened. I know HR then spoke to the manager who was being discriminatory against me, but I do not know if any formal punishment was given to the manager. The manager who was discriminatory towards me continued to work there and was cold towards me after everything."

"I sat down with the union and then the supervisor, and there was obviously denial. They told me that it was not discrimination. That was it. They did not take it seriously and the thing was actually turning against me."

Those who did not report these experiences felt unsure of how to report the discrimination and what difference reporting would make, and had a distrust of management and human resources.

"I don't know what the procedure is if I'm feeling racially targeted. Who do I go to? My supervisor who is friends with everyone else and who is a White woman? Or the manager?"

Because there's no way of addressing this."

"No, it's a complex matter. It's hard to find out why they didn't interview me or shortlist me. I don't have resources and don't know where to go after this incident."

Some respondents also indicated that they were unsure how to report the discrimination incidents that were subtle and less confrontational.

"Racism was such an alien concept back home. I never saw or felt that before until this experience . . . It's more subtle."

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 validated.

"No because people are going to be like, 'That's nothing, it's just body language or tone,' so I didn't think it was that intense for me to report it."

"I don't want to make a report of informing the officials for them to just say, 'Oh, this is nothing, people go through it every day.' I just don't want to feel invalidated."

Public Places

Incidents of Discrimination

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

"I don't wear a scarf, but my sister wears a scarf. We're Muslim, and a gentleman decided to come up and talk to us. We didn't initiate this conversation at all. We were just minding our own business, and he looked at us and said, 'you must be so happy to be in Canada with the war in your country,' and we're like, 'there's no war in our country, and I don't know who you think we are.' He just made his statement and walked away, and we just were sitting there kind of stunned."

*"I was walking my dog down Victoria Avenue, beautiful, hot summer day, lots of people around, and this White guy pulled out of the Tim Hortons parking lot, and he just pulled up beside me and he started screaming "you f***** n*****, f*** you n*****, you f***** n*****."*

"We weren't given the service we expected. The server was more attentive to the other tables. When it comes to us, the servers ignored us . . . You can tell. There's a difference if there's a Caucasian group beside me and they treat them better. It's quite noticeable."

Respondents described these incidents as either happening once or happening repeatedly. The incidents were perpetuated by either one person or multiple people. 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

Respondents were most likely to report that ethnicity and race, being an immigrant, and/or not speaking English well were the bases for the discrimination incidents in public places. 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.

"At that time, I believe I was the only person of color, like a Brown person, in the shop. So that's how I feel, if there were other people of color in the line maybe I wouldn't feel like that."

"They haven't seen people of different colors around there . . . It was just me and my daughter. We were the only Black people there . . . All the other kids and parents were White."

"There is a difference in treatment of someone who is of a different color."

"I have been told that I have a thick accent and I have been told to 'go back to your country' . . . I have also been told that people that look like me are immigrants who take people's jobs."

Observers' Reactions to the Discrimination

Many respondents (8 of 14) reported that the discrimination incidents were observed by others. However, none of these observers intervened in these public places.

"There were many people, but no one intervened."

"Racism makes people uncomfortable, and they don't want to defend – well, White people are very scared to defend Brown people."

"It's hard because there's nothing to be done . . . People are usually just busy doing their own thing. It's not a very loud way of racism. It could be on all spectrums, right? It could be 'go back to home' or a very subtle stink eye, and you can't really do anything about a stink eye, right?"

Respondents' Reactions to the Discrimination

Many respondents (9 of 14) did nothing at the time in response to the discrimination incidents because they did not know how to respond.

"I didn't do anything which I kind of regret, because it just again shows signs of oppression. So, I mean, this is a learning curve, right? . . . I just stayed quiet."

"We've become so used to racism and being discriminated that we become almost numb to it that we don't even realize . . . It's day-to-day life."

Another respondent posted their experience online to Facebook, a social media platform, in response to the discrimination.

"I did make a comment, not an official complaint, but a note comment on one of their Facebook pages, that I had this experience . . . I put it out there, given that Niagara is a tourist spot."

Respondents reported feeling angry, frustrated, disappointed, upset, uncomfortable, overwhelmed, confused, humiliated, rageful, hurt, suicidal, isolated, and vulnerable as a result of experiencing discrimination in these public places.

"Frustrated and disappointed . . . They don't even give me a chance to express or listen to me."

"I was angry, but I've learned to overcome that. I've learned to overcome whatever I've experienced."

"It's embarrassing. You're being stopped and everybody is looking at you . . . It's humiliating, and it made me angry."

"Sometimes I feel suicidal myself."

"I felt like I was different from others because I was treated like this."

Respondents' Reporting of the Discrimination

After the incidents, 4 of the 14 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 told the guy I would really want to talk to the manager . . . Of course, the moment you mention racism, the manager was not comfortable to talk about that. She just told me she will talk to the guy who made those remarks. Was I satisfied with that? Obviously not, because I know nothing will be done about it. So why bother reporting in the first place? So clearly, nothing we report is ever done, because if it was done, then there'll be proper training and people would change their mindset."

"I went to the customer service desk and asked for a manager and reported her, but the problem is you would do that a million times but the next time you go back, it's the same thing. Nothing changes. The people you report to maybe they have never been in your shoes, so they don't really understand what discrimination feels like."

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

"I've always felt – who do I tell? I'm going to report it to a White person anyway, for the most part, White male. What does it matter if I report it? What will they do about that?"

"I don't even know if this counts as something that's worth reporting because I've experienced similar instances so many times where it's almost become a norm to me, and I don't even know where to begin to report it."

Police

Incidents of Discrimination

In Niagara, two respondents described experiencing discrimination by the police, which included a lack of concern about the incident they had reported and feeling unsafe as a result.

"I wasn't even taken seriously. The officers had laughed and chuckled. I'm like, 'are you kidding me? Can you please go help these individuals now?' . . . It was very scary for me."

"I called the police, and the police didn't come to our house to ask us questions. Nothing ended up happening . . . so we called again the day after. . . (The) police have a commanding and rough attitude."

Perceived Reasons for the Discrimination

Respondents reported that their social class and racial background influenced the support they received from the police.

"The reality was because of my skin colour. Potentially that person experienced a delay in their medical treatment . . . The police is there to protect lives, instead he laughs."

Observers' Reactions to the Discrimination

One respondent reported that there were people around during the incident, but no one intervened.

"They become like a mob. They support each other because I am the alien. They are the people of the area, why would they support an alien?"

Respondents' Reactions to the Discrimination

In response to the discrimination respondents experienced by the police, both respondents

reported feeling upset, sad, angry, uncomfortable, scared, and vulnerable.

"I was shocked . . . I was very upset. It really made me angry."

"I felt very uncomfortable."

Respondents' reactions were also related to the fact that they are taxpayers.

"I pay my taxes here so it's not only about policing, but there was also an added layer where there was medical attention required."

"The police behavior was intolerable to me because they are getting their salary from the taxpayer. And I'm one of the business persons, I'm paying enough taxes for that. I was thinking 'I deserve better rights than the one I was dealt with.'"

Respondents' Reporting of the Discrimination

Respondents reported encountering ambiguous institutional procedures when attempting to report the discrimination they experienced with the police.

"I called the police unit, and they told me the official procedure was online and I had to google on how to report a police officer . . . They told me I must fill out a form of some sort, and then when I asked them for the form, they said I had to contact some provincial agency for the form. They were very vague about it."

One respondent indicated that they would be more likely to report the discrimination they experience by the police if there was a designated office to handle cases of discrimination.

"There needs to be a specialist that works independently in each policing unit rather than a provincial task force."

Sense of Belonging and Retention in Region

Sense of Belonging to Niagara

The respondents from this study varied in their sense of belonging to the Niagara region. Among those who did feel a sense of belonging, several factors were identified that contributed to their sense of belonging to Niagara.

Respondents discussed the importance of culturally relevant spaces, often religious institutions, as places that build community and foster a sense of belonging in the Niagara region, as well as the comfort of seeing cultural diversity in their neighbourhoods.

“Having safe and culturally appropriate spaces like the Gurdwara helps. I did not know there was one in Niagara for the longest time. It’s not just a religious place, it’s mostly a way for me to see my community.”

“I live close to the mosque and the neighbourhood around here is friendly with people from many places who speak different languages.”

Several respondents emphasized the importance of Canadians wanting to know more about their culture as contributing to a sense of belonging.

“I’ve seen Canadians sometimes coming into those events and spaces and that feels good that they also want to embrace our culture . . . that there is community-based involvement.”

Some of the respondents identified the history of diversity in the region, recognition, and representation as factors that influence their sense of belonging.

“People of colour have a very deep history here in Niagara. Personally, my family has been in Niagara for over 40 years as contributing citizens . . . Niagara is very culturally diverse and made up of many cities and townships.”

“I can go anywhere without feeling . . . out of place . . . Sometimes having more diverse places and locations helps.”

Respondents also mentioned the importance of (ethnic) restaurants as spaces that contribute to their sense of belonging to the region.

“Being Nepali, there’s two restaurants that are in the area which is a really big thing for us . . . Having food from your own country, owned by a Nepali person, who cooks the food from your home country and who speaks the language is big for a sense of belonging.”

The international students described the positive impact that the university has had on their sense of belonging to the Niagara region, including groups and student clubs with cultural representation.

“The university where I study in right now has a Sikh society and many clubs. Usually, there are not many Sikh people or Punjabi people at Brock [University]. This was a way where I found many people from my community and that feels like a source of belongingness.”

“It’s mostly student community here. I’m part of the student community so I feel more sense of belonging. I spend most of my time at Brock [University] connecting with people there, my professors and my friends.”

However, some respondents did not feel like they belonged in the Niagara region.

“I don’t feel like I belong in Niagara. I struggle with the community here, even though I’ve lived here for eight years. I lived in Toronto for ten years. I don’t really feel like there is a sense of belonging. There is a lot of othering in Niagara . . . but there are many younger people of colour coming here and they work very hard jobs. They get the work done. They are migrant workers who have come here for decades to harvest fruit and they get treated like garbage.”

“One tries to co-exist but there is much exclusivity. You want to express yourself 100%, but sometimes you can’t and you limit yourself. Therefore, you never feel 100% part of . . . I involve myself with the community even though I mispronounce words sometimes, but I don’t mind it . . . There are people who don’t try to co-exist, to involve themselves with the community, but I understand when people don’t engage because when people leave you on the side, you feel out of place.”

Several respondents indicated that there is a noticeable lack of representation in workplaces, government offices, and equity offices, with the management and staff in these spaces not adequately reflecting the diversity of the Niagara region.

“If you go to a diversity and inclusion agency, there shouldn’t be just White people there. . . it has to be diverse.”

“What would make me feel inclusive in Niagara is for White people to stop dismissing Black beauty, Black strength, Black pain. Just stop dismissing Blackness, period.”

Impact of Discrimination on Sense of Belonging to Niagara

The majority of the respondents indicated that the discrimination they experienced made them feel less welcome and less like they belong in the Niagara region. They shared specific instances when they felt like they did not belong and were not welcome in the region.

“Schools are predominately White, so I faced racism in high school.”

*“Through all my experience in the education system and employment, out of 7 days of the week, I will guarantee you I will experience some sort of racism 5 days out of the 7. . . I bet my left arm on that. That’s how much it happens here. Now the level of it, the intensity of it can vary from a microaggression, like ‘you speak really well,’ to straight up, ‘you f***** n*****.’”*

“I believe I belong to Niagara region, but I do not belong in my workplace in the Niagara region.”

“The discrimination affected me so much I had to leave a job I cared about. When I came to Niagara, my coworkers were the people I knew, the people I cared about. I had to leave them and earn less. It affected my income, my mental state. It affected everything.”

Respondents indicated that the aftermath of COVID-19 amplified their encounters with discrimination and their attributions of discrimination to their ethnic background.

“When discrimination does happen, especially now post COVID-19, I always second guess if it is because I’m Asian. Even if it isn’t overt, if someone is outwardly rude to me that is unnecessary, I think it is because I’m Asian. After COVID-19, I think that more often now. I have to try to separate the two.”

Impact of Discrimination on Desire to Stay in Niagara

The majority of the respondents indicated that the discrimination that they experienced in the region affected whether they were likely to stay in Niagara long-term or move away. Some respondents described wanting to move to other cities in Canada (primarily Toronto, but

Brampton and Ottawa were often mentioned as well).

“Places like Toronto and Ottawa, the police officers see more people of colour, so I see the situations being better. I want to leave since I can’t rely on a basic service like the police. . . I’m thinking of moving to Ottawa since it is more culturally diverse, affordable, and is a larger city with more opportunities. Also, they have government offices so there is less of a chance of facing discrimination compared to other workplaces.”

“This region is very oppressive compared to Toronto or Brampton, or even Windsor. This region is more accepting of the abuse. In the other regions at least they recognize when it happens . . . Here, they make excuses.”

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

“I’ve thought about moving away when I was younger but after 30 years in Canada, it’s difficult to decide to move away.”

“To be honest, I don’t feel like I belong in Niagara. I feel like I’m here to accomplish my work and then move back home. I don’t feel like I belong. I’ve never been made to feel welcomed . . . Once I retire, I will move back home. Due to everyday racism, I’m made to feel like I don’t belong. I’m moving back to Kenya where I don’t have the label of a Black woman. I’m just me.”

Several respondents spoke about being afraid of experiencing discrimination again in the Niagara region.

“I feel like I’m not protected, like no one has my back . . . If they do have my back, it’s quietly through a text, it’s never out loud . . . I don’t feel cared for.”

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

“I would never move just because of one person or one experience . . . I see much more diversity in the region compared to the past.”

“Other than these isolated incidents, I don’t go around thinking someone’s going to discriminate against me. . . With microaggressions, people don’t realize they’re doing what

they are doing . . . It's not malicious. So, it's harder to combat because it's ingrained in what they believe."

"We are trying to overcome hurdles, and when we overcome them, our situation becomes better . . . It not only makes us better, but it makes society better too."

Several respondents identified their family ties to the region as a key factor that contributes to their sense of belonging in Niagara.

"My whole life is here, my family is here, my job is here, and It's where I want to be. I feel comfortable here."

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

Knowledge of Strategies for Directly Responding to Discrimination When It Occurs

Half of the respondents knew of some strategies that they can use to respond to discrimination when it occurs, whereas a number of others reported not knowing of any strategies at all to respond to discrimination. Of those who had some knowledge of strategies to respond to discrimination, some had used them previously and had found them effective.

The strategy most often referred to by the respondents was to stay calm and ignore the perpetrator or walk away from the situation if possible.

“One is just to ignore it, and there are benefits to it, because you're not fueling negative behavior in a way, and you don't know how it's gonna escalate after.”

“Because of the system here, when you actually stand up for your rights, sometimes you will get yourself in trouble. You know what I mean? So for me, it's not worth (it) to get into a fight with an ignorant person.”

Respondents also mentioned confronting the perpetrators, speaking up for themselves, and using the incident as a teaching moment, to educate the perpetrator.

“The one strategy I use is I gauge how safe the situation is, both physically and verbally, in every way, and if I feel that I'm not in danger, I will try to make it into an educational moment for that person, regardless of whatever their age might be, but particularly if they are in high school, or they're just young or younger. I think that it's really important to very calmly and very methodically explain to them why what they did wasn't okay.”

“I thought of one reply (if I was to face an incident of discrimination), ‘We paid to be in this country, but you killed people to be here. This is not even your own country.’”

Other respondents preferred to report the incident, file a complaint, or leave a review.

“If it's an organization, then we can just leave a review in the review section so that other people know, or you can just contact the manager and let them know.”

A few participants noted another strategy which is to keep a record of the incident, including by

filming the incident as it is happening.

“If I were trying to protect myself from any bigger discrimination, I would try to take evidence of it, by taking photos or videos, just to support my claim, without being too invasive or escalating the situation.”

Knowledge of Policies and Procedures for Reporting Discrimination in Niagara

The majority of respondents did not know how to report the discrimination they experienced or what would be considered serious enough to report. This was true of discrimination that occurred in public places, workplaces, and by the police.

“No, I don’t know (of any formal ways to report discrimination by the police). Is there one?”

“I don’t have resources or something like that.”

Some respondents had some knowledge of the policies and procedures for reporting discrimination at the workplace, but had not reported the discrimination they experienced, mainly because they did not think the reporting would be effective or were worried about it negatively impacting them.

“Even the union is trash apparently from what I’ve heard from other people of colour because they’re not that supportive. Our particular union also has issues . . . (A racialized colleague) was talking about how she had an issue at her other job, still part of the union, and it was like ‘they couldn’t do anything about it.’”

“Everyone is so scared for their job. I don’t think there is any situation when factory workers like myself would feel comfortable using any procedures to come forward.”

On the other hand, one respondent described the policy for reporting discrimination at her workplace that she finds effective.

“In my current workplace, I know that the moment one experiences discrimination, you have to go and report to your employer, and then from there is a disciplinary meeting that is conducted, where both sides of the story are listened to, and if there is obvious discrimination, then the person is fired.”

Knowledge of Supportive Organizations in Niagara

A large majority of the respondents did not know of any groups or organizations in the Niagara region that can provide support for those who have experienced discrimination.

“There are no resources in this region. I know there is a multicultural center downtown, but they help more with families and job resources. They don’t help with discrimination cases.”

“Really I don’t know . . . I didn’t see any organization . . . They have inclusion committee just for the name. I never see groundwork by any of the committees.”

Those who did indicate having some knowledge of such supports listed organizations such as Justice for Black Lives, Niagara Region Anti-Racism Association, and the Sikh Society Gurdwara in Niagara. Of those respondents, only a couple had gone to the organization(s) for support when they experienced discrimination.

Reporting Tool that Would be Most Likely to be Used

Respondents were told that the Niagara 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.

“Yeah, because I guess the more we avoid reporting, the more worse it gets. Like they can do the same to other people if you don't stand up for them”

“Absolutely, I would use it because it will make society a better place. It is the responsibility of everyone to make society a better place.”

“I absolutely would and I think it's a long time coming. I think Niagara needs to look into it, Niagara needs to do it. Its 20 years behind. We need to make sure these things are being accounted for.”

However, some respondents (5 of the 31) indicated that they would likely not use such a tool. They voiced concerns about who would be reviewing the reports and about the outcomes of the reporting process, suggesting that nothing would come of reporting or that it would reflect negatively on those who come forward.

“Racism is built in the structures. So, if racism is in the structure, I don't think there's a way to really report it actually. I've worked in 4 different institutions, and even in the university, if it's in the structure, even the person you're gonna report to is racist. Then I don't see how you're gonna change, or what to do . . . Even I'm working now with the union and they do anti-oppression training. It's not mandatory. More than half of the people don't show up for even the training. They don't think it's something to do with them so they don't show up to the training, so how would they even get to understand?”

“The thing is how to handle the situation without being biased towards the individual that reported it, because I've seen somebody get fired at my workplace 2 months after reporting it. And as soon as I joined (the workplace), what somebody told me in good faith was “You get into trouble with the managers, you get fired,” and we have seen that . . . I don't know if I would use it honestly.”

A few respondents said that their usage of such a reporting tool would be conditional, depending on factors such as anonymity and confidentiality, reporting tool host, how the data

will be used, and any consequences or repercussions of using the reporting tool.

Respondents further discussed characteristics and features of the electronic 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. Half of the respondents preferred anonymous reporting, often for safety reasons and fear of retaliation or consequences at their workplaces.

“(Anonymous because) I don’t want to involve my kids in anything, because I am very lucky that my kids are comfortable, and I don’t want to impact them.”

“I think it should be anonymous reporting, and then the more details of the person doing the discrimination should be there, and not the person who's experiencing it, because it's very intimidating.”

Ten other 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. A few respondents suggested having both options available, wherein respondents can report anonymously but have the choice of including their name and contact information if desired.

“There should be option, anonymous or by name, because I would like to have feedback too. So for me I would like to have feedback so it should be up to the reporter. Because if you do anonymous maybe you get some false reporting but . . . both options should be available, up to the reporter. For me, I would like to get feedback.”

“Personally with me, I don’t mind. I am not a secretive person . . . facts is facts. Once I am telling the truth, I don’t mind.”

Reporting Tool Host

In reference to who would host such a reporting tool and handle the discrimination incidents’ data that will be reported, respondents emphasized the importance of diversity within the reporting tool host, wherein those receiving and reviewing the reports must be racially diverse,

and even potentially have previous experience with discrimination themselves.

"I would like to see the statistics regarding how many people they have included in their staff. How many Brown people are there? How many Hispanics are there? How many Indians or Asians are there? If there is a good balance of people. If the ratio is, I wouldn't say equal to the Whites, because it's a predominantly White country (so) we might not be able to get there like 50/50, but (I think) who is being included (by the host) is a reflection of how much they're against racism."

Respondents had varied opinions on who exactly should be hosting this type of tool. Half of the respondents (16 of 31) 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 be fair and take people's reports seriously.

"Basically it's all about credibility. That people are credible, we know that they've done similar work in society. They are fair. These are the people who should be involved in things like that . . . I prefer a local organization, separate from the government, separate from the police obviously, separate organization that I trust."

"I think it should be any organization that has the capability but it should have branches everywhere and real honest (workers). You know, money will not solve this issue. It is dedication that will solve this issue. How dedicated or how sincere (are the) social workers you have? And those who have real interest, not their interest is just to make money or just to do anything. The real honest interest is needed on that. This will be in the real interest of everybody."

Many didn't care who hosted the tool as long as it was independent. They discussed the importance of the transparency, neutrality, and independence of the host (e.g., not from their workplaces or other affiliations).

"That department or the staff, they should be independent (and) dedicated kind of people . . . Independent organization and independent department."

Other respondents indicated that it did not matter to them who hosts such a tool as long as it is not the police or the government.

"I'm very iffy when it comes to Niagara Region Police. I've had bad experiences with them. I don't think that they get the right training that they should when it comes to mental health"

or culture or anything like that. So if I had to report to them, I'm probably hesitant cause they don't care to be honest."

"It wouldn't make sense for Niagara Region Police to be hosting on their website . . . I think Niagara Region Police has lost the trust of people where the integrity piece cannot be left upon them. So, with that in mind, it needs to be hosted separately."

However, some respondents indicated that they would prefer it to be hosted by the government.

"I think the government would be fine . . . These days, with everything happening, I can't really trust the police to do that, because we have a lot of work to do on their end . . . And not a lot of people in general are really involved with their local community so they may not even care or know of that local community (organization) . . . but the government, it's the government, so people might be more susceptible to use that."

Lastly, one respondent indicated that the reporting tool should be hosted by the government, the police, and local organizations all together.

"It needs to be a triangulation of the social organization, the government, and the police. It has to be the three together, not just one. It has to be a complete system or else it wouldn't work. The organization speaks on behalf of the people; the police provide safety and criminal support; and the government is the central source for information."

Importance of How the Tool Data Would Be Used

Around half of the respondents 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.

"For me, it is not about how the information is collected, it's about what is done with the information."

"They can make reporting easy but until they prove that they're going to actually take action against the things that we're reporting against, doesn't matter right? . . . But I don't trust anyone in management at Niagara to actually do something about it . . . I have zero faith that the higher ups will actually do anything about anything and I don't wanna waste my time."

Some respondents suggested that this information should be included in the tool itself.

“The website give the explanation of the background, what their website is for and what they’re doing in that tool.”

“I’d like some kind of information on what they’re going to do with the information that I provide to them, and how they propose to use the information.”

Reporting Tool Type

The respondents indicated varied preferences for the type of reporting tool, such as a website, a smartphone app, etc. Some 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.

“Application, I guess . . . it’s easy for me, because again, I use my phone a lot and it’s easier if I have an application. I might not every time remember the website URL, or I’ll have to go to Niagara’s website every time to get it.”

Other respondents indicated that they would not be comfortable downloading an app to their device and would prefer using a website instead. Many 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 a Google Doc for simplicity.

“It’s just that you have to download (an app), and for someone who doesn’t have space (on their phone) or whatever that may be, a website would be a little more convenient.”

While some respondents indicated that they did not have a preference between a website or an app, others noted that they were not comfortable using these kinds of technology and preferred calling a phone number/hotline or using text messages to report.

“In website maybe I can’t express myself wholly and I don’t know if I’ll get a response, if I’ll get any action against them, but maybe if I actually tell someone about the entire situation with their names, then they might take action against that person.”

Moreover, regardless of the reporting tool type, respondents suggested some features to be included in the reporting tool, including the ability to record videos of the incidents and upload

the recordings.

“Can record it live as it is happening and submit it . . . It’s like an immediate remedy for the situation . . . Having that tool for them to be able to do that immediately makes them feel like, ‘Okay, I’ve done something about it.’ They can breathe.”

Reporting Tool Accessibility and Ease of Use

Respondents indicated the importance that the tool be accessible and voiced the need for the reporting tool to be translated into multiple languages, as some immigrants may not be comfortable reporting their experiences in English.

“Because my English is not good sometimes, I can’t explain good. Because of that, I think I can’t (report) because maybe someone can’t understand me if I can’t explain everything well.”

A number of the respondents identified ease of use and the length of the reporting process as factors that would encourage or prevent them from reporting. Respondents suggested that the reporting tool should be user-friendly and easy to navigate with clear instructions, and that it should contain a few short, straightforward questions. Some respondents noted that multiple choice questions and Yes or No questions would be helpful.

“I think that if it's user friendly, and the questions or prompts, or however you categorize what it is, without having to necessarily go into detail unless you wanted to. I think it's important to have very sort of stock overarching questions that can be multiple choice. And then, if there is more to add, then to have a comment section, would be the best for me, because I may have varying degrees of wanting to report it. And so if I wanted to just do that because it records it in the data and that's important to me, but I don't necessarily want to go through the rigmarole of writing everything out like a report. I think that it would be really helpful to have multiple choice options, and then, a comment section for each section or whatever sections are relevant.”

“I would use it if it’s simple . . . so you know how we do COVID questionnaires and those kind of things, when you just briefly are asked about the situation, and they are like ‘Explain in 200 words what happened’ and that’s it. I do not want it to be long.”

“Offering some guidance on how to report it properly.”

Awareness of Reporting Tool

Some respondents noted that the tool should be advertised and disseminated widely to ensure that people use it.

“They should have more campaigns regarding such matters, like if they were to introduce an app or website, anything like that, they should just have a campaign regarding it, and then I think people would be just scared to even do something racist after that.”

“If that link is provided to everybody at work asking to join, to know that hey there is an independent body responsible to review these and they will talk to you and check with you.”

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

The majority of the respondents indicated that the Niagara 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 Niagara.

In addition to discussing the importance of supporting the reporting process and developing reporting tools, respondents indicated the importance of being heard and included, education and awareness, and community spaces and events, as well as taking accountability and action and having independent reviewers and evaluators.

The Importance of Being Heard and of Being Included

The respondents emphasized the importance of being heard and the importance of listening to racialized people and immigrants in the community. Some suggested that research studies such as the current one are a good way to do that.

“I think if it was conducted by more people of colour and different types of people, I think it would help a lot. Me and my friend got interviewed for this actually and we were so happy that we're being interviewed by people of colour because we're like we can't talk to White people this way because they don't care. When that discrimination happened at work, we both talked about it and all the White people were like, ‘Oh, it's not a big deal! He's just making a joke.’ And it's not a joke! These are people's lives we're talking about.”

Respondents wanted to see diversity policies adopted in the region and in their workplaces, highlighting the role of local government.

“(The city) should realize (the problem) first and they should work on it and address it properly in their policy and strategy, make some strategy. Now they don't have anything . . . First, we need to make strategy and policy . . . We need to adopt it at the government level. These local bodies of government should have a policy, then they implement it. When they will see the result, other private organizations (will follow). They should also promote it to other organizations and maybe they can give them incentives (to adopt the policy and strategy).”

They also suggested the employment of people of diverse racial and migration backgrounds in

their workplaces and in government institutions, in all levels of employment including management and decision makers.

“More diversity at the top (of organizations) specifically, because I feel like a lot time we preach diversity and there is, but not at the top with the people making decisions . . . A lot of times HR are like, ‘Well, they didn’t apply. What can I do?’ but it’s just that these people feel like ‘what is the point of them applying when they never get it.’ So you really have to go into the community and talk to them and see what’s making this group of people not apply, what’s the reason, and showing them that whatever company it is, it’s a company where they welcome any- and everyone, because that would definitely help with making people comfortable.”

“I don’t think (Niagara) cares about representation at some point, because I know even for my workplace, they had Black History Month at some point and they invited this White guy to talk to us about Black History Month. It was funny. We really laughed about that but it was not funny . . . In Niagara here, anybody in leadership position is obviously Caucasian and has to be a native of Niagara. That’s what I realized.”

Education and Increased Awareness

Many respondents spoke about educating and raising the awareness of the broader community, including children in schools and those who are discriminating.

“I think subtle racism should be also accepted as a case report. I think children in schools, especially I think everything starts at a really young age, and so they should be introduced to these concepts at a really young age for them to even process them, because by the time you’re an adult, it has been in your brain for quite some years and that’s gonna take some time to get it out . . . It’s not that easy to have a conversation with (adults) regarding the matter, but I think if anything has to be done, it has to be dealt with the children.”

“Educating themselves by any form, raising awareness, and if there’s a chance for them to get acquainted with someone from (a different) walk of life, like Asians or Black African American, yeah. Normally those barriers or borders get taken down when they actually get to know someone who is from that same ethnicity.”

“They need to address their existing biases by understanding that they have them.”

Others spoke about the importance of increasing awareness of available supports and

resources. One respondent suggested that immigrants and racialized people in the region should know what legal support is available to them.

“We have community organizers within my job that are responsible for bringing in people who talk about (discrimination). We discuss it very freely and openly, and we discuss it on a regular basis. So I absolutely think it is the responsibility of community centers like my government-funded centers to make sure that our clients are aware of their abilities, that they should know what resources they have to combat whatever struggles they may have faced. So I think it is really important to do that.”

“We need legal support, not just resources and pamphlets, for immigrants. We need support to help with our families when we move from other places to come here . . . We need help with legal support to report when we experience discrimination, especially for the cases when we don’t have support at work or we don’t have an HR department.”

Community Spaces and Events

Some respondents suggested that it is helpful to create diverse spaces and events for immigrants, non-immigrants, racialized people, and non-racialized people to come together. They indicated that community events should be intentionally and purposefully designed to promote inclusivity.

“I think the Niagara region needs to do more, to invest more in our communities and to invest more into the cultural art centre here. They need to provide more funding to these settlement agencies, funding to community organizations, to build spaces that are people-of-colour-friendly and allow them to feel safe in the community and build a sense of belonging.”

“I noticed that cultural events at my workplaces always excluded some groups, or people come and eat the food and leave. It’s hard to make people stay and socialize, but that is the only way we can connect more together. In Mexico, people all over the place, from different communities, neighborhoods, work environments, all come together for parties and celebrations. That is missing here – the sense of celebration of community, of place, of country, to feel happy and proud that we live here together in a such beautiful country that provides in so many ways. The local organizations and workplaces can develop more opportunities to socialize with different cultures to enliven a sense of pride and identity in where we live.”

Accountability and Action

Respondents wanted to see follow-up and action taken after the discrimination incidents occur. They discussed wanting to see perpetrators held accountable for their action and suffer consequences, ranging from education to punishment.

“I think that we need to have more strict action. We need more, I wanna say, consequences to any discrimination that is reported and that can be anywhere, to employers, to the police, or to organisation, any anti-racism organisation . . . More information needs to be shared about racism and the things that people will experience or the punishment that people will have to experience if they are reported.”

Other actions and responses were suggested to ensure that the anti-racism sentiment and policies are not merely performative.

“The report should be followed up with . . . of course that person who is going through it needs support, psychological support, and help to deal with it . . . So that person needs to be address his concerns and at least console that person . . . If that person needs some compensation . . . if they need some course . . . or maybe symbolic compensation, so that the person feels like, ‘Okay, it happens and it is addressed.’”

Independent Reviewers

Respondents noted that the involvement of a committee or agency that is external to and independent from their workplaces and employers would be useful when immigrants and racialized people experience discrimination in their workplaces, as their HR personnel are often not neutral. This external reviewer would be responsible to assess the situation and ensure the protection of the employees’ rights and responsibilities.

“I think a third party strong agency should be involved with this kind of situation. I mean a neutral party, because that way at least that person can both sides and take appropriate action . . . Honestly, they can’t just listen to my story. They have to listen to their story and do an in-detail investigation . . . that proves whether I am telling the truth or I am telling false information. In that way, the mediator can decide.”

Recommendations

Recommendations for Employers and Businesses

To prevent discrimination toward immigrants and racialized individuals at work in the Niagara region, 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
- Provide employee training focused on countering stereotypes, encouraging perspective taking, and education about what constitutes discrimination, including microaggressions
- Develop a system for supporting the promotion of immigrants and racialized employees to managerial and top positions, wherein they are provided opportunities for additional training and obtaining skills that will lead to management and top positions in organizations

To support immigrants and racialized individuals who may be facing discrimination at work in the Niagara region, businesses and other employers should:

- Hire an external evaluator to assess and make recommendations about their policies surrounding non-discrimination and the system in place for reporting discrimination (if any)
- Implement a straightforward and confidential procedure for reporting experiences of discrimination that formally documents the investigation and the outcomes
- Disseminate clear information to employees on their policies surrounding non-discrimination, and provide clear instructions on steps to take if one does experience discrimination
- Provide bystander intervention training for all employees, including how to respond to incidents of discrimination and how to support targets of discrimination
- Provide confidential mental health supports for those who have experienced discrimination at work

- Hire an external mediator to deal with reports of discrimination, who can decide the appropriate action to be taken and appropriate outcomes

Recommendations for the Region

To prevent discrimination toward immigrants and racialized individuals in public places in the Niagara region, the region should:

- 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
- Provide education to the broader community about the benefits of immigration to the community, the discrimination that is being experienced in the community, and the damage caused by this discrimination – starting with children at schools

To support immigrants and racialized individuals who may be facing discrimination in the Niagara region, the region should:

- 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 (and in multiple languages) on how to most effectively respond to discrimination when it occurs, the specific steps to take if one experiences discrimination in the region, and local groups and organizations that can provide support to those who have experienced discrimination

- Develop a discrimination reporting tool that is widely advertised and provides information on supports available for targets of discrimination
- Provide funding for community initiatives to help support immigrants and racialized individuals who have experienced discrimination, and for confidential mental health supports for those who have experienced discrimination in the region
- Ensure effective supports and initiatives are available to those who experience discrimination 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
- Once a discrimination reporting site is set up in the region, 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
- Ensure that reports of discrimination are taken seriously and acted upon
- Conduct further research on the experiences of discrimination in the region to collect data from immigrants and racialized individuals and hear about their experiences
- Provide culturally sensitive legal services to immigrants and racialized individuals in the region, particularly for newcomers and those who recently experienced a discrimination incident

To support a sense of belonging and retention to the Niagara region among immigrants and racialized individuals, the region should:

- Publicly celebrate the diversity in the region, including through community events and spaces that bring all members of the community together
- Have more representation of immigrants and racialized individuals in public and private institutions and spaces, including in senior leadership positions

Recommendations for the Police

To support immigrants and racialized individuals who may be facing discrimination in the Niagara region, the police should:

- Provide training to all staff focused on countering stereotypes, encouraging perspective taking, countering (unconscious) biases, and education about what constitutes discrimination, including microaggressions
- Provide clear information to those who would like to report discrimination as to the procedure for doing so

Recommendations for a Reporting Tool

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 the Niagara region, 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 short straight-forward questions to answer (available in multiple languages)
- 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 include the ability to upload videos
- 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 interculturally competent
- 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
- Consideration should be given to providing alternative methods of reporting discrimination, including through a hotline and text messages