



UNTIL ALL OF US HAVE MADE IT

GENDER EQUALITY
AND ACCESS IN OUR
OWN WORDS

MARCH 2020



CANADIAN
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION



“UNTIL ALL OF US HAVE MADE IT, NONE OF US HAVE MADE IT.”

- The Honourable Rosemary Brown (1930-2003), Founding Mother, Canadian Women's Foundation

These words continue to inspire and guide our efforts to advance gender equality. Rosemary Brown was passionate in the fight for gender justice and knew we won't get anywhere in our quest for equality if we don't pay attention to under-heard voices and make things better for those facing the greatest barriers and discriminations.

While advances have been made in gender equality, benefits haven't been experienced by all. Whether looking at outcomes in employment, health, education, or other areas, there are women in Canada who continue to face significant challenges and systemic inequality. For some women – Indigenous women, racialized women, immigrant women, and women with disabilities to name a few – improvements have been marginal or insignificant.¹

The Canadian Women's Foundation asked Canadians from different backgrounds and identities about the barriers they experience in the following key areas:

- access to education;
- access to employment/fair pay;
- access to housing; and
- experiences of abuse and access to support services

Survey Focus

There are many reports and studies about gendered outcomes in education, employment, income, housing, abuse, and service access, but this report focuses on lived experiences, in the words of respondents, with an intersectional lens.

This report is a qualitative study and represents self-reported experiences. The findings paint a picture of how gender inequalities can play out differently for different segments of the population, and point to systemic changes that need to happen for true gender equality to be realized for all in Canada.

Due to the wide diversity of respondents and corresponding small size of some segment samples, we highlight statistically significant² survey findings that emerged from the survey.

Who Was Surveyed

An online survey was conducted by MARU/Matchbox among 1,332 people from different backgrounds and identities living all over Canada. The survey was extended to people over 18 years of age who are not retired, and who identify as female, trans, non-binary, or Two Spirit. The survey did not include those who identify as male. It was conducted in English and French between January 28 and February 11, 2020.

¹Women's Equality in Canada: An Environmental Scan, 2017, Gender Equality Network Canada. [Available here](#)

²“Statistical significance is a determination ... that results in the data are not explainable by chance alone.” Source: Investopedia. [Available here](#)

Important Terminology

Intersectionality: coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989³, the term ‘intersectionality’ “starts from the premise that people have multiple identities, and being members of more than one ‘group,’ they can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege. Intersectionality sheds light on the unique experiences that are produced when various forms of discrimination intersect with these converging identities. It is a dynamic strategy for linking the grounds of discrimination (e.g., race, gender, class, sexual identity, etc.) to historical, social, economic, political, and legal contexts and norms that intertwine to create structures of oppression and privilege.”⁴

Racialized: the term ‘racialized’ “acknowledges the fact that the barriers ... are rooted in the historical and contemporary racial prejudice of society and are not a product of our own identities or shortcomings.”⁵ The term ‘visible minority’ is often used by governmental bodies to reference people of colour who are not First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. In this report, we use the term ‘racialized’ as it acknowledges “the process by which societies construct races as real, different, and unequal” and the fact that racial barriers are rooted in social prejudices and not in individual or community shortcomings.”⁶

Newcomers/immigrants: we used the following categories as defined by Statistics Canada⁷:

- Newcomers: landed immigrants who have been in Canada for 5 years or less
- Recent immigrants: landed immigrants who have been in Canada for 5 to 10 years
- Established immigrants: landed immigrants who have been in Canada for more than 10 years

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³Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw, University of Chicago Legal Forum. Available here

⁴Columbia Law School, Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies. Available here

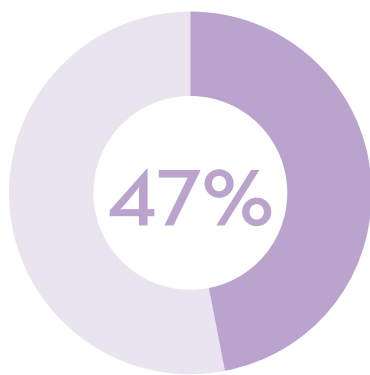
⁵Racialized People Equity and Inclusion Lens Snapshot, 2016, City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) and City of Ottawa. Available here

⁶Racial Discrimination, Race and Racism (fact sheet), Ontario Human Rights Commission. Available here

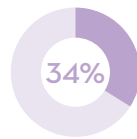
⁷The Canadian Immigrant Labour Market: Recent Trends from 2006 to 2017, Lahouaria Yssaad and Andrew Fields, Statistics Canada. Available here

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

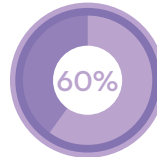
Nearly half of respondents say they have not achieved the level of education they wanted.



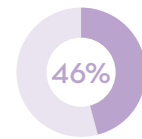
ALL RESPONDENTS



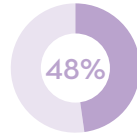
NEWCOMER AND RECENT IMMIGRANT



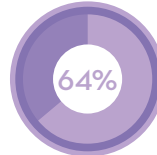
WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY



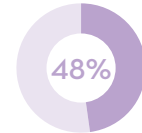
IDENTIFY AS CISGENDER AND HETEROSEXUAL



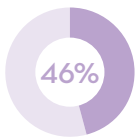
ESTABLISHED IMMIGRANT



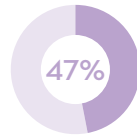
OTHER DISABILITY*



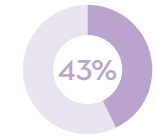
AGES 18-34



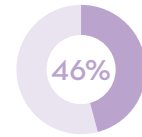
RACIALIZED



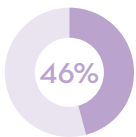
BORN IN CANADA



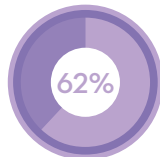
WITHOUT A DISABILITY



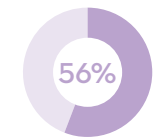
AGES 35-54



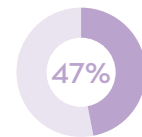
NON-RACIALIZED



INDIGENOUS



IDENTIFY AS 2SLGBTQI+



AGES 55+

*Respondents who selected 'other disability' may have been referring to mental health-related disabilities, disabilities caused by brain trauma, neurodivergence etc.

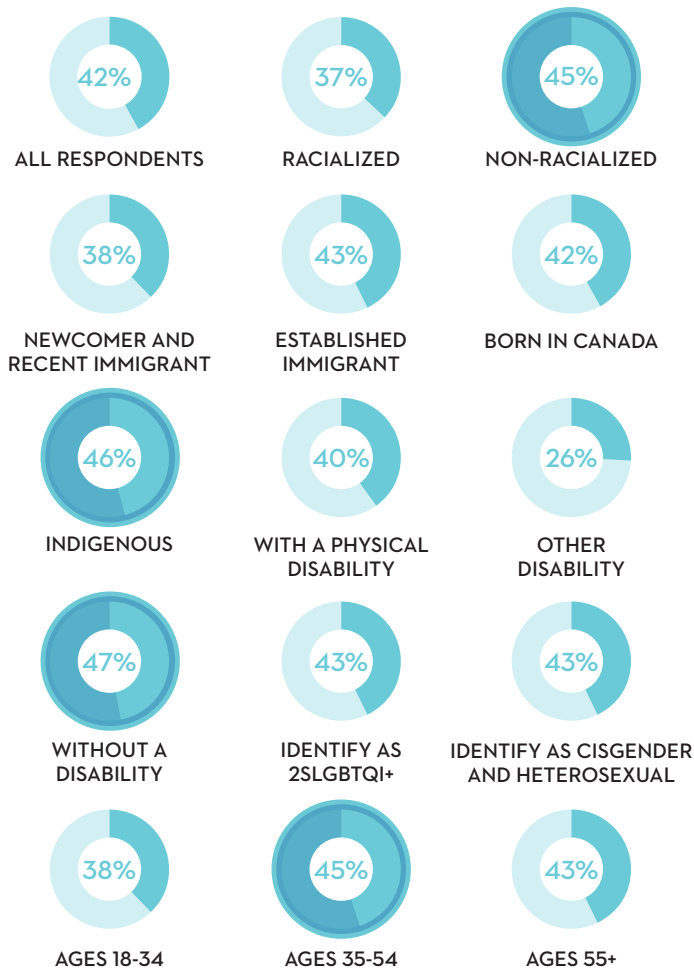
Those who have not achieved the level of education they wanted are 48% more likely to have a high school diploma or less or some college or technical/vocational training but not have finished.



WHAT STANDS IN THEIR WAY?

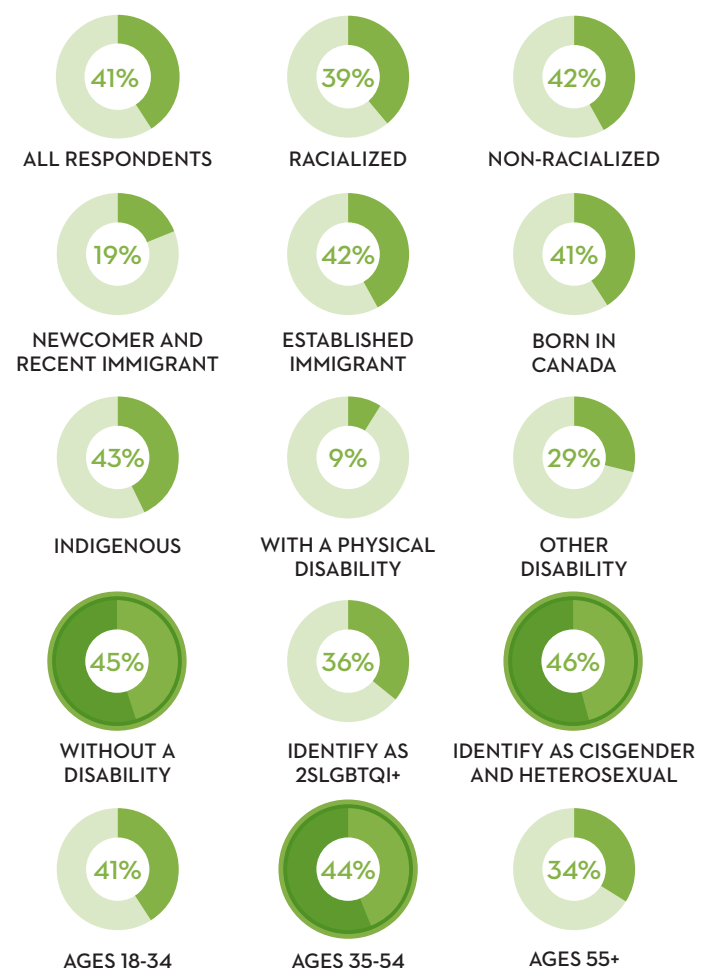
AFFORDABILITY

Of those who haven't reached their desired level of education, the most common response is that they couldn't afford it.



TIME

When asked to rank barriers, 41% rank insufficient time for both work and education as a major barrier.

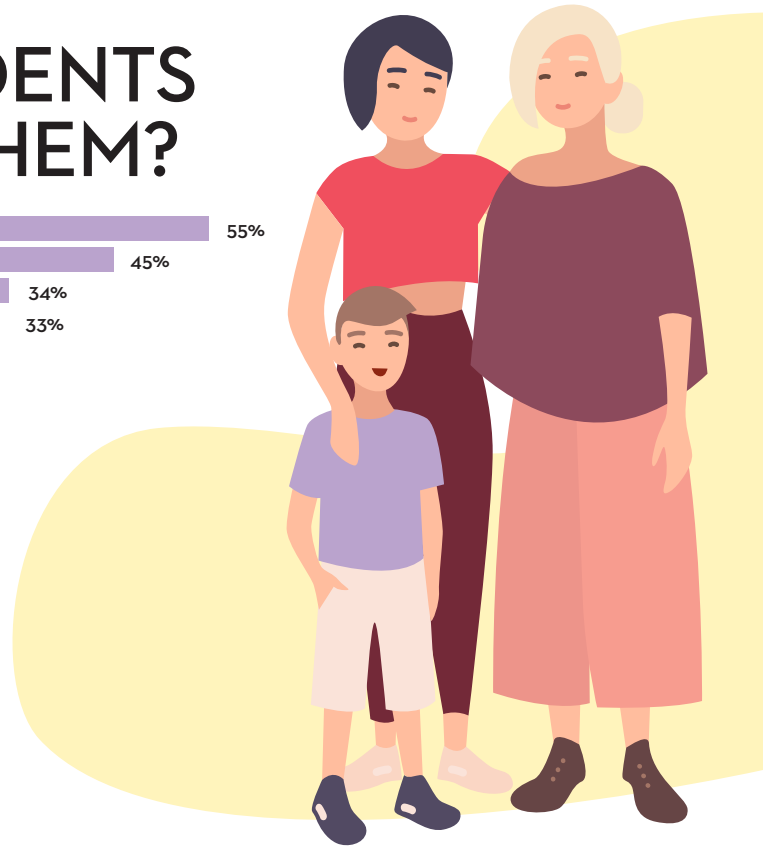
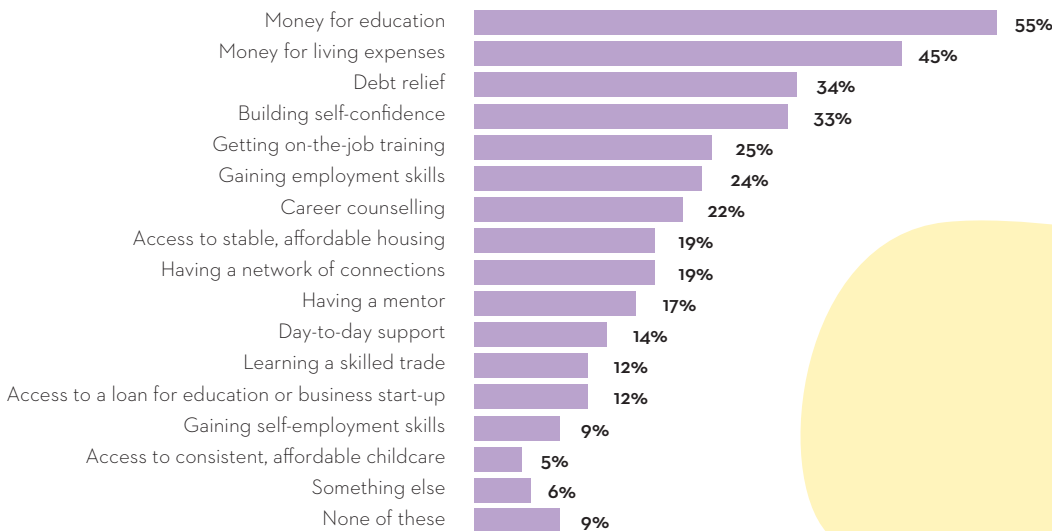


“EDUCATION IN GENERAL IS EXPENSIVE WHEN YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY MONEY LEFT OVER AFTER RENT AND BILLS.”

“I NEED TO WORK FULL TIME.”

“I HAD TO TAKE CARE OF MY PARENTS AND GET A FULL-TIME JOB.”

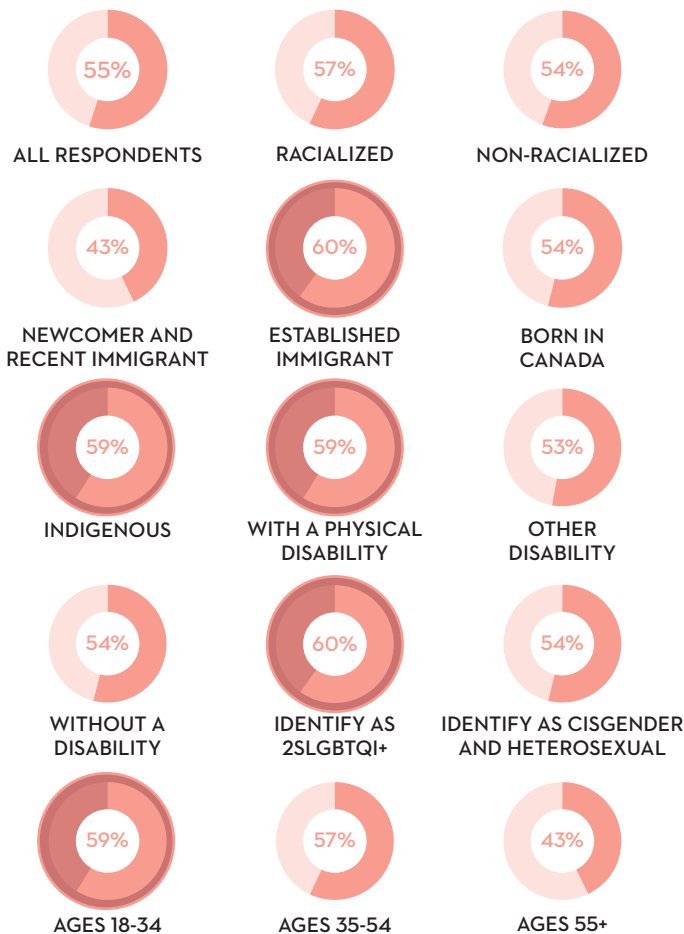
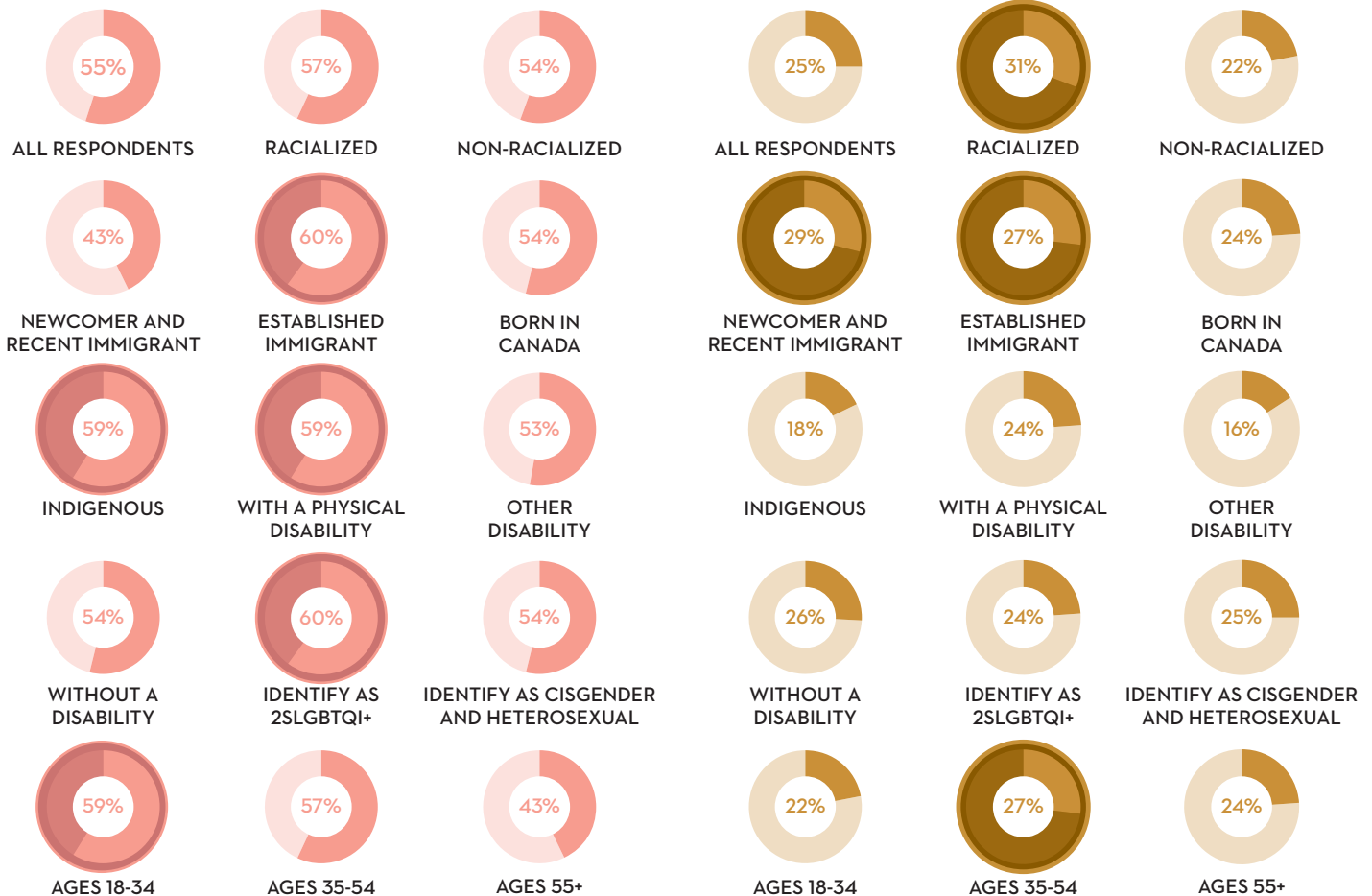
WHAT DID RESPONDENTS SAY WOULD HELP THEM?



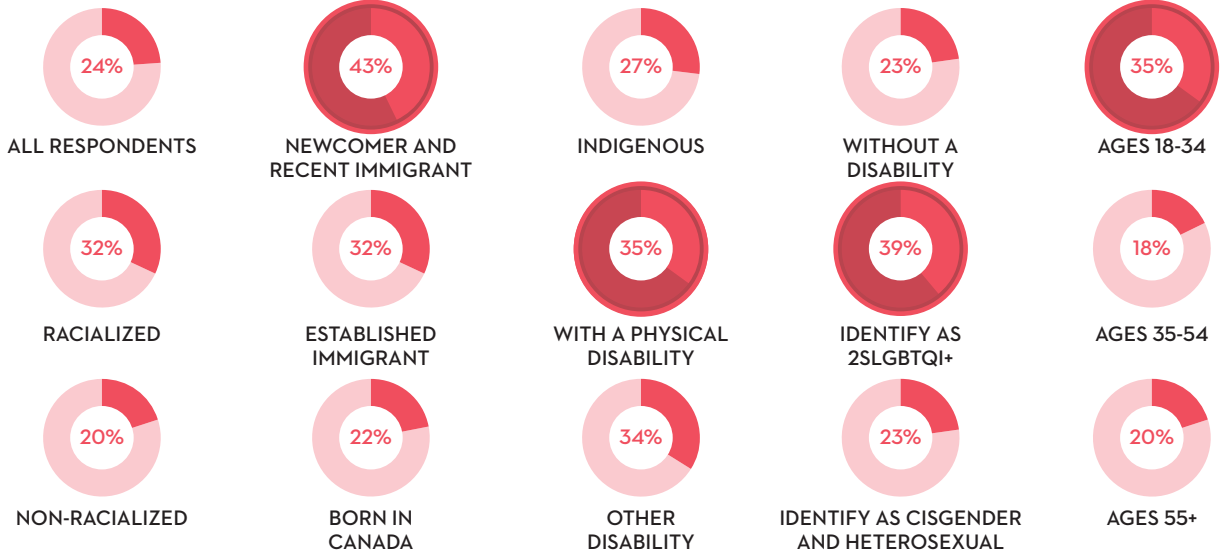
FINANCIAL SUPPORT

55% of respondents who did not reach the level of education that they wanted say financial support for education would most help.

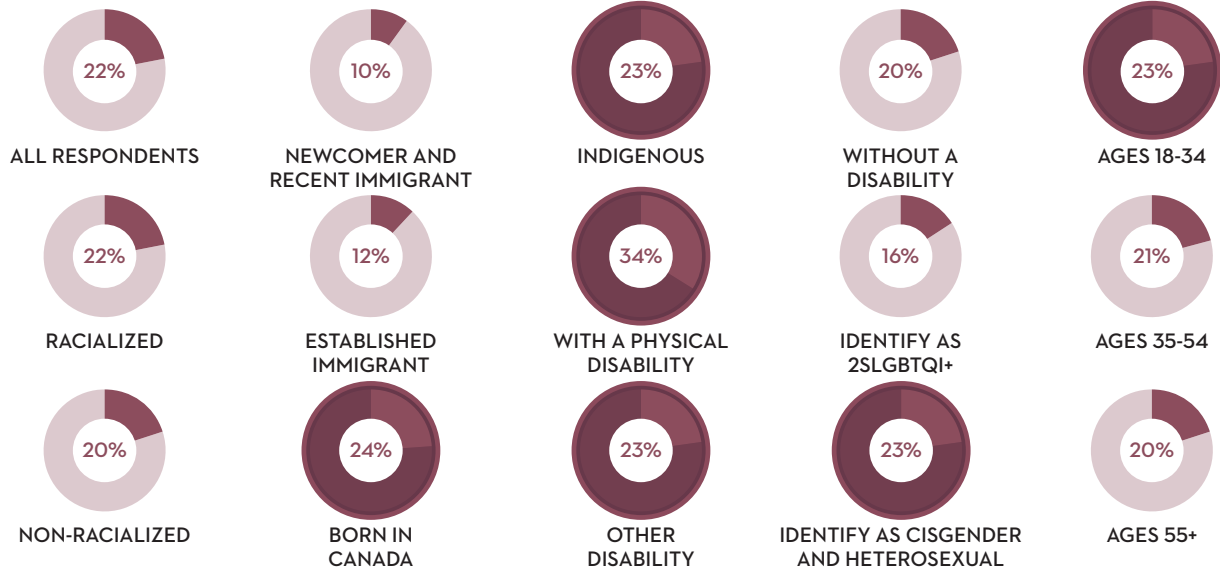
ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING



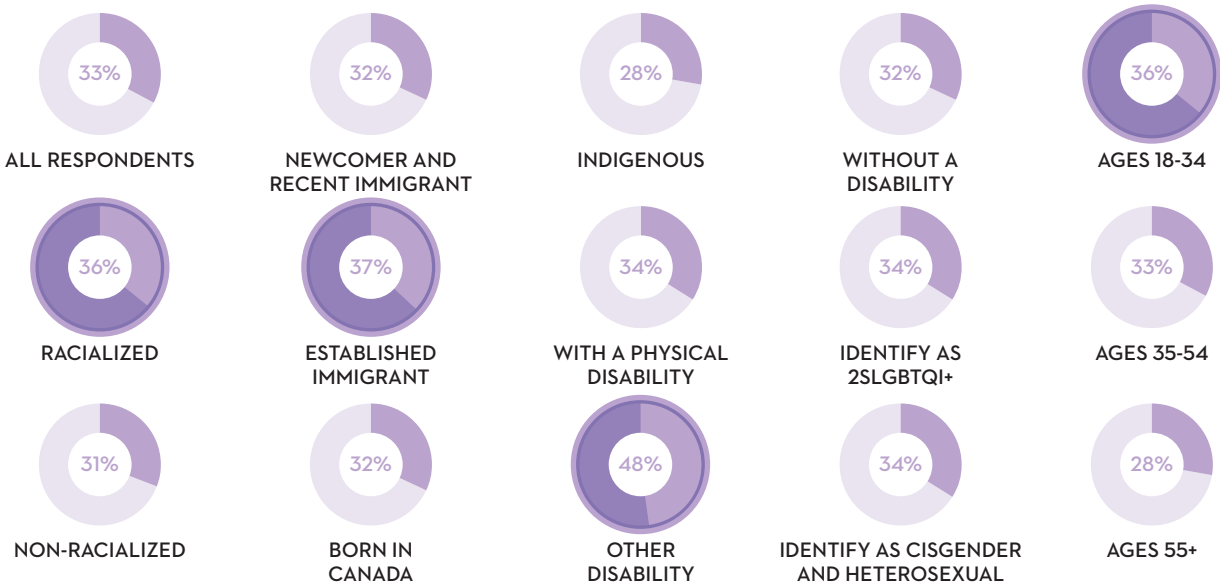
EMPLOYMENT SKILLS



CAREER COUNSELLING



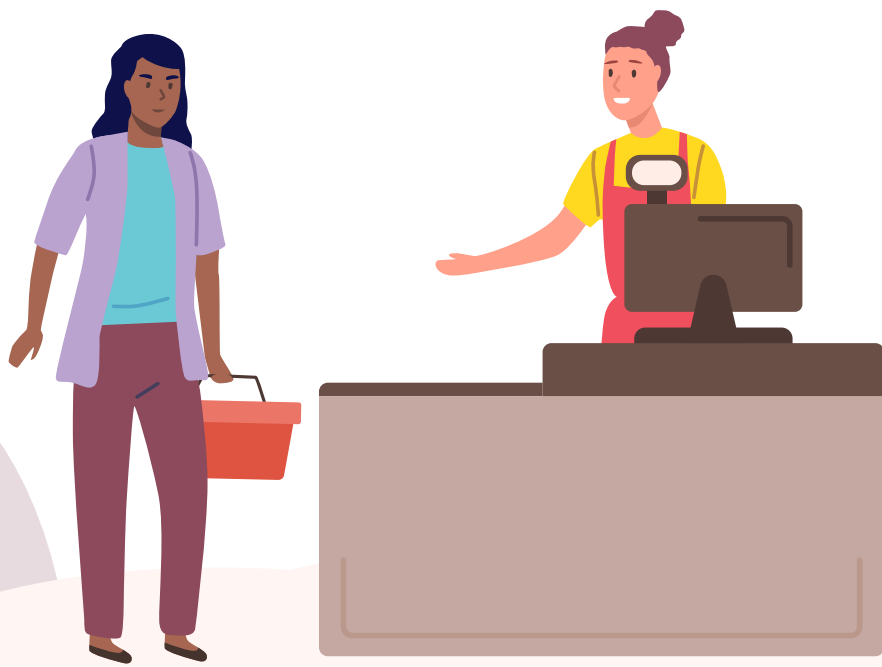
INCREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE



ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT/FAIR WAGE

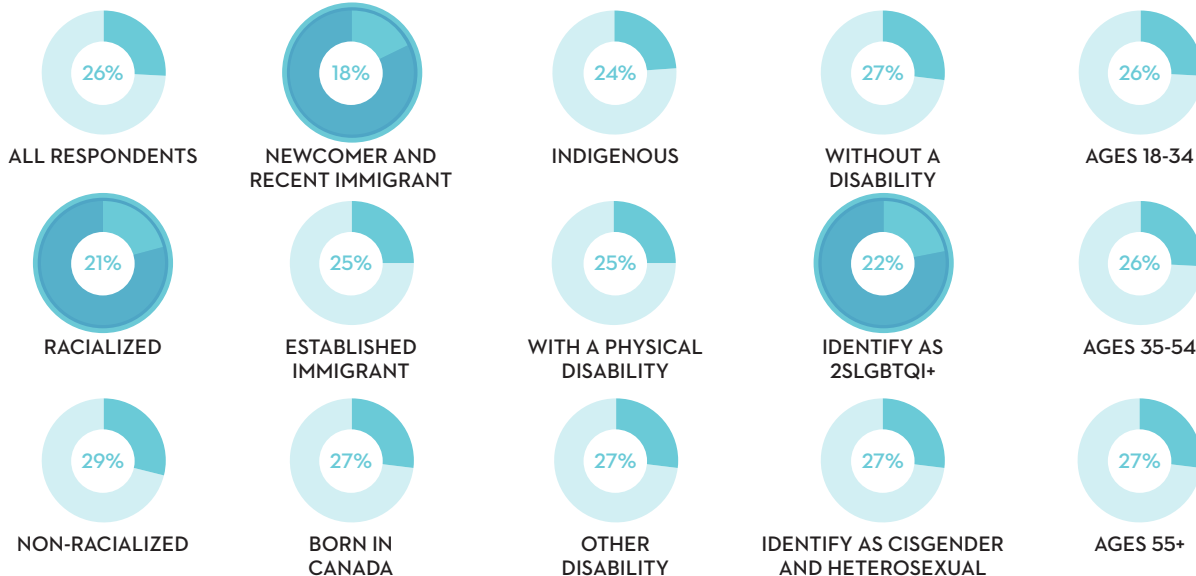
Only 50% of respondents say their household income covers monthly expenses and allows for some savings.

35% of respondents worry about making enough money to cover their monthly expenses.

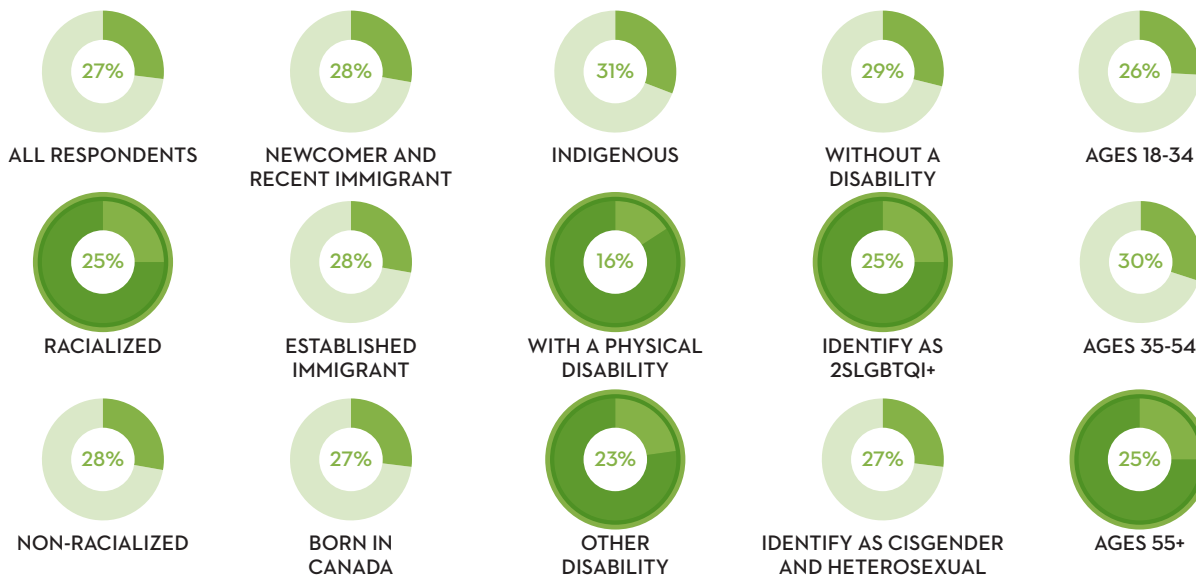


WHAT STANDS IN THEIR WAY?

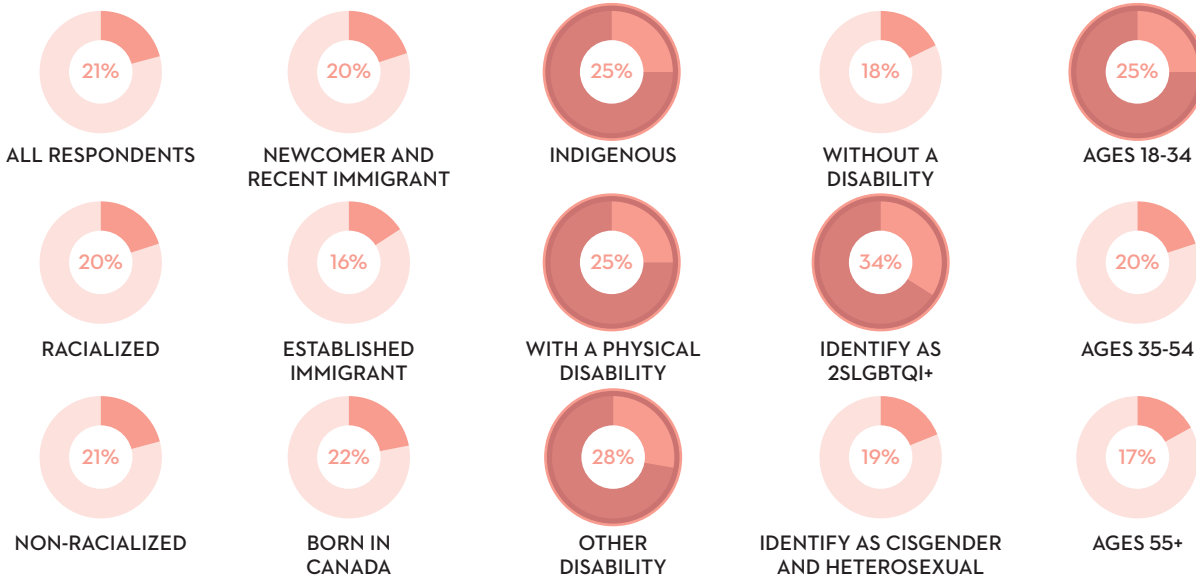
Only 26% of respondents say they are paid fairly for their experience.



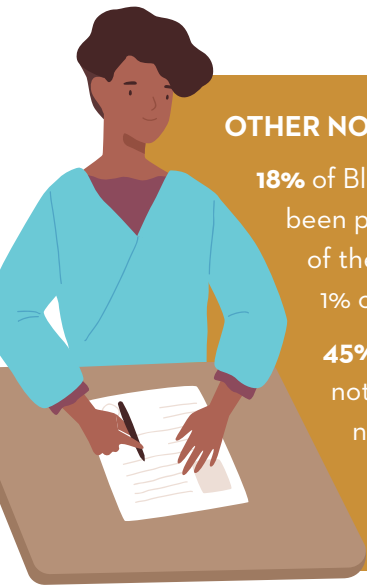
Only 27% of respondents say they are paid equally to their peers.



21% of respondents say they feel taken advantage of at work.



"I STOOD UP TO A COWORKER AT WORK, HE THEN PROCEEDED TO CALL ME "PRINCESS" TO TRY TO UNDERMINE ME ... HE DID NOT RESPECT MY TECHNICAL AUTHORITY AND TRIED TO USE MY GENDER AGAINST ME."



OTHER NOTABLE RESPONSES

18% of Black respondents believe they have been passed over for promotion because of their race, compared with less than 1% of non-racialized respondents.

45% of 2SLGBTQI+ respondents have not negotiated their salary/pay: significantly higher than cisgender and heterosexual respondents (24%).

26% of 2SLGBTQI+ respondents have not asked for a raise even though they think they deserve one: significantly higher than cisgender and heterosexual respondents (15%).

41% of 2SLGBTQI+ respondents say they would have a better job if they had more education/training: significantly higher than respondents cisgender and heterosexual respondents (27%).

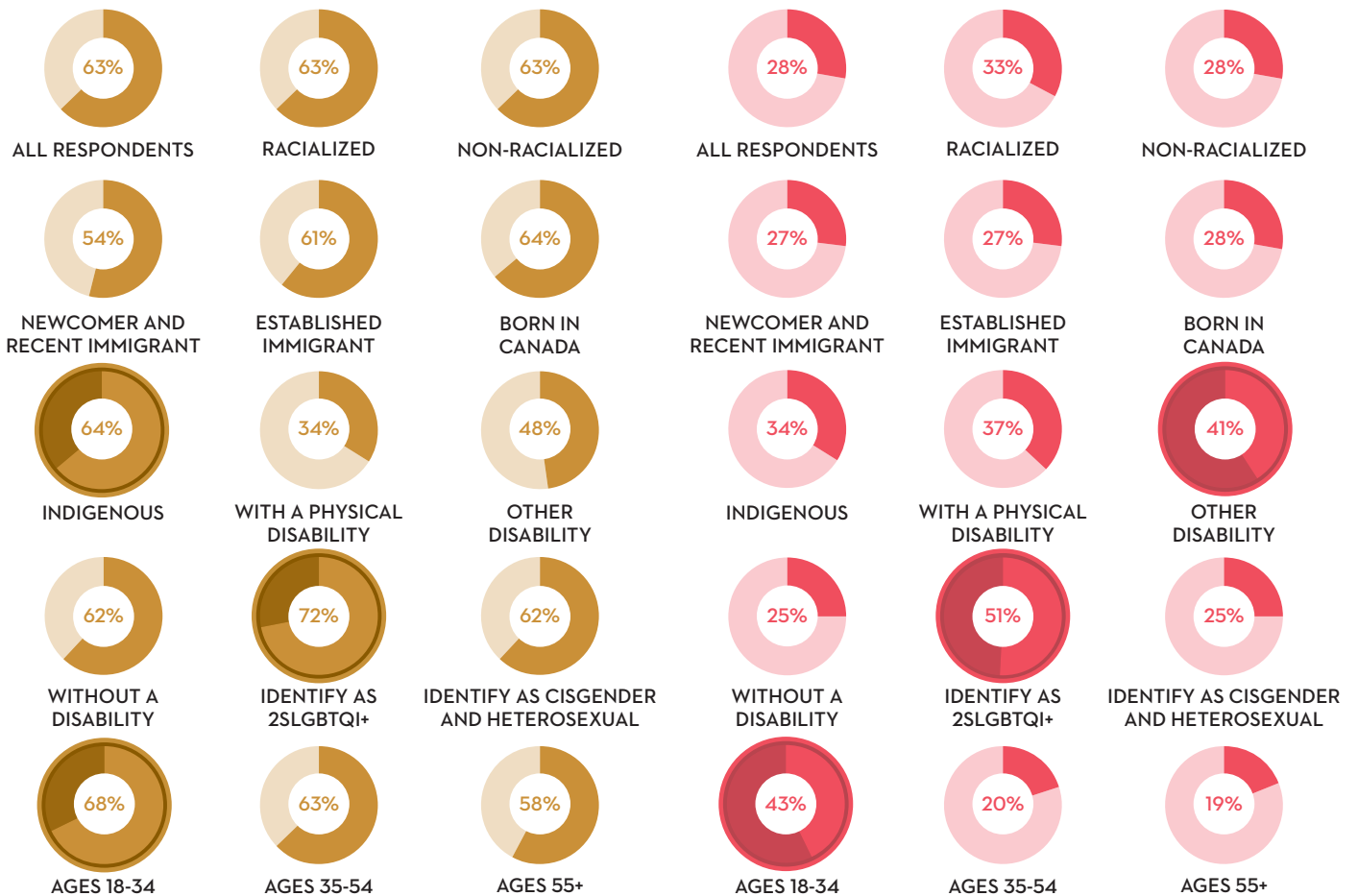
WHAT DID RESPONDENTS SAY WOULD HELP THEM?

EDUCATION

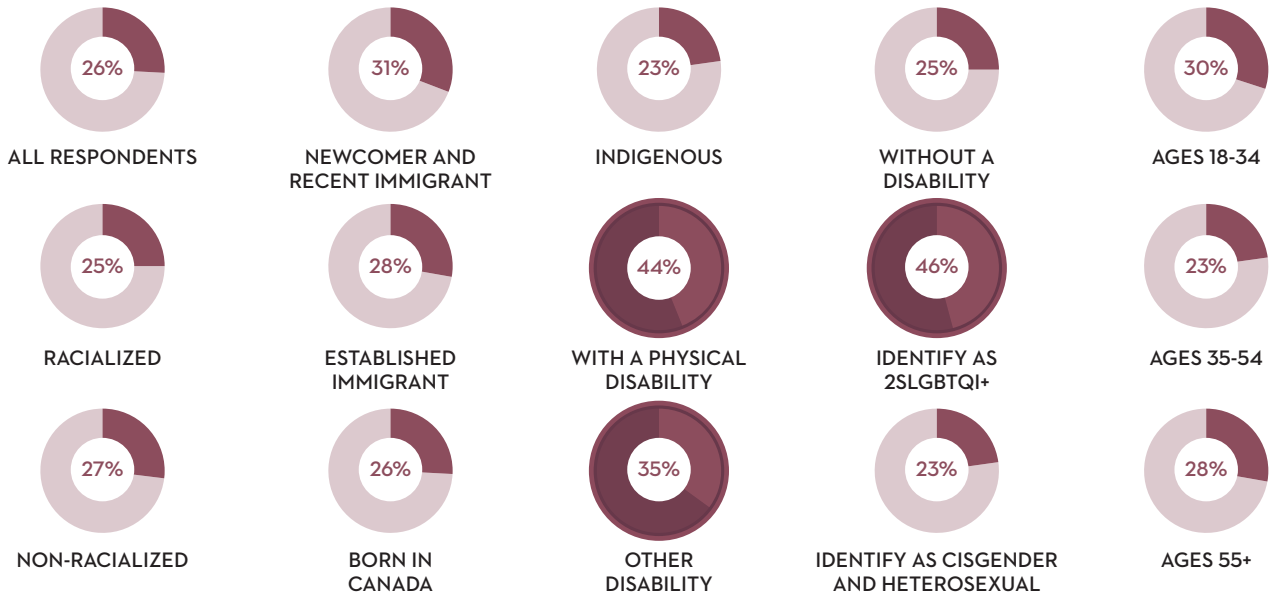
63% believe more education would help them secure an income that better covers monthly expenses and allows for some savings.

ACCESS TO HOUSING

28% of respondents say it's difficult to find affordable housing.



26% of respondents say there is little money left over once they've paid their rent or mortgage.



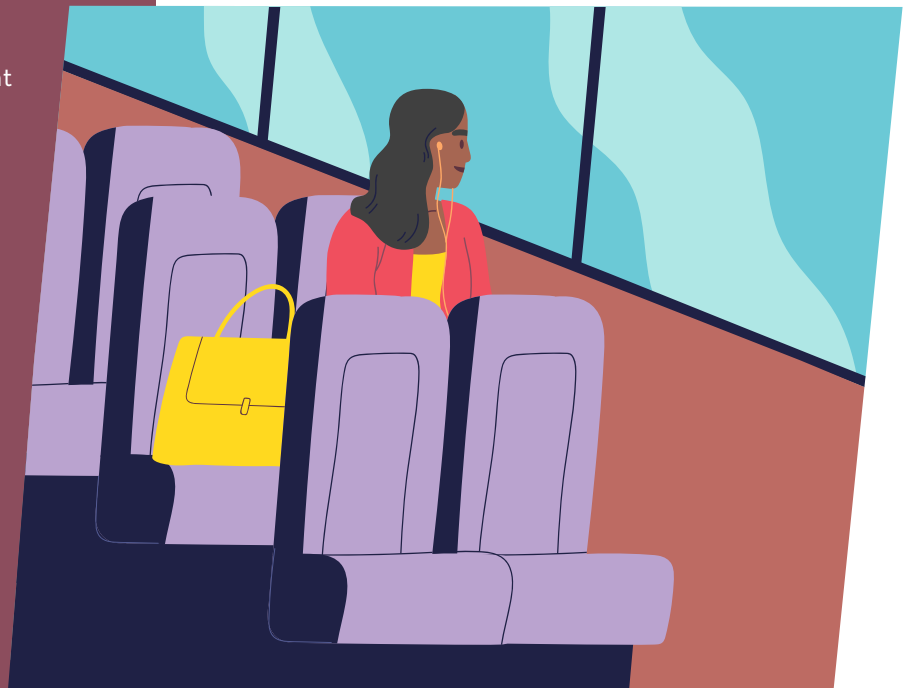
WHAT DID RESPONDENTS SAY WOULD HELP THEM?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

25% of racialized respondents say that access to stable, affordable housing would help them to get ahead or improve their situation, compared to 16% non-racialized respondents.

TRANSIT PROXIMITY

17% of racialized respondents and 24% of those who identify as 2SLGBTQI+ say they need housing in or near an urban centre as they rely on public transit, compared to 10% non-racialized respondents, and 11% cisgender and heterosexual respondents.



ABUSE AND ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES

17% of all respondents say they have experienced physical assault or abuse in their personal life.

31% of respondents say they have experienced emotional abuse in their personal life.



OTHER NOTABLE RESPONSES

Of the 35% of respondents who sought support services, 18% say there was a lack of access, or no relevant services in their area.

Of the 35% of respondents who sought support services, 21% say they didn't know who to contact.

Of the 35% of respondents who sought support services, 20% say the waitlist was too long.

**Methodology note: subgroup analysis is limited due to the small sample sizes of those who sought support services.*



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