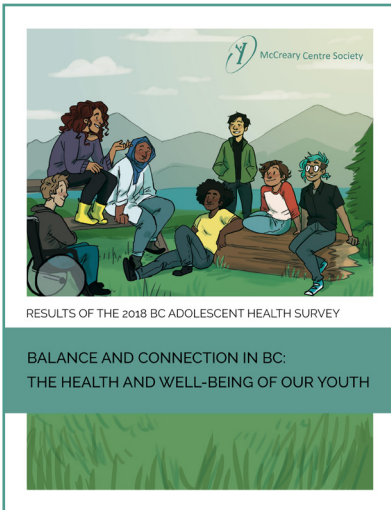


BC YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

A 2018 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY FACT SHEET



This fact sheet uses data from McCreary Centre Society's BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). The most recent BC AHS was completed in 2018 by over 38,000 youth aged 12–19. To learn more about the survey and view other posters and reports, please visit www.mcs.bc.ca.

Racial discrimination can negatively impact young people's physical and mental health, as well as their educational and social outcomes (Benner et al., 2018; Priest et al., 2013; Trent et al., 2019). For example, experiencing racial discrimination has been linked to depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness, substance use, and other health risk behaviors, as well as to lower levels of resilience and life satisfaction (Benner et al., 2018; Priest et al., 2013). However, having caring and supportive parents, friends, and teachers can reduce the impact of racial discrimination on adolescents (Juang & Alvarez, 2010; Wright & Wachs, 2019). Community and spiritual/religious supports can also be protective (Cooper et al., 2013).

This fact sheet considers BC youth who reported they had experienced discrimination or had been treated unfairly on the grounds of their race, ethnicity, or skin colour in the past 12 months. It also considers how such experiences can impact health, and how we can support youth who have experienced this type of discrimination.

This fact sheet includes quotes from youth who completed the 2018 BC AHS.

"I have often been discriminated against due to my race(s) and beliefs. It seems that I have dealt with a lot more bullying than anyone I know, like I'm always the target. It's really bad for my self-esteem but I persevere in the hope that it will all be better some day and I'll feel fulfilled and loved and happy with myself. I am not going to live as a victim."

Youth may not always be aware of when they are being discriminated against. However in 2018, 14% of BC students reported they had experienced racial discrimination in the past year. This was an increase from five (11%) and ten (12%) years earlier.

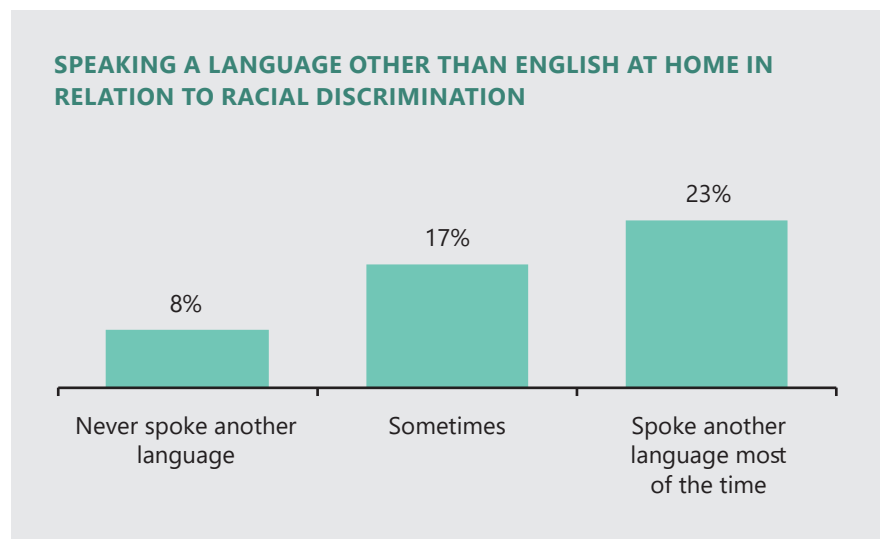
Older youth were more likely than younger ones to report that they had experienced racial discrimination. For example, 19% of 18-year-olds experienced racial discrimination, compared to 14% of 15-year-olds and 11% of 13-year-olds.

Youth born abroad were generally more likely to have experienced racial discrimination than those born in Canada, regardless of how long they had lived here (22% vs. 12%). This rose to 25% among those who arrived in Canada as refugees. Also, the more often students spoke a language other than English at home, the more likely they were to have experienced racial discrimination.

Overall, urban-based youth were more likely than rural-based ones to experience racial discrimination (14% vs. 10%). However, youth of East Asian and South Asian descent were more likely to experience racial discrimination if they lived in rural areas. For example, 31% of East Asian youth attending school in rural areas had experienced this type of discrimination, compared to 20% in urban areas.

Youth of different backgrounds who had been discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity, or skin colour in the past year	
African	38%
Australian/Pacific Islander	17%
East Asian	21%
European	8%
Indigenous	15%
Latin/South/Central American	20%
South Asian	25%
Southeast Asian	23%
West Asian	31%
Other background	9%
Don't know background	4%

Note: Youth could choose all backgrounds that applied.
 Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.



INTERSECTIONALITY

“Teaching people about sensitivity to racism and homophobia would reduce (hopefully) the amount of ignorant comments I hear that affect my mental health.”

Youth who experienced other forms of discrimination in the past year were more likely to also report they had been discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity, or skin colour. For example, 36% of those who had been discriminated against because of their gender or sex, 31% who had been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, and 30% who had been discriminated against because of a disability had also experienced racial discrimination.

MENTAL HEALTH

Experiencing racial discrimination was associated with poorer mental health. For example, students who had been discriminated against in the past year were less likely to:

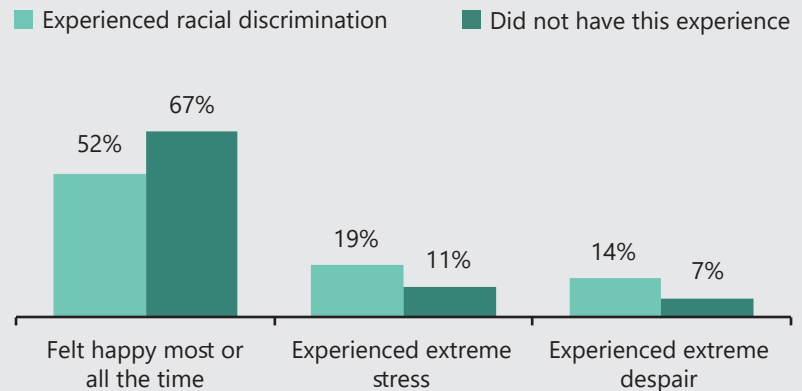
- Rate their mental health as good or excellent (63% vs. 74% of those who had not experienced racial discrimination).
- Feel happy most or all the time in the past month.
- Feel their life was going well (61% vs. 75%).
- Usually feel good about themselves (47% vs. 60%).

They were more likely to:

- Wish they had a different life (26% vs. 16%).
- Experience extreme stress in the past month.
- Experience extreme despair in the past month.

“I feel really, really sad sometimes ... I get teased at school just because I'm Muslim and I wear a hijab and no one else does. It makes me feel really alone.”

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE PAST MONTH IN RELATION TO RACIAL DISCRIMINATION



POTENTIAL RISKS TO HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Youth who experienced racial discrimination in the past year were more likely to have missed school, and to have done so frequently. For example, 34% skipped classes in the past month (vs. 24% of youth who had not experienced this type of discrimination), and 12% skipped at least three times that month (vs. 7%). Also, 21% missed school because of their mental health (vs. 14% of those who had not experienced racial discrimination).

Youth who experienced racial discrimination were more likely to report they were experiencing problematic substance use and needed help (8% vs. 5% of those who had not been discriminated against for this reason), including needing help for their alcohol use (5% vs. 3%), cannabis use (5% vs. 3%), and their use of other substances (2% vs. 1%). They were also less likely to have friends who would be upset with them for using substances.

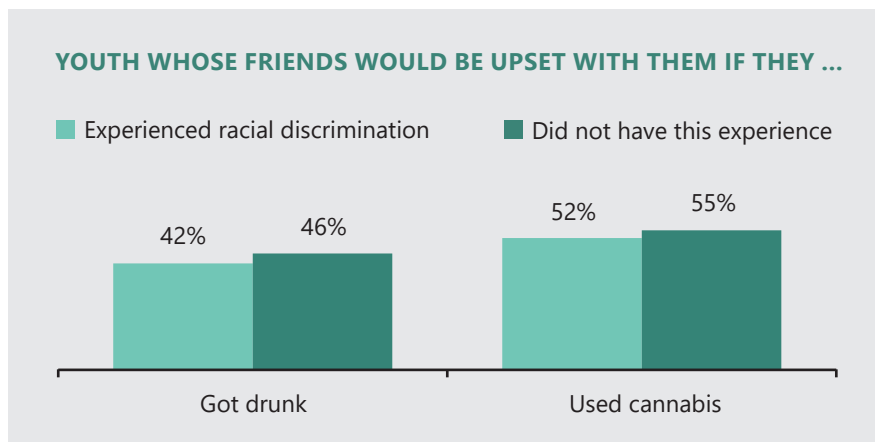
SUPPORTING YOUTH WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Youth who had experienced racial discrimination in the past year reported more positive well-being when they felt supported by their family, friends, school, and community. For example, they were less likely to have experienced extreme despair in the past month and more likely to feel hopeful for the future.

Youth who experienced racial discrimination were less likely to have experienced extreme despair in the past month when they:

- Felt more strongly connected to their community (8% vs. 22%).
- Had an adult in their community who they felt really cared about them (11% vs. 17%).
- Had an adult relative they could talk to if they had a serious problem (6% vs. 24% of those who did not have this in their life).

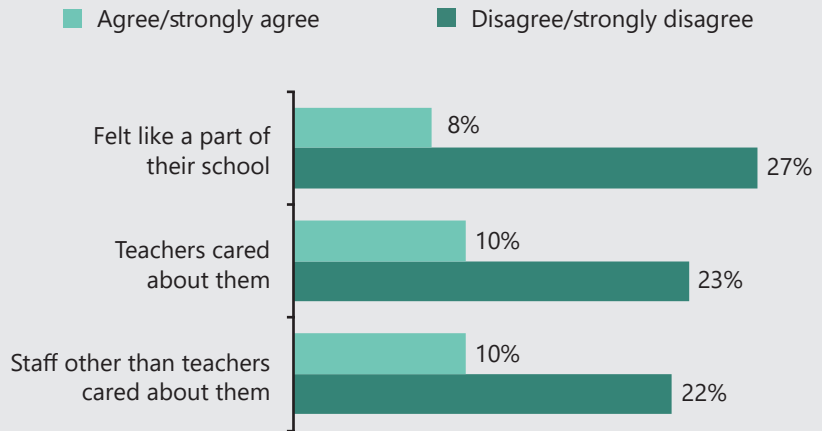
- Felt their family respected them at least quite a bit (8% vs. 35% of those who never or rarely felt this way), paid attention to them (8% vs. 35%), understood them (5% vs. 29%), and had fun together (8% vs. 29%).
- Felt connected to school (including feeling part of the school and that school staff cared about them).
- Had received helpful support from a spiritual leader in the past year.
- Had at least three close friends in their school or neighbourhood (11% vs. 22%).



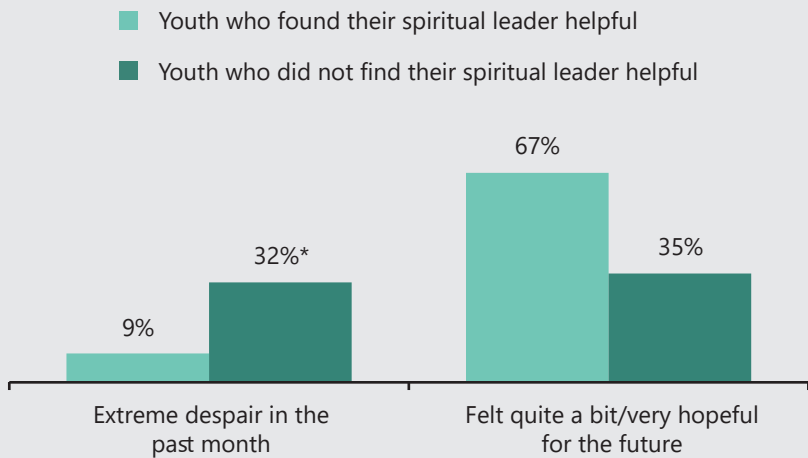
Youth who experienced racial discrimination were more likely to feel hopeful for the future when they:

- Had an adult relative they could talk to about their problems (69% vs. 40% who did not have this).
- Felt their family respected them (68% vs. 31%), paid attention to them (67% vs. 31%), understood them (74% vs. 34%), and had fun together (68% vs. 35%).
- Felt like a part of their school (69% vs. 36%).
- Felt their teachers (66% vs. 43%), other school staff (67% vs. 44%), or an adult in their community (63% vs. 49%) cared about them.
- Felt connected to their community (73% vs. 40%).
- Had received help from a supportive spiritual leader in the past year.
- Took part in weekly cultural or traditional activities (62% vs. 56%).
- Had at least three close friends in their school or neighbourhood (61% vs. 44%).

**YOUTH WHO FELT EXTREME DESPAIR IN THE PAST MONTH
(among those who experienced racial discrimination in the past year)**



**YOUTH WHO FELT EXTREME DESPAIR AND/OR HOPEFULNESS
(among those who experienced racial discrimination in the past year and approached a spiritual leader for help)**



* Any percentage that is marked with an asterisk should be interpreted with caution, as it has a higher than anticipated standard error, but is still within a releasable range.

YOUTH'S SUGGESTIONS

"I would like the curriculum to implement more ways to learn about discrimination in communities (i.e., racism, homophobia, sexism)."

"A lot of what I know about important topics I learned online or elsewhere. I think school should teach more about discrimination, sexism, racism, and homophobia ... More resources should be given."

"We should learn more about race and health, and the impacts it has."

RESOURCES

Any youth who is experiencing racism and would like to talk to someone can call **Kids Help Phone** 24/7 at **1-800-668-6868** or **text 686868**.

Youth interested in doing a project to address racism in their community can apply to the **Youth Action Grants (YAG) program** which provides up to \$500 for youth-led projects to improve youth health. To learn more about YAGs visit www.mcs.bc.ca.

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