



Discrimination, Inclusion, and Diversity during the COVID-19 pandemic

There are often compounding concerns about discrimination for new citizens and people of colour in Canada

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship, in partnership with Leger, polled two groups — 1,515 Canadians and 956 new citizens — about Canadians' experiences, concerns, and attitudes about discrimination during COVID-19. Canadians of colour reported higher concerns and experiences of discrimination since the COVID-19 crisis began. Often, these experiences and concerns are even more significant among new citizens of colour who have intersecting racial and immigrant identities.¹

Key findings

1

In response to the question, **“Are you, or your family members, worried that discrimination and prejudice will increase in Canada because of COVID-19?”**

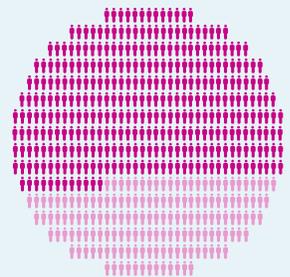
Half of Canadians (51%), or their family members, are worried that discrimination and prejudice will increase in Canada because of COVID-19. This increases to over two thirds among new citizens (64%) and Canadians of colour (69%).

Canadians of colour are much more likely to be concerned that discrimination and prejudice will increase in Canada because of COVID-19, compared to white Canadians (69% vs 47%). These numbers jump to 70% and 88% among new citizens of South Asian and Chinese origin², respectively.

Canadians were also asked about how often they stand up against discrimination in public, with new citizens, Canadians of colour, and younger Canadians doing so more often. More Canadians agree that this crisis will bring diverse communities in Canada closer together than those who do not, while there is less optimism about the changes to Canadian society generally that may come out of this crisis.

1. Respondents completed the survey between April 27 and 30. The margin of error for the study was +/-2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

64%



About **two thirds of new citizens** are **worried that discrimination and prejudice will increase** because of COVID-19.

Younger Canadians are even more concerned that discrimination and prejudice will increase, with 71% of new citizens under the age of 35 concerned.

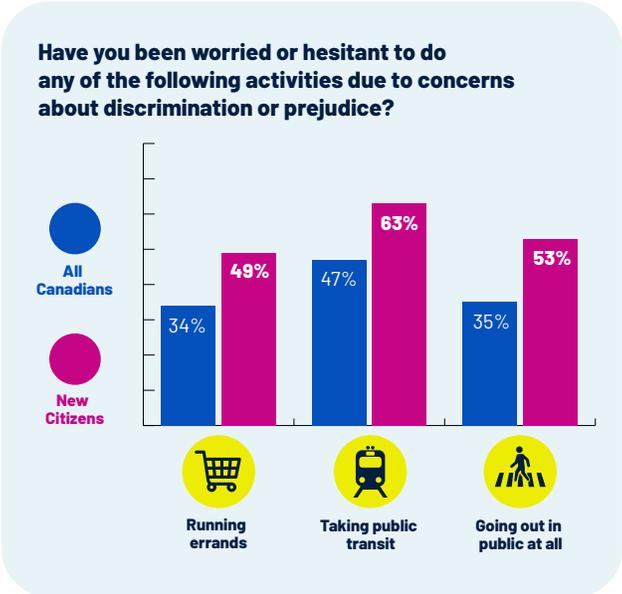
2. The term “Chinese Canadians” is often used in reference to Canadians of Chinese origin or descent.

2

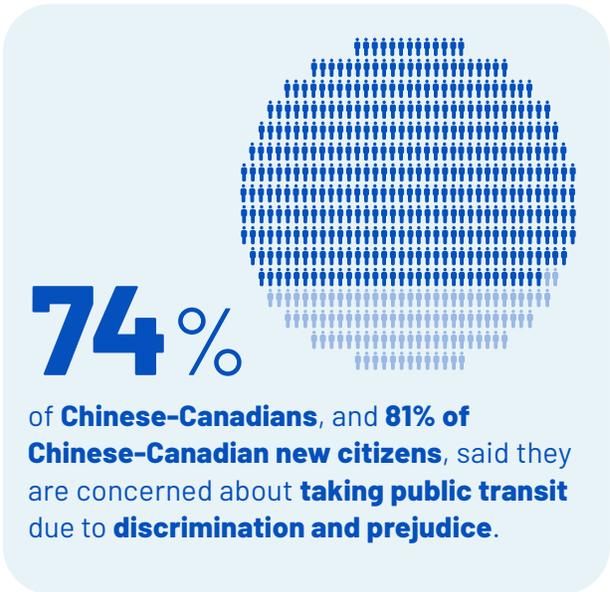
In response to the question, **“To what extent have you been worried or hesitant to do any of the following due to concerns about discrimination or prejudice?”**

Approximately half of new citizens and Canadians of colour are concerned about discrimination and prejudice while running errands, taking public transit, or going out in public altogether.

Across many activities and preventive health behaviours listed, Canadians of colour who are also new citizens reported the highest level of concerns about discrimination and prejudice.



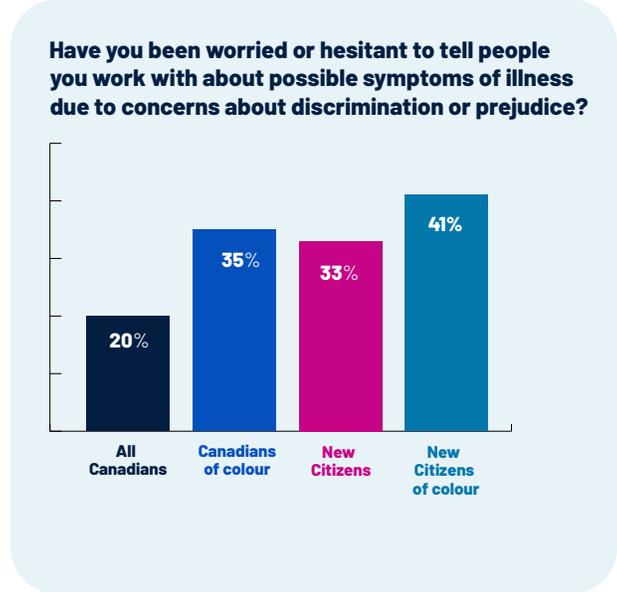
2.1



2.2

74% of Canadians of Chinese descent or origin, and 81% of new citizens of Chinese origin, said they are concerned about taking public transit due to discrimination and prejudice.

Concerns among new citizens about taking public transit is a particular problem, considering that 45% of new citizens report being considered essential workers. Upon further breakdown, the proportion of essential workers rises to 48% among new citizens of colour and lowers to 39% among white new citizens.



2.3

Among those concerned about wearing a mask in public due to discrimination and prejudice, Chinese (49%) and South Asian (39%) Canadians are among the most concerned. These responses were even higher when it came to concerns about their family members.

Younger Canadians aged 18-34 are more concerned about most activities than all other age groups.



2.4 Percentage of respondents that are worried about daily activities or preventive health behaviours due to concerns about discrimination

Daily activities	All Canadians	Canadians of colour	New citizens	New citizens of colour
Wearing a mask in public	21%	36%	27%	31%
Running errands	34%	42%	49%	55%
Taking Public Transit	47%	58%	63%	70%
Going out in public at all	35%	51%	53%	60%
Preventive health behaviours	All Canadians	Canadians of colour	New citizens	New citizens of colour
Tell family or friends about possible symptoms of illness	20%	31%	26%	33%
Tell people you work with about possible symptoms of illness	20%	35%	33%	41%
Call a doctor/telehealth to discuss possible symptoms of illness	15%	27%	21%	26%
Tell people you know how you are feeling emotionally	25%	35%	32%	37%
Try to get tested	22%	34%	27%	33%

3

In response to the question, “Have you, or a family member, felt judged, targeted, or discriminated against in public since COVID-19 began?”

About 1 in 10 Canadians and new citizens report that they, or a family member, has felt judged, targeted, or discriminated against in public since COVID-19 began. However, this increases significantly to 30% among Canadians of colour, and 17% among new citizens of colour.

Among Canadians of Chinese descent or origin, reported experiences of being judged, targeted, or discriminated in public jumps to 53%.

Experiences of discrimination are higher in person than online.

Younger Canadians are far more likely to report feeling judged, targeted, or discriminated against in public since COVID-19 began – 21% of those under 35, compared to 9% of those over 35.



4

In response to the question, **“Since COVID-19 began, have you spoken up for someone who was being threatened, intimidated, or made to feel uncomfortable due to their race, age, class, or ability?”**

More new citizens (17%) have spoken up for someone being threatened or intimidated due to their race, age, class or ability – compared to (13%) of Canadians.

Almost twice the number of Canadians of colour have spoken up for someone being threatened, intimidated, or made to feel uncomfortable due to their race, age, class, or ability, compared to white Canadians (20% vs 11%).

Younger Canadians aged 18–34 are also almost twice as likely as older Canadians to speak up for someone being threatened, intimidated, or made to feel uncomfortable due to their race, age, class, or ability (21% vs 9%).

5

In response to the question, **“To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following: this crisis will bring diverse communities in Canada closer together?”**

More Canadians agree that this crisis will bring diverse communities in Canada closer together (43%) than those who do not (32%).

About a quarter (24%) of Canadians are not sure.

Canadians of colour are more likely (54%) to agree that the crisis will bring diverse communities in Canada closer together than white Canadians (42%).

Younger Canadians are more likely to agree than older Canadians. 50% of those aged 18–34 agree that this crisis will bring diverse communities in Canada closer together, compared to 41% of Canadians 35 years and older.

6

In response to the question, **“Are you feeling optimistic or pessimistic about the changes to Canadian society that will come out of this crisis?”**

New citizens (37%) are feeling slightly more optimistic about the changes to Canadian society that will come out of this crisis, compared to all Canadians (30%).

New citizens of colour are nearly three times more likely to have a very optimistic view about the changes that will come out of this crisis compared to white Canadians (17% vs 6%).

Younger Canadians (18–34) are significantly more likely to feel pessimistic than older Canadians, with 34% leaning toward a more negative outlook.



Demographics

“All Canadians” sample

Identify as: 81% white, 4% Chinese, 3% South Asian, 2% Latin American, 2% Black, 1% Southeast Asian, 1% Arab, 1% Indigenous, <1% Filipino, <1% West Asian, <1% Japanese, 2% other, 1% prefer not to answer

- 81% born in Canada
- 16% born outside of Canada
- 11% 18-24; 16% 25-34; 16% 35-44; 18% 45-54; 17% 55-64%; 21% 65+
- 26% have children under 18 living in the household
- 41% urban; 37% suburban; 21% rural; 2% I don't know/I prefer not to answer

“New citizens” sample

Identify as: 36% white, 12% Latin American, 12% South Asian, 11% Filipino, 4% Arab, 4% Chinese, 4% Black, 4% West Asian, 2% Southeast Asian, 1% Korean, <1% Japanese, 5% other, 5% prefer not to answer

- 20% became citizens within the last year, 33% within 1-2 years, 29% 2-5 years, 15% 5-10 years
- 3% 18-24; 16% 25-34; 37% 35-44; 23% 45-54; 12% 55-64%; 9% 65+
- 43% have children under 18 living in the household
- 59% urban; 28% suburban; 8% rural; 5% I don't know/I prefer not to answer



Institute
for **Canadian**
Citizenship

Institut pour
la **citoyenneté**
canadienne

500-260 Spadina Ave.
Toronto, ON, Canada M5T 2E4

 info@inclusion.ca

 inclusion.ca

 [@inclusion_ca](https://twitter.com/inclusion_ca)

  [@inclusion.ca](https://www.facebook.com/inclusion.ca)

+1 416 593-6998

(Please note that Canoo support is only available through our [Help Centre](#))

Registered charity number:
82303 4145 RR0001

Cet document est également
disponible en français.