

Teens & Racial Injustice



July 2020



Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of 4-H from July 2 to July 9, 2020 with 1,000 respondents ages 13-19.

We also collected data on 4-H participation (n=119 4-Hers and n=881 non 4-Hers), and got large sample sizes for different races to cut the data by race (n=161 Black teens and n=234 Hispanic teens).



Executive Summary

- Black and Hispanic teens are much more likely to have experienced mistreatment because of their race, with Blacks being especially likely to fear for their safety
- 83% of teens acknowledge systemic racism is an issue in the U.S., causing them to feel angry, overwhelmed and stressed
- This is igniting teens to rally around the issue, with 86% saying they are “proud that people are taking a stand protecting against racism” and two-thirds saying they “need people to hear their voice about racism” – which is especially true for Black (82%) and Hispanic (76%) teens who are looking to be heard
- 3 in 4 teens have taken action against racism, either via conversation or demonstration; they are also calling for racism education in school and government reform to create more equal access as avenues for long-term change
- Ultimately, teens acknowledge the journey is just beginning as “there is still so much work to be done in the fight against racism, this is just the start” (82% teens overall, 89% Black teens), yet also “feel encouraged that the current movement and protests will lead to less racism in the U.S.” (70% teens overall, 81% Black)



Exploration of Findings

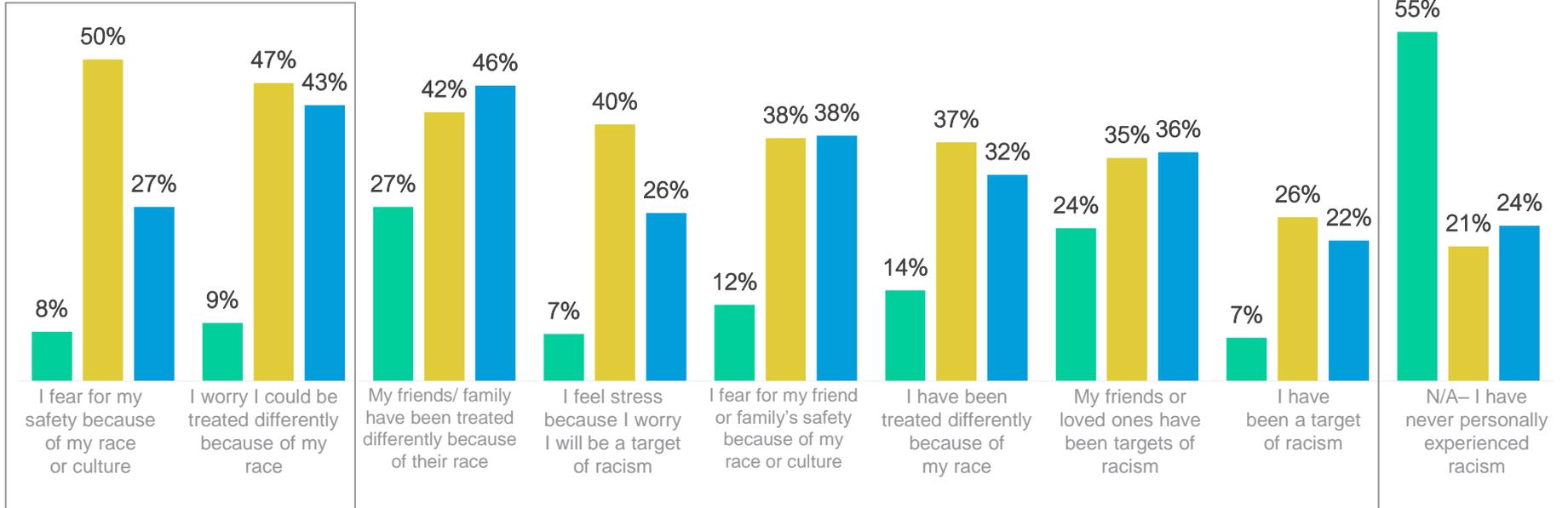
Teen Perspective on Racial Injustice



Black and Hispanic teens in America are much more likely to report experiencing fear and mistreatment based on their race

Have you ever experienced any of the following?

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic





The vast majority of teens acknowledge that this prejudice is systemic, and are seeing the same awakening among their family and friends

83%

“I believe systemic racism exists in the United States.”

81%

“My friends think systemic racism exists in the United States.”

87% Black

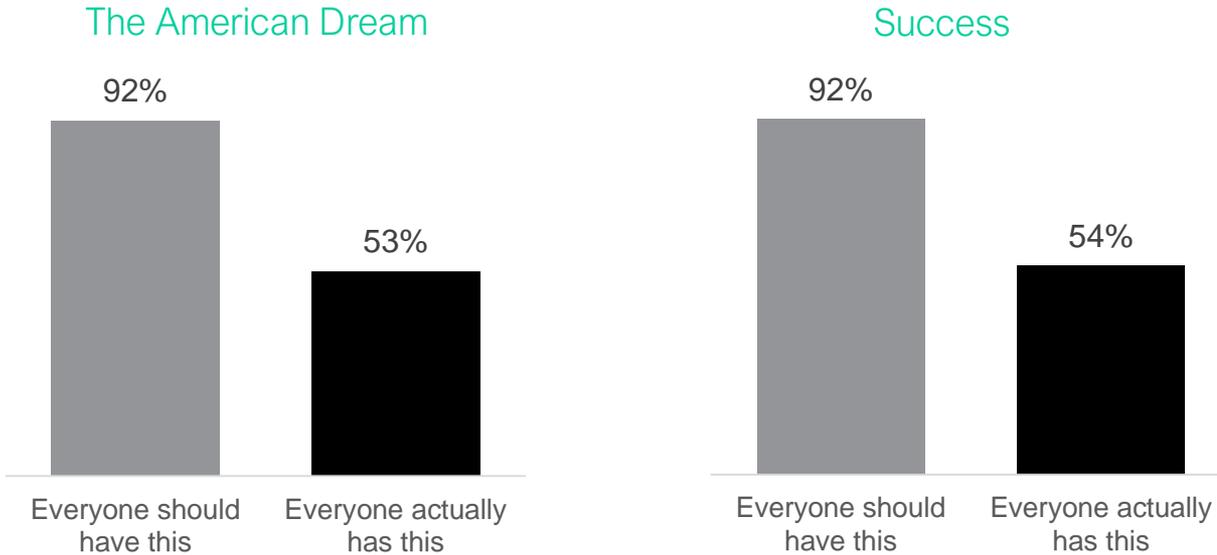
75%

“My family thinks systemic racism exists in the United States.”



Teens acknowledge that this disparity ultimately impacts the American Dream

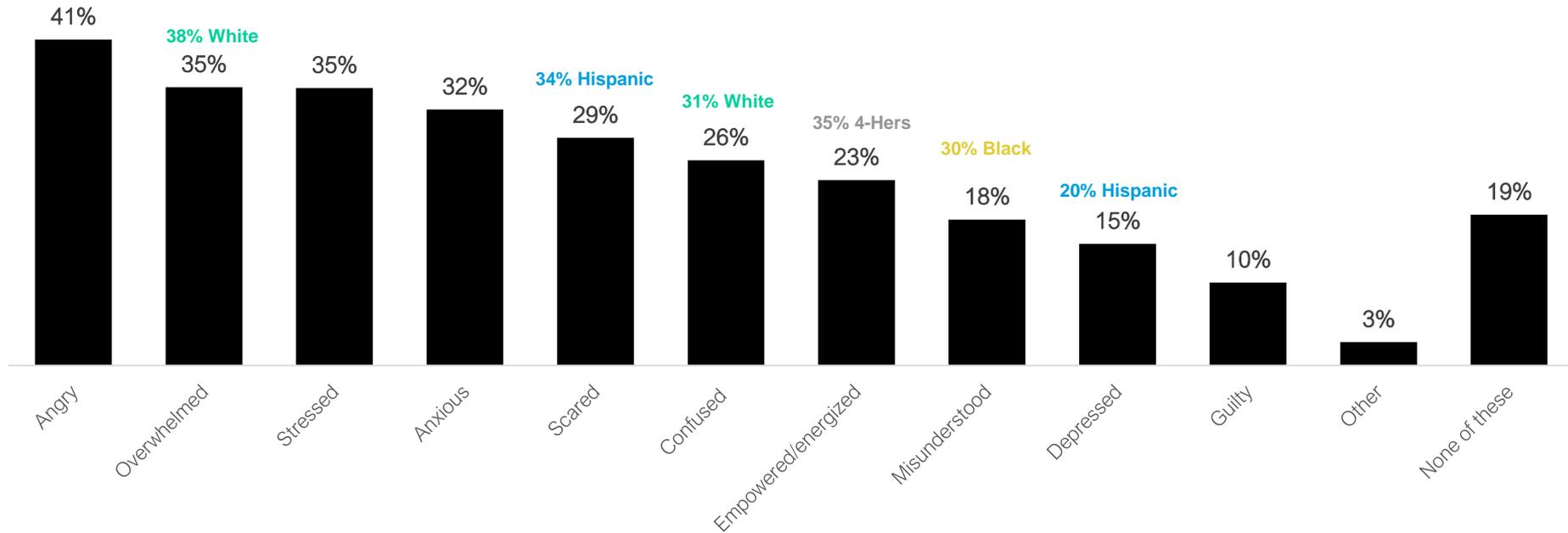
“I believe everyone should have / has an equal shot at _____
no matter their race, culture, or where they come from.”





As a result, teens feeling angry, overwhelmed, and stressed about the current state of the country

Have you experienced any of the following feelings from the recent events of social unrest (e.g., BLM protests)?





Teens are rallying around the issue, with those who are Black and Hispanic especially looking to be heard

86%

“I’m proud that people are taking a stand protesting against racism.”

91% Black

vs.

20%

“I don’t think people should be protesting about racism.”

25% White

66%

“I need people to hear my voice about racism.”

82% Black | 76% Hispanic

vs.

23%

“I think people are making a big deal for nothing in the racial protests.”

28% White



More often teens struggle with knowing how to communicate and learn about racism, rather than a lack of interest in getting involved

40%

“I don’t know how to communicate about racism.”

37%

“I don’t feel like I can do anything about racism.”

36%

“I don’t feel like I have enough understanding and education to talk about racism.”

vs.

17%

“I don’t want to do anything about racism.”

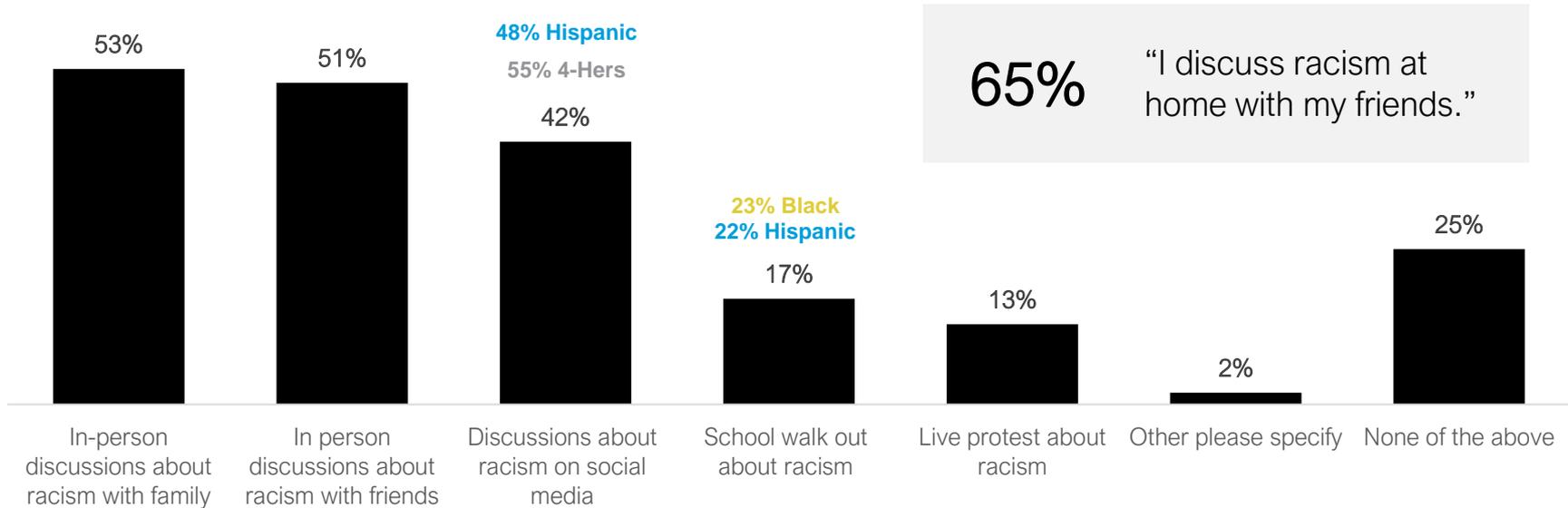
12%

“I don’t believe racism exists.”



However, 3 in 4 teens are already taking action, primarily by engaging in tough conversations about race, either in person or on social media

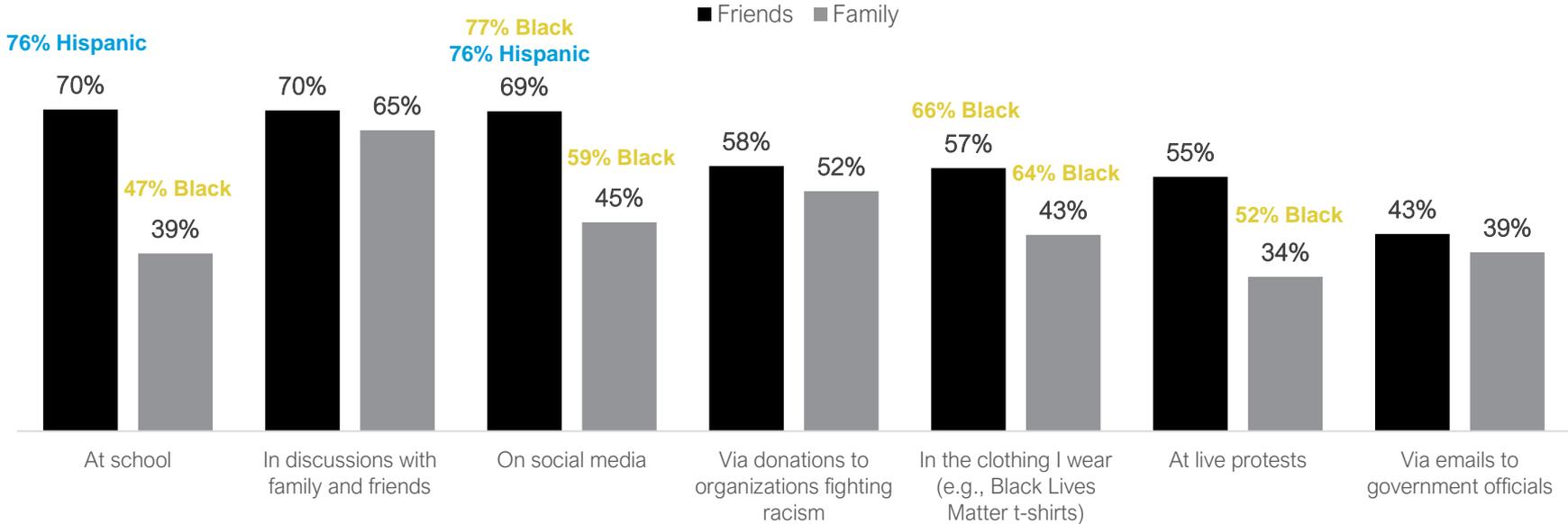
Have you participated in any of the following?





Many say their friends are more supportive of their efforts to stand up than their families, though Black teens are finding more encouragement to speak up at home

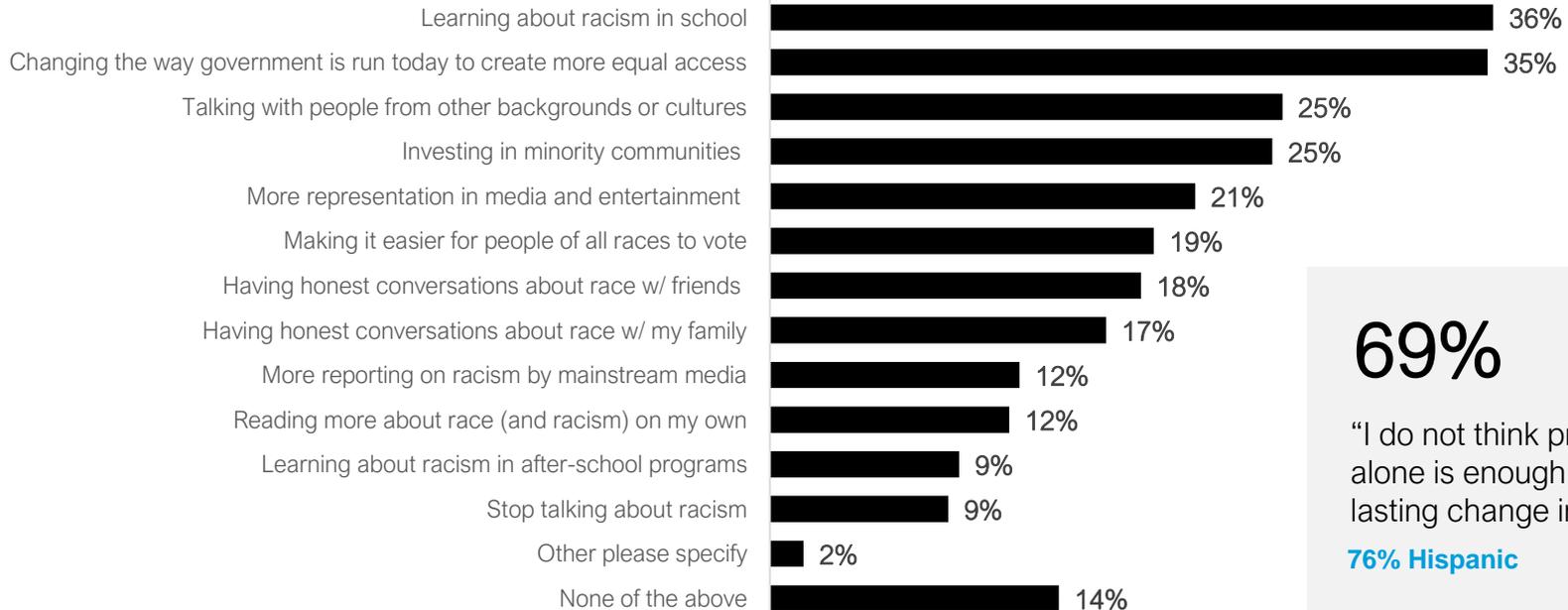
Would your friends and/or family be supportive of you expressing your views on racism in any of the following ways?





Teens are also calling for education and government reform to address racial disparity long-term

Which of the following, if any, do you think are effective ways to address individual and systemic racism?



69%

“I do not think protesting alone is enough to make lasting change in the US.”

76% Hispanic



Ultimately, teens know that this is just the start of an uphill journey, but they are encouraged to be the generation that takes action to make the change

82%

“There is still so much work to be done in the fight against racism, this is just the start.”

89% Black

78%

“It takes real action and more than just words to address racism.”

86% Black
84% Hispanic

70%

“I feel encouraged that the current movement and protests will lead to less racism in the U.S.”

81% Black