

E PLURIBUS UNUM

PERSONA VALIDATION AND EXPLORATION

SEPTEMBER 2024

METHODOLOGY

On behalf of E Pluribus Unum, Embold Research conducted a poll of registered voters built of modelled personas, in order to validate the accuracy and profile of these personas. Additionally, this research sought to dive more deeply into the attitudes of these particular voters toward racial justice and community engagement.



Survey n=568 likely "Overwhelmed Olivias," "Lost Lucilles," and "Nervous Nessas" in 13 southern states, from August 28 - September 1, 2024



Respondents were recruited via dynamic online sampling targeting a list of identified voters provided by E Pluribus Unum



Filtering based on age, gender, and race/ethnicity.



The modeled margin of error is 4.1%

SAMPLE OVERVIEW



100% Women 0% Men 0% Other



100% White 0% Black 0% Hispanic 0% AAPI 0% Other



65% Base Democrat 8% Base Republican 27% Independents + Leaners



20% Protestant, Non-Evangelical 5% Evangelical 3% Observant Catholic 8% Non-observant Catholic 18% Other 46% Non-religious



19% Florida 18% North Carolina 14% Texas 10% Tennessee 8% Arkansas 7% Alabama 7% Kentucky 6% Georgia 4% South Carolina 4% Virginia 1% Louisiana 1% Mississippi !% West Virginia

KEY FINDINGS

Most respondents align somewhat, if not completely, to at least one of the three tested personas.

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A majority of respondents (55%) feel welcomed by their community, however, six in 10 feel that they would be treated poorly for expressing different views.

Messages about creating change resonate deeply with respondents, but do not significantly change the level interest in taking action to advance racial justice in their communities

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This cohort of voters show clear desire and enthusiasm for making change in their communities. At the same time, practical constraints and fears around community acceptance stifle action.

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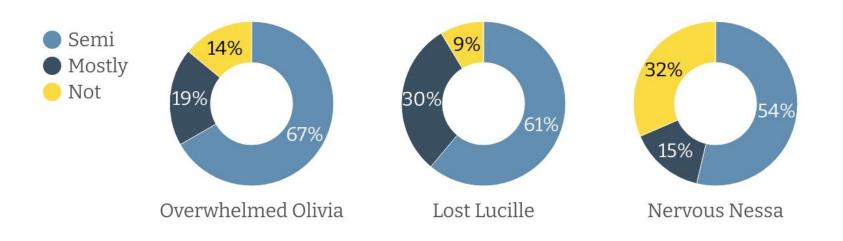
Respondents overwhelmingly believe that they can make a difference when it comes to racial justice (75%) and a majority (58%) are currently involved in their communities in some way

PERSONA

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Overall, respondents show partial, if not near-complete, alignment with at least one of the three tested personas

Persona Alignment





Length of Time in Community

	Less than 2 years	2-5 vea	ars 6-10 v	vears 🔵 1	1-15 vears	More than 15 ve	ars
	All Respondents	16	20		18	44	
	Overwhelmed Olivia						
	Not	10	15	17	56		
Most respondents	Semi	19	2	20	18	40	
Most respondents	Mostly	12	20	18	li.	50	
have lived in their							
	Lost Lucille						
community for at	Not			14	18	43	
least 10 years	Semi	20		19	19	39	
	Mostly	9	22	15	5	3	
	Nervous Nessa		_				
	Not	18		7	20	42	
	Semi	18	19		18	43	
	Mostly	8	26	1	.4	51	

25

50

75

Q: Roughly how many years have you lived in your current community?

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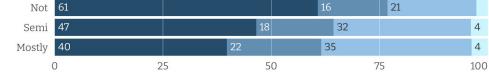
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Length of Time in South

- Lived in the South my whole life
- Grew up in the South, but spent some time living in other areas before returning
- Grew up somewhere else, then moved to the South

Other (please specify)

29 All Respondents 49 4 **Overwhelmed** Olivia Not 29 51 29 17 Semi Mostly 40 31 7 Lost Lucille 18 Not 71 50 28 3 Semi Mostly 43 34 5 Nervous Nessa

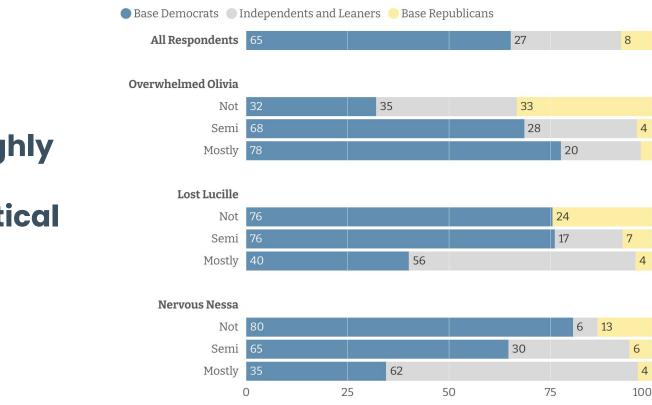


Q: Which of the following best describes the areas you've lived in?

...However, only three in 10 are "true" transplants, and just under half are life-long Southerners



Persona Political Alignment



Q: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a:

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Personas roughly fall into their expected political alignments

Notably, only a quarter of respondents identify as Evangelical or Non-evangelical protestant.

Additionally, significant portion of respondents describe themselves as "non-religious."

Religious Affiliation

Protestant, Non-Evangelical	20
Evangelical	5
Observant Catholic	3
Non-observant Catholic	8
Other	18
Non-religious	46

Q: Which of the following best matches your religious affiliation?



Top Community Values

Equality is one of the most important values for respondents when it comes to maintaining strong communities, followed by responsibility and community

Only one in 5 respondents select "Honesty" as a top value for maintaining strong communities

Equality	55
Responsibility	33
Community	32
Family	29
Fairness	27
Security	27
Freedom	24
Honesty	21
Justice	21
Норе	14
Faith	7
Patriotism	2
Other (please specify)	5

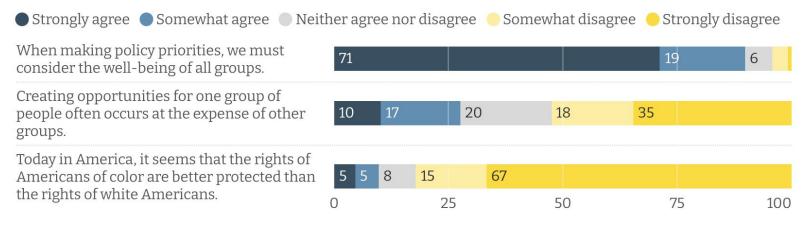
Q: Focus now on yourself. In your opinion, which THREE of the following values are most important for maintaining strong local communities?



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Respondents overwhelmingly believe that policy priorities must take into account the well-being of all groups and reject the notion that Americans of color are better protected than their white peers.

Policy Priorities



Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

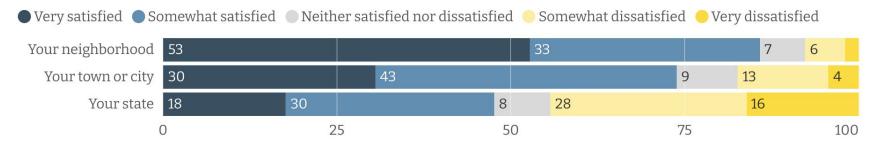


SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES IN CONTEXT

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Majorities of respondents are satisfied with how things are going in their local areas, but divided when it comes to how they feel about their state.

Satisfaction With Local Areas



Q: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a:



Just over half of voters say their community welcomes and includes them, but six in 10 believe they would be treated poorly if they expressed beliefs different from others

Belonging Within Community

🕒 Strongly agree 🕒 Somewhat agree 🔵 Neither agree nor disagree 🥚 Somewhat disagree 😑 Strongly disagree

Positive Messages

I feel that I can make a meaningful impact in my local community.	20	41		21	11	7
People in my local community welcome and include me in activities.	22	33		29	11	5
I feel like a valued member of my local community.	14	35	29		16	6
When interacting with people in my local community, I feel like I truly belong.	15	33	24		20	7
I feel like an "insider" who understands how my local community works.	8	27	33	22		10

Negative Messages

I would be treated poorly by members of my local community if I expressed beliefs different from theirs.	26	36		18 <mark>14</mark>	7
I am unable to influence decision-making in my local community.	17	27	30	19	6
community.	0	25	50	75	100

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Q: Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Respondents most often cite local schools, churches, and volunteer organizations as places where they feel a sense of belonging in their community

"Ocala down town farmer's market. Everyone is incredibly friendly and always willing to chat." - 40yo, 15+ years in community, FL, Strong Democrat

"Church I always feel welcome and I feel like I belong." - 49yo, 15+ years in community, AR, Independent lean Democrat

"My neighborhood. There's a strong sense of community among most of us. We'd all drop something to help another out." - 41yo, 15+ years in community, SC, Strong Democrat



Most respondents believe that individuals with marginalized identities are often excluded from their communities - both through individual hostilities and systemic barriers

"LBGT community. They were asked not to participate in the Christmas parade." - 43yo, 15+ years in community, TN, Strong Republican

"I feel like the area I live in is very racist. I feel people are stereotyped by what they look like; Hispanics are automatically illegal immigrants, African Americans are automatically criminals." - 45yo, 15+ years in community, NC, Weak Democrat

"Sure. Those with less money, resources, POC, elderly, anyone partially on the margins." - 48yo, 15+ years in community, GA, Strong Democrat

"Spanish-speakers, lack of community resources for assimilation." - 46yo, 15+ years in community, GA, Weak Democrat



When identifying shared values, most respondents gravitate toward family, community, and helping one another

"Making sure to take care of each other." - 42yo, 15+ years in community, TX, Strong Democrat

"I think everyone genuinely wants to do right by their neighbors and be a good citizen." - 50yo, <15 years in community, GA, strong Democrat

"Ability to have the freedom to provide a safe, comfortable life for our families" -, 46yo, 15+ years in community, NC, Independent lean Democrat

However, there is also a significant group of respondents who feel that conservative and religious values - which they don't hold - dominate

"I understand that most of my community is Christian and Republican however, I don't think they value anything but themselves" - 44yo, <15 years in community, TN, Weak Democrat

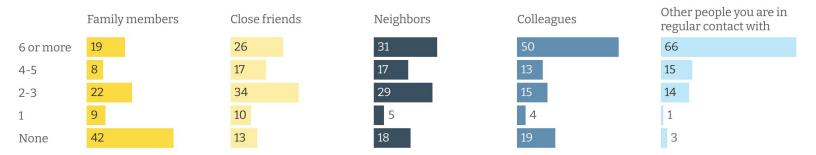
"'Christian' values of treating everyone as a brother - as long as people look at and believe like you" - 45yo, <15 years in community, NC, Independent lean Democrat



Most voters have at least one person in their lives that is another race or ethnicity from them

However, the more intimate the connection, the smaller the number of those who are different races/ethnicities

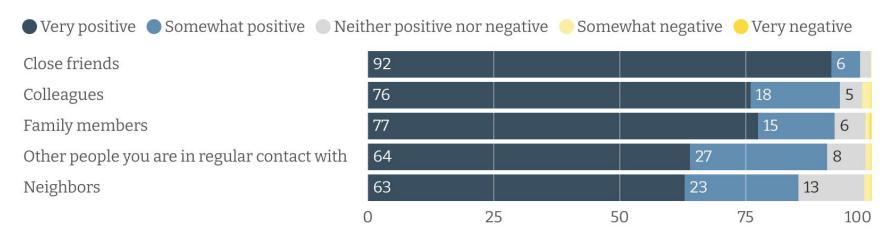
Diversity of Everyday Life



Q: How many of your family, close friends, neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances are from another race or ethnicity than you?

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Overall, respondents report having "very positive" experiences with people close to them of different races or ethnicities



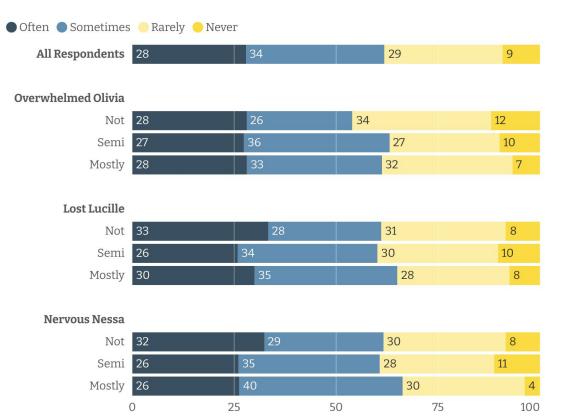
Q: How would you describe the interactions with the people you identified above (e.g., family, close friends, neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances who are from another race or ethnicity than you)? (Respondents were shown only the options in which they indicated they had relationships with people from other races).

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Conversations about Racial Justice

A majority of respondents hear about conversations about racial justice in their communities semi-frequently

Those who are more aligned with the personas modelled are more likely to be attuned to these conversations.

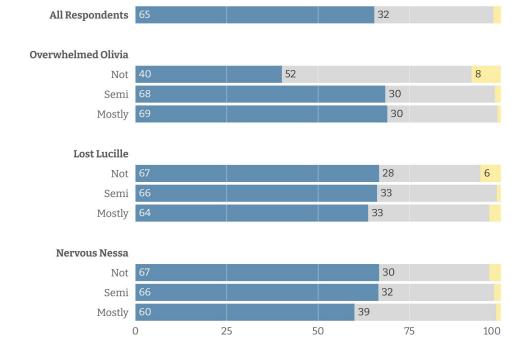


Q: There are a lot of conversations in America today about racial justice and making our communities more fair for people of all races. How often do you hear about such conversations happening in your local community?



Views on Discrimination

- When it comes to discrimination against Black people in our country today, the bigger problem is racism in our laws and systems.
- When it comes to discrimination against Black people in our country today, the bigger problem is racism by individual people.
- Othere is no discrimination against Black people in our country today.



Q: Which of the following comes closest to your view?

Most respondents feel that the larger issue when it comes to discrimination against Black people is systemic, not individual



Majorities of respondents frequently talk to like-minded people about politics, race, and equity but are less likely to do so with people that have different views, or confront someone on their opinions

Conversations About Race

Often Sometimes Rarely Never

68 Talk about politics with like-minded friends and family. 55 Talk about race and equity with like-minded friends and family. Talk about politics with people that have opinions different from 19 28 Talk about race and equity with people that have opinions different 14 51 30 Confront a family member or friend that is saying something racist, 19 29 Confront someone you don't know that is saying something racist, 11 38 15 0 25 50 75

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3

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O: How often do you find yourself having the following conversations or discussions?

yours.

from yours.

sexist, or unjust.

sexist, or unjust.

MOTIVATORS AND BARRIERS

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Virtually all respondents have gotten involved in their community in some way, with the most popular forms of civic engagement being voting and donating to a cause, candidate or political party

Civic Engagement

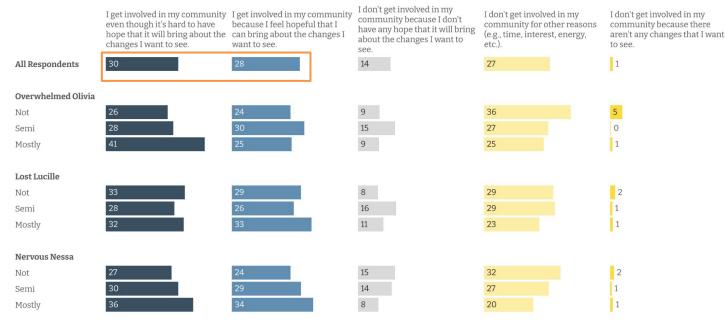
Voted in an election	84
Donated to a cause, candidate, or political party	62
Supported or promoted an issue of importance to me on social media or online	59
Asked friends or family to support a cause or register to vote	56
Contacted an elected official (via email, phone call, letter, etc)	44
Mentored a young person	36
Participated in a PTA or school board meeting	33
Volunteered for a cause, candidate, or political party	29
Been active in your church	21
Participated in a moderated conversation with people who hold views that are different from your own	20
Attended a town hall or community forum	19
Attended a demonstration for or against a candidate, person, or issue	18
Organized community efforts	15
None of these	3

Q: Below are some ways that people get involved in their community. Which of the following have you done in the last year? Select all that apply.



Nearly six in 10 voters say that they are involved in their community, even if significant portions feel that it's hard to bring about the changes they want to see

Getting Involved in Community



Q: Thinking about your involvement in your community, which of the following comes closest to your view?

Respondents' motivation to be involved comes from three main sources:

Personal Values

"My privileged upbringing and education makes me feel like I have a responsibility to be engaged and contribute positively to my community, plus my faith and hope for the future." - 40yo, <15 years in community, Weak Democrat, FL

Desire for Change

"My daughter. We need to make the world a better place for her. She needs bodily autonomy. She needs a safe. School environment without fear of being shot. She'll need affordable housing and insurance eventually. And affordable groceries. We always need to strive for better. They deserve it." - 44yo, <15 years in community, FL, Strong Democrat

Ability to impact

"A sense that that effort makes someone else feel safer, more comfortable, more themselves .. an ability to demonstrate inclusion and make actual changes that impact actual humans" - 40yo, 15+ years in community, Strong Democrat, FL

Respondents overwhelmingly say that time is the biggest obstacle when it comes to getting involved...

"It's hard to find time. Do I spend my off hours with my family? Or do I spend my off hours canvassing? It's a difficult balance to achieve." - 44yo, <15 years in community, FL, Strong Democrat

"I have to work. So the answer there is time." - 44yo, 15+ years in community, NC, Independent lean Democrat

...but fears around safety, and lack of knowledge or feeling overwhelmed about where to start are also prominent

"Violence against me or my family if I show what "side" I'm on in any way." - 45yo, 15+ years in community, VA, Strong Democrat

"Feeling dispirited and fatigued. Not knowing who to trust or where to start." - 44yo, 15+ years in community, AR, Strong Democrat

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Respondents are divided when it comes to identifying the obstacles that keeps individuals or organizations from being effective

While some respondents feel that the most significant barrier is a lack of resources or knowledge...

"Exposure, funding, more volunteers" - 42yo, <15 years in community, NC, Pure Independent

"People don't know where to start, it's intimidating and overwhelming." - 41yo, 15+ years in community, WV, Strong Democrat ...Others feel that a fear of change, or close-mindedness and apathy in their communities is what stands in the way

"I believe their biggest obstacle is not knowing how to work with others that may see things differently than them. Compromise is possible. I think many people are too busy with themselves and their lives to really take a moment to find the needs in their community." - 48yo, <15 years in community, VA, Strong Democrat



Belief in Ability to Make a Difference

	Strongly agree	mewhat agree	Neither ag	gree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	😑 Strong	gly disagro	ee
	All Respondents	31		48		13	4	3
	Overwhelmed Olivia							
	Not	28	3	6	28		4	4
ly ey	Semi	30		50		13	5	3
ev	Mostly	38		45		9	5	4
~,								
	Lost Lucille							
	Not	40		37		14	E	5
•	Semi	30		49		14	4	
ial	Mostly	31		48		12	5	5
	Nervous Nessa							
	Not	33		46		16		4
	Semi	30		47		14	6	
	Mostly	34		51			8 4	4
		0	25	5	0 7	5		100

Respondents overwhelmingly believe that they can make a difference in advancing racial justice

Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "People like me can make a difference in advancing racial justice."



Motivations For Taking Action

Respondents are most motivated by the possibility of helping all people feel at home and of creating a better future for their loved ones

To help all people feel at home and welcome where they live	57
To create a better future for our loved ones than the one we were raised in	49
To make a difference, even if it might be small	34
To step in when I see that others could use a helping hand	32
To keep communities from missing out on talent, innovation, and brilliance when not all people have the opportunity to succeed.	32
To be a role model for young people who are important in my life	31
To find a community of people that I trust and can work with to make a difference	19
To help an organization I care about make a difference	15
To help me feel like the best version of myself	7
Other (please specify)	1
None of these	4

Q: Which of the following reasons would most motivate you to take action to advance racial equity? Please select UP TO THREE.



31

Factors For Participation

When deciding to participate in advancing racial equity, the most important factors for respondents are the agenda or the organizer and the time commitment

What the organizer's agenda is	57
Whether I can do it flexibly, on my own time or schedule	53
How near to me or far away it is	50
How much time it will take	48
How other people there feel, believe, or act	35
How much money it will cost	33
What I would need to do there	33
Whether I will already know people there	19
Whether I can take my family or friends	14
Whether I can learn something new	12
Whether I can meet new people	6
How much fun I might have	4
Other (please specify)	7
None of these	5

Q: Which of the following factors are most important to you when deciding whether to take action or participate in an event to advance racial equity? Please select UP TO FIVE factors that are most important to you.



Biggest Challenges

Economic issues rise to the top, with over half of respondents selecting "the cost of housing and rent" as one of the top three biggest community challenges

The cost of housing and rent	53
Growing economic inequality	31
Schools, giving children the tools they need to succeed	30
Too much development, too fast	29
Polarization and the inability to talk across differences	28
LGBTQ+ rights	24
Racism and discrimination	22
Opioid and substance abuse crisis	15
Crime and public safety	13
Loss of natural resources	9
Gender equality	7
The potential for political violence	7
Extreme weather events such as flooding	6
Voter access and election security	6
Lowering government spending, more fiscal responsibility	5
Reducing illegal immigration	4
An increase in hate incidents	3
Water quality and availability	2

Q: Below is a list of issues that people sometimes consider to be challenges in their communities. In your opinion, what are the THREE biggest challenges in your community? Please select UP TO THREE.



MESSAGE **TESTING**

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Message Test for Persona Groups:

Statement A [50% see]: We all want to feel safe and welcome where we live, work, and play. But given our country's history of prejudice, some people don't feel like they belong here. Thankfully, we can each do something about it right now.

We each have more power than we think. But sometimes we need guidance, and connection to others who feel like we do. That support can help us overcome discomfort, find time to contribute, and realize the difference we can make.

People like us can start with the things we do every day, like talking to our friends and family, or putting our talents to use to create caring communities. It only takes a few minutes to learn how you can make a difference.

Statement B [50% see]: We all want to create a better world than the one we were raised in. A big part of making that happen is creating communities where everyone—no matter where you come from, what you look like, or what you believe in—feels welcomed, supported, and that they belong.

We've come a long way, but there's more work to be done. While we did not create today's inequalities, we can be part of the solution. We can create kinder communities for ourselves, our families, neighbors, and generations to come.



Respondents resonate strongly with both messages, but prefer a statement that focuses just on community

[50% saw version A]

We all want to feel safe and welcome where we live, work, and play. But given our country's history of prejudice, some people don't feel like they belong here. Thankfully, we can each do something about it right now.

We each have more power than we think. But sometimes we need guidance, and connection to others who feel like we do. That support can help us overcome discomfort, find time to contribute, and realize the difference we can make. People like us can start with the things we do every day, like talking to our friends and family, or putting our talents to use to create caring communities. It only takes a few minutes to learn how you can make a difference.

How favorable or unfavorable do you feel toward this statement?

● Very favorable ● Somewhat favorable ● Neutral ● Somewhat unfavorable ● Very unfavorable

All Respondents	56	31	7	2	3

[50% saw version B]

We all want to create a better world than the one we were raised in. A big part of making that happen is creating communities where everyone—no matter where you come from, what you look like, or what you believe in—feels welcomed, supported, and that they belong.

We've come a long way, but there's more work to be done. While we did not create today's inequalities, we can be part of the solution. We can create kinder communities for ourselves, our families, neighbors, and generations to come.

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How favorable or unfavorable do you feel toward this statement?

● Very favorable ● Somewhat favorable ● Neutral ● Somewhat unfavorable ● Very unfavorable

All Respondents

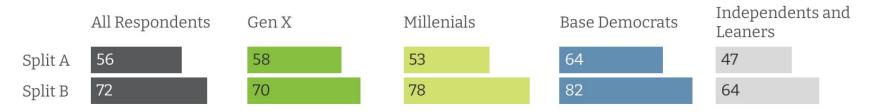
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There is a key generational and partisan difference when it comes to the reception of each message

Inclusive Community Statements

Total "Very favorable"

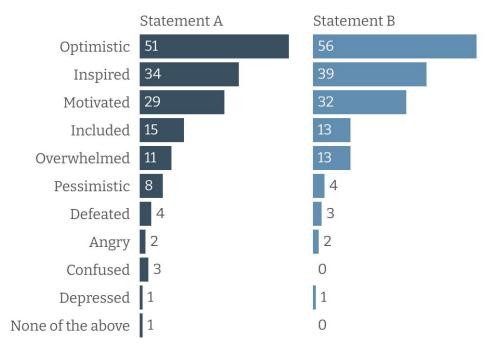


Q: How favorable or unfavorable do you feel toward this statement?



Reaction to Statements

While both messages elicit positive emotions, respondents are slightly more likely to say they feel "optimistic" and "inspired" after reading Statement B

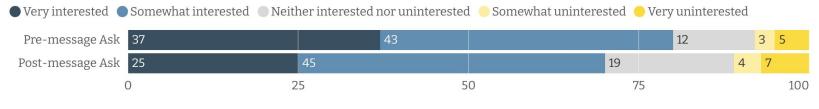


Q: How does this statement make you feel? Select all that apply.



After messaging, interest in taking action to advance racial justice remains roughly the same

Statement A Movers



Statement B Movers

• Very interested Somewhat interested Neither interested nor uninterested Somewhat uninterested Very uninterested

Pre-message Ask	29		44		18	4	5
Post-message Ask	20	51			19	4	6
	0	25	5	0	75		100

Q Initial: How interested or uninterested are you in taking actions to advance racial justice in your community?

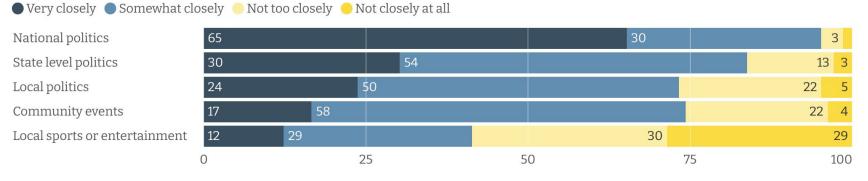
Q Final: Based off the statement you just read, how interested or uninterested are you in taking actions to advance racial justice in your community?

INFORMATION AND MESSENGERS

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Respondents regularly keep up with politics at all levels, but the level of engagement decreases when getting to a more local level

Engagement in Community and Politics



Q: How closely do you follow the following topics?

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Levels of Trust

When receiving information, respondents universally trust friends, doctors/nurses, and K-12 educators, and are wary of faith leaders and the Republican party

Friends	54			44			
Doctors and nurses	47		4	5			7
K-12 educators	47		44	1			6
Family	50			41			7
Veterans	23	65					11
Local business owners	18	67					14
Your neighbors	15	69					13
The Democratic Party	23	55				11	12
Community leaders	5 62					25	8
Law enforcement	13	53				24	10
The federal government	6 52					28	14
Your local government	3 51					32	14
Faith leaders	8 28			30			35
The Republican Party	9	14					76
	0		5	0	75		100

• Strongly trust • Somewhat trust • Somewhat distrust • Strongly distrust

Q: For each of the following public figures or groups, please indicate how much you trust the information they provide.



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Information About Local Issues

When seeking information about local issues, respondents are most likely to turn to word-of-mouth sources, local TV news, and Facebook

Word of mouth (e.g. friends, family, or neighbors)	63
Local TV news	54
Facebook	51
Local newspaper	39
Organizations you are a member of	37
Email newsleters	27
FM Radio	27
Instagram	26
TikTok	18
Local political party	18
Nextdoor	17
Town halls	13
YouTube	11
Twitter/X	10
Reddit	10
Bulletin boards	4
AM Radio	3
Somewhere else (please specify)	14
None of the above	1

Q: Where do you get information about local issues? Select all that apply.



CONCLUSION

Nuanced relationship to community: Just over half of respondents feel welcomed by their communities (54%), and when asked to identify shared values in their communities, respondents tend to point to helping and supporting each other. At the same time, many respondents (61%) feel that they would be ostracized for expressing different views, and that fear reveals itself as a central obstacle for getting involved in efforts for change.

Gap between values and involvement: Respondents demonstrate keen interest in getting involved in their communities, and substantial portions report being civically engagement or active in their communities. Moreover, nearly eight in 10 respondents feel that they have the power to make a change in advancing racial justice. At the same time, respondents express feelings of overwhelm at the magnitude of the issues, or fear about backlash or ostracization from other community members.