



# LIFE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG MINNESOTANS WITH MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES

*INTERSECTIONALITY STUDY III*

## QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

7 AUGUST 2024

Research conducted by,  
MarketResponse International  
Project #2526



For the Minnesota Governor's Council  
on Developmental Disabilities





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# RESEARCH OVERVIEW

**Multi-phased Intersectionality Studies** are focused on the intersection of developmental disabilities with race and ethnicity and other marginalized communities, which leads to social discrimination and disparities in areas such as:

- Health Care
- Employment
- Education
- Housing
- Social Services (home and community-based services)

## Phase I: Qualitative research completed in August 2022

- Literature review
- Internal Qualitative Interviews
- Narrative Research Focus Groups and 1:1 Interviews (n=49)

Was designed to gain insights regarding:

- The nature of discrimination and all its forms
- How it is experienced by various groups with intersecting profiles
- Impacts and results, both short-term and long-term

**Phase II: Benchmark Quantitative survey completed in September 2023** was designed to gain comparative measures of various forms of discrimination among four populations (n=593):

- 1) White people with disabilities
- 2) Black, indigenous, (and other) people of color (BIPOC\*) with disabilities
- 3) White people without disabilities
- 4) BIPOC without disabilities

\* We are using the term BIPOC to represent all non-white racial and ethnic communities included in this study.

**Phase III: Quantitative and Qualitative research completed in July 2024** is

focused on young Minnesotans (ages 13-22), to better understand their life experiences and the extent to which those with marginalized identities feel included in the One Minnesota promise of diversity, equity and inclusion. This pilot study provides preliminary measures (n=261), which can help inform the design and fielding of a future potential statewide survey of young Minnesotans.



# RESEARCH METHOD



## Quantitative Survey of Young Minnesotans

- Included 9-12<sup>th</sup> grades and transition program students, ages 13-22
- Two groups were identified, based on disability status:

No disability (control sample)	n=176	Total Disability Sample: n=85*
Have a disability	n=57	
Parent (assisting child respondent w/ disability)	n=28	
TOTAL n=261		

\*55% reported as a developmental disability

The quantitative survey was administered through two methods:

- 1) Commercial opt-in online panel, used primarily to recruit young persons without disabilities from all around the State of Minnesota.
- 2) Young Minnesotans with developmental and other disabilities were included in the survey with help from state agencies

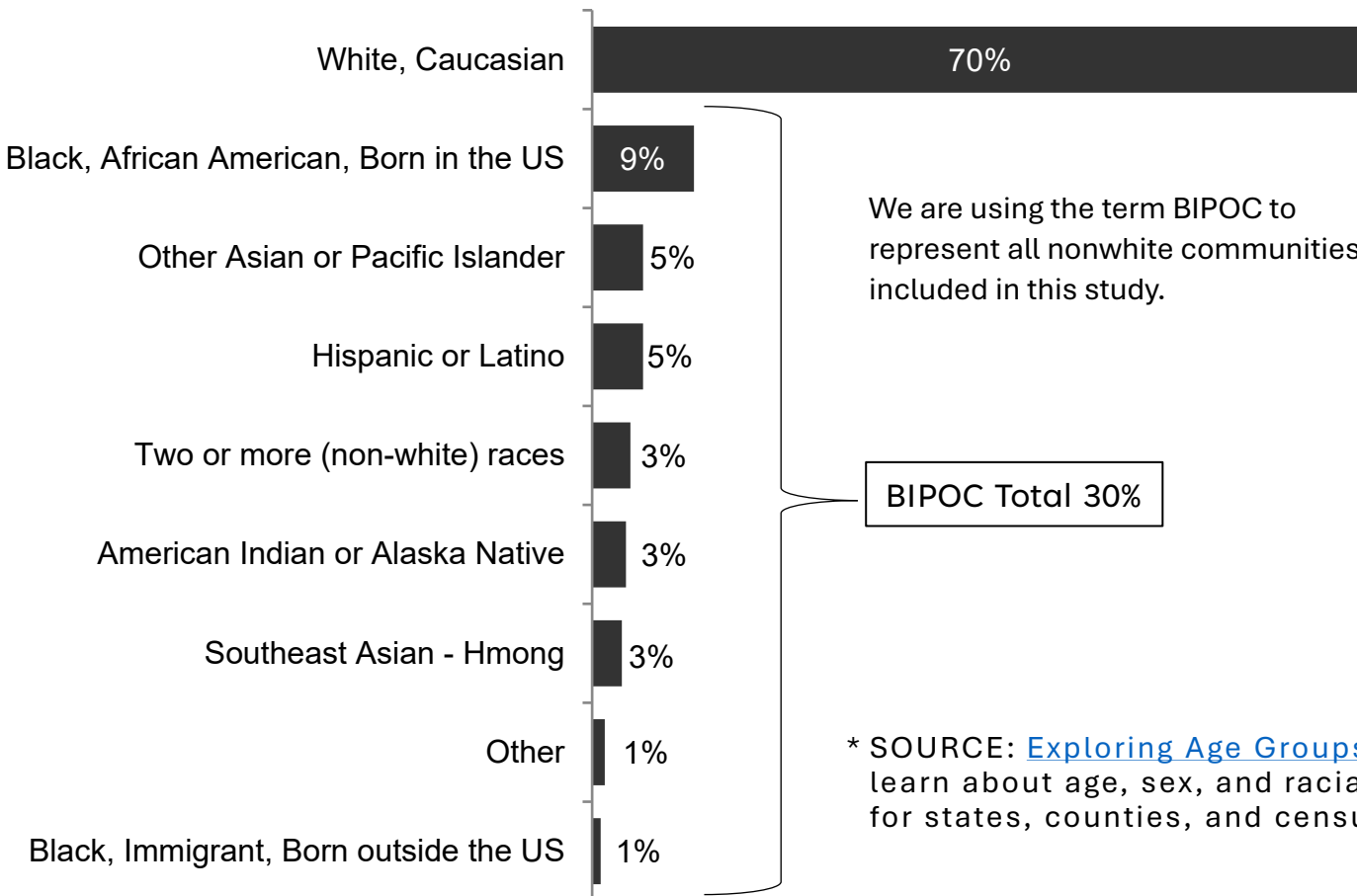
A qualitative Online Community was conducted among a sampling of respondents with disabilities who participated in the online survey

- n=7 around the state of Minnesota
- 2 weeks duration

# RESPONDENT PROFILE – Youth Respondent Profiles

With 70% White, Caucasian, and 30% BIPOC, the survey sample closely matched the diversity of the general population of young Minnesotans.\*

## Race, Ethnicity (n=261)

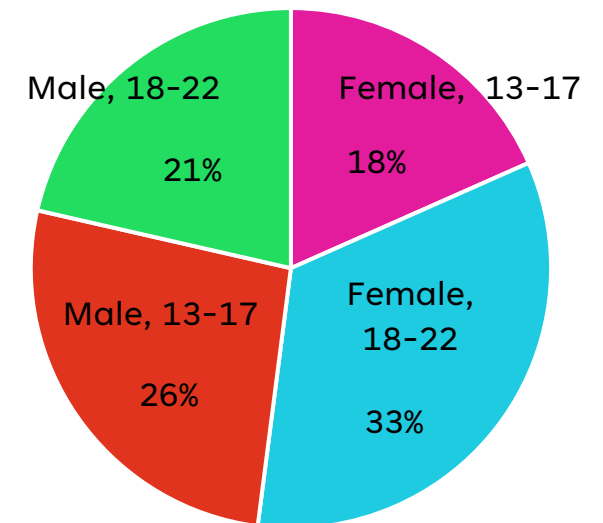


\* SOURCE: [Exploring Age Groups in the 2020 Census](#), learn about age, sex, and racial and ethnic diversity for states, counties, and census tracts

Our sample of young Minnesotans had good representation by age and gender:\*\*

- Age 13-17, 44%
- Age 18-22, 54%
- 47% Male
- 52% Female

## Age and Gender (n=256)

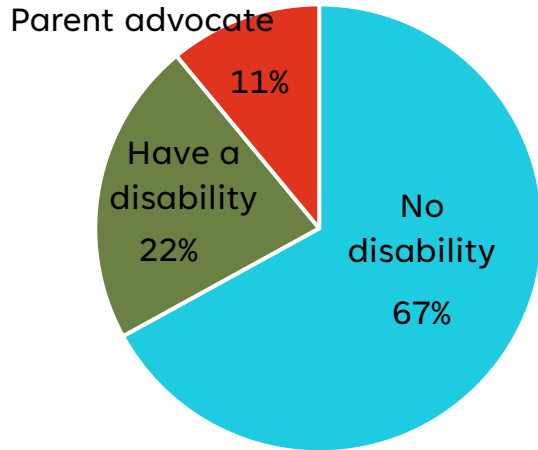


\*\*Data does not add up to 100% due to rounding and 2% self reporting as non-binary.

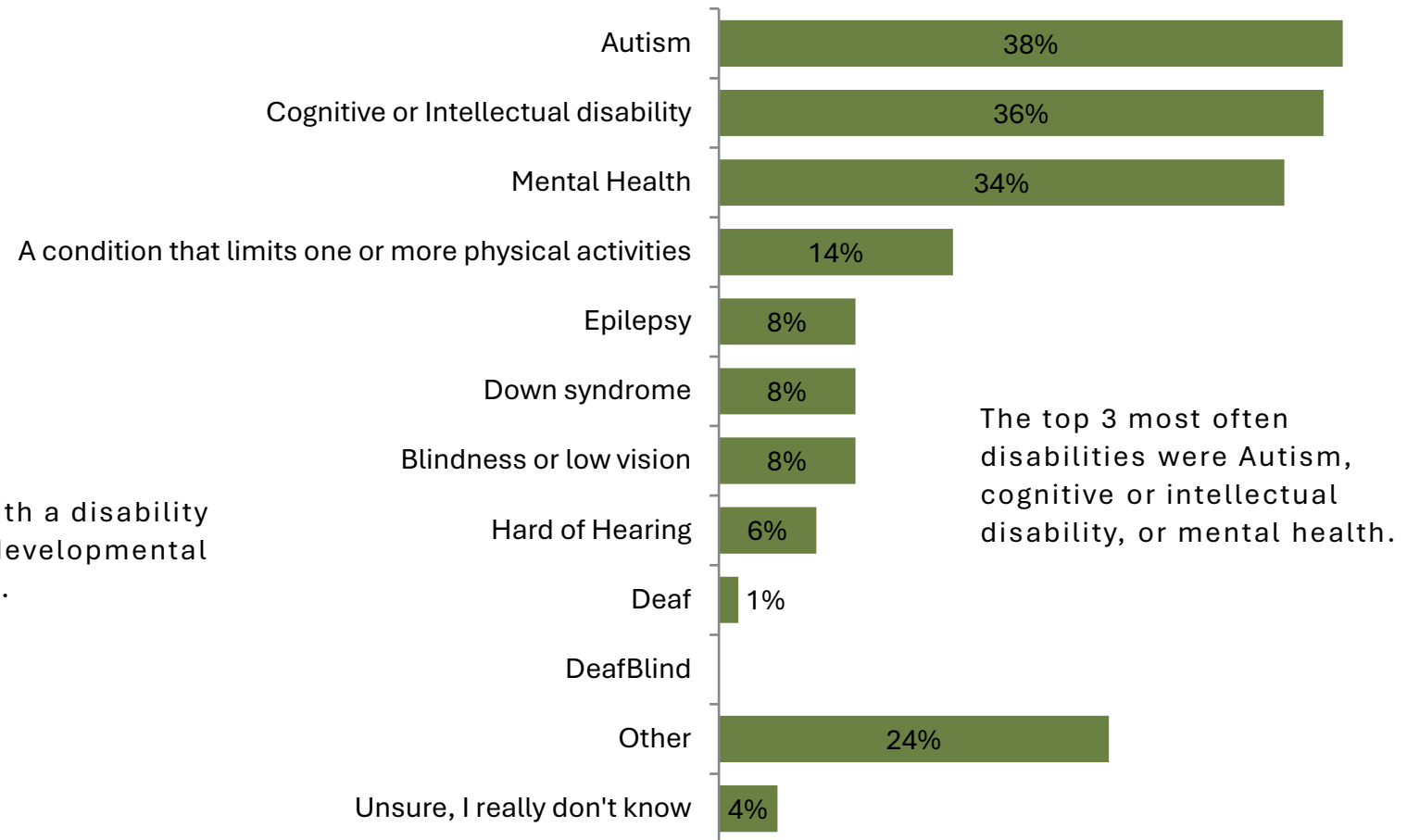
# RESPONDENT PROFILE – Disability Status

Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents did not have a disability, 22% had disability, and 11% were parents assisting their child or young adult in completing the survey.

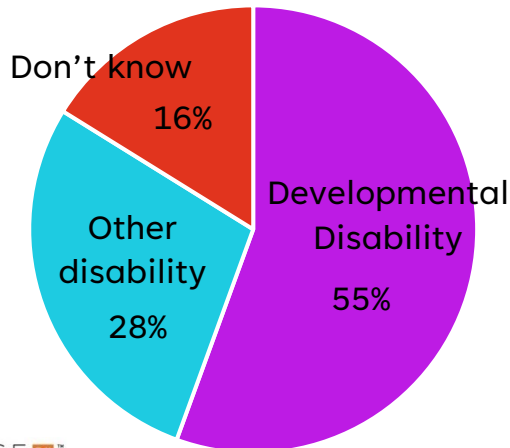
**Disability Status** (n=261)



**Nature of Disability** (n=85)



**Type of Disability** (n=85)



Of those with a disability 55% were developmental disabilities.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A DIFFERENT REALITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Twice as many incidences of discrimination were experienced by Minnesota teens and young adults with disabilities, as compared to youth without disabilities.

The young respondents selected words that best describe the way they typically feel when they are out and about and interacting with other people in their community. Words selected most often reveal very different perceptions among young people with disabilities, as compared to those without disabilities.

### The TOP 5 WORDS selected by . . .

Young people WITHOUT disabilities:

Friendly  
Anxious  
At Ease  
Confident  
Accepted

Young people WITH disabilities:

Friendly  
Anxious  
Misunderstood  
Excluded  
Frustrated

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – Intersectionality Impacts

## Impact of the intersection between disability and race and ethnicity:

- BIPOC teens and young adults **WITHOUT** disabilities experience twice as many incidences of discrimination, as compared to white youth without disabilities.
- For both white and BIPOC teens and young adults, having a disability greatly increases the likelihood of experiencing discrimination.
- The relative amounts of reported discrimination experiences were highest among young white Minnesotans with disabilities, as compared to the BIPOC youth with disabilities.
  - There was a similar finding from The One Minnesota Baseline Quantitative Survey among Minnesota adults, completed in September 2023. (Our project #2508)
  - We believe these similar findings from both studies are indications of a *loss of privilege* impact that is possibly more noticed and experienced by white people with disabilities, as compared to BIPOC with disabilities.

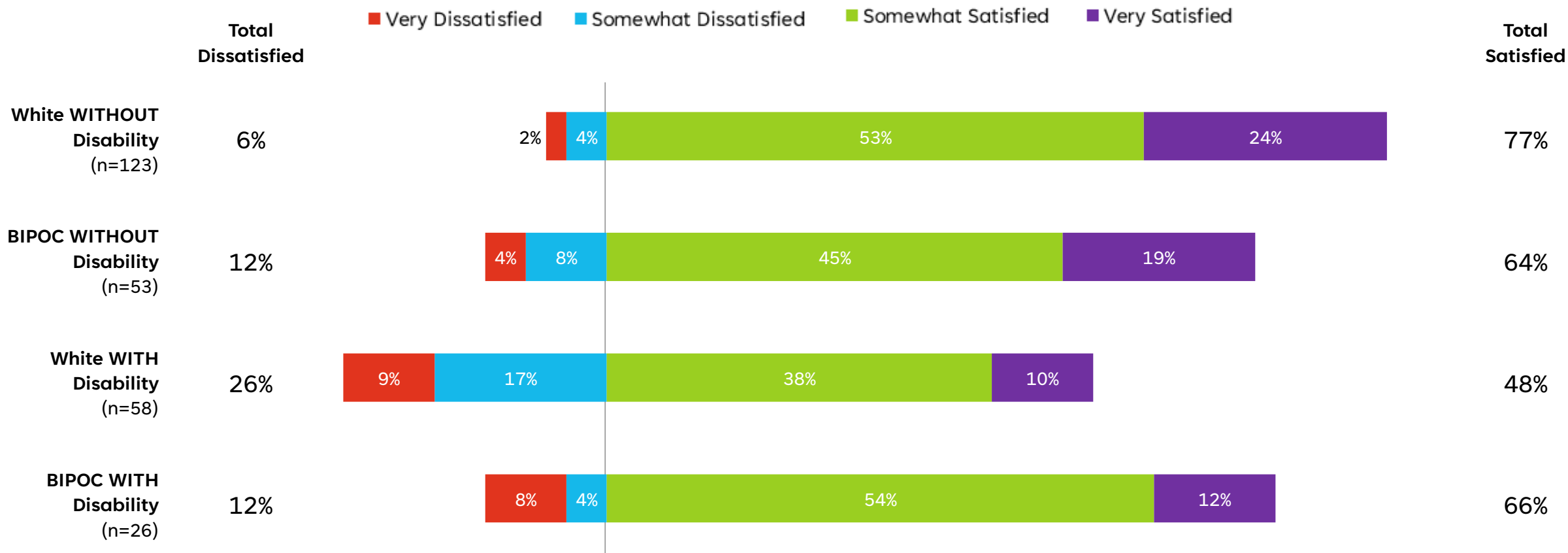
**Privilege** is a special right, advantage or immunity granted or available only to particular individuals or groups. Oxford Languages

In the original Intersectionality study completed in August 2022, we surmised that ***discrimination happens in the absence of privilege.***



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – Satisfaction in the Community

White people with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be dissatisfied with how they are treated, included, and accepted in their communities, as compared to BIPOC youth, with or without disabilities.



All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way you are treated, included, and accepted by your community as a whole?

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – Discrimination Experiences

When describing their discrimination experiences, including unfair treatment, barriers to products or services, or restrictions from privileges, the following top six themes emerged.

	White WITHOUT Disability (n=48)	BIPOC WITHOUT Disability (n=33)	White WITH Disability (n=46)	BIPOC WITH Disability (n=17)
Social Exclusion, Favoritism, and Bullying	17%	24%	35%	35%
Inadequate Support Services for People with Disabilities	6%	6%	46%	18%
Disability Discrimination in Education	4%	3%	28%	24%
Workplace Discrimination	15%	15%	9%	18%
Racial Discrimination	6%	33%	0%	6%
Healthcare Discrimination	8%	3%	11%	12%

Differences of 20% or more, between groups with sample sizes greater than 30, are likely to be statistically significant at the 90% level or greater.

To improve the lives of young Minnesotans with disabilities, the State would need to better understand the issues – and provide solutions related to – support services for disabilities, discrimination in education, and workplace and healthcare discrimination.

## DETAILED FINDINGS



**Achieving the One Minnesota promise is synonymous with eliminating discriminatory behaviors and barriers that limit the possibility for people to achieve their full potential.**

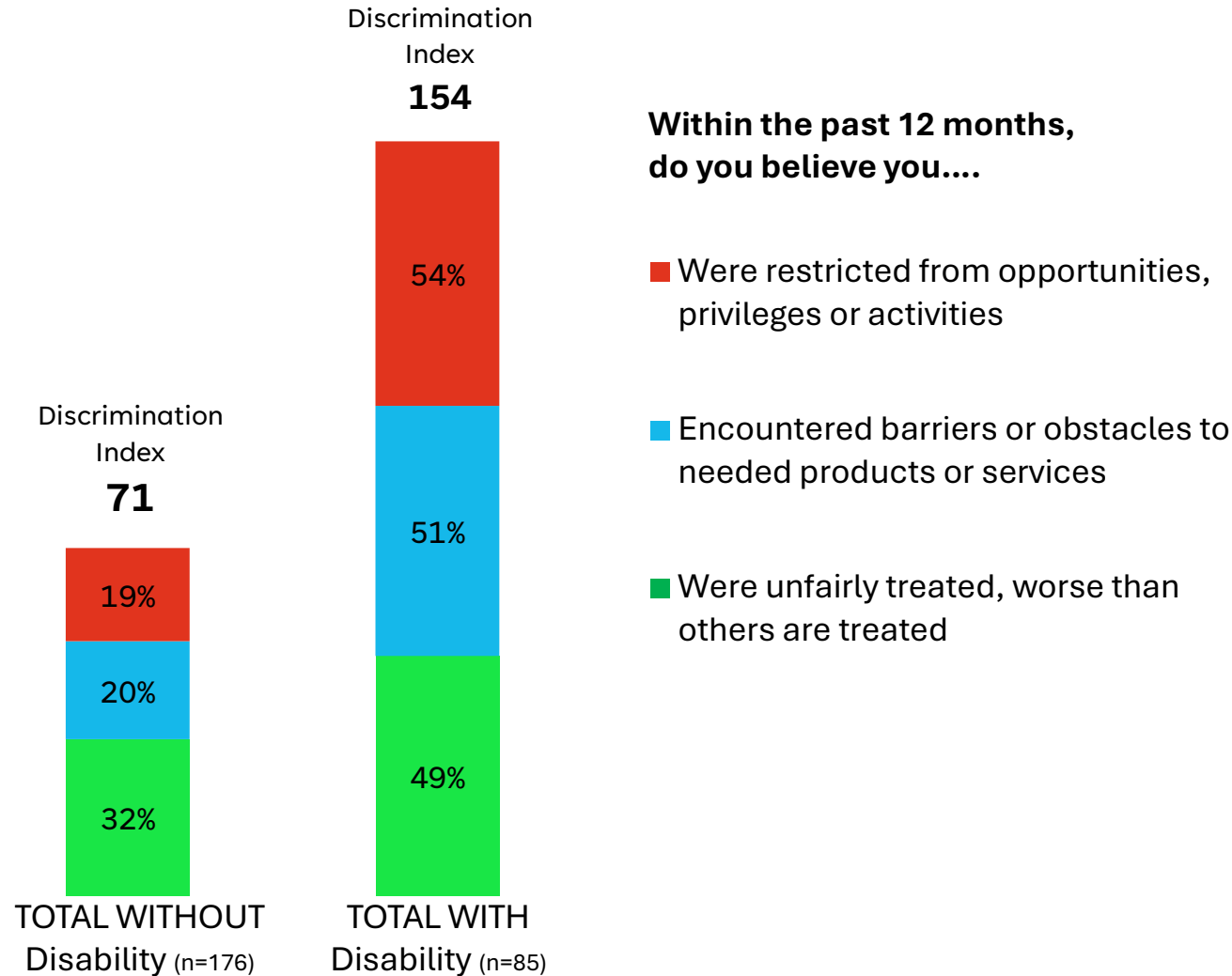
**Discrimination** is the act of making unjustified distinctions between people based on the groups, classes, or other categories to which they belong or are perceived to belong.

- Occurs when individuals or groups are unfairly treated in a way which is worse than other people are treated.
- Or when barriers or obstacles to needed products or services exist for some people but not for others.
- Or when members of one group are restricted from opportunities or privileges that are available to members of another group.



# MEASURES OF DISCRIMINATION

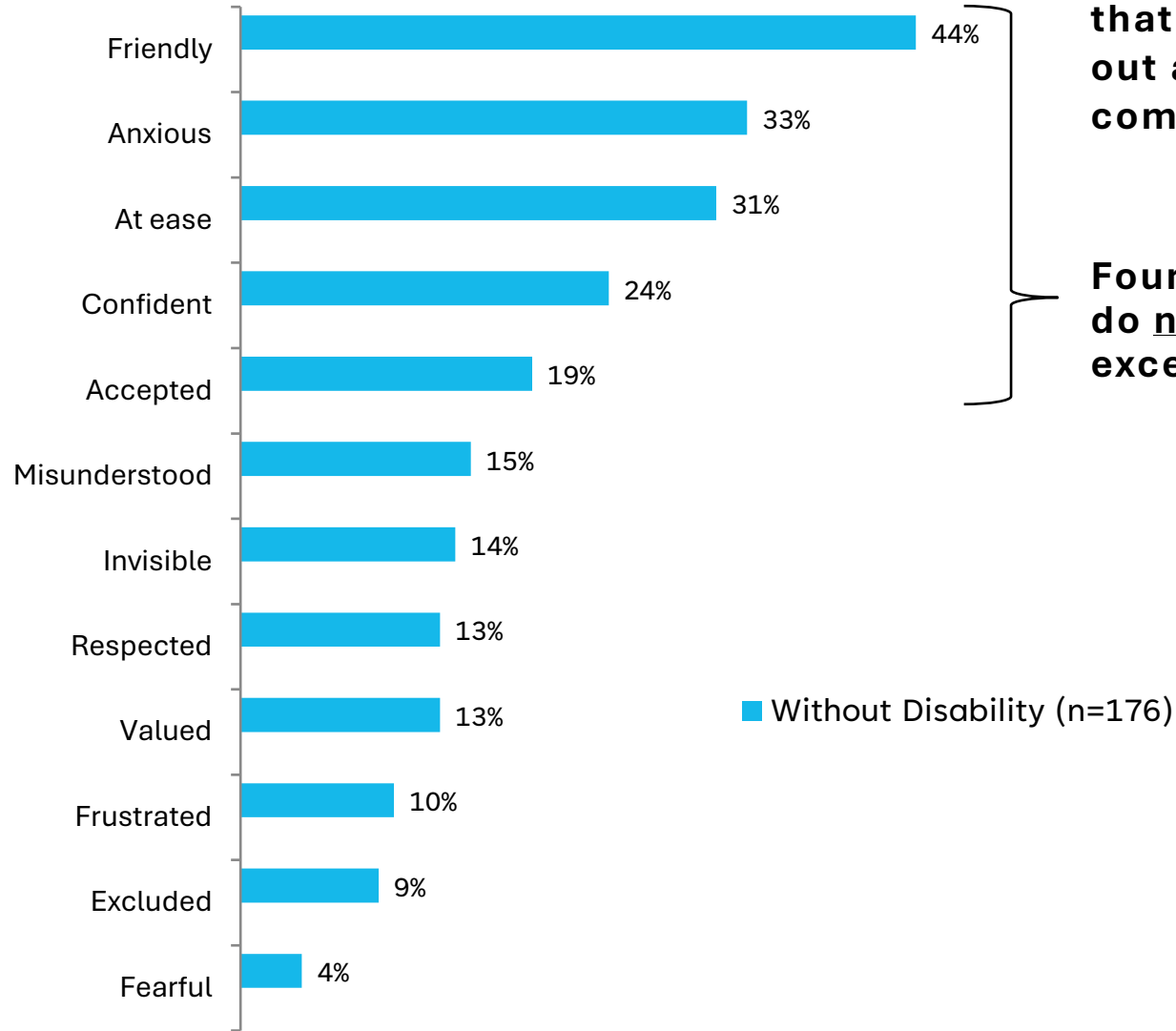
## Total Discrimination Indices



The three questions used to measure incidences of discrimination are shown here. Adding up the YES percents from the three questions yields a *total discrimination index* for each group.

As shown, twice as many incidences of discrimination were experienced by Minnesota teens and young adults with disabilities, as compared to youth without disabilities.

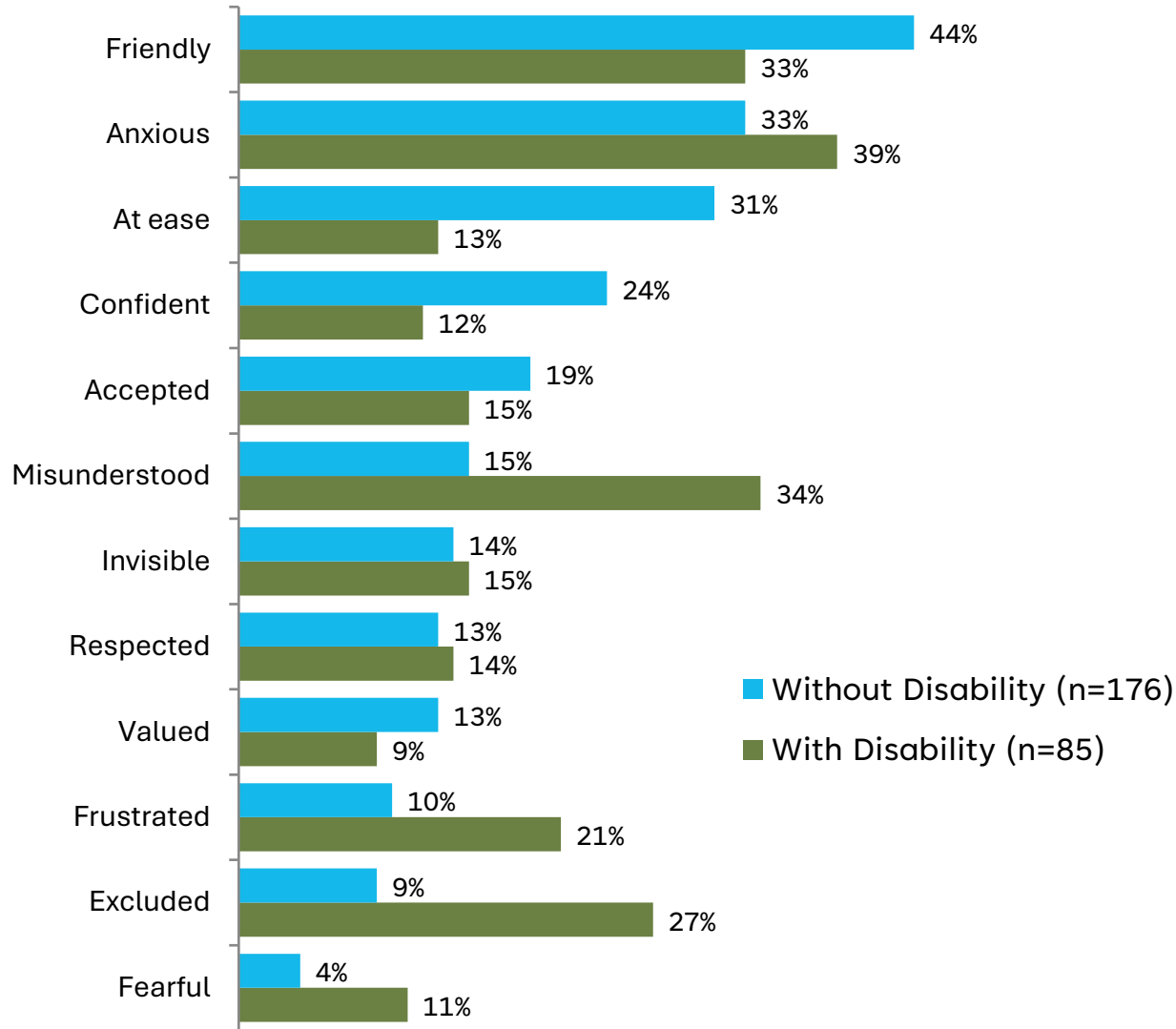
# HOW THE YOUTH FEEL IN THEIR COMMUNITY



The young Minnesotans were asked to select the few words that best describe the way they typically feel when they are out and about and interacting with other people in their community.

Four of the top 5 most selected words by those who do not have a disability were all positive. (The exception is the word *Anxious*.)

# HOW THE YOUTH FEEL IN THEIR COMMUNITY



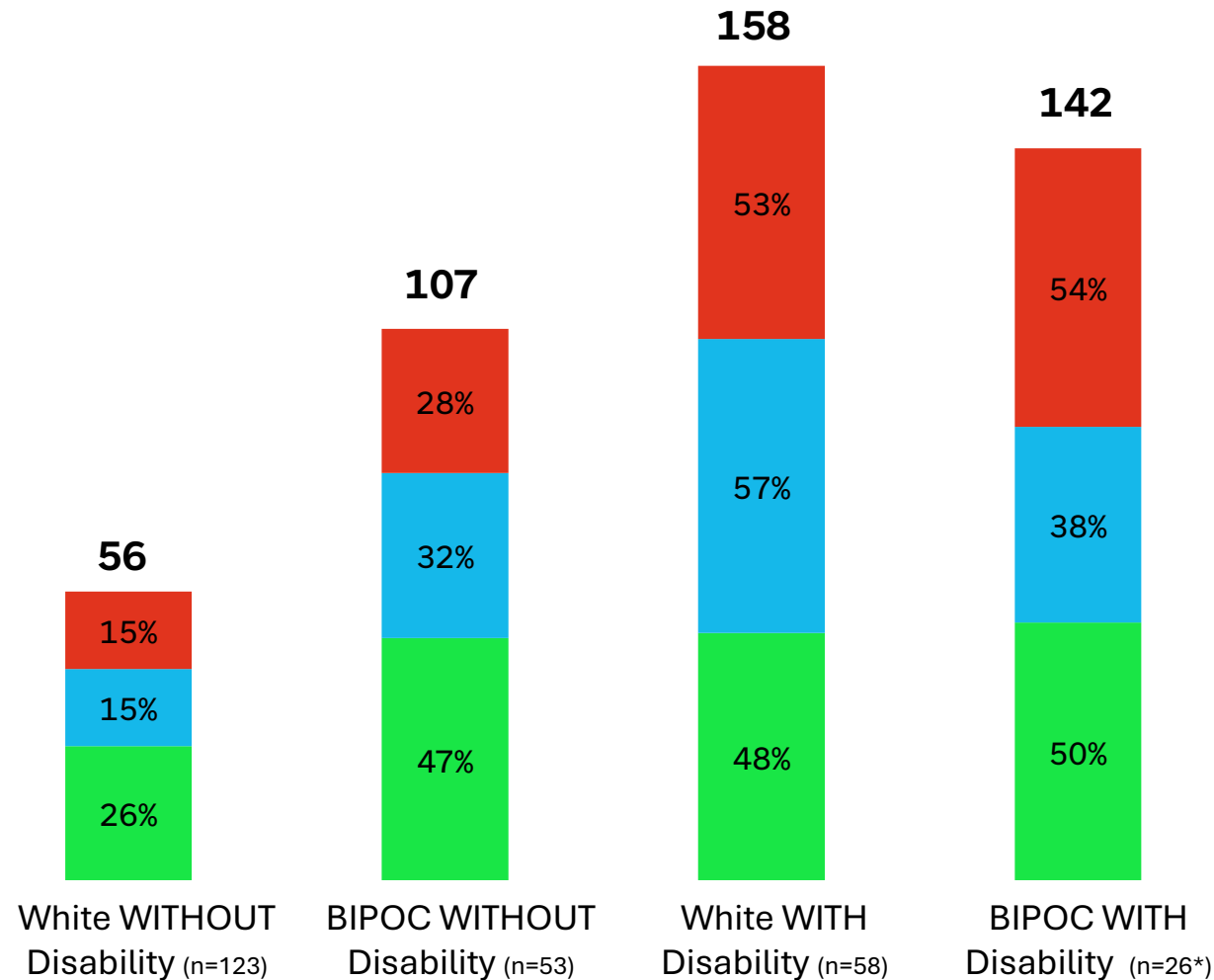
Four of the top 5 most selected words by the young Minnesotans with disabilities were negative:

- **Anxious**
- **Misunderstood**
- **Excluded**
- **Frustrated**



# INTERSECTIONALITY IMPACTS – Disability And Ethnicity

Total Discrimination Indices –  
by Disability Status and Race, Ethnicity



**BIPOC teens and young adults WITHOUT disabilities experience twice as many incidences of discrimination, as compared to white youth WITHOUT disabilities.**

**White youth with disabilities experienced the highest number of discrimination incidences.**

- Were restricted from opportunities, privileges or activities
- Encountered barriers or obstacles to needed products or services
- Were unfairly treated, worse than others are treated

\* Given the relatively small sample size of n=26, caution is advised in making statistical inferences to the population of young BIPOC Minnesotans with disabilities.

# INTERSECTIONALITY IMPACTS – How Youth Feel in Their Communities

The teens and young adults from the four groups selected words that best describe the way they typically feel when they are out and about and interacting with other people in their community.

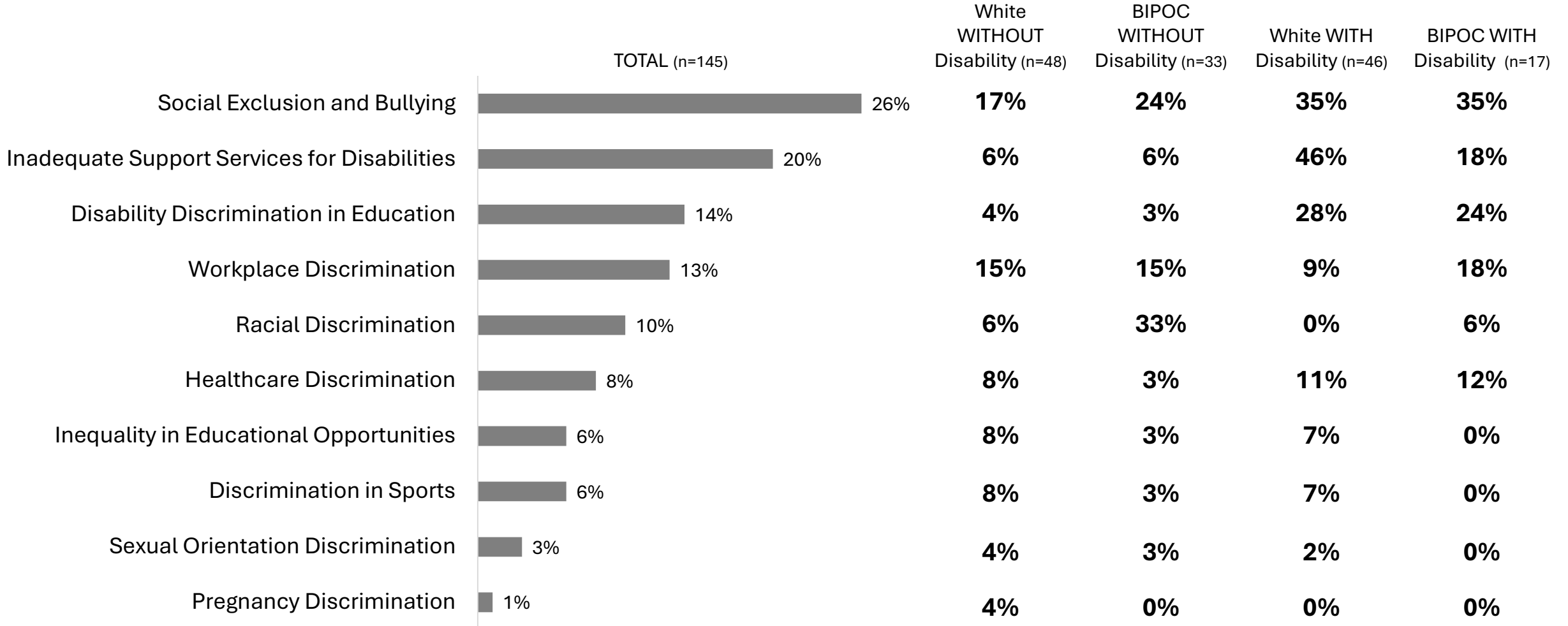
		White WITHOUT Disability (n=123)	BIPOC WITHOUT Disability (n=53)	White WITH Disability (n=58)	BIPOC WITH Disability (n=26*)	
POSITIVE	Friendly	45%	43%	34%	31%	<b>BIPOC youth with disabilities appear to be least likely to feel <u>at ease</u> in their communities.</b>
	At Ease	36%	21%	16%	8%	
	Confident	24%	25%	7%	23%	
	Accepted	22%	13%	16%	15%	
	Respected	15%	8%	10%	23%	
NEGATIVE	Anxious	29%	42%	41%	35%	<b><u>Fearful</u> was selected by one of five BIPOC with disabilities, substantially more than any other group.</b>
	Misunderstood	11%	23%	33%	38%	
	Frustrated	8%	13%	21%	19%	
	Excluded	8%	9%	29%	23%	
	Fearful	2%	8%	7%	19%	

Differences of 15% or more, between groups with sample sizes greater than 50, are likely to be statistically significant at the 90% level or greater.

\* Given the relatively small sample size of n=26, caution is advised in making statistical inferences to the population of young BIPOC Minnesotans with disabilities.

# DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES

The teens and young adults were asked to describe a time when they felt as though they were unfairly treated, or there were barriers to needed products or services, or they were restricted from privileges or activities. Their responses were coded as follows:



Differences of 20% or more, between groups with sample sizes greater than 30, are likely to be statistically significant at the 90% level or greater.



# DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES: White Without Disabilities

**Thirty-nine percent (39%) of young white Minnesotans without disabilities reported having any discrimination experiences. Some examples of those experiences are shown below under two general themes.**

## **Social Exclusion, Favoritism, and Bullying**

*Our school only celebrates and encourages boys, not the girl athletes and smart kids. It makes me mad. I have a 4.0 GPA, but it doesn't matter if you're a girl: the school doesn't celebrate us. Just the boys. It's hurtful.*

*In school I feel that they are not helpful for students that are at the bottom, and they didn't care if I succeed. I would go to them for extra help or support in certain classes and they didn't help in any way.*

*Kids pick on me for wearing hand me downs.*

*In baseball the coach plays favorites with kids that pay to go to his program outside of school & put them on teams above where they should play. Most cannot afford the outside program. It frustrates them & makes them want to quit the program.*

## **Workplace Discrimination**

*At work, I was sexually harassed by another coworker and when I told HR, they did not care. This made me feel like I was treated very unfairly. It honestly made me feel like I was not respected because it was an ethical issue. I wanted to quit, and I still do.*

*At work, I was more harshly judged because of my age and pregnancy. I was upset and I feel like I stopped trying as hard to be successful at my job.*

*I feel that in my workplace, I am often looked down upon because I am young. I often am not able to lead in the same way my coworkers can even though they are only a few years older than me. It makes me feel frustrated. I feel that age does not define how hard one works. This affects my work because I become self-conscious in my decisions after not being able to participate in the same activities as my older coworkers.*

# DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES: BIPOC Without Disabilities

**Sixty-two percent (62%) of BIPOC without disabilities have experienced discrimination. Various forms of racial discrimination were most often described.**

## **Racial Discrimination**

*My younger brother and I moved to a small town. Because we are part of a very small African American group, I feel things are harder, or people shun us because of our skin color, or maybe it's just the fact that we are young. I feel as though they see young gang members coming to cause trouble, when we are actually just young adults trying to survive.*

*I was shopping for something, and no one came up to me. But then a white girl came in and the store workers were quick to greet and help her.*

*Being Asian I couldn't hangout with my white friends because of their mom being mean to me and thinking I wasn't good enough.*

*I was restricted from a group in my church because I was a black person. It made me feel sad, and very angry.*

*I was at work, and they were being really racist and rude. They called me the N word.*

## **Social Exclusion, Favoritism, and Bullying**

*I'm not considered part of the group or circle. I was treated with warmth in front of the public, but not behind the public, I'm nothing. My mom warned me about being careful trusting and hanging out with people. She is right. I don't get to walk with them. I can't sit with them.*

*I was a new kid in school this year & after we moved it has been difficult for me to make friends and get involved in stuff. I suffer from anxiety, and it plays a big role in me making friends or doing normal kid stuff. I just don't want to be at school; there isn't anything to look forward to.*

*I was bullied by my peers for cutting my hair short; kids teased me and called me trans.*

Among young white Minnesotans WITH disabilities, 79% reported experiences with discrimination, examples of which are shown below under four general themes.

## Inadequate Support Services for Disabilities

*Living in northwest Minnesota creates a barrier to needed services for an individual 18-22 with disabilities, because of the lack of availability. There are limited resources and opportunities for individuals with disabilities living in greater Minnesota. We lack supportive employment and meaningful transition programs. Individuals with disabilities lack community and leisure opportunities. At a minimum, our smaller schools struggle to provide level 3 settings for those students with higher needs. Within our region, our students do not have access to a Level IV facility. Currently, the nearest facility is over 100 miles away. That is not equity in education!*

*I haven't been able to have PCA services due to not being recognized as disabled. **It took almost 3 months to get a MN Choices assessment scheduled** after a 3-year battle for SSDI certification. My disability wasn't recognized, I felt like I didn't matter.*

*At my school, they told me my diagnosis wasn't "valid" because I got it from a Primary Care Physician not a specialist. I have been on the wait list to get my diagnosis confirmed by a specialist for 7 years. **This loophole allowed them to not give me any accommodations at school.** It made me feel like my education was not a priority and they wanted easy students and money rather than using resources to help people.*

***I rely on services provided by waivers.** Every year we have to answer the same questions about my disability just to access needed services, and it gets old. It is unfair because my condition and supports aren't going to change a lot from year to year. I need help with basic daily living activities. Each year it seems like I have to prove it over and over again just to maintain my current level of services.*

## Social Exclusion, Favoritism, and Bullying

*Others in my education program were allowed to use video or remote learning option on days where I wasn't physically able to be present due to my disability, but I was denied that option despite meetings and advocating. Frustrated, hopeless, depressed, I felt there was lost opportunities and time to work on my growth, development, goals for my future.*

*I have a processing speed deficit. There have been instances where I am not given the same respect when I need more time on an exam. Jokes are made towards me and a bit from teachers such as making snore noises, or jokes about how it takes me years to finish.*

## Disability Discrimination in Education

*It is hard for me to pay attention for long periods of time, and it takes me longer to do bigger tasks. I do not get as good of marks as others in my class do. My peers get frustrated with me, and I feel like the teachers score me lower because of it.*

*Due to mental health, I struggle with anxiety and have a hard time being around groups of people. **The school wasn't always willing to help with accommodation that made it tolerable to attend school.** I ended up missing several days of school for the year and the school secretary marked the days missed as unexcused and I ended up with truancy.*

## Healthcare Discrimination

*Wealth (or lack thereof) makes getting proper healthcare difficult. I can't afford it.*

*There have been times when my son was overshadowed in the medical community because of his Down syndrome. **There has been an institutional bias against some folks with Down syndrome.** When physicians aren't sure what the person's diagnosis is, they say: "It's just part of Down syndrome." They do not look into the causes, nor do they do diagnostic testing to make an informed decision about the patient's symptoms.*

# DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES: BIPOC WITH Disabilities (n=17)

**Among young BIPOC Minnesotans WITH disabilities, 65% reported experiences with discrimination. Some examples, in their own words, are provided below.**

## **Social Exclusion, and Workplace Discrimination**

*At work I was not invited to activities because they thought my disabilities would make me not fun. It made me feel “less than,” and made me look at my coworkers differently.*

*Visiting any store and interacting with the cashier. I can't always understand what they are saying. Everyone around me gets irritated when I take too long. I get anxious and frustrated. I felt disrespected.*

*I was treated unfairly due to my race at my old job. People assumed I didn't speak English and therefore ignored me. I was also treated unfairly by a customer due to my gender. I was threatened because I did not smile.*

## **Disability Discrimination in Education**

*The education staff don't ask me relevant questions and are not providing me with transition services that address my needs and wishes for the future: to live independently in the community (with support) and be employed in the community (with appropriate supports as needed). The school has a "program" that I must "fit into." I have asked for assistive technology to support me in my transition plan. I have learned and use some assistive technology that my parents have shown me how to use, but I am not allowed or encouraged to use it at school or during my transition program. I am angry, I am supposed to be able to have the assistive technology I need to succeed, but because the school staff don't want to learn the technology, they don't provide it or even worse, they forbid me from using my phone with picture schedule app that I use at home. They say that other students can't use their phones so I can't use mine.*

*I have always felt like I have ADHD. I expressed this to my mom, and she had countless meetings with my school and doctor, and no one would do anything or even test me. They don't want to listen or help, and I couldn't do it anymore. I dropped out my 10th grade year. Now I am a year behind in school. I started smoking weed to try to help. I was really good at track and football, and I gave it all up.*



**THANK YOU!**  
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