

Storytelling for Change

- *The goal is to make Sudbury a better place to live, work, learn—or just be.*
- Through understanding the experiences of individuals in our community, we can raise community awareness and collaborate with local advocacy groups and our Select Board to effect change.



Background

The Sudbury Lived Experience Project was modeled after the Lived Experiences Project in Needham, MA.



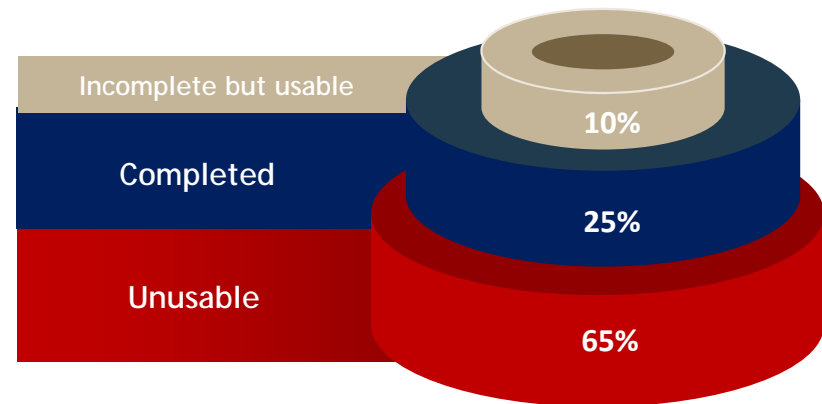
A generous gift from the [Sudbury Foundation](#) made it possible for the SDEIC to begin this project in consultation with Dr. Nichole Argo, co-founder of the Lived Experiences Project in Needham, MA.

Survey Participation

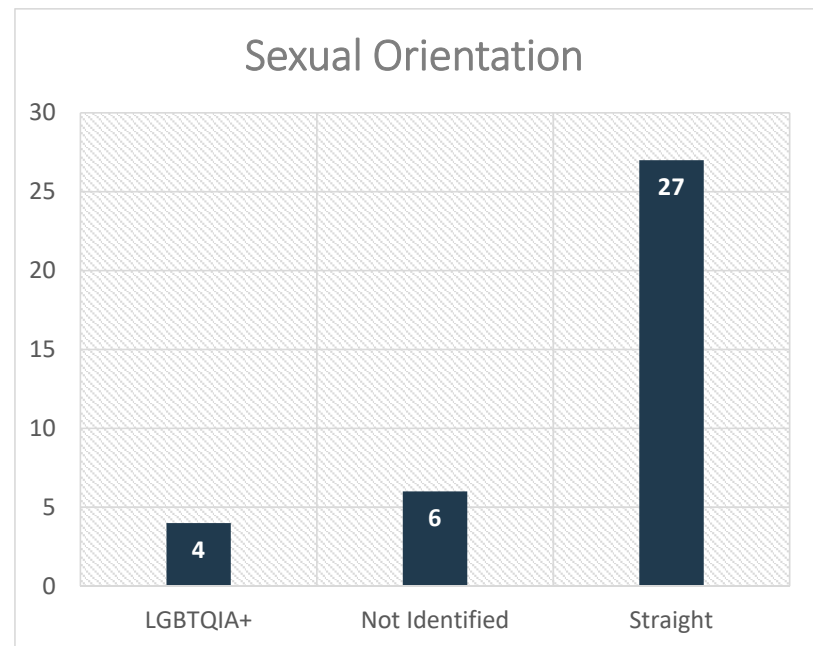
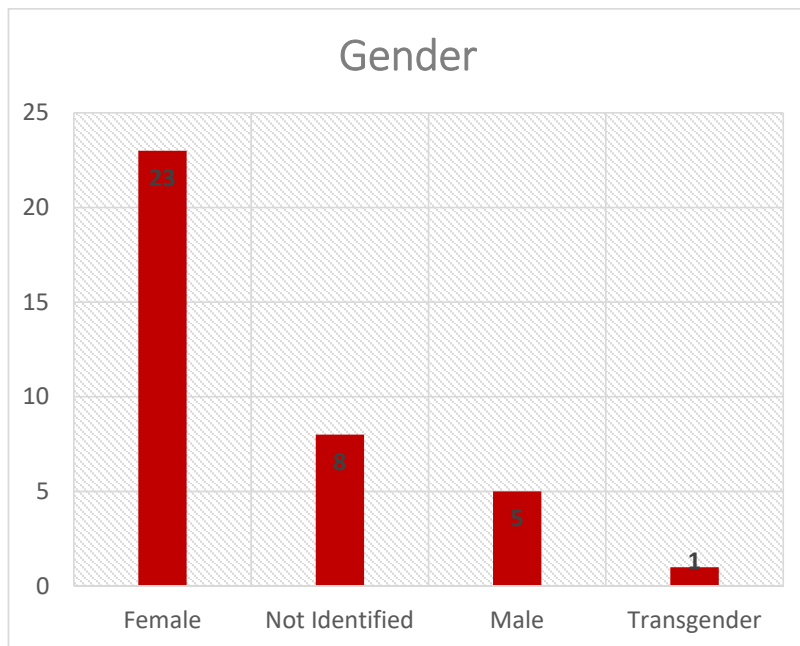
Completed Surveys **25%**

- The total sample size was 106
- 37 surveys had usable information
- 26 surveys were complete
- 11 incomplete surveys with stories

Successes	Opportunities
Initial interest in participating	Shorten the survey
Diverse perspectives	Expand the outreach
	Recognize Survey fatigue

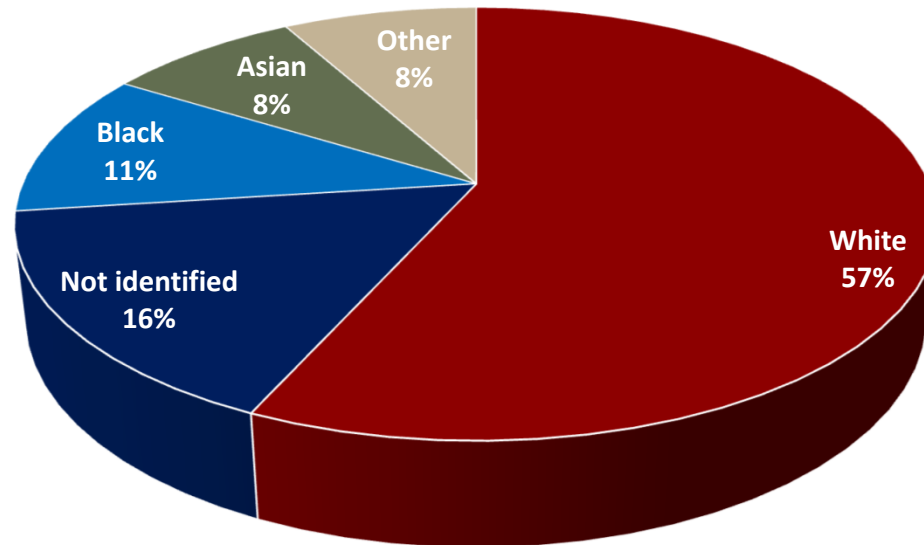


Key Demographics



Key Demographics

Race



Participants Open to Contact

3 Positive Stories

- Stories of Community
- Growing up as Transgender Person
- Feeling Welcomed When Moving Here

Key Demographics

White = 2/3  African American 1/3
 Regarding Self = 3/3

Identity-based Mistreatment

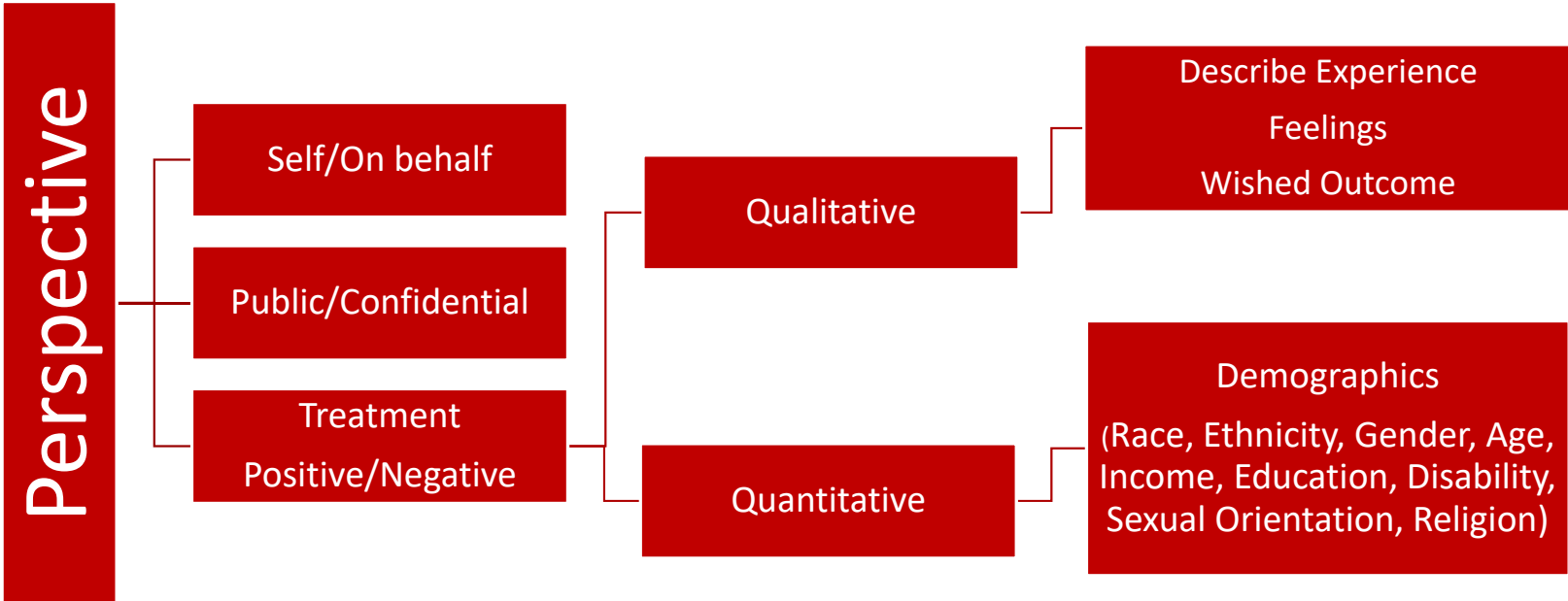
- Adoption Bias
- Exclusion Based on Religion
- Bullying based on Race
- Violence

Key Demographics

White = 4/6  Southeast Asian = 2/6
Regarding Children = 4/6  Regarding Self = 2/6

9 Community members Have Agreed to be Contacted

Survey Layout



Write a Story



Positive Stories

- about a positive local experience involving welcoming, inclusion, equity or belonging.

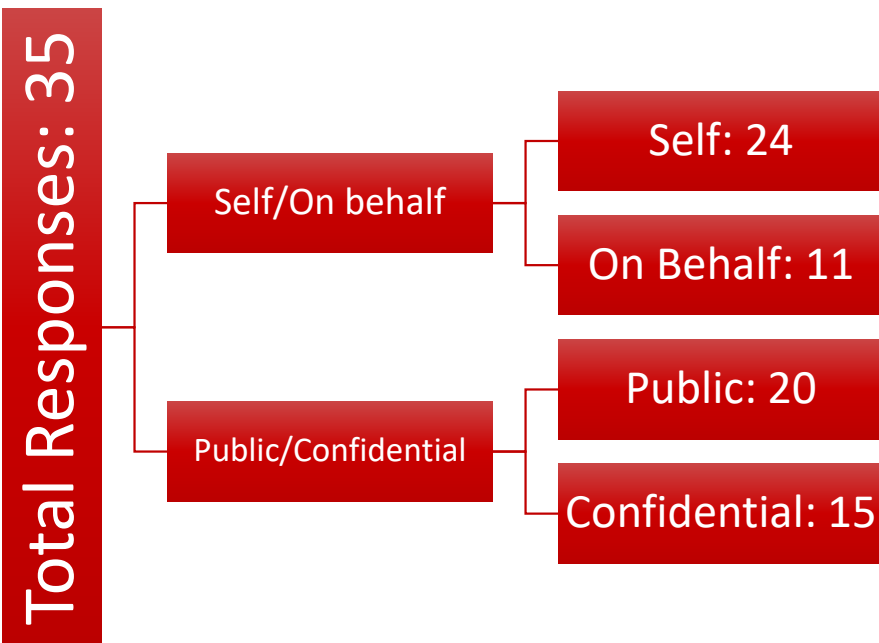
Identity-based Mistreatment

- about a local experience with racism and/or prejudice.

As you write, try to include the following information:

- What happened, who was involved (without using names), and in what sequence did the event/s unfold?
- Describe the setting
- When did it happen?

Response Types



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"I have generally had a good experience in Sudbury as a member of a racial minority. I appreciate the various Black Lives Matters yard signs and other yard signs referencing an inclusive perspective. I appreciate that many of these signs have remained in place for over a year. I appreciate that several of the churches and religious houses of worship also have similar prominent postings on their properties. I have found the Peter Noyes Elementary School, Sudbury Extended Day and the Sudbury Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) to be welcoming communities. I have appreciated the letters regarding the importance of teaching about diversity in the schools from the SPS superintendent and I have appreciated the open letters he has written about tragic national events and their focus on commitment to a healthy and non-prejudiced school environment"



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"I attended the Family Pride Day on June 11, 2022, and thought it was a wonderful event. It was held at the Memorial Congregational Church and Goodnow Library (two of the events sponsors, along with the Sudbury Cooperative Preschool. The event featured, among other things, a diverse book fair, the debut of a diverse little free library, and a drag queen story time. The event was well attended, and the mood was joyful. I was so happy to be a part of it and to have my children experience it as well. We need more events like these in Sudbury!"



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“When First Parish put up a large Black Lives Matter banner in the Town Center, the banner came down once. I believe it was cut, although, it is possible the rope snapped due to stress. The Chief of Police expressed some concern but was very supportive and participated in a public forum to discuss the issues. The Chief has also participated in the other forums that I have attended.”



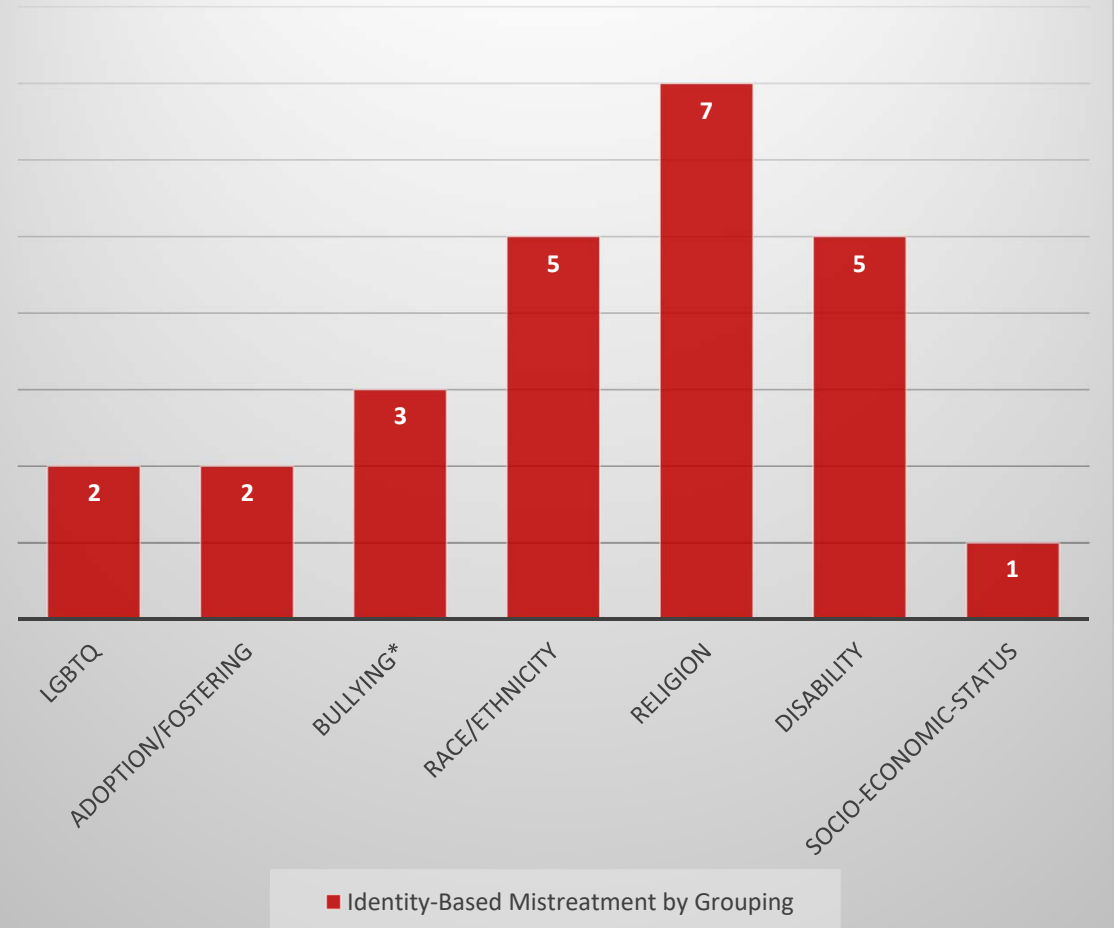
Negative Experiences



**The bullying that was not specified by identity group was due:*

- *Dress style: did not dress like a girl.*
- *New student who identified as Black but was unclear that bullying was tied specifically to this identity.*
- *Potential xenophobia/ethnicity- picking on name.*

Identity-Based Mistreatment by Grouping



Words Matter

- “Jews have all the money”
- “Sped Head”
- “they don’t like us round-eyes telling them what to do”
- “you’re worthless”
- “faggot”

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"We are a Jewish family. The Jewish sabbath is Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. Yet all middle school social events took place Friday nights - ballroom dance, sports, parties at the Community Center, etc. "



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“Several friends who own modest homes in Sudbury who tell tales of play dates where the kid says, “is this is your whole house?””



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*“For the first time in a number of years we were at home in Sudbury on Memorial Day this year and decided to head to the Center to see the end of the parade and the ceremonies at Grinnell Park. The events were moving and enjoyable, but my husband and I were startled that Christian values were mentioned not once but three times in the course of one of the prayers. A more inclusive prayer would have been better suited to the occasion. Those who fought and died for the United States and its values of freedom, equality, and opportunity held a variety of faiths, as do those who live here today
We were pleased that a rabbi offered a nondenominational prayer at the end of the ceremonies.”*



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“Parents actively steer their children away from friends who were not neurotypical even when the kids wanted to play together. This kind of social striving and insecurity on the part of parents leads to discrimination.”





A word cloud of negative emotions on a grey background. The words are arranged in a roughly horizontal line from left to right, with varying sizes and orientations. The word 'angry' is the largest and most prominent, located on the right side. Other words include 'scared', 'disrespected', 'disheartened', 'different', 'upset', 'misunderstood', 'unfair', 'terrible', and 'hurt'.

angry
scared
disrespected
disheartened
different
upset
misunderstood
unfair
terrible
hurt

Feelings



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESOLUTION

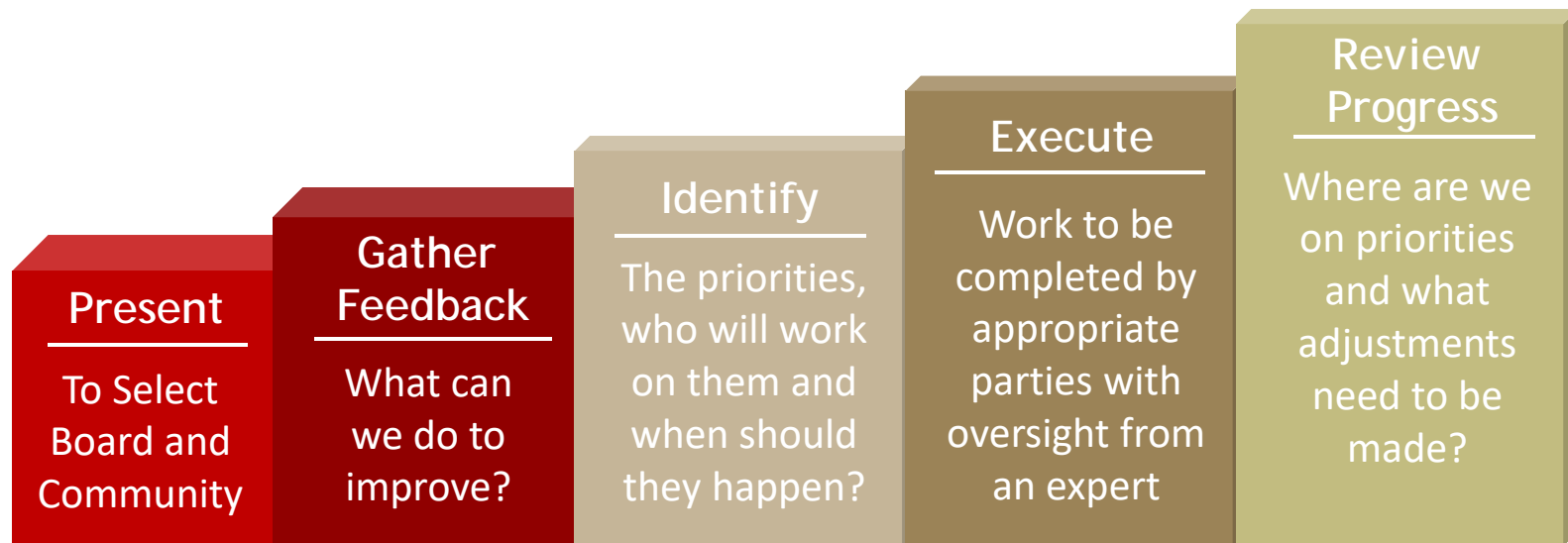


Local DEI Leaders

Town/City	Population*	Town Position	School Position
Sudbury	18,000	NA	NA
Concord	18,000		Director of DEI
Action	24,000	Director of DEI	Director of DEI
Wellesley	29,000		Director of DEI
Wayland	14,000		Director of DEI
Weston	11,000		Director of Equity and Professional Learning
Maynard	11,000	NA	NA
Natick	36,000	Director of DEI & Outreach	Director of Social-Emotional Learning & Equity
Lexington	34,000	Chief Equity Officer	Director of Equity and Student Supports
Framingham	71,000		Asst. Superintendent for Equity, Diversity, and Community Engagement

* All population numbers are approximate

Recommendations for Next Steps



Lessons Learned

- Shorten the survey
- Manage expectations of what the DEIC can do

Next Steps



1. Notify those who completed the survey (who were open to it) to let them know that there will be an open meeting discussion at the next DEIC meeting on 10/19/23.
2. Discuss recommendations
3. Simplify the Survey to reduce Survey Fatigue
4. Present findings/recommendations to the Select Board
5. Begin 2nd phase of the survey “lived experience”