



EJP

DEI Climate

Survey - 2022

Results summary by
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on behalf of EJP's DEI team

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Introduction

EJP’s Mission Statement

The mission of the Education Justice Project is to build a model college in prison program that demonstrates the positive effects of higher education on incarcerated students, their families, the communities to which they return, the host institution, and society as a whole.

Our vision is a more humane and just society, sustained through education and critical awareness.

Learn more about the Education Justice Project at educationjustice.net.

DEI’s Mission Statement

We recognize that in order to build a model college-in-prison program we must honor the value and dignity of all EJP members.

We commit to individual and organizational action to build respect, dignity, fairness, caring, equity, and self-esteem in our communities.

Survey Goals

We aim to conduct this survey biannually to answer key DEI questions.

We are interested in examining:

- (1) the demographic profile of EJP
- (2) whether EJP spaces are inclusive, equitable, and safe, and
- (3) what EJP can do to improve the inclusivity, equity, and safety in its spaces.

We plan to conduct this survey every 2 years, and our next survey will be released in Spring 2024.

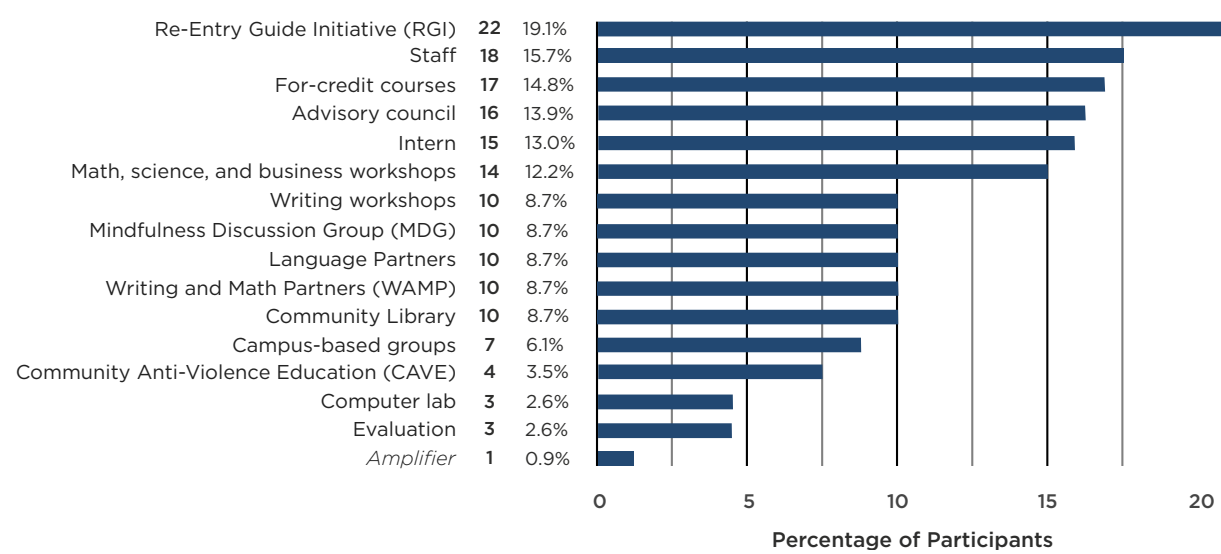
Sample Characteristics

115 outside members, including EJP alumni, completed the 2022 survey between May 10 and June 4, 2022.

Roles in EJP

EJP Programs

Participants represented the following EJP programs (note that percentages do not add up to 100, because participants can be involved in multiple programs):

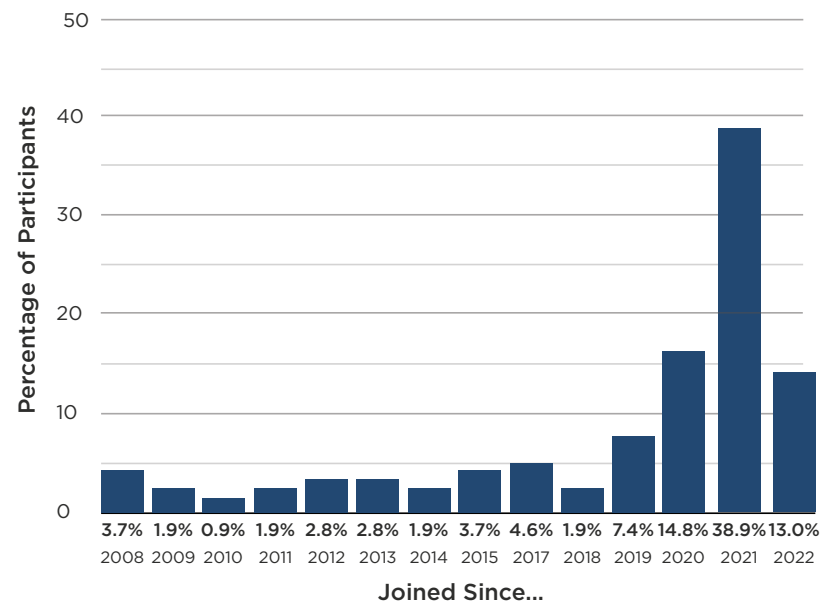


Leadership Roles

23 participants (20.0% of the sample) held a leadership position in EJP at the time of the survey (Coordinator, Director, Assistant Director, or Head of Program).

Length of Membership

Participants ranged from 0 to 14 years of involvement in EJP.



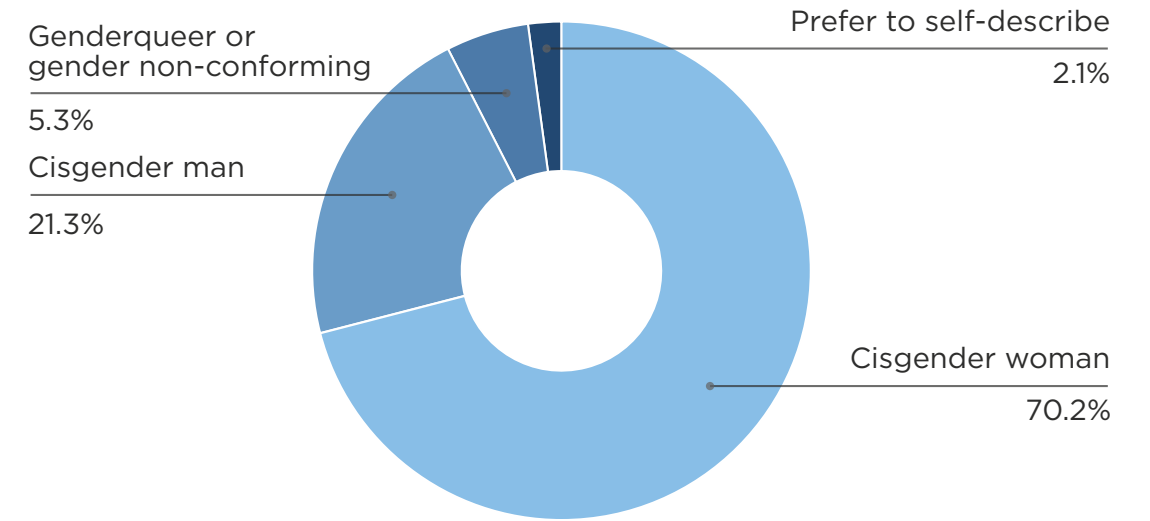
Demographics

Age

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 84 years. The average age in the sample was 33.9 years.

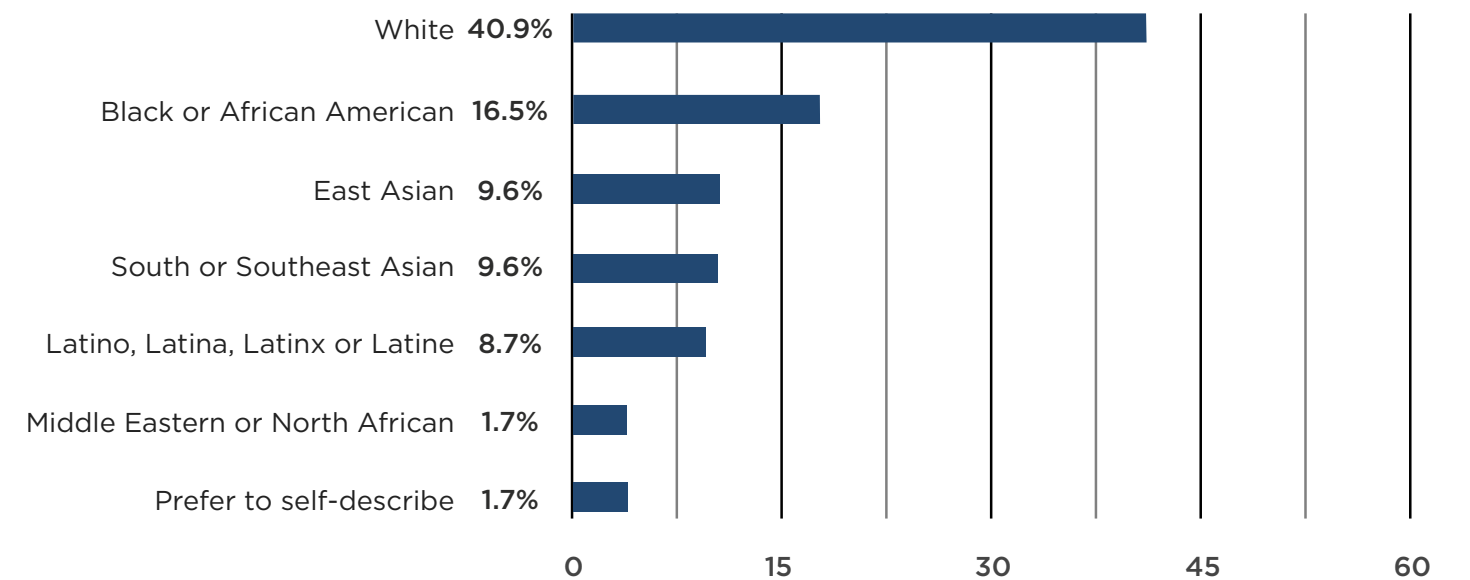
Gender

The following table shows the distribution of gender in the sample. The 2 participants who chose to self-describe identified as “Male”:



Race and Ethnicity

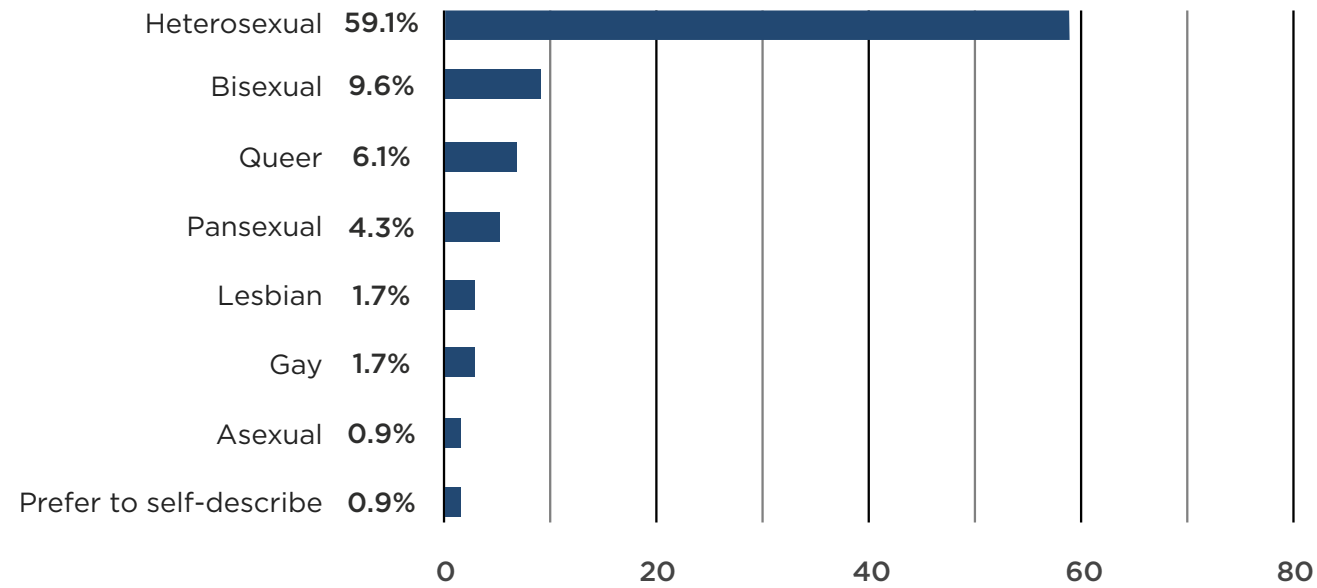
The following table shows the distribution of racial and ethnic identities in the sample. Percentages do not add up to 100, because participants were able to select more than one option. The 2 participants who chose to self-describe identified as Asian American and Hispanic (Spain).



In total, 7 participants (7.5% of those who responded to this question) identified with more than one race or ethnicity. Among participants who identified as Latino, Latina, Latinx, or Latine, 3 (30.0%) identified with more than one race or ethnicity, and 7 (70.0%) identified only with that category.

Sexual and Affectional Orientation

The following table shows the distribution of sexual and affectional orientation in the sample. Percentages do not add up to 100, because participants were able to select more than one option:

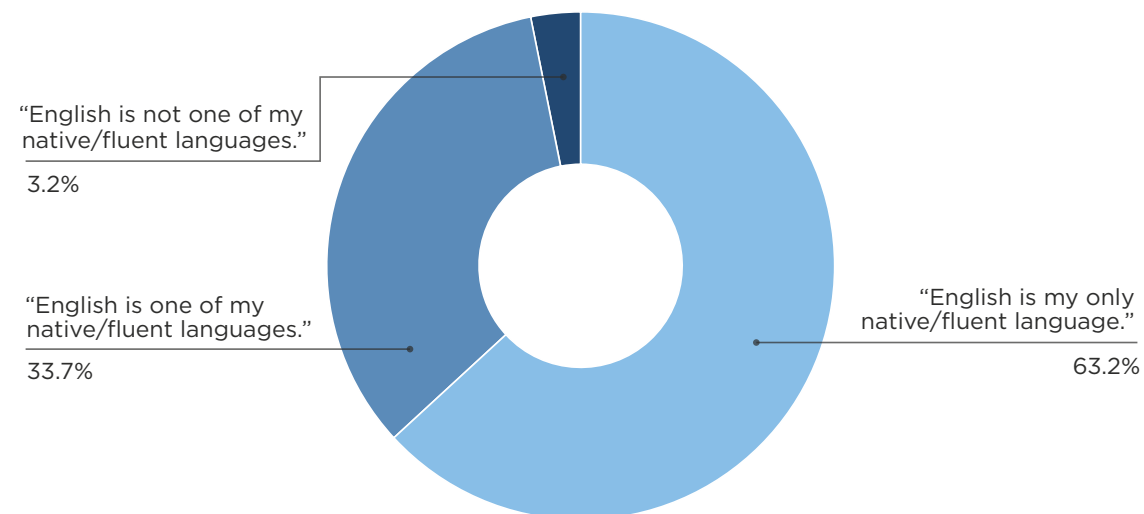


First Generation College Students

29 participants (30.5% of those who responded to this question) are first-generation college students.

English Proficiency

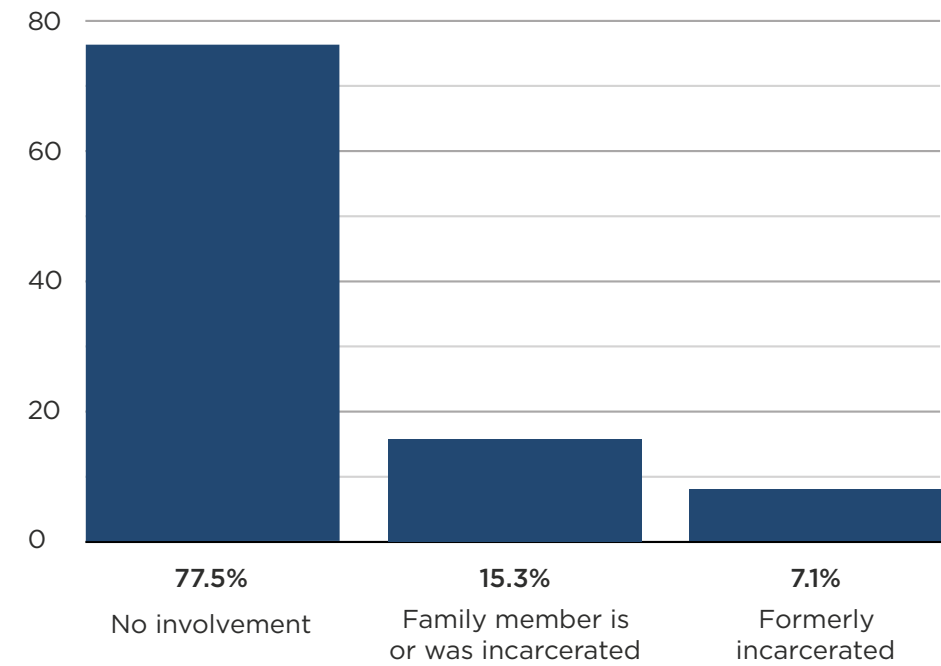
The following table shows the distribution of English proficiency in the sample:



Criminal Justice System Involvement

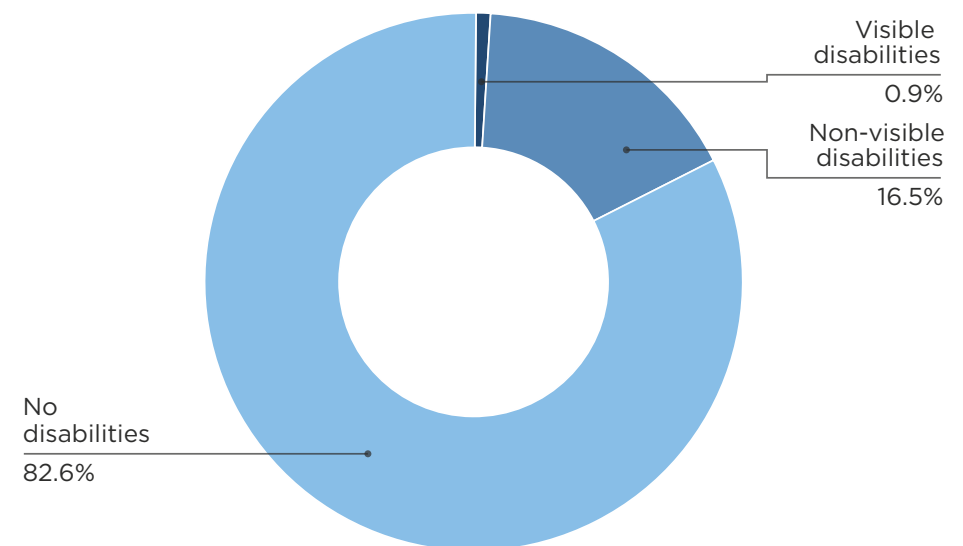
The following table shows members’ extent of involvement with the criminal justice system.

Percentages do not add up to 100, because participants were able to select more than one option:



Disability

1 (0.9%) participant identified as having a visible disability and 19 participants (16.5%) identified as having a non-visible disability.

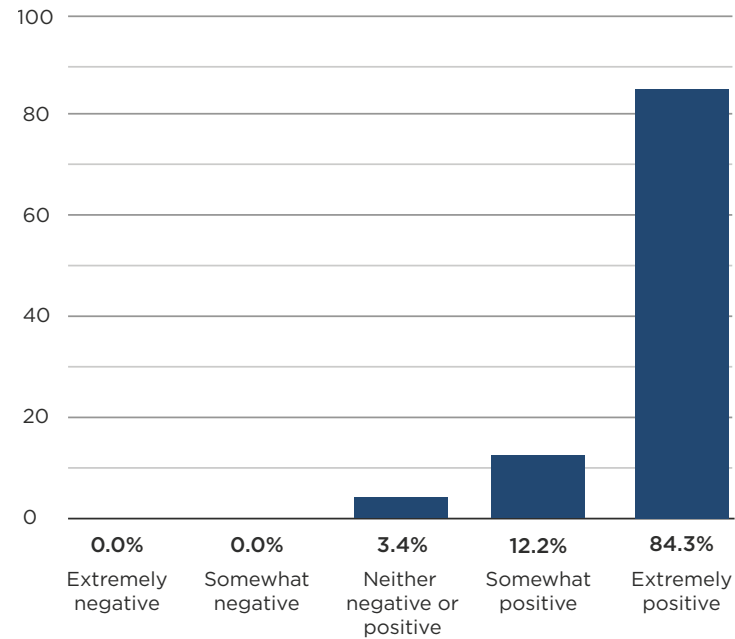


Overall Satisfaction with EJP

Satisfaction

Overall Satisfaction Ratings

Participants responded to the question, “Overall, how positive/negative has your experience been in EJP?” on a scale from 1 to 5. Each item was rated on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The average rating was 4.8.



Demographic Differences in Satisfaction Ratings

We examined differences in overall satisfaction ratings by:

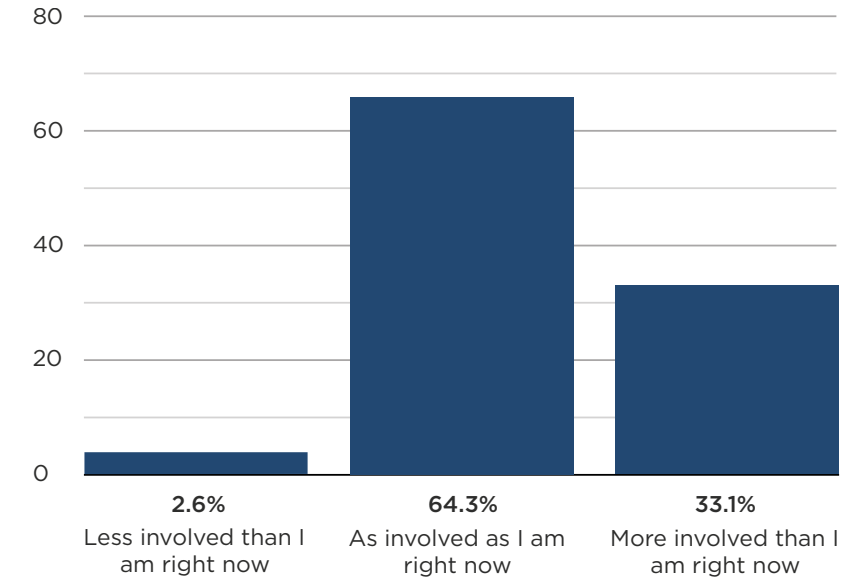
- gender (comparing experiences of cisgender men, cisgender women, and genderqueer or non-conforming participants)
- race (comparing the experiences of White participants to those of participants of color)
- sexual and affectional orientation (comparing the experiences of heterosexual participants to those of participants with another identity)
- first-generation status (comparing the experiences of first-generation college students to those of non-first-generation students)
- criminal justice system involvement (comparing the experiences of those who have been incarcerated or whose family members have been incarcerated to the experiences of those who do not have an incarceration history)
- disability status (comparing the experiences of participants with a disability to those of participants without a disability)

There were no statistically significant differences in ratings of overall satisfaction by gender, race, sexual orientation, first-generation status, criminal justice system involvement, or disability status.

Desired Level of Involvement

Overall Involvement Ratings

Participants responded to the question, “How much would you like to be involved with EJP?”

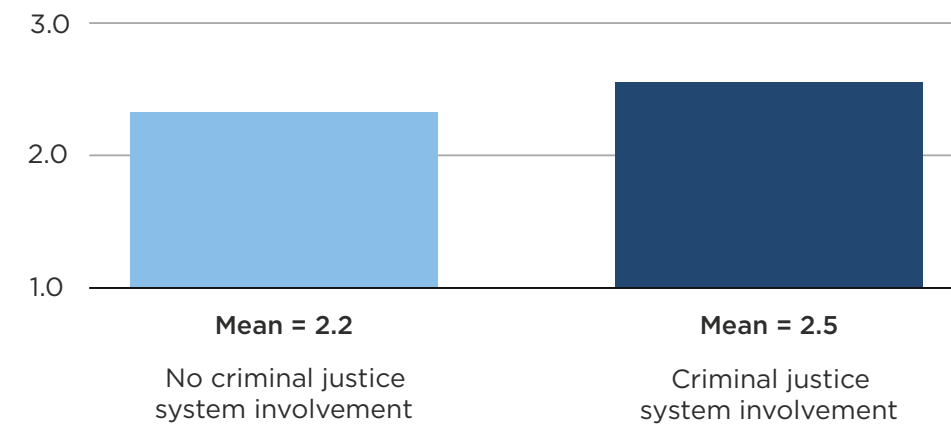


Demographic Differences in Desired Involvement

We examined differences in desired involvement by gender, race, sexual orientation, first-generation status, criminal justice system involvement, and disability status.

There were no statistically significant differences in the desired level of EJP involvement by gender, race, sexual orientation, first-generation status, or disability status. There was a significant difference in desired EJP involvement by criminal justice system involvement.

Participants with incarceration experiences wanted to be significantly more involved in EJP activities than those without an incarceration history ($p = .014$).

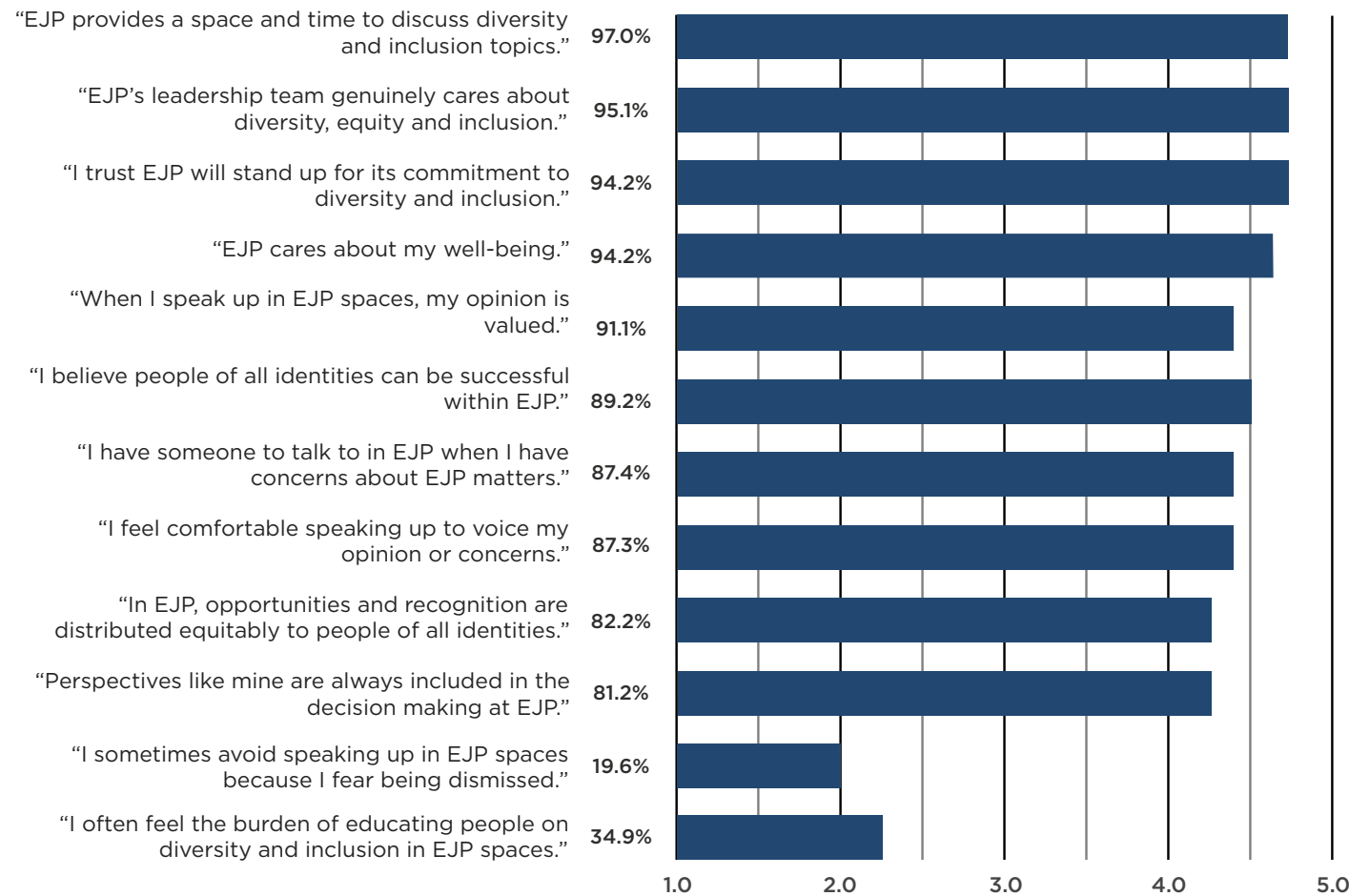


Support and Safety in EJP

Support

Overall Support Ratings

Participants rated their level of agreement with a series of statements indicating how supported they feel as members of EJP. Each item was rated on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).



The 12 support items listed above had high reliability when combined into a scale ($\alpha = .90$), so we calculated the average score across all items. On a scale from 1 to 5, in which higher scores indicate participants feeling more supported, the average score was 4.4.

Demographic Differences in Support Ratings

We examined differences in average support ratings by gender, race, sexual orientation, first-generation status, criminal justice system involvement, and disability status.

There were no statistically significant differences in average ratings of support across any of these demographics.

Welcoming Environments for Different Identities

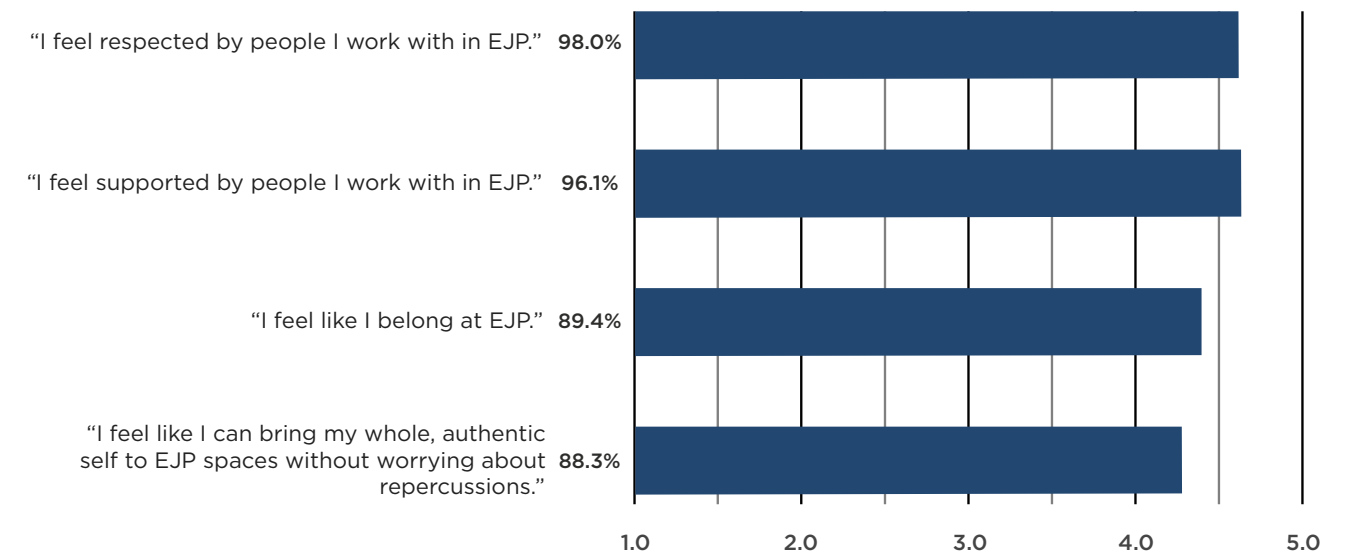
We asked participants, "Are there any identity groups that you think would not feel welcome in EJP spaces?" The following is a list of verbatim responses from participants who identified an identity:

- politically and socially conservative
- It's less that they're not welcome, but I think I feel a little alienated by the leadership comprising predominately cisgender white women, and always fear making someone upset for sharing a differing perspective. I also recognize as someone who has not been formerly incarcerated (nor do I have family members who have been incarcerated) I am very conscious of making sure I listen more than I speak!
- I'm an old volunteer in EJP. Age issues seem under the radar - that's ok - except for aging issues in MDG
- I have not seen it but I'm not sure how someone that is trans would be perceived.
- I believe neighborhood kids would not feel welcome because we have not actively pursued them actively. This is a blind spot for EJP and we need to address that.
- Black, Women, Caribbean

Safety

Psychological Safety Reports

Participants rated their level of agreement with a series of statements indicating how psychologically safe they feel in EJP spaces. Each item was rated on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The following table shows the distribution of responses:



The 4 psychological safety items listed above had high reliability when combined into a scale ($\alpha = .90$), so we calculated the average score across all items. On a scale from 1 to 5, in which higher scores indicate participants feeling more psychologically safe, the average score was 4.5.

Demographic Differences in Psychological Safety

We examined differences in average psychological safety ratings by gender, race, sexual orientation, first-generation status, criminal justice system involvement, and disability status.

There were no statistically significant differences in average ratings of psychological safety across any of these demographics.

Physical Safety Ratings

101 participants (98.1% of those who responded to the question) agree with the statement, “I feel physically safe in EJP spaces.”

The remaining 2 participants (1.9%) disagreed with this statement.

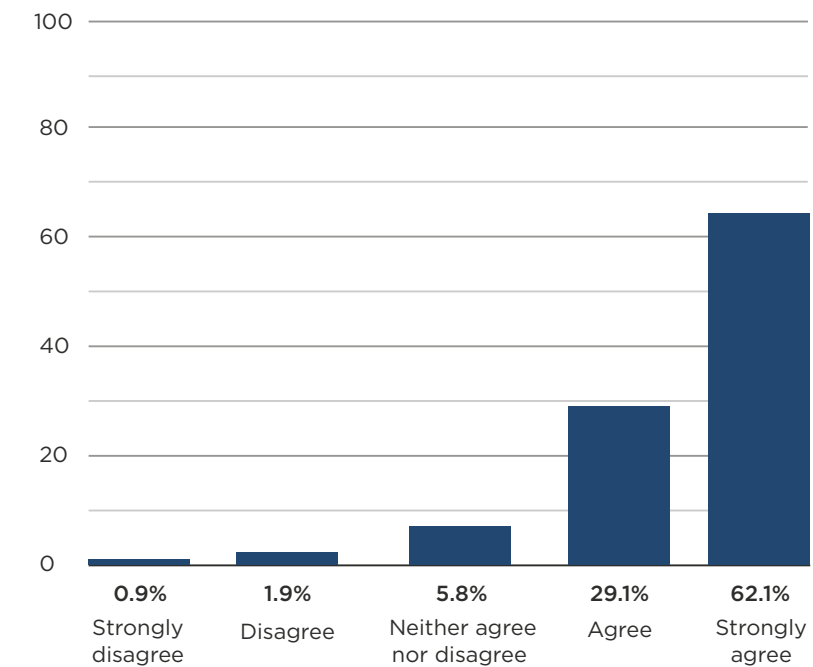
Of these 2 participants, 1 provided an explanation in the available text box: “Many times during the EJP activities I was approached uncomfortably, but the working partner didn’t notice it at all and just said it’s fine.”

Specific Incidents of Harassment, Microaggressions, or Bullying

Comfort Reporting an Incident

Overall Comfort Ratings

Participants rated their level of agreement with the statement, “I would feel comfortable reporting an incident of harassment, microaggressions, or bullying to EJP leaders.” The following chart shows the distribution of responses.



Demographic Differences in Comfort Ratings

We examined differences in participants’ level of comfort reporting an incident by gender, race, sexual orientation, first-generation status, criminal justice system involvement, and disability status.

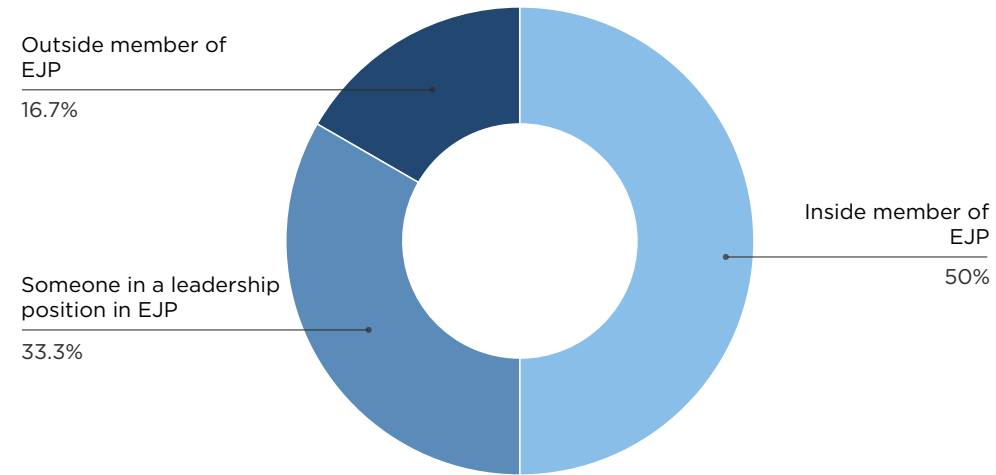
There were no statistically significant differences in ratings of comfort across any of these demographics.

Reports of Specific Incidents

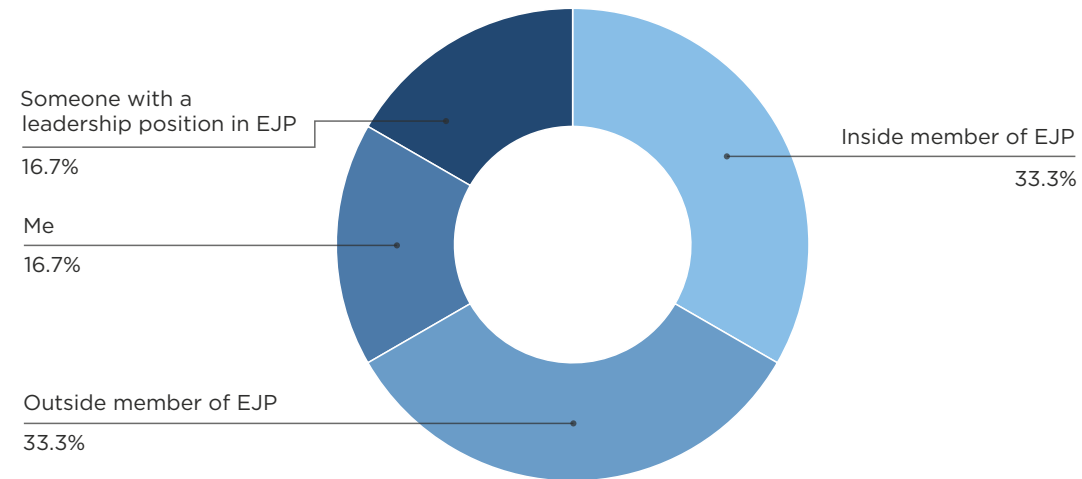
Participants were asked, “Have you ever experienced, witnessed, or heard about an incident of harassment, microaggressions, or bullying in EJP spaces in the past year?” Of 102 participants who responded to the question, 5 (4.9%) answered “Yes.”

In a series of follow-up questions, these 5 participants reported the following characteristics of 6 incidents:

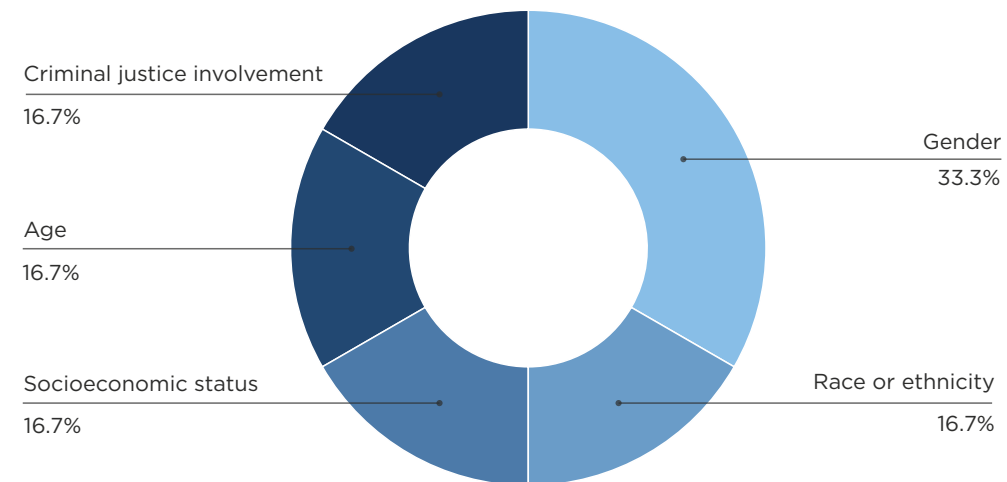
Who was the perpetrator of the incident?"



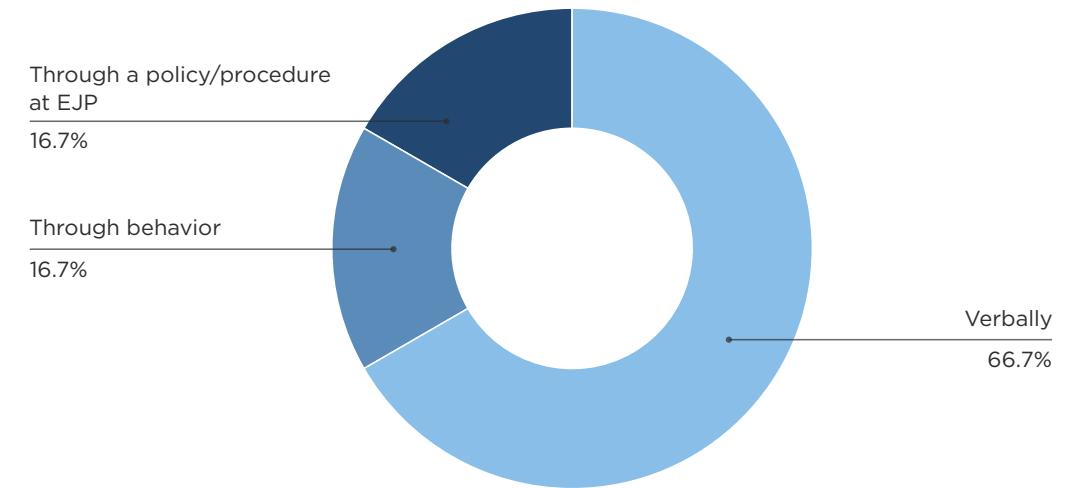
"Who was the target/victim of the incident?"



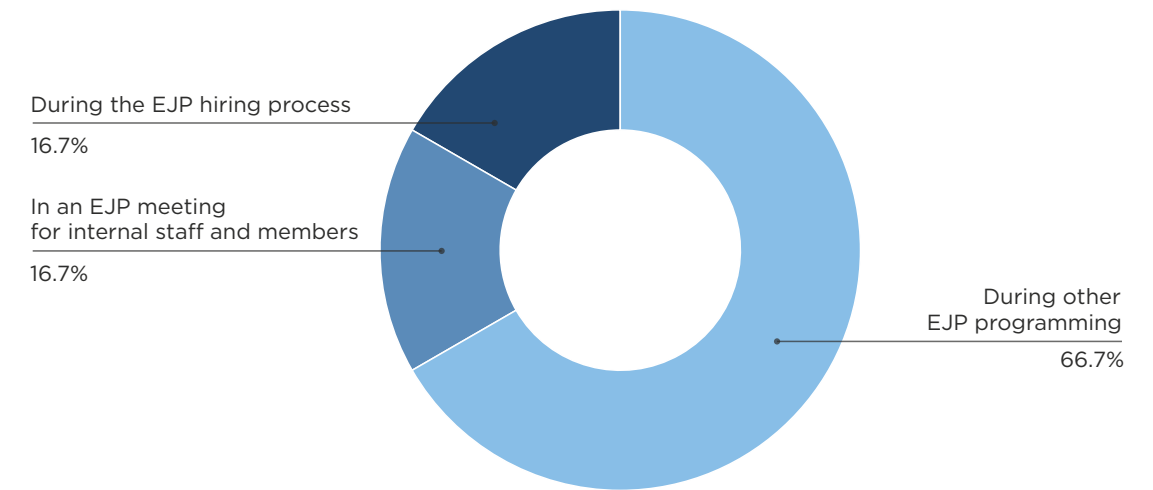
"What type of bias was expressed?"



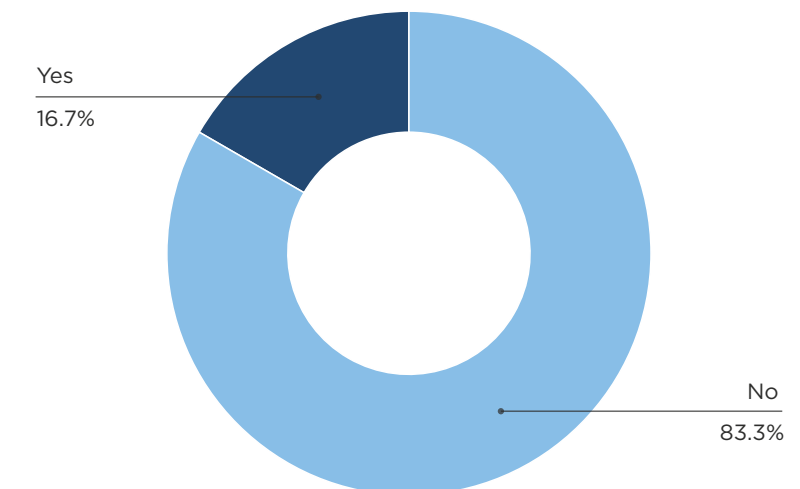
"In this incident, how was the bias expressed?"



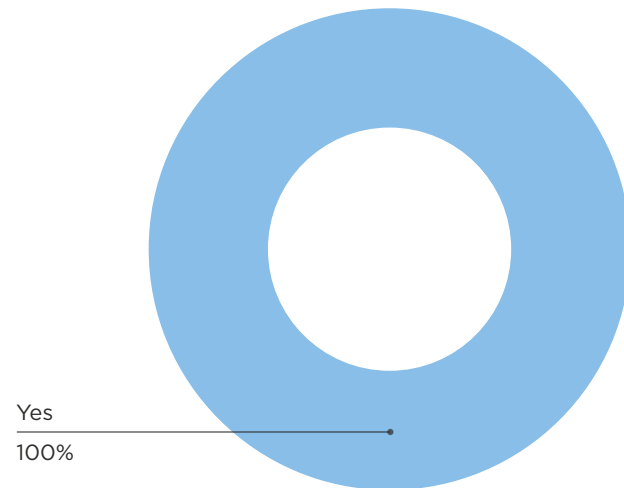
"In what context did the incident occur?"



"Did you report this incident to anyone within EJP?"



“Was your report of the incident handled to your satisfaction?”



One participant provided the following comment in an open-ended response: “There have been a couple of times that new inside members have made general jokes (e.g., a culture’s cuisine) or activity suggestions (e.g., hangman), while not toward any one person or group represented in the room necessarily, have been uncomfortable for members. We didn’t report this but had conversations within our program.”

Conclusion

Respondents’ Additional Comments about EJP

Finally, participants had the opportunity to provide any final thoughts in an open-ended text box.

The following is a list of the verbatim responses:

- “Thank you for all the work that you do to make being involved in EJP a positive experience!”
- “MDG is a space where these issues deserve to be recognized w/o blame, with compassion”
- “I’m hoping that for the critical climate we can discuss other topics outside of cultural appropriation. I’m not sure where it fits within this group.”
- “I would like to learn more about the difficulties suffered because of mental health issues. This is a huge demographic that feeds the PIC. I would like to understand mental health more extensively.”
- “I would like to clarify I would feel comfortable, but I wouldn’t know where to reach out/report if I encountered any incidences of microaggressions, harassment, or bullying!”
- “I have learned a lot about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the EJP spaces.”
- “I believe it’s important that we discuss how capitalism in the material conditions of the economy influence equity and inclusion issues.”

Concluding remarks from the DEI team

We want to thank everyone who took the time to provide information about their experiences within EJP. We plan to conduct the next survey in Spring 2024, and to distribute the survey among both inside and outside EJP members.

We continue to critically examine and discuss survey results with EJP members at large. The goal is to create a transparent evaluation process. One of the steps we have taken after initial data collection is that we now collect demographic information from all EJP members.

The DEI team is always looking for more support and new members. If you are interested, please reach out via dei@educationjustice.net.

To learn more about the Education Justice Project or the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative, contact us at dei@educationjustice.net.

