



PUBLIC SAFETY & RACIAL JUSTICE IN ESSEX



1

WHAT WE DID

ENGAGED WITH THE COMMUNITY

OVERVIEW

INITIAL SURVEY

Prior to engaging in any data collection process, the Essex community was surveyed asking people to **weigh in on how to proceed**. Respondents prioritized a survey, listening sessions, affinity space for BIPOC, and a collaborative planning process.

LISTENING SESSIONS

Five listening sessions were held, including an affinity group for BIPOC residents and one for members of the Nepali community and two general sessions. Each session had a facilitator and a scribe. Sessions were 2-hours long.

PUBLIC SAFETY SURVEY

A **public safety survey** designed to capture similar information was designed and disseminated electronically. The survey remained open for three weeks.



OVERVIEW

Key Questions

Listening sessions and Public Safety Survey were designed to answer the following key questions:

How do people envision public safety (what does it mean and what does it include)?



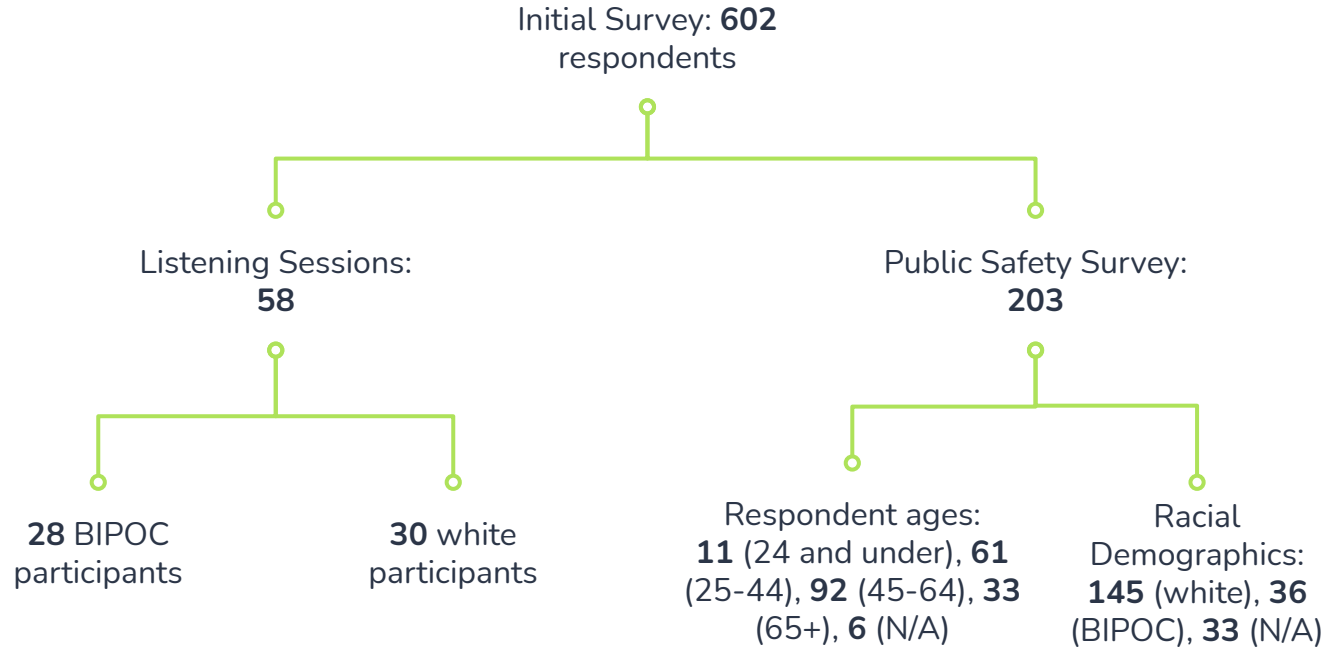
What are people's experiences with public safety and policing in Essex?



How do people want to make Essex a safer place to live and work?



DEMOGRAPHICS

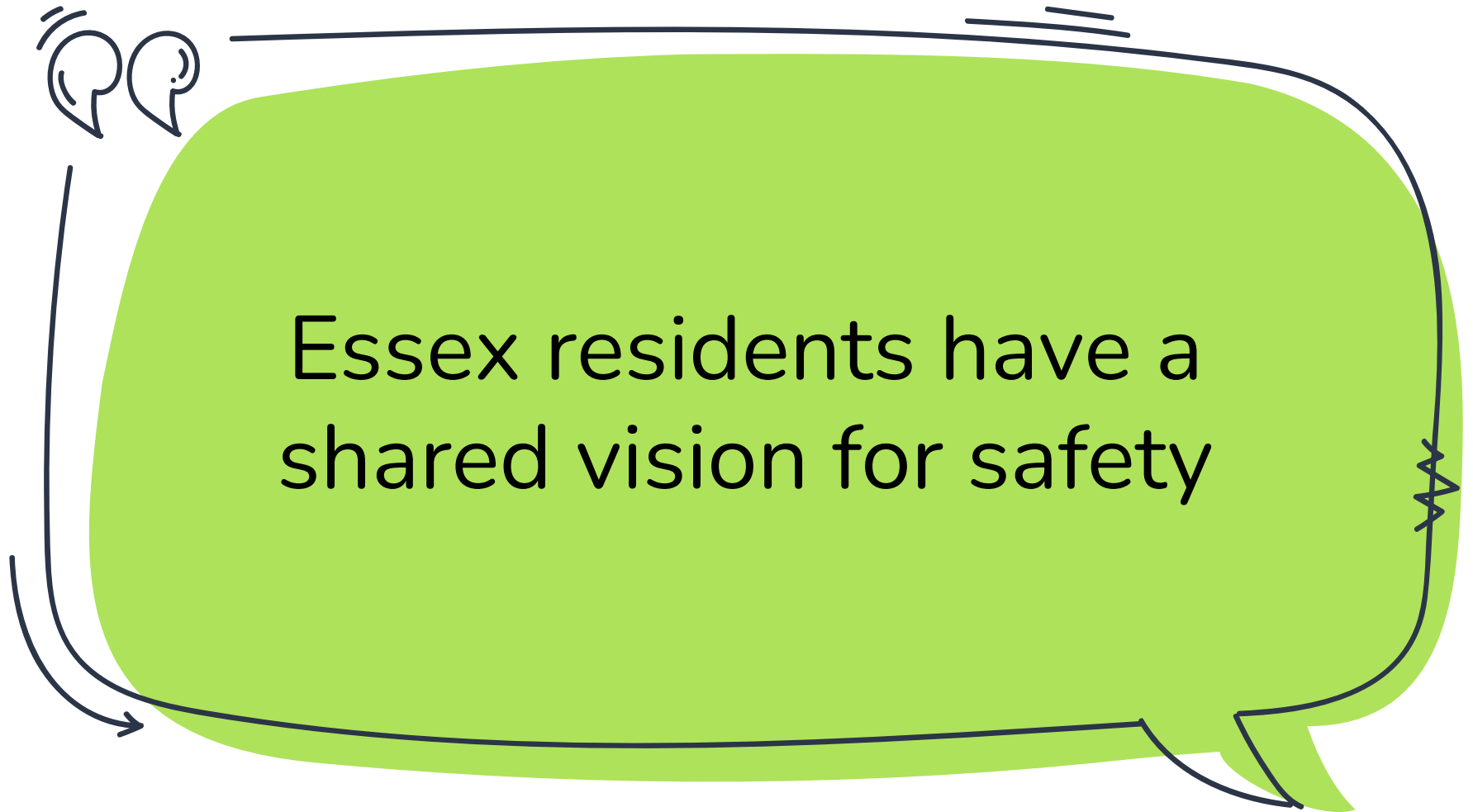




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WHAT WE HEARD

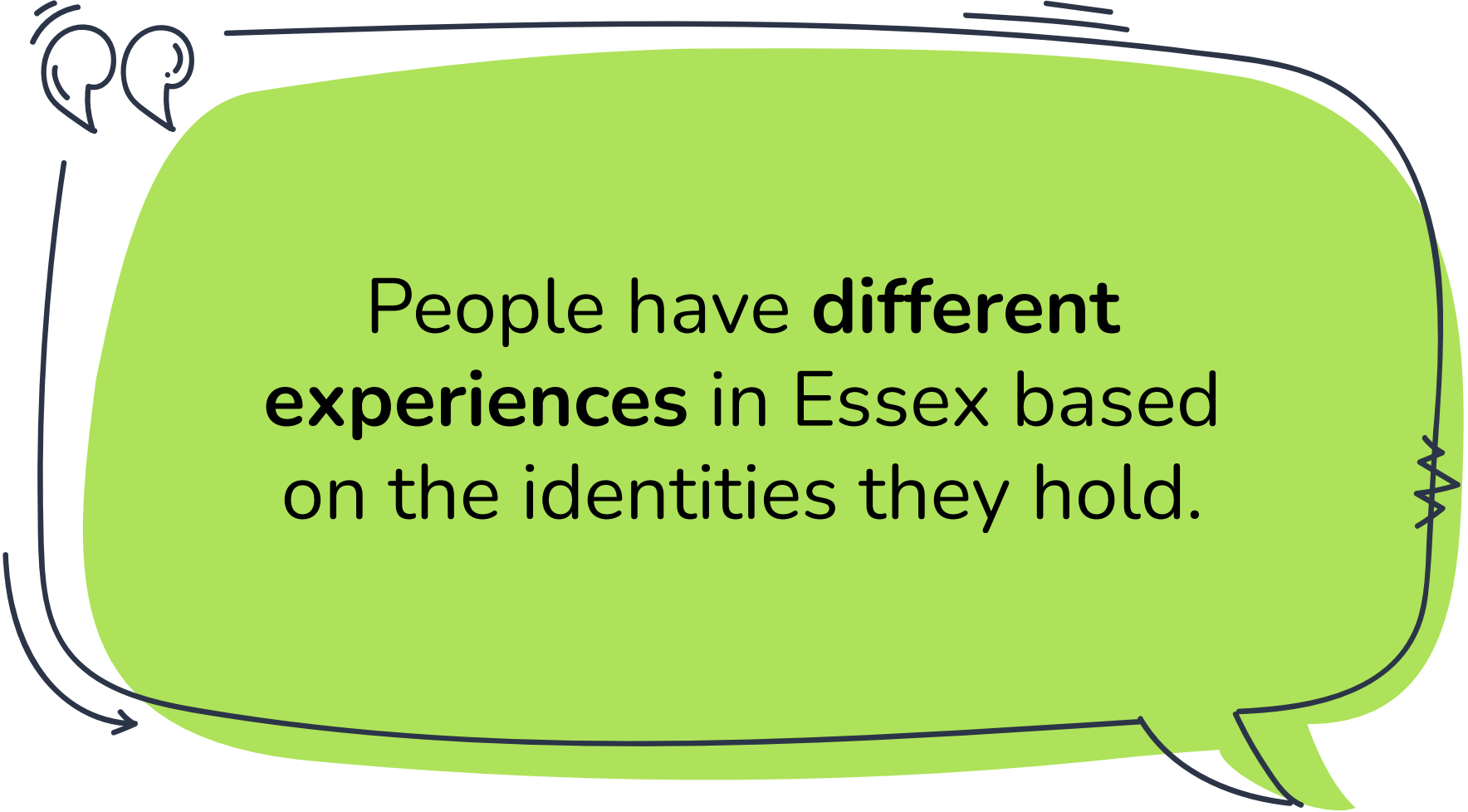
TWITTER VERSION



Essex residents have a
shared vision for safety

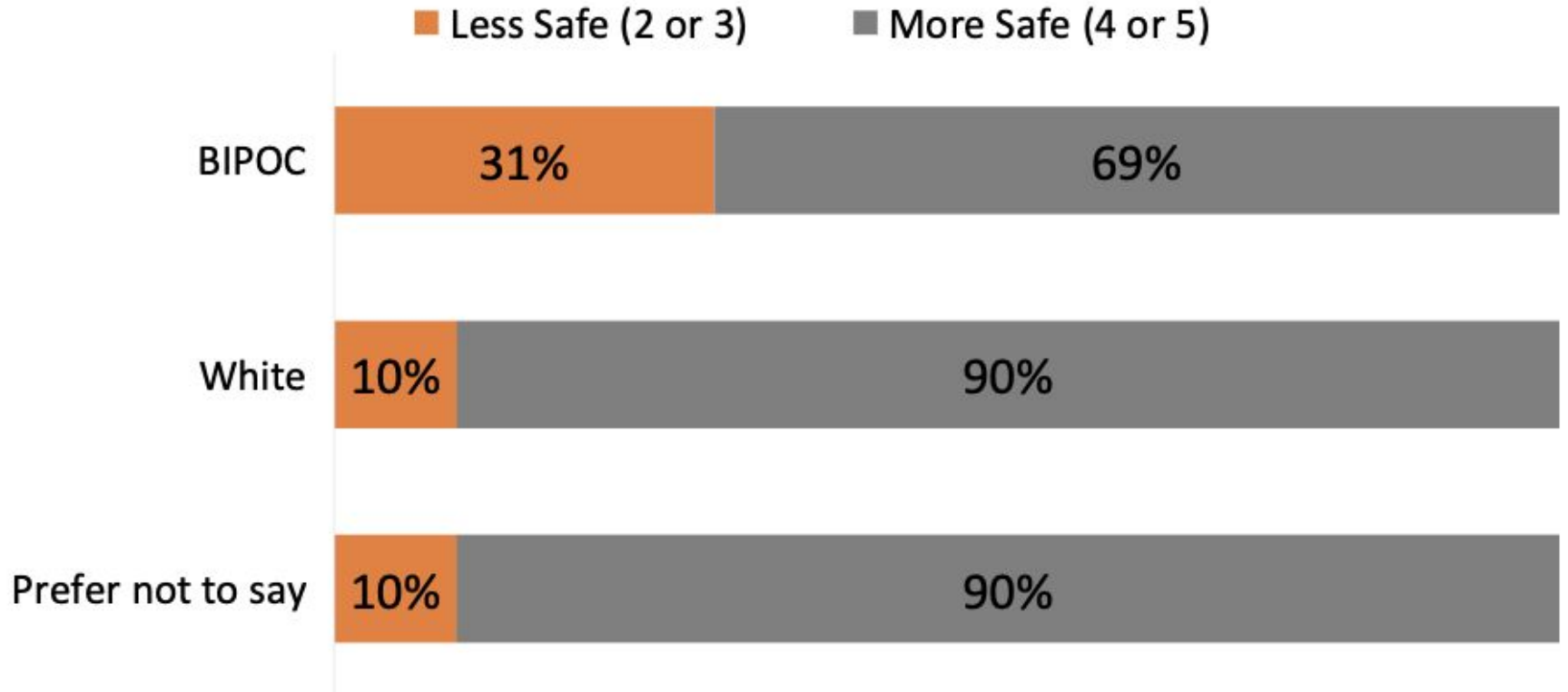
SHARED VISION

- X Everyone feels comfortable and safe from physical and emotional harm and can travel freely and without worry to all parts of our community.
- X There is a strong sense of community and belonging and public safety is seen as a collective responsibility
- X There is a low crime rate and adequate and responsive police, fire and rescue services.
- X There is equitable access to resources, protection and quality of life, and people's basic needs are met
- X People are not discriminated against or singled out regardless of identity, position, background or views.
- X Sidewalks and roads are safe and well maintained, and there is adequate lighting.



People have **different experiences** in Essex based on the identities they hold.

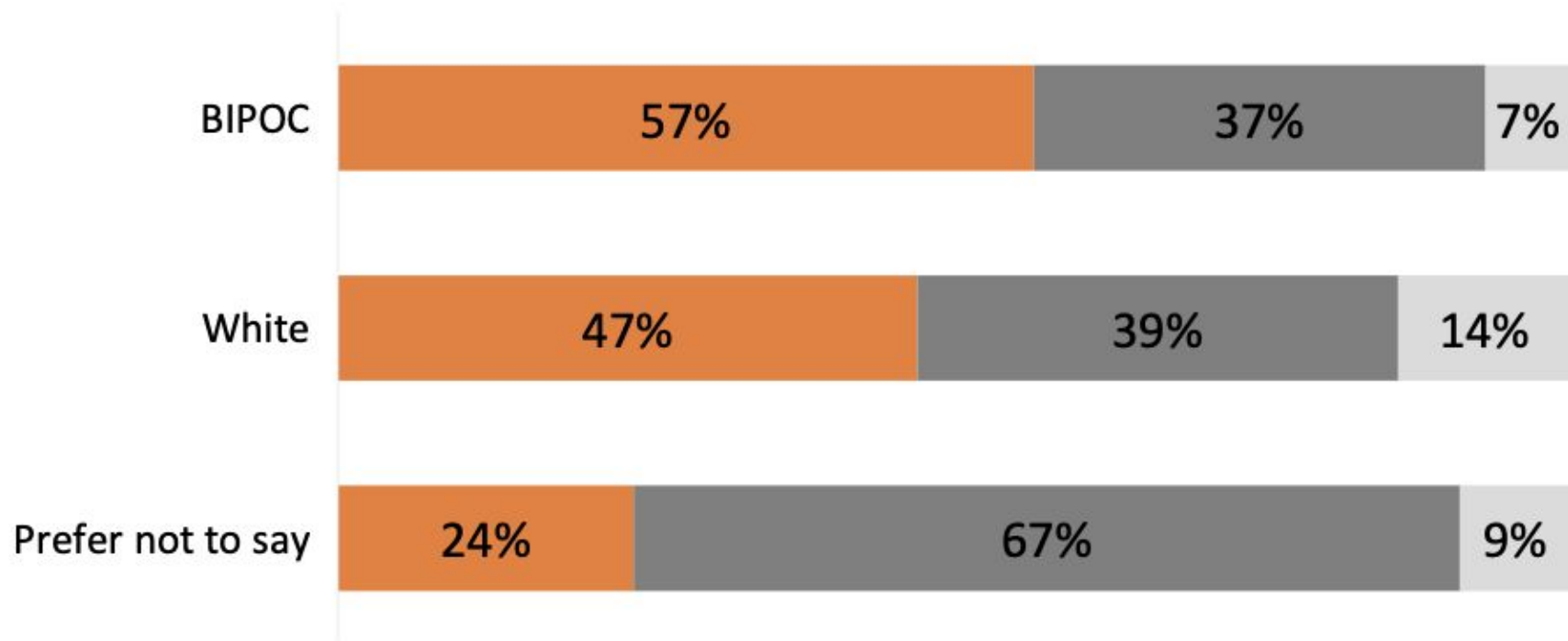
How safe do you feel living in Essex?



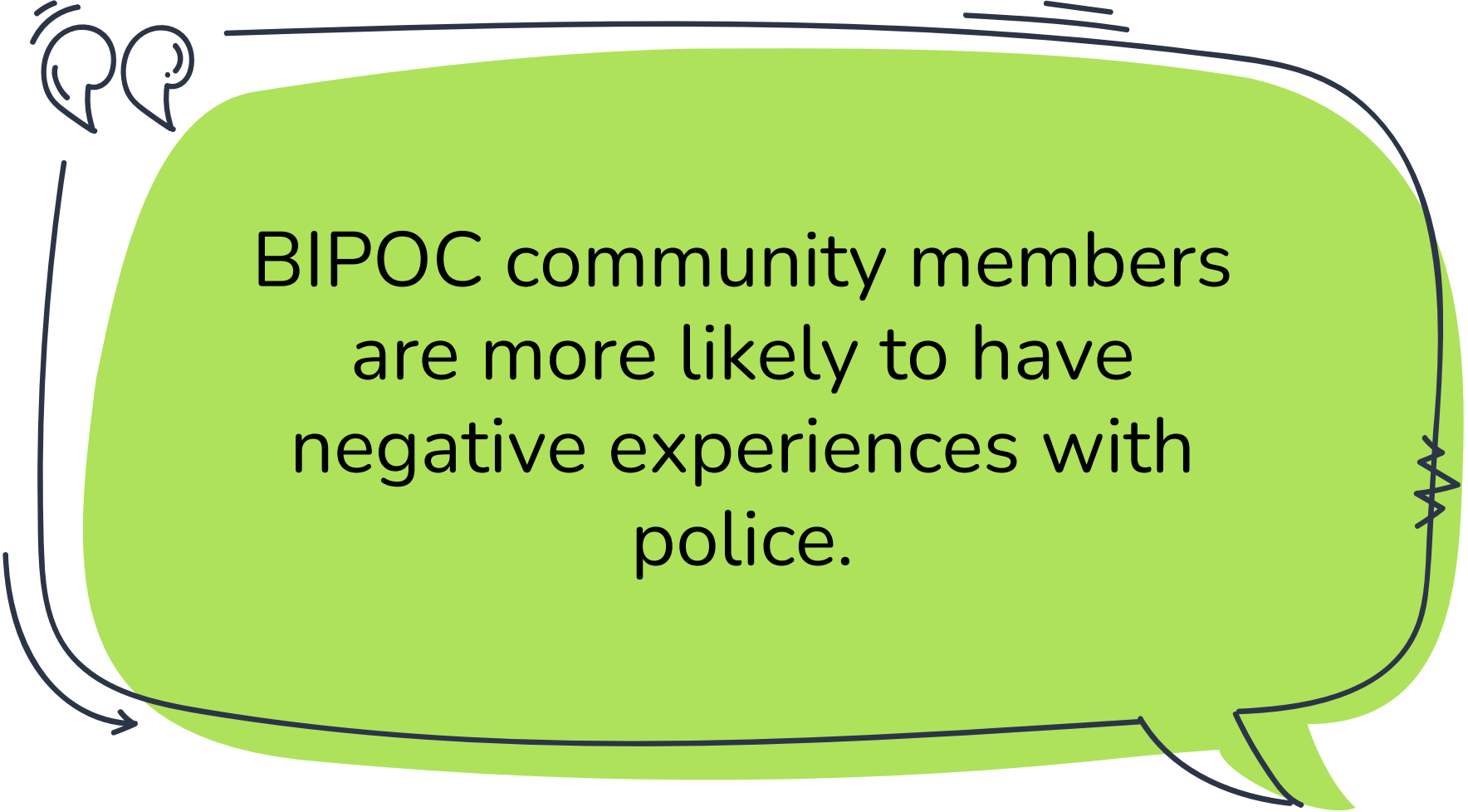
Source: Essex Safety, Policing & Racial Justice Survey, Fielded Nov 2020

Have you experienced or observed racism in Essex?

Yes No I'm not sure

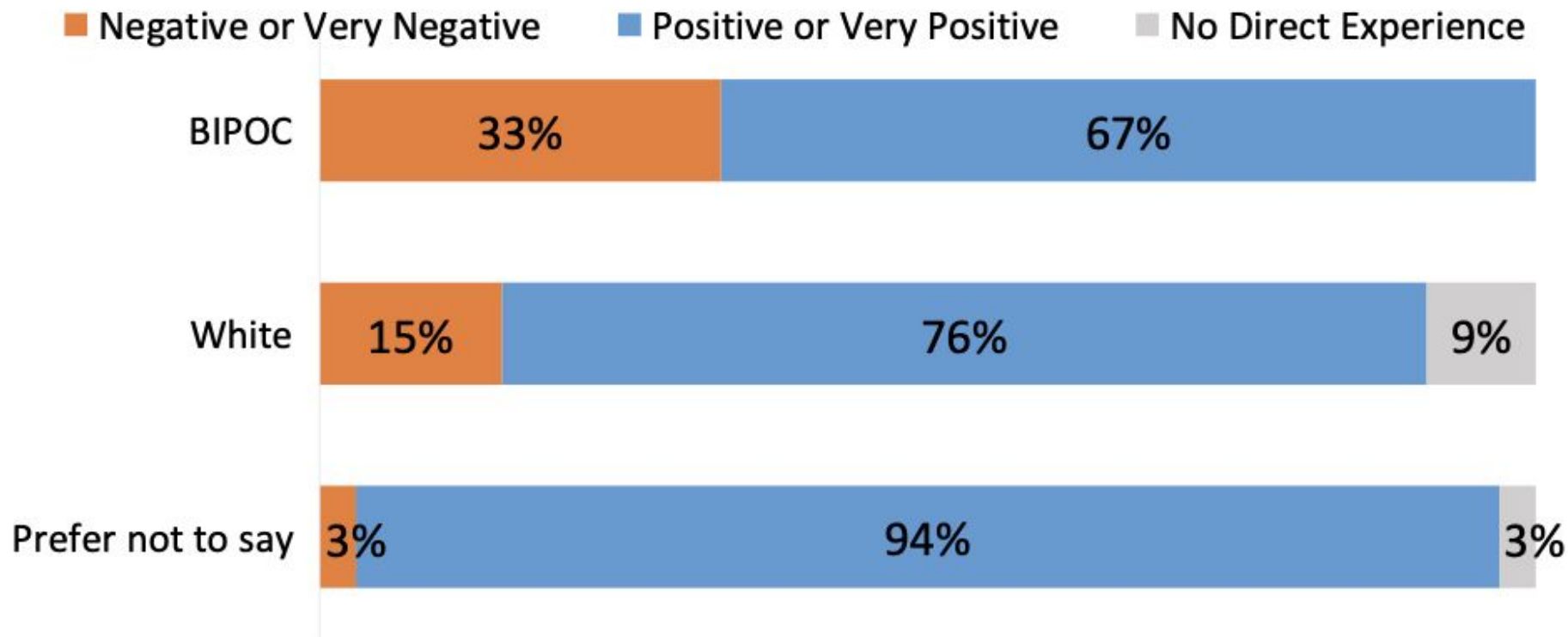


Source: Essex Safety, Policing & Racial Justice Survey, Fielded Nov 2020 |



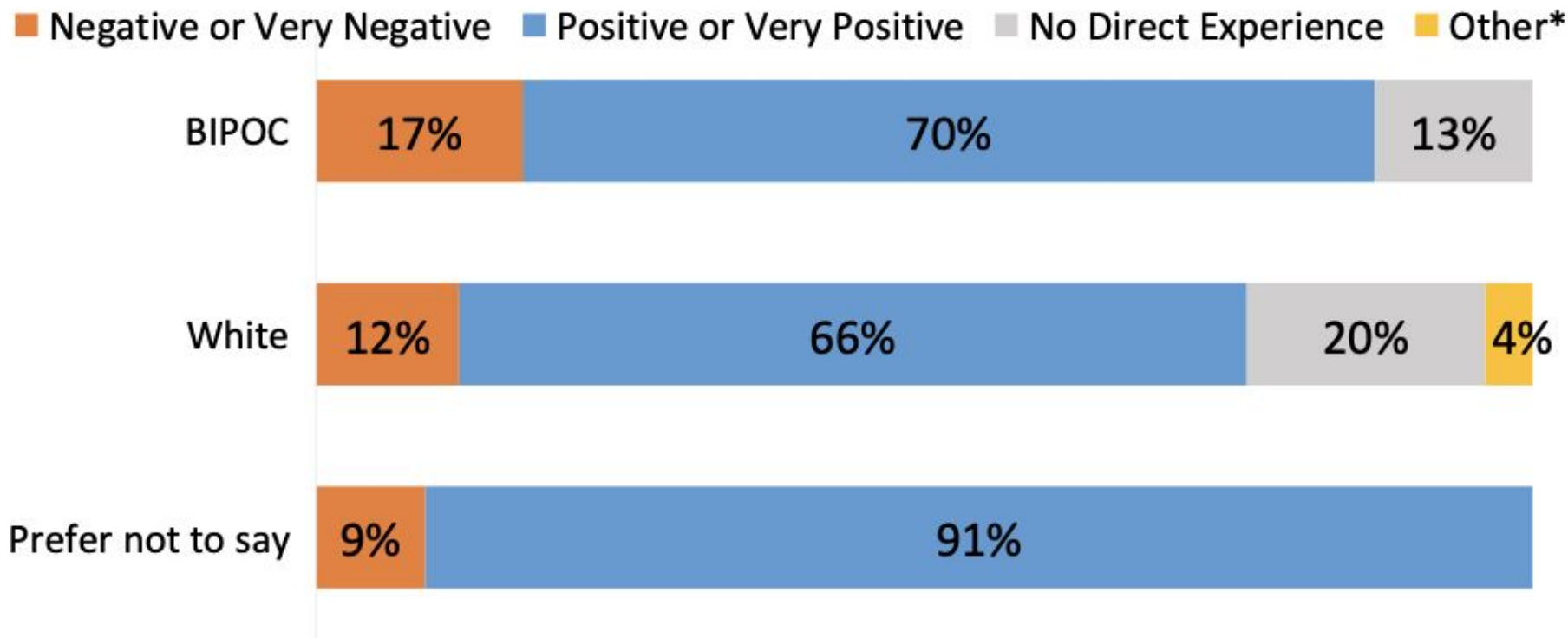
BIPOC community members
are more likely to have
negative experiences with
police.

Overall Experience with Police Anywhere



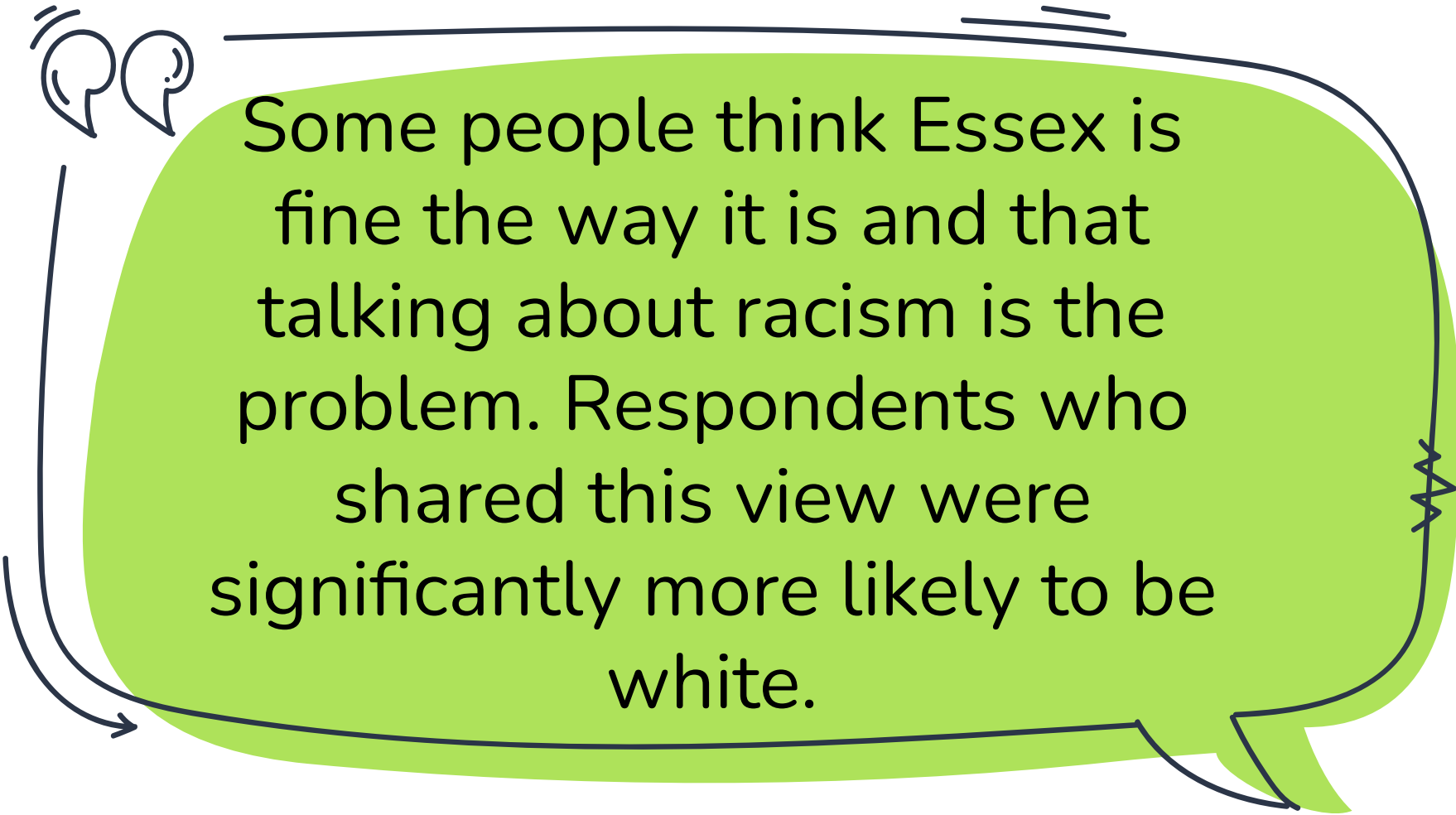
Source: Essex Safety, Policing & Racial Justice Survey, Fielded Nov 2020

Experience with the Essex Police Department

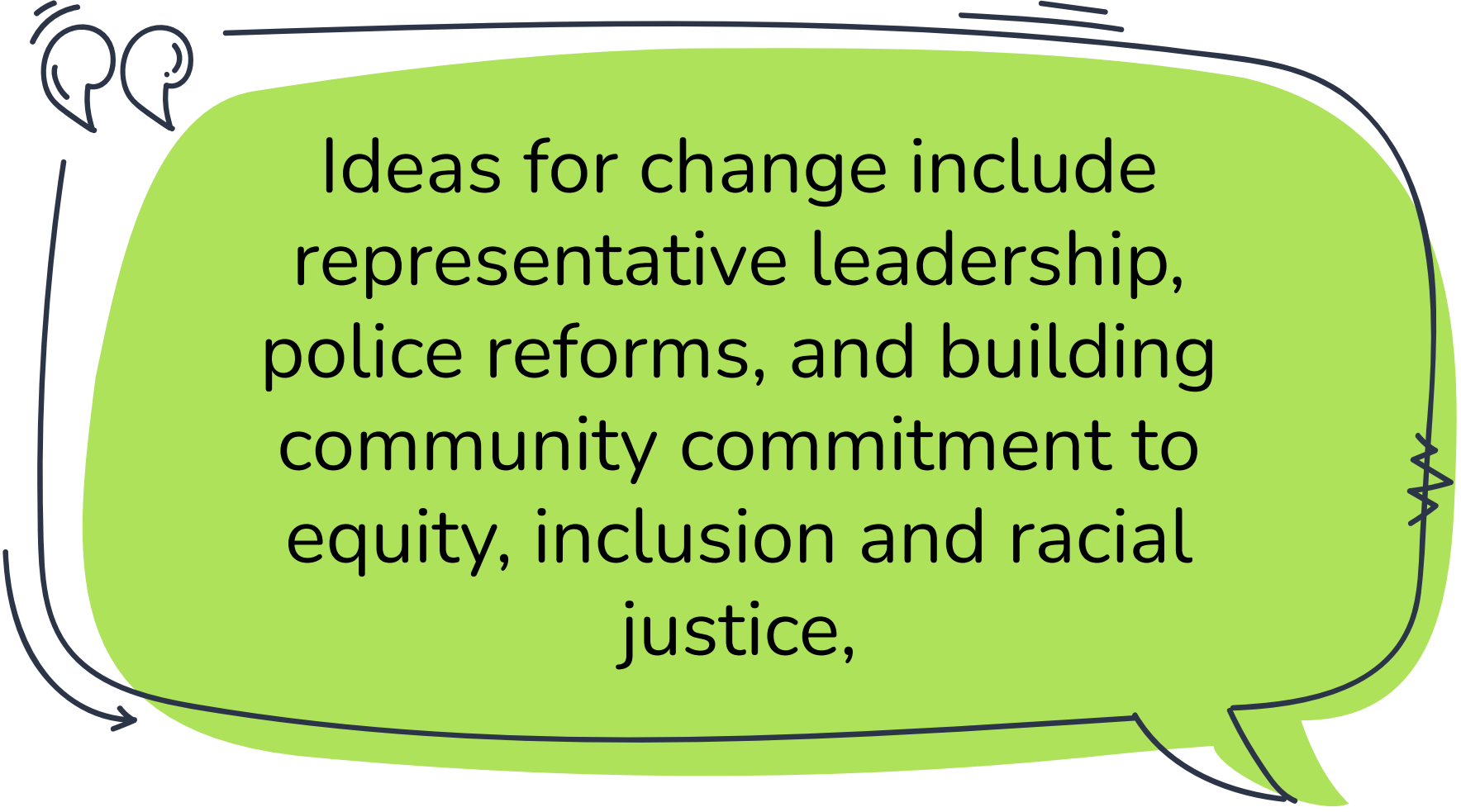


*Neutral or mixed comments

Source: Essex Safety, Policing & Racial Justice Survey, Fielded Nov 2020



Some people think Essex is fine the way it is and that talking about racism is the problem. Respondents who shared this view were significantly more likely to be white.



Ideas for change include
representative leadership,
police reforms, and building
community commitment to
equity, inclusion and racial
justice,

ACTION IDEAS

MUNICIPAL

- X Ensure that community leadership is representative of the population
- X Improvements to Education system (i.e. curriculum changes)

COMMUNITY

- X Build shared agreement and commitment to an inclusive, equitable future through ongoing **community conversations, education and training**

POLICING

- X Consider a range of strategies to improve policing,



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MOVING TO ACTION

ESTABLISHED COLLABORATIVE
PLANNING TEAM

PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS

- X Youth and adults
- X Formal and informal leaders
 - X Community members
 - X Representatives from Community Justice Center, Essex Police, Essex Westford School District, Municipality
- X Multi-racial/ethnic group

PLANNING TEAM MET TWICE IN DECEMBER TO

1. Build relationships and form a team
2. Learn & reflect on what we heard from the community
3. Hear about about diversity, equity and racial justice work currently happening in Essex*
4. Begin to set action priorities for this group (based on community input)

**see next slides*



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MUNICIPAL UPDATES

CURRENT AND EMERGING EFFORTS

EWSD EQUITY ACTION PLANNING AREAS OF FOCUS

Hiring and Human Resources

Professional Learning

Curriculum Audit

EWSD/EPD Relationship

Equity Report

Policy and Decision Making

Bias Response Reporting

Community Connections

Student Leadership

MUNICIPALITY

- X Housing Commission
- X Safety, Policing & Racial Justice process
- X Added racial justice, equity and inclusion as one of five focus areas in our Human Services Grant funding
- X Annual diversity and Implicit Bias training
- X Looking into offering stipends for Boards and Commissions
- X Expanding outreach when hiring new staff
- X Working to establish longterm equity goals

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

VIEW(Voices for Inclusion in Essex and Westford)

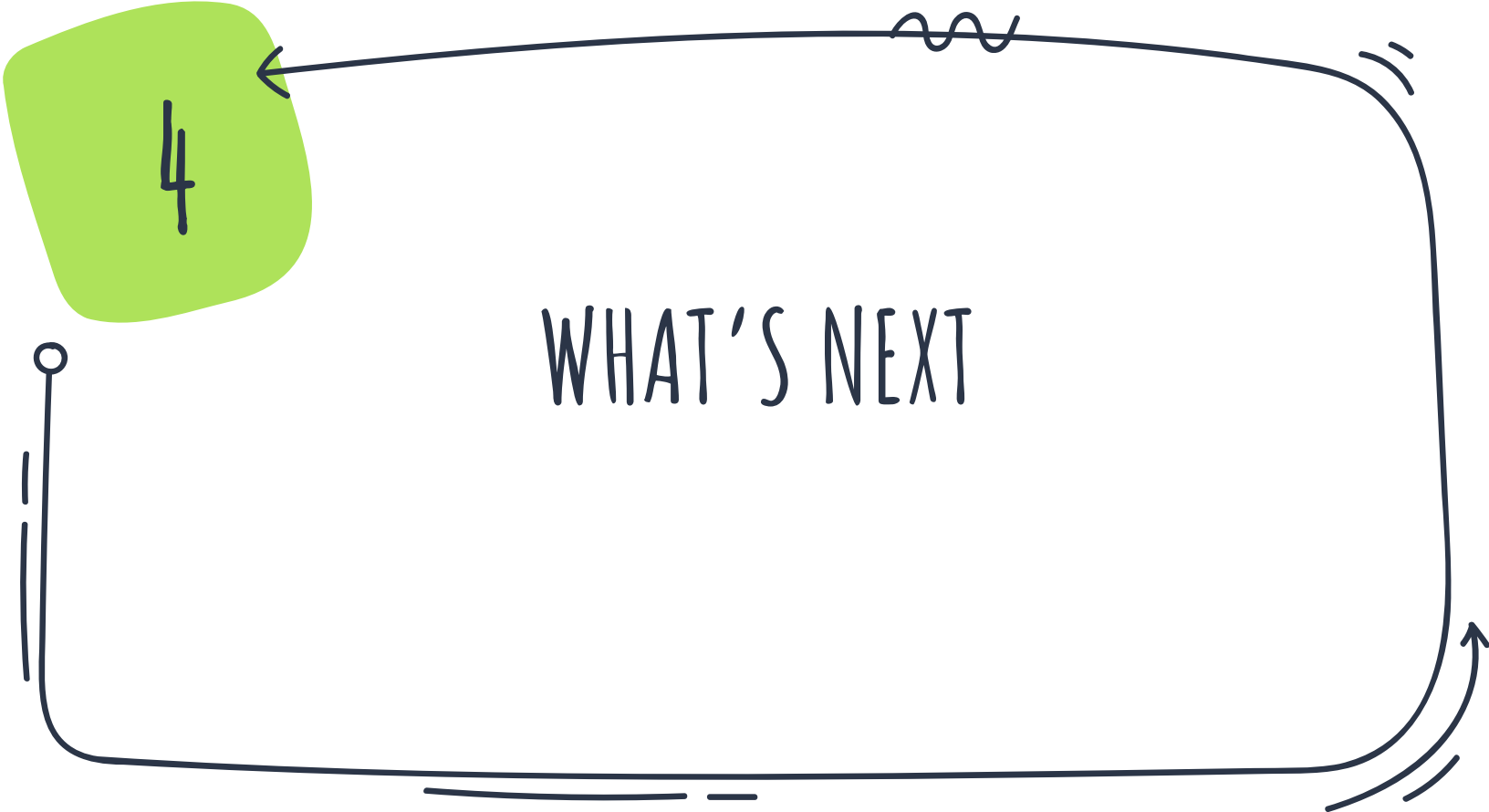
- To achieve the essence of community, the voices from every race, religion, socioeconomic group, and marginalized set of folks need to be heard. The Voices for Inclusion in Essex and Westford (VIEW) is a group of diverse community members who are working to create events and opportunities for Essex and Westford residents that allow for these outlying voices to be heard and understood. VIEW wants to strengthen our community by looking at it through the various lenses of people we live and work with.

New Initiatives

- Data around race and referrals to the CJC
- Referrals from EPD for Victim/Affected Party Outreach
- Citizen Concerns / Forum(s) with the Chief of Police

POLICE

- X Policy
- X Oversight
- X Mental health crisis response / Howard MH
- X Shift **SRO** (School Resource Officer) to **DLO** (District Liaison Officer)



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WHAT'S NEXT

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CREATIVE DISCOURSE

- X Build momentum and decision-making around the community's shared vision of public safety to create an equitable and inclusive Essex community.
- X Continue to build municipal infrastructure (e.g. more representative leadership, fully functional and funded social services, community oversight of police) as both a platform for and a means to improve policing and public safety.
- X Essex police should continue to hold trainings (racial equity, de escalation, use of force, mental health), work with community and data collection experts to improve data collection and sharing, and continue to implement community policing strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CREATIVE DISCOURSE (CONT'D)

- X Continue weekly meetings with leaders across the community (education, municipal, police) to collaborate on ways to promote racial diversity, equity and inclusion in municipal infrastructure and activities.
- X Prioritize CJC's and EPD efforts to
 - X Expand data collection related to CJC referral decisions (disaggregated by race/ethnicity)
 - X Institute regular community forums with EPD
- X Reconvene Safety, Policing and Racial Justice collaborative planning team in January to revisit priorities they've identified (based on community input) and create a plan of action to continue to address priorities.

CREATIVE DISCOURSE THANKS

- X All the Essex community members who participated in the listening sessions and responded to the surveys.
- X The core planning team of municipal staff who helped to support and implement this work: *Greg Duggan, Jill Evans, Ron Hoague, Erin Maguire, Owiso Makuku, Evan Teich*

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