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# EASING RACIAL TENSIONS AT WORK

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## HOW WE CONDUCTED OUR STUDY

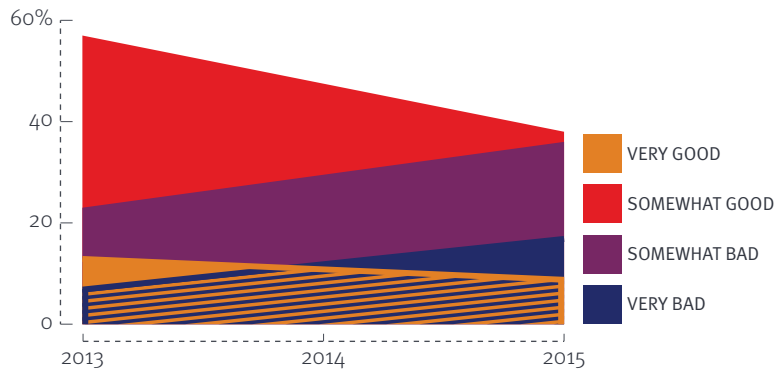
The research consists of a survey, Insights In-Depth® sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups) involving 97 people from our Task Force organizations, and one-on-one interviews with 44 men and women in the US.

The national survey was conducted online or over the phone in October and November 2016 among 3,570 respondents (374 black, 2258 white, 393 Asian, and 395 Hispanic) between the ages of 21 and 65 currently employed full-time in white collar occupations, with at least a bachelor's degree. Data were weighted to be representative of the US population on key demographics (age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, and Census Division). The base used for statistical testing was the effective base.

The survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), a non-profit research organization. NORC was responsible for the data collection, while CTI conducted the analysis.

In the charts, percentages may not always add up to 100 because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses from respondents.

# Racial tensions divide Americans

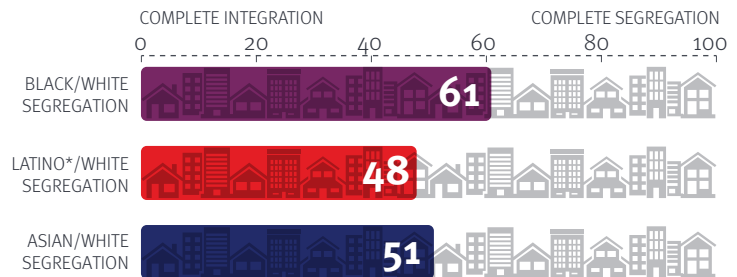


**WOULD YOU SAY** race relations between whites and blacks are very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad?<sup>1</sup>

## WE LIVE IN A SEGREGATED NATION

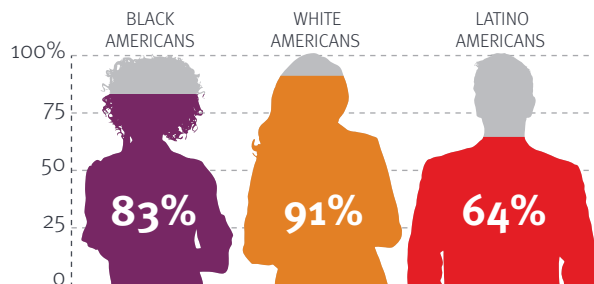
**SEGREGATION** makes it easier for Americans to be unaware of the stubborn obstacles to equal civil rights for citizens of color. The workplace is one of few settings where we commonly interact across racial and ethnic lines.

### WE DON'T LIVE TOGETHER...



Average segregation indices for US states<sup>2</sup>

### WE DON'T SOCIALIZE TOGETHER...



The members of our social networks are likely to be members of our own race/ethnic group<sup>3</sup>

### ...BUT WE DO WORK TOGETHER.

“For most adult citizens, the single most likely site of integration—of genuine social interaction across racial lines—is the workplace.”<sup>4</sup>

—Cynthia Estlund, author, *Working Together: How Workplace Bonds Strengthen a Diverse Democracy*

\* For data referenced in this infographic, “Latino” refers to those who identify as being of Latino or Hispanic descent.



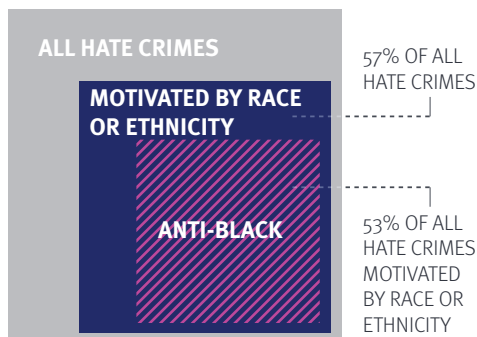
# Race relations affect employees...

## EXTERNAL TENSIONS SPILL INTO THE WORKPLACE

### MOST PROFESSIONALS OF COLOR

have encountered discrimination outside of the workplace. Black professionals are the group most likely to experience discrimination or fear it.

### HATE CRIMES committed in 2015<sup>5</sup>

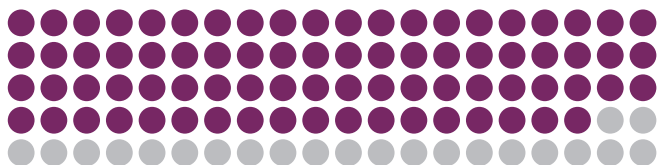


“I cannot check being a black woman at the door when entering the workplace. These social issues impact me. I have a young son, and how he engages with the police is a real concern—one that carries over into my morale and productivity at work.”

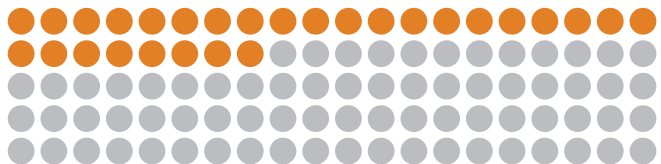
—Black female focus group participant

**EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED** discrimination/bias outside of work and/or are fearful of discrimination/bias/violence for themselves or family

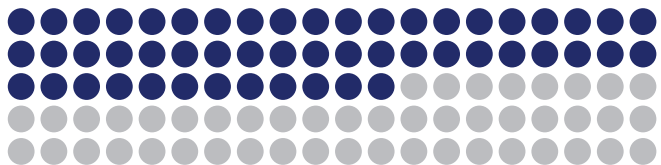
BLACK: 78%



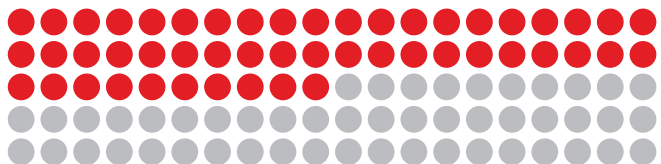
WHITE: 28%



ASIAN: 52%



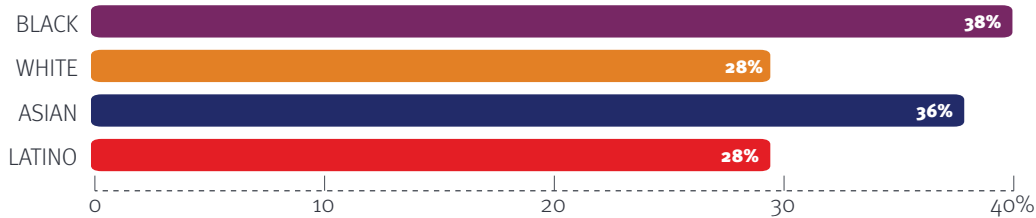
LATINO: 50%



# ...and employers

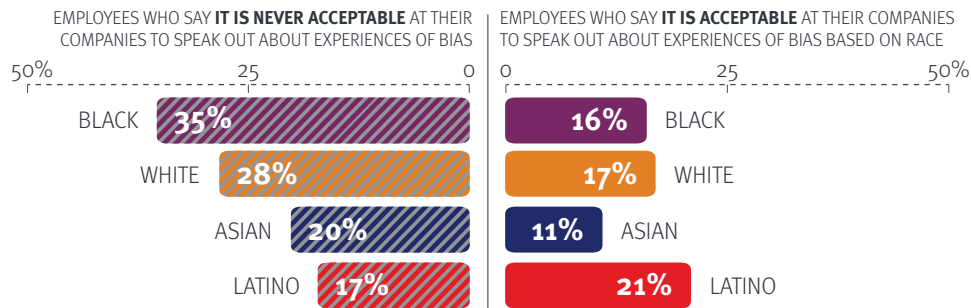
## MANY EMPLOYEES FEEL THEY CAN'T DISCUSS RACIAL BIAS AT WORK...

**IT IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE** at my company to speak out about experiences of bias based on race

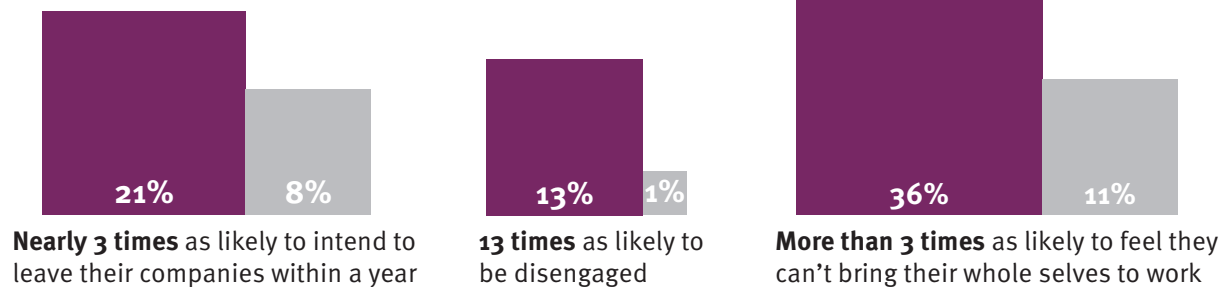


## ...WHICH HEIGHTENS ALIENATION

### EMPLOYEES WHO REGULARLY FEEL ISOLATED AND/OR ALIENATED AT WORK



**BLACK EMPLOYEES** who say it is **never acceptable** at their companies to speak out about experiences of racial bias are...



BLACK EMPLOYEES WHO SAY IT IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE AT THEIR COMPANIES TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT EXPERIENCES BASED ON RACE

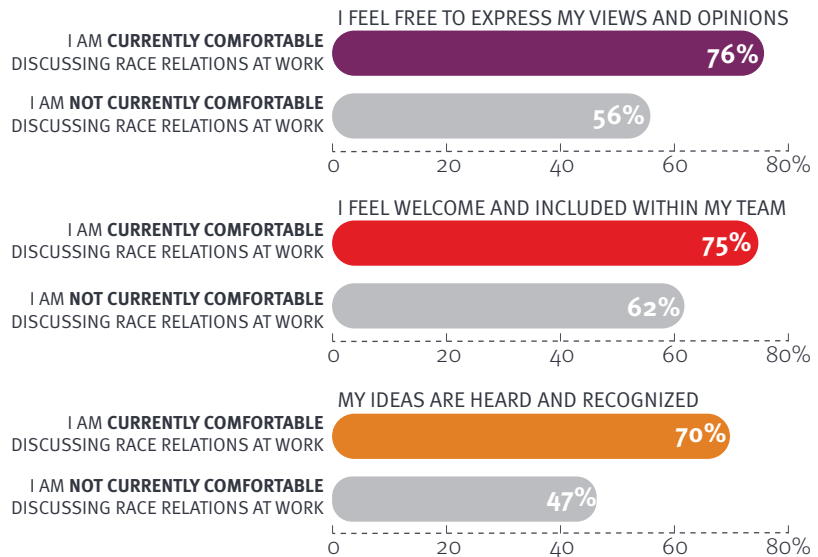
BLACK EMPLOYEES WHO SAY IT IS ACCEPTABLE AT THEIR COMPANIES TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT EXPERIENCES BASED ON RACE

# Talking about race at work benefits the business

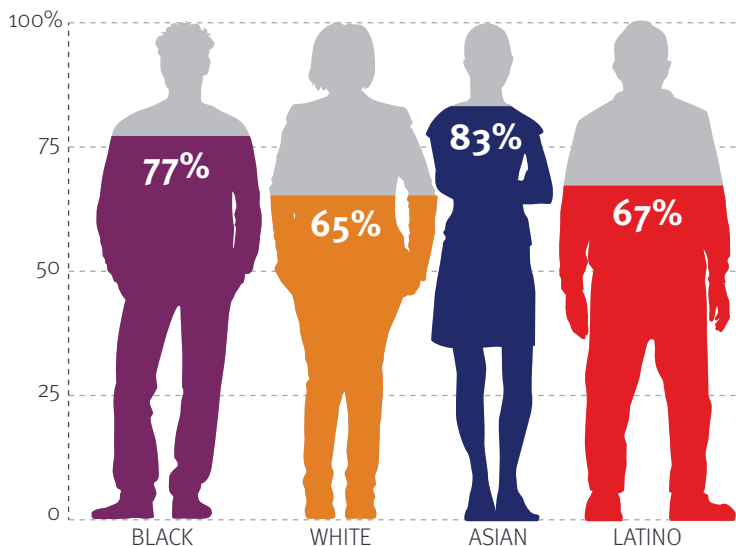
**EMPLOYEES BENEFIT** when they feel they can discuss race relations at work.

“Leaders think a response would distract us from the business, but actually the silence is more distracting. When there’s an elephant in the room, it makes a company look cowardly not to address it in some way, even if it’s only internally.”

—White female focus group participant



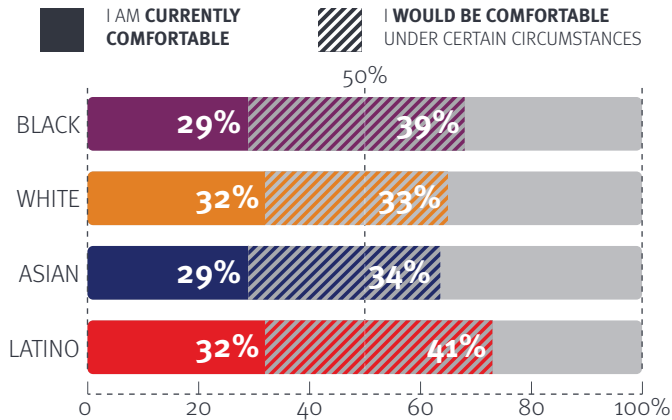
## WHEN COMPANIES ADDRESS RACE PUBLICLY, THE BRAND BENEFITS



**AMONG RESPONDENTS** who are aware of companies responding to societal incidents of racial discrimination or bias, the majority say the response made them view the company in a more positive way.

## EMPLOYERS CAN HELP EMPLOYEES FEEL COMFORTABLE

### WHEN IT COMES TO DISCUSSING RACE RELATIONS AT WORK...



**CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES** would make employees more comfortable discussing race relations at work.

“I think senior leaders should model how to talk about race. They can set the example.”

—White female focus group participant

“Race is our country’s original sin. We like to think we’re postracial, but there is so much understandable pain associated with our complicated relationship with race—including the reality that white people don’t wish to be blamed and often want to ignore that there is a problem. All of us have been impacted.”

—Kendra Thomas, Vice President, Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Pearson

## Breaking the silence

### FOSTER INTERNAL CONVERSATIONS

- ✓ Acknowledge that racial tension is an issue
- ✓ Create the circumstances for productive conversations
- ✓ Enable one-on-one conversations
- ✓ Empower small group discussions
- ✓ Bring in outsiders
- ✓ Hold a town hall
- ✓ Host a discussion within your company’s employee resource groups (ERGs)

### TAKE A PUBLIC STANCE ON RACE

- ✓ Release a public company statement arguing against racial injustice
- ✓ Share guidance from Diversity and Inclusion and HR specialists publicly
- ✓ Take other public action

**OUR DATA SHOWS** that employers, as well as employees, benefit when colleagues feel they can talk about race at work. But it’s up to employers to help break the silence.

**OUR FULL REPORT**, including comprehensive guidelines for employer action, is available at [talentinnovation.org](https://www.talentinnovation.org)





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#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Gallup, "Race Relations: In Depth," Gallup Inc., accessed April 6, 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1687/race-relations.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> "New Racial Segregation Measures for States and Large Metropolitan Areas: Analysis of the 2005-2009 American Community Survey," Population Studies Center Institute for Social Research, accessed April 11, 2017, <http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/dis/census/segregation.html>

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Cox, Juhem Navarro-Rivera, and Robert P. Jones, "Race, Religion, and Political Affiliation of Americans' Core Social Networks," Public Religion Research Institute, August 3, 2016, <http://www.prrri.org/research/poll-race-religion-politics-americans-social-networks/>

<sup>4</sup> Cynthia Estlund, *Working Together: How Workplace Bonds Strengthen a Diverse Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2003), 61.

<sup>5</sup> "2015 Hate Crime Statistics: Incidents and Offenses," Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed April 17, 2017, [https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/topic-pages/incidentsandoffenses\\_final](https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/topic-pages/incidentsandoffenses_final)

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