

REFRESH NEIGHBORHOOD DATA PROJECT

HEALTH BEHAVIORS

From summer 2017 to winter 2018, Broad Community Connections (BCC) led a community-based participatory research study to collect information on the health, wellbeing, wants and needs of residents living near the ReFresh Project. The below information is a synthesis of data regarding respondents' health behaviors and barriers to practicing healthy physical and emotional habits. The data is from 200 door-to-door surveys with adult residents, all living within one-square mile of the ReFresh Project at 300 N Broad Street in New Orleans. The survey area covered parts of the Tremé-Lafitte, Lower Mid-City, Mid-City, and Bayou St. John neighborhoods. BCC also conducted focus groups with key resident demographic groups to augment survey findings.



ReFresh
PROJECT

The ReFresh Project is a community health hub and collaborative of cross-sector partners working to achieve health equity in New Orleans neighborhoods along North Broad Street. Through health education programming, community engagement, data collection, information sharing, and systems-change advocacy, we work to ensure that all local residents have the tools, education and supports needed to be healthy and happy.

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES

What we eat, how active we are, how we deal with stress, and whether or not we are supported in our mental health needs all influence our overall health and wellbeing. Factors outside of our control, however, oftentimes dictate how, if, and to what extent we as individuals are able to make the healthiest choice for ourselves and loved ones. This data brief presents information on our neighbors' physical activity, eating, shopping, and emotional self-care attitudes and behaviors, as well as barriers they confront when trying to make healthy choices. For information on additional structural factors influencing peoples' health, please see our other ReFresh Neighborhood Data Project briefs on demographics, health care access and utilization, and housing and neighborhood stability.



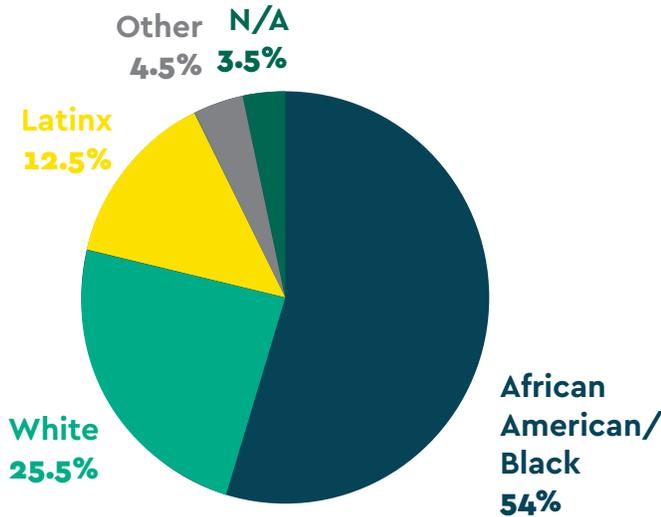
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GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

ReFresh neighborhoods are generally home to a diverse mix of older Black or African American* adults with deep roots in the neighborhood, young and childless white adults new to the neighborhood, and young Latinx** immigrant families with low levels of formal education.

RACE + ETHNICITY

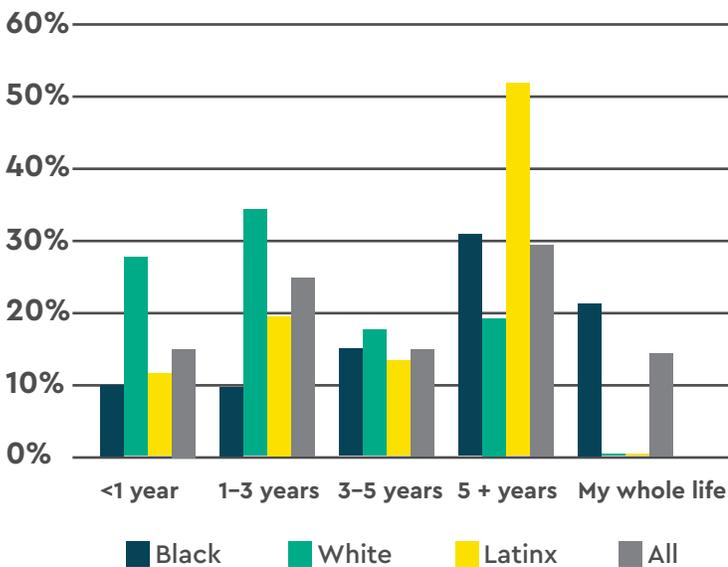


The majority of survey respondents identified as Black (54%), followed by white (25.5%) and Latinx (12.5%), respectively. Approximately 4.5% of survey respondents identified as Native American, Asian, or multi-racial, shown here as "Other". A separate 3.5% of participant responses (seven people total) did not identify as a discernable race or ethnicity. In an effort to make our graphs readable, we do not show outcomes for "Other" or for respondents who did not identify as any race or ethnicity in the remainder of this brief. If interested in this data, please contact ReFresh.

*The survey asked residents to identify their race from a list of options taken from the U.S. Census Bureau. One option was "Black or African American." For the sake of brevity and the desire to be inclusive of people of African descent from countries other than the United States, the term "Black" is used for the remainder of this brief when referencing residents who chose this option.

** "Latinx" is a gender-neutral term sometimes used in lieu of "Latino" or "Latina". For the purposes of this brief, "Latinx" is used to describe the residents who responded "Yes" to the survey question "Do you consider yourself Latino?".

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?



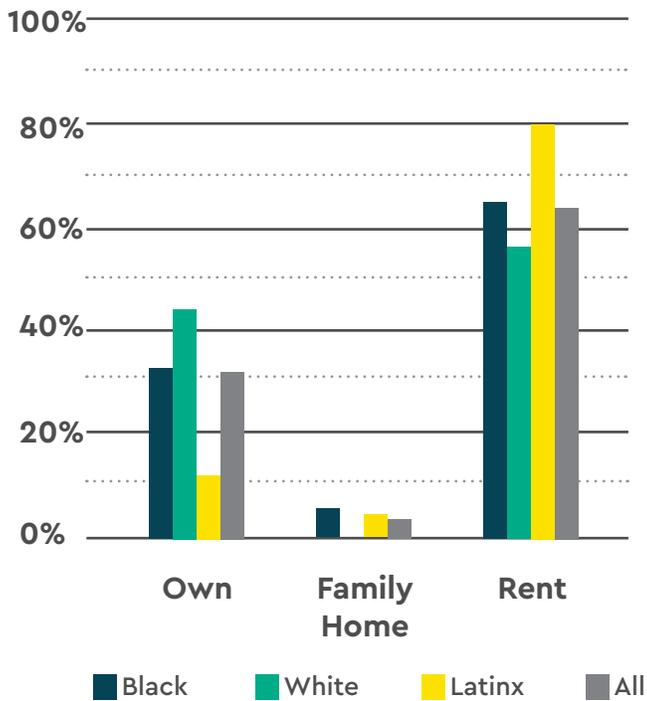
Black residents have the deepest roots in the ReFresh neighborhoods, followed by Latinxs, then white residents. Fifty-four percent of Black respondents had lived in the neighborhood for at least five years, with 22% having lived in the neighborhood their whole life or "close to it". Fifty-two percent of Latinx respondents had lived in the neighborhood for five years or more, yet none had lived there for their whole life. No white respondents had lived in the neighborhood their whole lives, and 81% had moved into the neighborhood within the past five years.



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DO YOU RENT OR OWN THIS HOME?



The majority of respondents in each racial and ethnic group rented their home. Despite being the newest group to ReFresh neighborhoods, white respondents led other racial and ethnic groups in homeownership at 43%. Of Black residents, 32% owned their home or lived in a family-owned home, followed by 16% of Latinx respondents. In follow-up focus group discussions, many Black homeowners reported owning their homes for a long time with some living in homes passed from generation to generation.



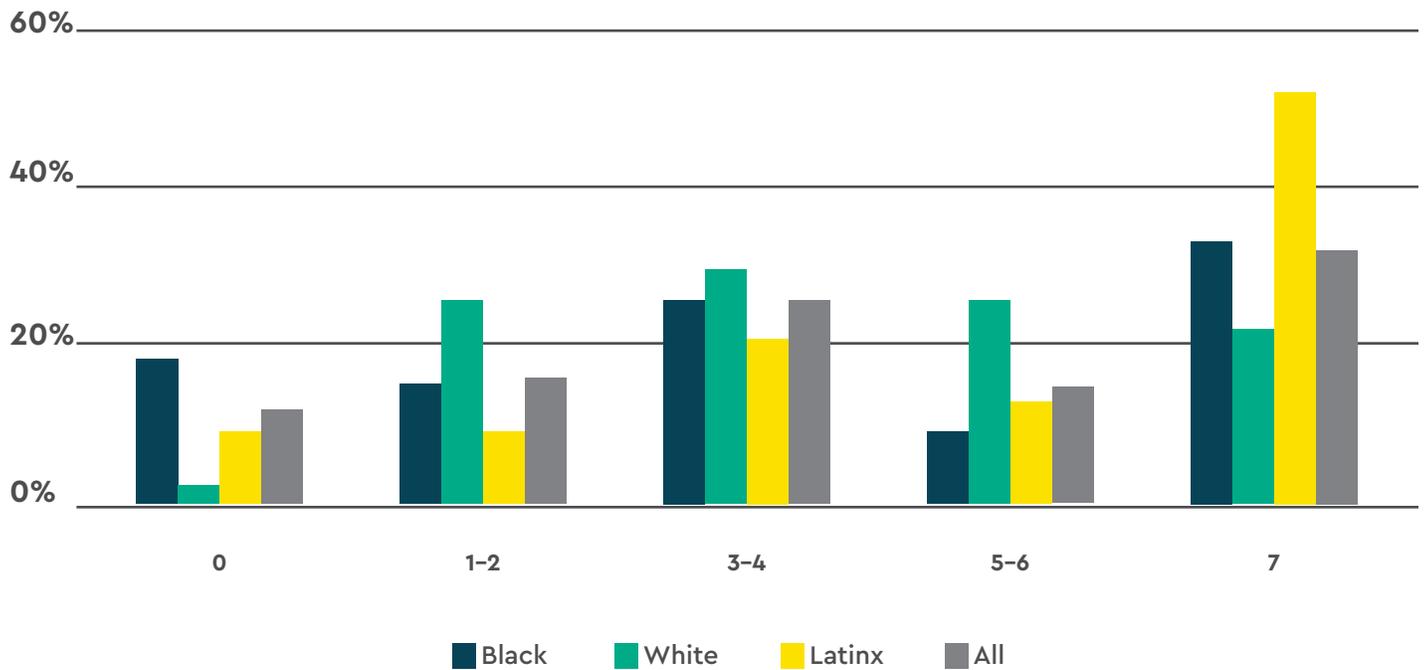
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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

In general, most survey respondents in each racial and ethnic group were interested in being physically active, and many people preferred physical activity with a social element to help keep them motivated. However, the actual amount of physical activity people participated in each week and most of the barriers people confronted when trying to do so were different based on the racial and ethnic group of survey respondents.

HOW MANY DAYS A WEEK ARE YOU PHYSICALLY ACTIVE FOR AT LEAST 20 MINUTES?



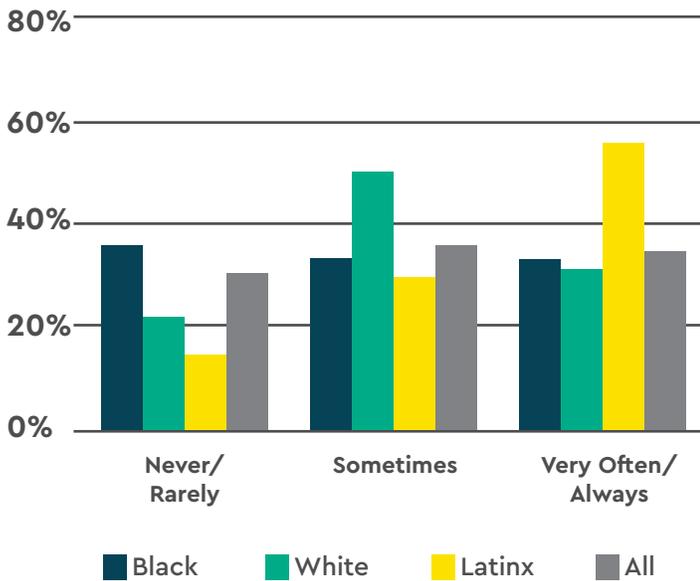
Most respondents from all racial and ethnic groups reported being physically active three days per week or more. Latinxs were the most physically active with 84% answering three or more days and 52% stating they are physically active seven days a week. Around 70% of Black and white respondents reported being physically active three days per week or more with around one third of respondents in each group being active six or seven days a week. Black respondents had the highest percentage of no physical activity in the week at 19%. This question left "physical activity" open to interpretation and may include manual labor such as cleaning or construction, walking as transportation, intentional exercise, and more.



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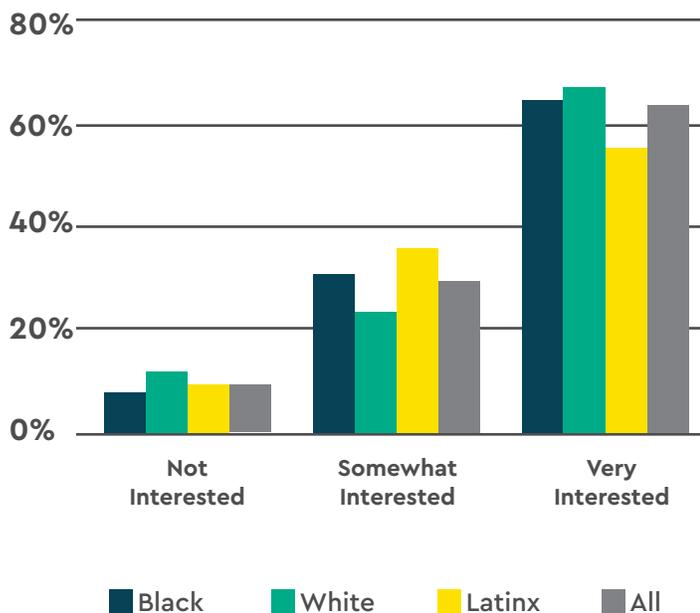
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ARE YOU AS PHYSICALLY ACTIVE AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE?



The majority of Latinx respondents (56%) are "very often" or "always" able to be as physically active as they would like, followed by 32% of Black respondents and 29% of white respondents. Black respondents had the highest rate of "never" or "rarely" being able to be as active as they would like. It is important to note that this question is in reference to the amount of physical activity the individual respondent desires rather than a recommended standard.

HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMMING?



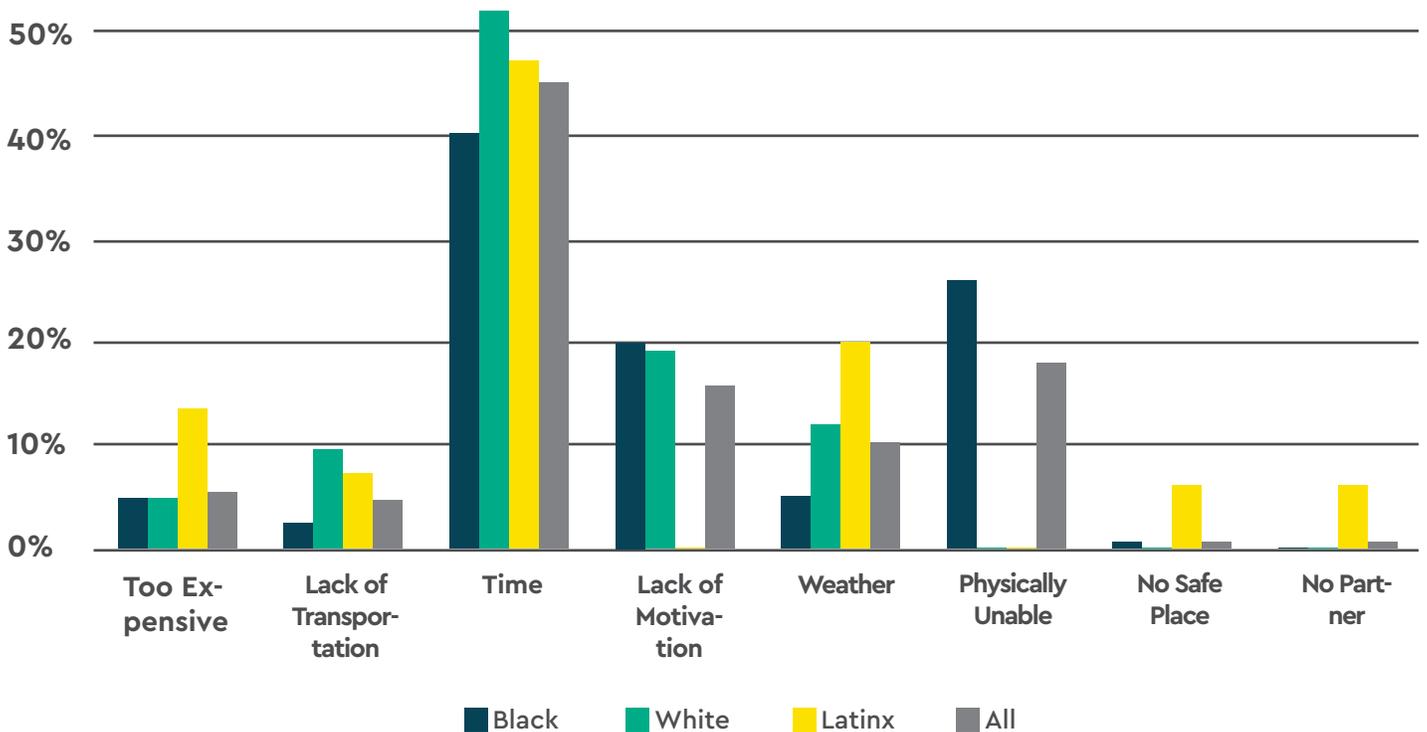
The majority of all respondents said they were "very interested" in free or low-cost physical activity programs in or near their neighborhood. Around two thirds of Black (63%) and white (65%) respondents chose this answer, with 56% of Latinxs choosing this as well. Only 8% of all respondents reported not being interested at all.



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WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACE IN BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE?



Time was the largest barrier to physical activity among respondents of all racial and ethnic groups. White respondents reported this the most at 54%, followed by 47% of Latinx respondents and 41% of Black respondents. The second and third largest barriers were, however, different for each racial and ethnic group. For example, Latinxs cited "weather" as the second largest barrier (20%) followed by activities being "too expensive" (13%). A number of participants in the Latinx focus group talked about soccer leagues for adults and youth being too expensive and hard to get to. White respondents cited "lack of motivation" second (20%) followed by "weather" (12%).

The second biggest barrier for Black respondents was "physically unable" to be active (26%), and the third was "lack of motivation" (20%). In focus groups, Black adults echoed the survey findings, citing lack of motivation, inability to exercise due to pain, and feelings of self-consciousness due to limited ability as barriers to exercise. Most people in the Black seniors focus group were very active in general, and some regularly participated in water aerobics, walking, and more. With the exception of one participant, however, all these seniors lived in their own homes and were able-bodied. One participant lived in a senior living facility and talked about how seniors there had nothing to do, especially regarding physical activity.



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WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?

Group exercise was the most sought after type of programming by all participants at 24%. Focus groups revealed that people did not care so much what type of physical activity they were doing, but thought that a group structure would help keep them motivated. This sentiment was particularly strong among Black adults and seniors and Latinx adults. In regards to desired programming, the top answers among Black respondents were dance or Zumba classes and walking groups, while Latinx respondents mostly requested group sports such as soccer for adults and youth, and white respondents favored group sports generally and yoga. Latinx respondents also expressed a desire for free physical activity programming for youth during times when youth are home from school (e.g. holiday breaks) and parents are at work, as well as activities youth and adults can participate in together.



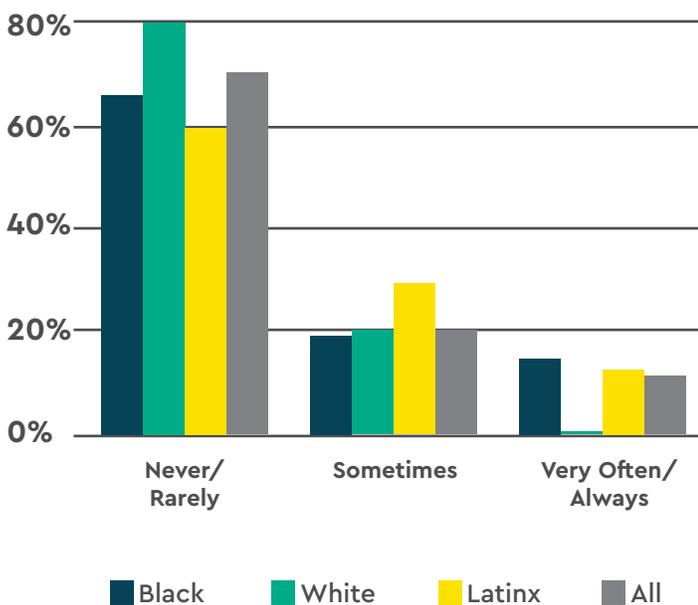
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FOOD SECURITY AND HABITS

Survey respondents across race and ethnicity showed a general desire to regularly consume fruits and vegetables, and many were often eating meals prepared at home. Chronic and temporary food insecurity was, however, most notable among Black and Latinx respondents. Expense was the largest barrier for all racial and ethnic groups in eating more fruits and vegetables, and many Black residents mentioned being on a fixed income which limited their monthly food budget.

IN THE LAST MONTH, HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED TO AFFORD FOOD FOR YOURSELF OR YOUR FAMILY?



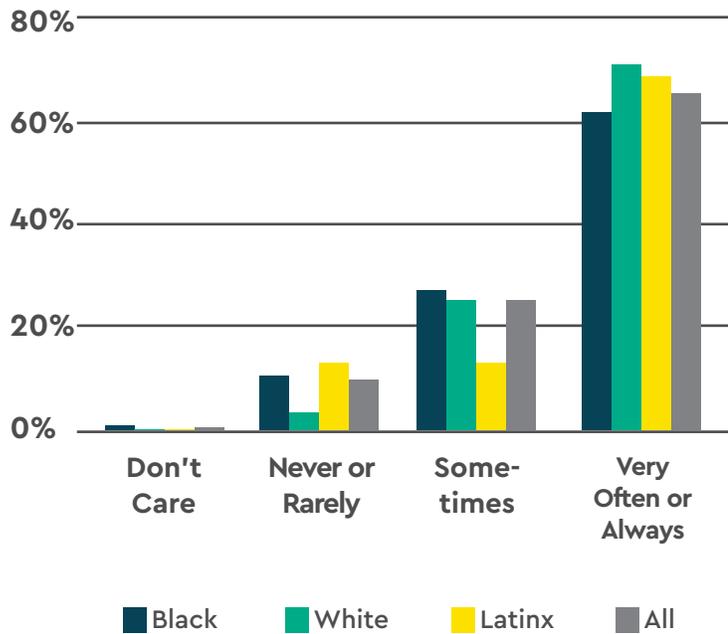
Latinx and Black respondents showed the most food insecurity; 16% of Black respondents and 12% of Latinx respondents stated they struggled to afford food "very often" or "always" within the past year. One-quarter to one-fifth of each racial or ethnic group responded that they had struggled to afford food "sometimes" within the past year. Only 60% of Latinx and 65% of Black respondents had "never" or "rarely" struggled to afford food within the year, compared to 80% percent of white respondents.



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ARE YOU ABLE TO EAT AS MANY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AS YOU WOULD LIKE?



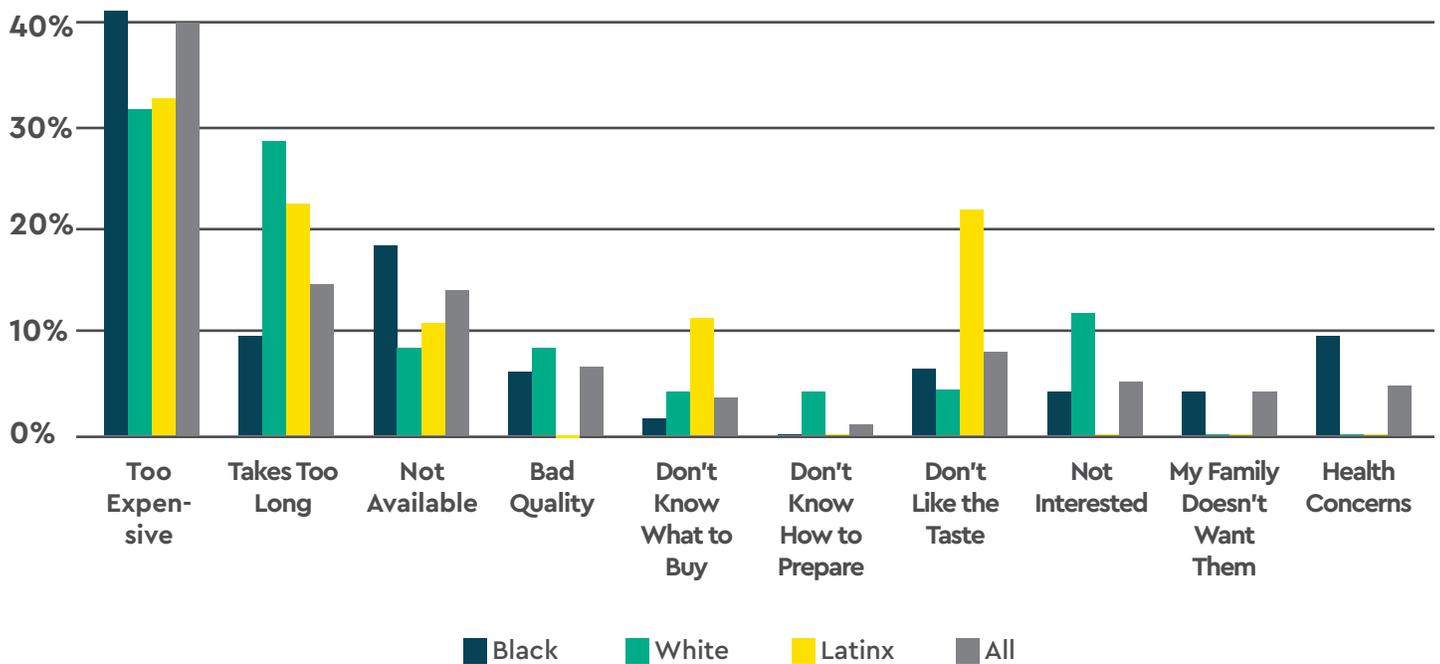
The majority of people reported "very often" or "always" being able to eat as many fruits and vegetables every day as they'd like with white respondents having the highest rate at 71%, followed by Latinx (68%) and Black respondents (62%). Latinx respondents reported "never" or "rarely" being able to eat as many fruits and vegetables as they'd like at the highest rate (16%) followed by Black respondents (10%) and white respondents (4%). In focus groups, many Black adults used the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP", or food stamps), had tight food budgets, bought and prepared food for multiple people in their family, and usually purchased the majority of their fruits and vegetables at the beginning of the month when receiving their SNAP allotment. Similar to the physical activity question, this question left it up to the respondent to determine what amount of fruits and vegetables is desirable for them to eat. In general, the majority of Black adult, Black senior, and Latinx adult focus group respondents mentioned really liking fruits and vegetables and trying to prioritize them in their diet and that of the children they care for.



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WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACE IN EATING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?



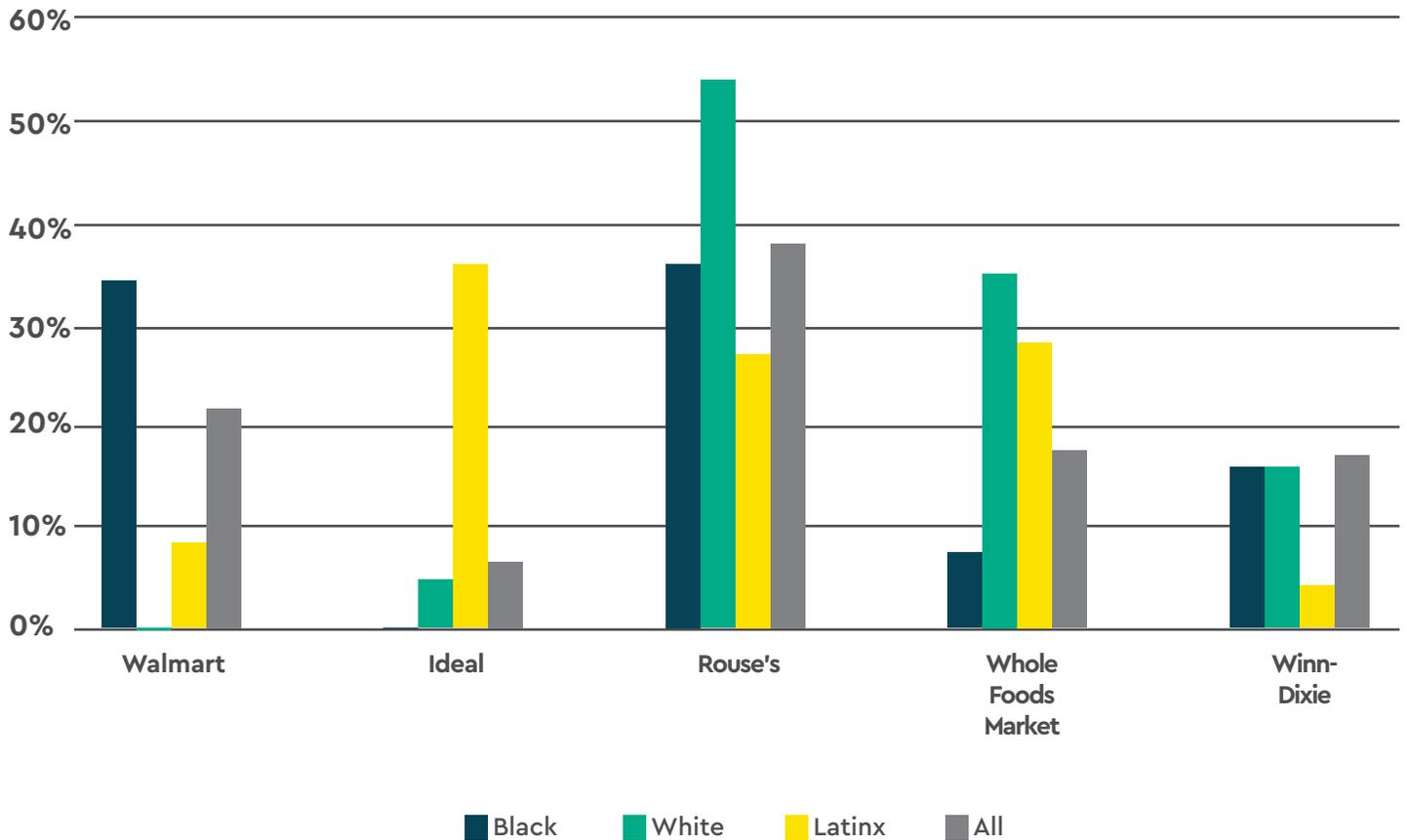
The largest barrier to eating fruits and vegetables across all racial and ethnic groups was expense. Forty-two percent of Black respondents cited this as the number one challenge, as did 33% of Latinx respondents and 32% of white respondents. Most participants in Black adult and Black senior focus groups mentioned being on some sort of fixed income that they strategically spent each month based on their needs. The length of time needed to prepare fruits and vegetables was also a common barrier amongst survey respondents, cited by 28% of white respondents, 22% of Latinx respondents, and 10% of Black respondents. Other top barriers for Black respondents included fruits and vegetables not being available where they shopped (17%) and health concerns (10%). For Latinxs, 22% did not like the taste, and 11% either did not know what to buy or these foods were not available where they shop. For white respondents, 12% were not interested in eating fruits and vegetables at all.



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WHERE DO YOU BUY MOST OF YOUR GROCERIES?



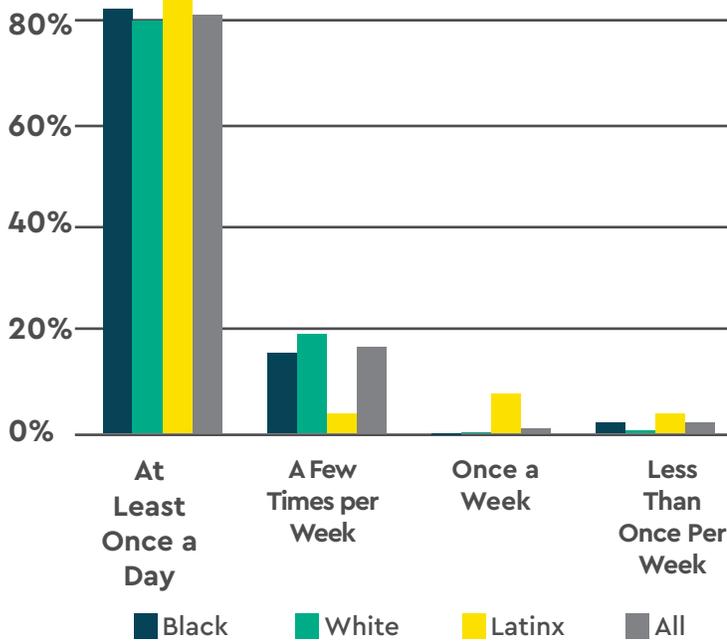
Rouses was the most popular place to buy groceries for both white (55%) and Black (36%) respondents. Walmart was a close popular second for Black respondents, with 34% citing this as the store they shop at most often. In the focus group of Black adults, many described a preference for Walmart as they could buy groceries as well as other products they needed at the same place. Winn Dixie (16%) and Sav A Lot (9%) followed, and only 7% of Black respondents cited Whole Foods Market as the main place they shopped. In contrast, Whole Foods Market was the second most popular response for white respondents at 35%, and the most popular grocery store amongst Latinx respondents was Ideal Market at 36%, followed by a tie between Rouses Market and Whole Foods Market at 28% each.



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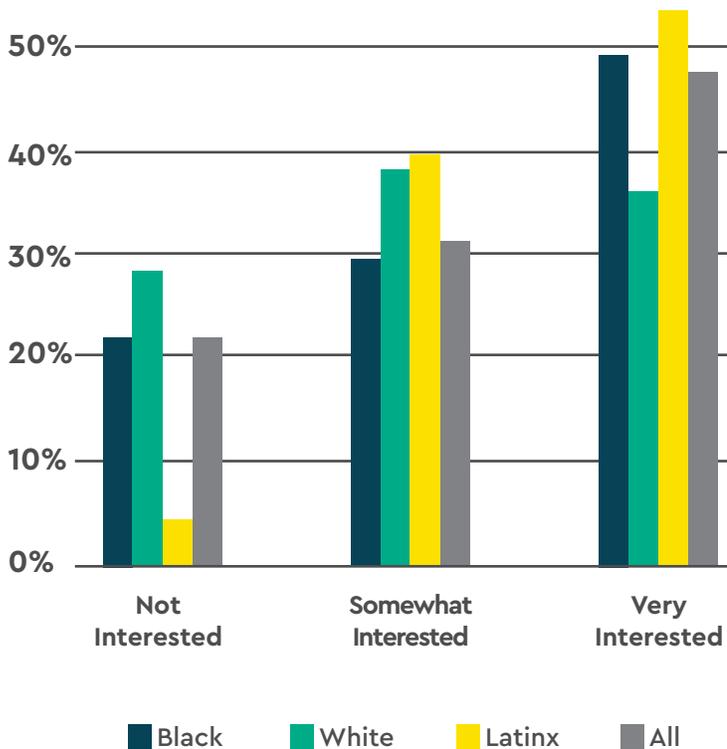
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HOW OFTEN DO YOU EAT MEALS PREPARED AT HOME?



The majority of all respondents reported eating a meal prepared at home at least once a day (81%), and this was split fairly evenly across all racial and ethnic groups. If not eating a home-prepared meal once per day, the rest of white respondents (20%) and almost all the rest of Black respondents (16%) ate meals prepared at home a few times per week. For Latinx respondents, however, 8% ate a meal prepared at home only once a week, with 4% eating a meal like this even more infrequently.

HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN HEALTHY COOKING AND NUTRITION PROGRAMMING?



In general, Latinx respondents were the most interested in free healthy eating and nutrition programming in or near their neighborhood. About half of all Latinx (56%) and Black (50%) respondents reported being "very interested" in participating in this type of programming, compared to 35% of white respondents. Almost all the remaining Latinx respondents reported being "somewhat interested" (40%) compared to 37% of white respondents and 29% of Black respondents. Only 4% of Latinxs were "not interested" in potential free health cooking and nutrition programming in their neighborhood compared to almost a quarter of all white and Black respondents. Most of the people participating in the Black adult, Black senior, and Latinx adult focus groups had already been actively incorporating vegetables into their diets and were interested in increasing their daily intake, yet in a way that worked with their limited budgets.



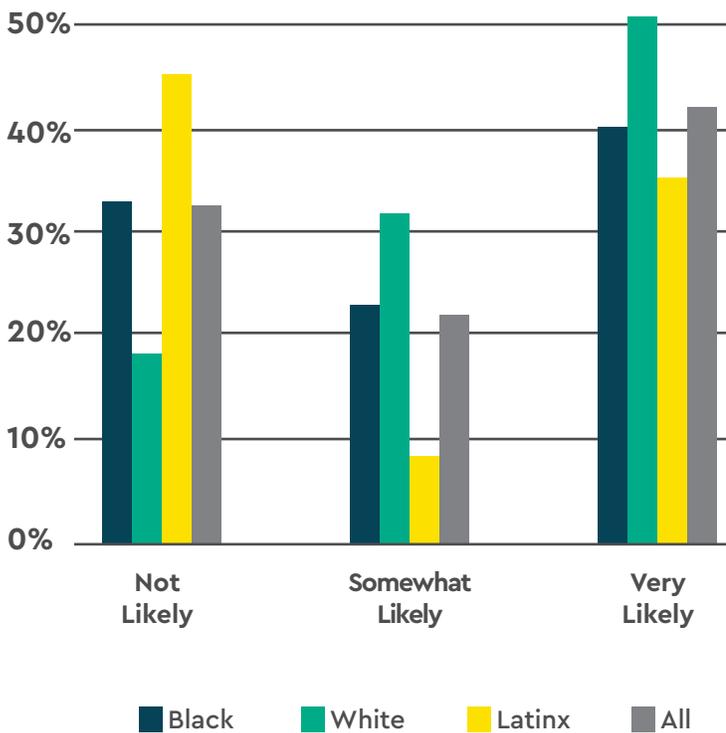
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EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

Stigma surrounding mental health issues was strong across all racial and ethnic groups, particularly among Black and Latinx residents. When feeling stressed out, respondents had very different coping mechanisms depending on the racial or ethnic group they identified with.

HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO SEEK HELP FROM A SUPPORT GROUP OR THERAPIST?



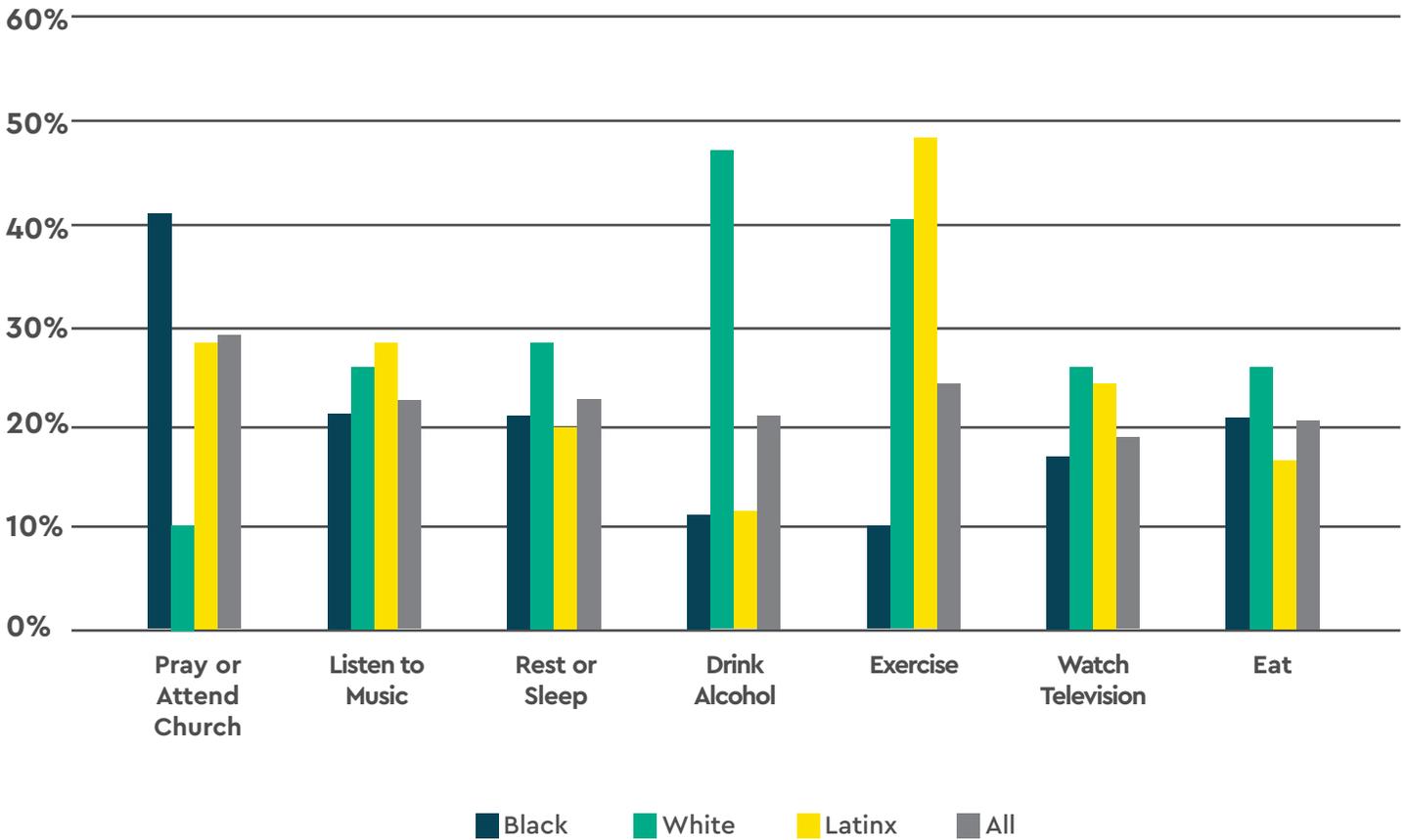
In general, Latinx respondents were the least likely to seek professional help from a support group or therapist if they felt sad or depressed; 44% stated they would be “unlikely” to seek professional help with only 36% stating they would be “very likely” to seek this type of help. Black respondents were more amenable to the idea of finding help with 40% being “very likely” to seek professional care, yet 33% stated they would not likely seek this care and 22% stated they would be “only somewhat likely” to seek care. In focus groups with Black adults, participants acknowledged that there was a strong stigma against discussing one’s emotional issues or mental health in the Black community. While these participants stated that “keeping things inside” was the norm for them, there was also consensus that this was not the healthiest approach. In contrast, just over half (51%) of white survey respondents stated they would be “very likely” to seek care – the highest of all racial and ethnic groups. However, 18% were “unlikely” to seek care and 31% were “only somewhat likely” to do so. In the focus group with mostly young white professionals, many stated that if a friend were going through a rough time, they would first support the friend by listening to their problems. There was a general consensus that in recommending a friend receive mental health care, one would risk making the friend feel stigmatized and like something was wrong with them.



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WHEN YOU ARE STRESSED, WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE THINGS YOU DO TO FEEL BETTER?



When asked about the top three things they do to relieve stress, responses were markedly different for respondents in different racial and ethnic groups. The most popular answers among Black respondents were "pray or go to church" (41%), followed by "listen to music" (22%), then a tie between "eat" and "rest/sleep" (21%). Among white respondents, the most popular answers were "drink alcohol" (47%), followed by "exercise" (41%), then "rest/sleep" (28%). The top three responses among Latinx respondents were "exercise" (48%), followed by a tie between "listen to music" and "pray or go to church" (28%), then "watch television" (24%).



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