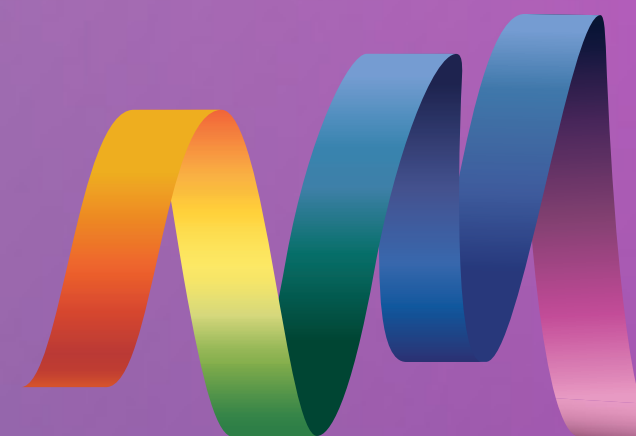


Queer Lived Experience Report

2022



PRIDE
ADVERTISING
& MARKETING®

Queer Lived Experience Report

2022



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Introduction

Despite progressive attitudes about our workforce, agencies in Canada had never engaged in a study of its 2SLGBTQ+ community. There is a misconception that because agencies are a part of the creative industry, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are absent, or less pronounced than in the average workplace. Or perhaps think the industry is immune to these issues.

Discrimination is systemic and privilege is structural. Progress requires assessing our current state, measuring benchmarks, identifying barriers, and uniting stakeholders along a singular path.

With this knowledge, PrideAM sought to create a baseline of understanding that could be a springboard to co-create priorities with leaders, and invite in 2SLGBTQ+ talent and allies to develop solutions.

Research Question

Through our research, we sought to answer the question:

“Have advertising and marketing communications agencies developed an inclusive and diverse workplace culture for 2SLGBTQ+ talent?”

Methodology

- These findings were taken from a cross-section of 2SLGBTQ+ respondent data from the 2020 ICA Talent Census Report.
- While the survey was lengthy and covered many different topics, the findings included in this report were those that were statistically significant compared to non-2SLGBTQ+ respondents:
 - Over-indexed (115 index or higher)
 - Under-indexed (85 index or lower)
- Where the number of responses were too low and skewed very high or low, we excluded analysis and interpretation to not read into or create narratives that may not be accurate.

Limitations

The picture visualized here may not be accurate of the truth and all perspectives of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in the industry.

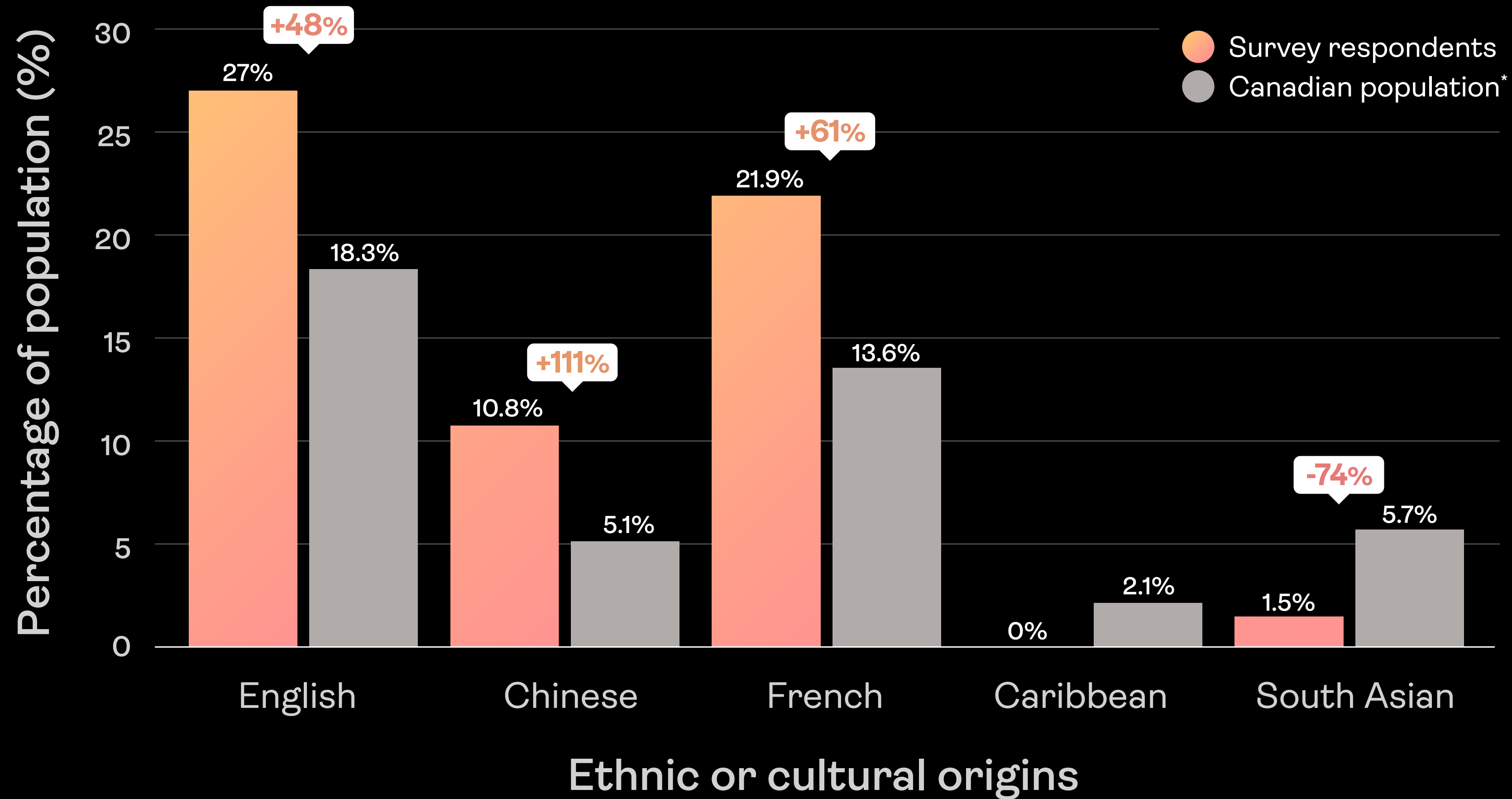
We would be remiss to not acknowledge that 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion is a complex, nuanced, and deep issue with a great deal to unpack. By no means does this report intend to be a definitive assessment but rather a first look that should be critiqued and contributed to with follow up research.

- The data is self-reported and was collected in 2019, and it is reasonable to assume that perceptions, opinions, and experiences have changed as a result of the pandemic, which has had an outsized impact on the 2SLGBTQ+ community, according to Statistics Canada.¹
- It was a large but not entirely representative nor statistically significant sample size of completed responses (sample size of n=137 identifying as 2SLGBTQ+).
- Most notably, there were no respondents that identify as trans individuals, nor was there proper representation across all seniority levels (no interns).

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/a00075-eng.htm>

LIMITATIONS

Looking at the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondents, the survey was not representative of the latest 2016 Census data for Canada.



* Statistics Canada – 2016 Census.

About PrideAM

PrideAM was launched in 2015, as the first 2SLGBTQ+ body for the marketing and brand communications industries.

A voluntary and not-for-profit organization, it is our aim to improve the experience, support and representation of 2SLGBTQ+ people both within the industry and beyond. Headquartered in Toronto, the need to advocate for our community is a global mission.

Send us an email

queers@prideam.org

Find us on the internet

PrideAM.org

[Facebook](#)

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[Twitter](#)

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Executive Summary

From our research, four major findings emerged.

1 First, **our industry has above average representation** of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals compared to the Canadian population.

Unfortunately, these professionals are **younger and in a more financially precarious situation.**

They have lower salaries and accumulated wealth than their straight, cisgender counterparts.

2 There is a pattern of **substantial guarding of sexual or gender orientation and identity** among the 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in advertising and marketing agencies.

3 Perhaps most disturbingly, compared to their straight and cisgender peers, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals have **more experience with discrimination** in the workplace.

4 While overall, 2SLGBTQ+ professionals hold favourable views on how their workplaces are creating bias-free and equitable, diverse and inclusive work cultures, they are **slightly more skeptical on agency change** than their straight, cisgender peers.

From these findings, we appeal to our industry to transparently work on creating the conditions for greater 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion (and other marginalized groups) through discussion, training, assessments, and review of current policies.

Finding 1: Representation

Finding 1: Representation

Studies in Canada, the U.S., and Western Europe all arrive at the encouraging conclusion that shows a growing proportion of 2SLGBTQ+ under the age of 30. PrideAM saw a similar trend in its self-reported data, along with a correlation of these professionals having lower salaries and accumulated wealth than their straight, cisgender peers.

While this is to be expected, given that the personal incomes of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are 27.78% less than non-2SLGBTQ+², it spurs a call for a review into pay equity with an intersectional lens.

Naturally, 2SLGBTQ+ employees should make more as they progress up the ladder, but unless there are pathways for them to ascend into upper management, this pay inequity could continue to exist.

12%

of respondents self-identified as a part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community based on their sexual identity.

There are

195%

MORE 2SLGBTQ+

in agencies in comparison to the proportion approximated by Statistics Canada.² However, this may not be accurate as it is estimated that the 2SLGBTQ+ community is under-sized in most major governmental and academic studies, with some estimates pointing to 2SLGBTQ+ comprising between 10-20% of the population.³

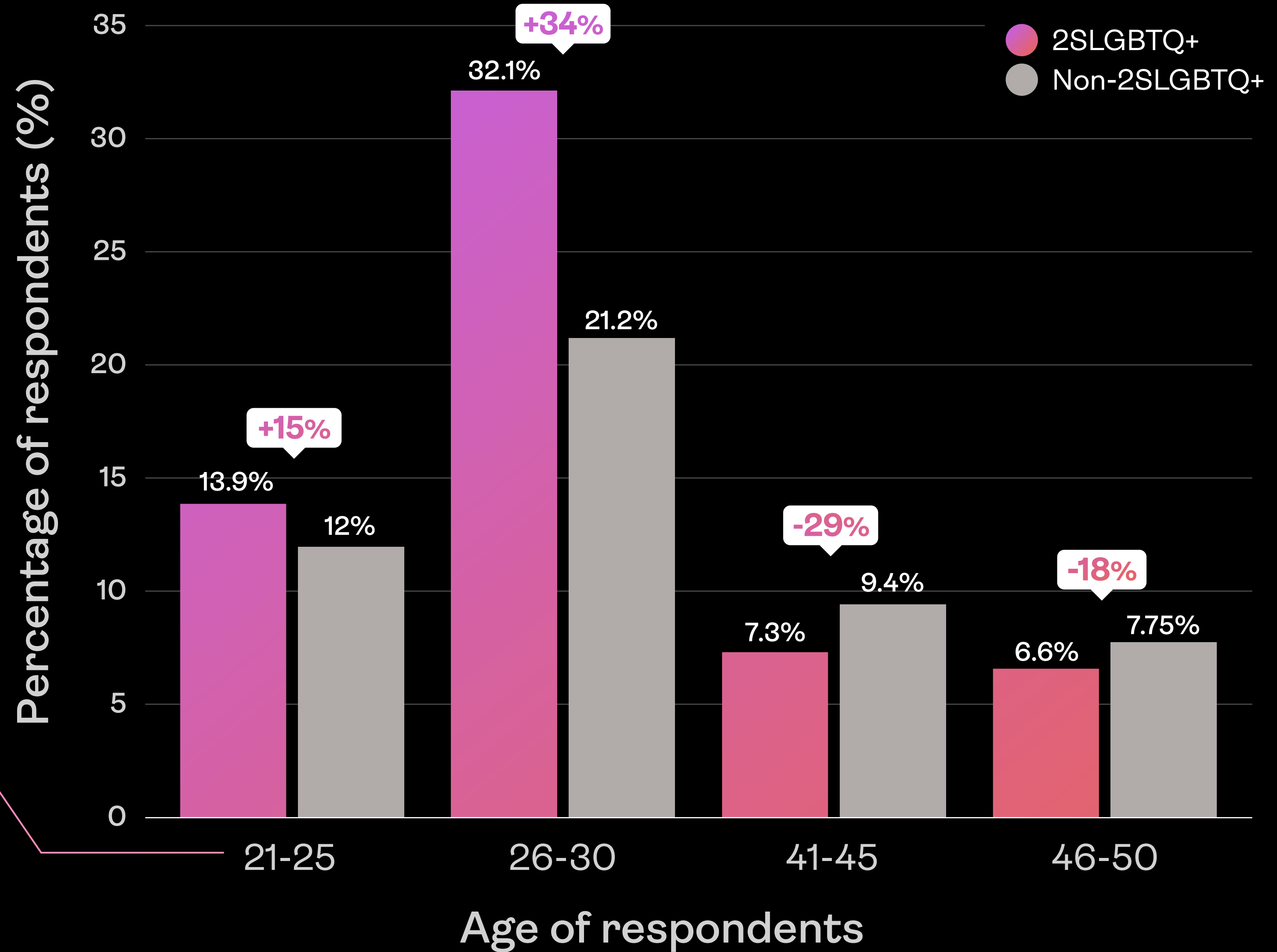
² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/apr/05/10-per-cent-population-gay-alfred-kinsey-statistics>

FINDING 1: REPRESENTATION

The survey respondents are **overwhelmingly under 35 years old**, with older 2SLGBTQ+ individuals under-represented.

According to the latest Statistics Canada data (2018 at time of reporting), approximately 30% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians are between the ages of 15 and 24 – an age group that accounts for just 14% of the non-2SLGBTQ+ population.²

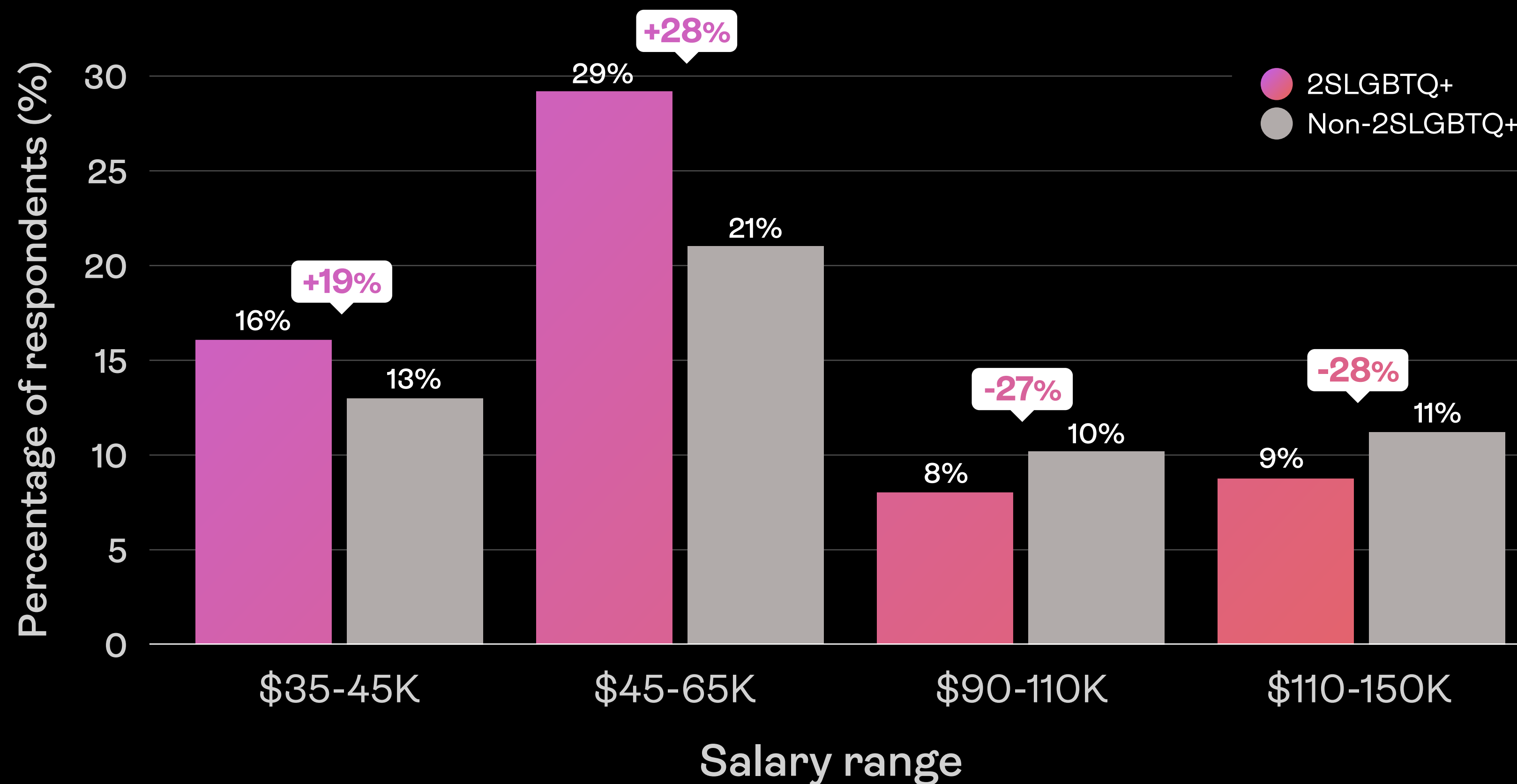


The age ranges listed demonstrate the greatest difference.

² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>

FINDING 1: REPRESENTATION

As a result, we see that 2SLGBTQ+ professionals make lower salaries and have accumulated comparatively less wealth than their straight, cisgender counterparts – and these truths could stem from other factors.



The salary ranges listed demonstrate the greatest difference.

19%

of 2SLGBTQ+ agency professionals describe their current economic status as **LOW INCOME.**

29%

more likely than their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers.

FINDING 1: REPRESENTATION

When it comes to positions,
2SLGBTQ+ professionals are

31%

more likely to be
ENTRY-LEVEL
in agencies compared to
their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers.

But they are also

29%

less likely to be
**DEPARTMENT
LEADS/DIRECTORS.**

And,

31%

less likely to be
EXECUTIVES.

FINDING 1: REPRESENTATION

28%

of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals said that growing up they came from

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

21%

more than their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers.

14%

of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals said that growing up they came from

HIGH INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

30%

more than their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers.

This is an interesting dichotomy, and potentially a reminder of the industry's skew towards attracting talent from privileged backgrounds.

Finding 2: Disclosure of Identity

Finding 2: Disclosure of Identity

Disclosing your identity – whether sexual orientation or gender identity – is a deeply personal and almost always difficult decision for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. The first challenge is accepting it yourself, and then becoming more public with trusted biological and/or chosen family, and eventually your workplace or other communities.

The creative industries have generally attracted 2SLGBTQ+ talent, but **advertising largely remains a cisgender, heterosexually male dominated industry.** Fear of being in the out-group and the career limitations associated with it, or shame about one's own identity can hold the community back from disclosing in the workplace.

Despite our industry's progressive nature, we still do see a significant percentage of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals who protect their true identity nor identify as members of the community.

FINDING 2: DISCLOSURE OF IDENTITY

33%

of respondents skipped the question asking “Are you out?”

97%

of those who did answer the question were either fully or partially out.

It’s unfair to assume that these 45 respondents would have answered “no” to the question, it could indicate an absence or deficiency of emotional safety or security in order to disclose this status to a public, anonymous source.

The feelings of fear, shame, or even self-hatred are commonly held by 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, byproducts of social and cultural conditioning and are powerful motivators to prevent or discourage 2SLGBTQ+ to be forthcoming about their authentic selves and truths.

FINDING 2: DISCLOSURE OF IDENTITY

28%

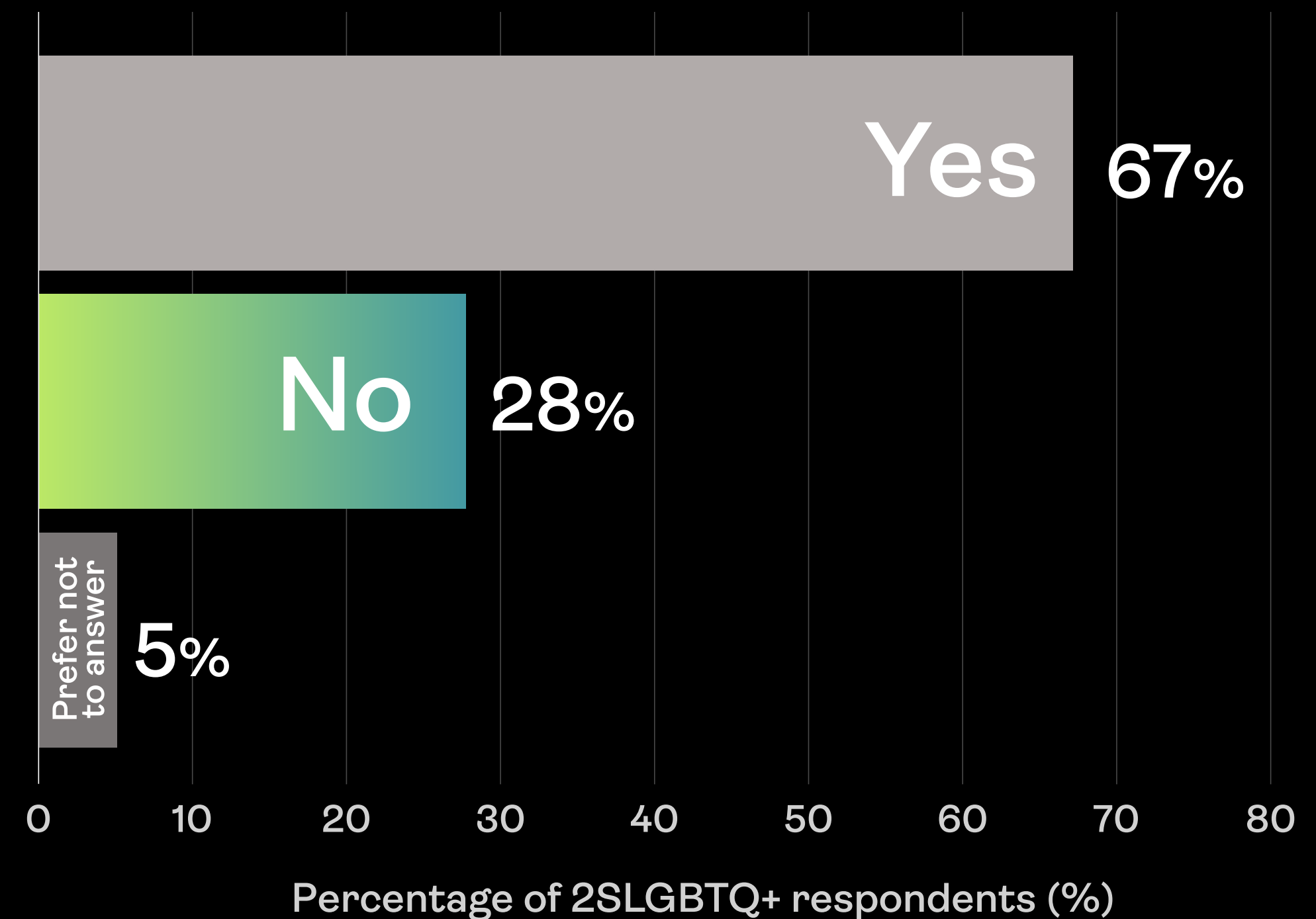
of respondents said that they do not identify as a member of the community.

To an ally, this statistic might be confusing – how could someone identify themselves as 2SLGBTQ+, but at the same time not identify as part of the community?

2SLGBTQ+ respondents might have answered this way if they do not feel a sense of engagement and interaction with other members of the community (i.e. group of friends, acquaintances), perhaps investment or participation in 2SLGBTQ+ events, gatherings, or presence in spaces, or other reasons like negative lived experiences.

Question

Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?



Finding 3: Discrimination and Bias

Finding 3: Discrimination and Bias

To understand and progress towards true 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion means to look and take actions with an intersectional lens. Being aware of the other identities and communities someone can belong to is important in understanding where changes need to be made, and where relationships and dependencies are.

For example, 2SLGBTQ+ folks that identify as part of a racialized community face greater barriers to inclusion, especially when agencies under-index on BIPOC representation at all levels.

This survey has revealed that 2SLGBTQ+ professionals are more aware of the different types of overt and subtle forms of discrimination and bias that exist in the work place.

11%

of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in agencies have experienced homophobia in their agency.

13%

of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in agencies have witnessed visible or invisible disability discrimination in their agency.

FINDING 3: DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

This finding should be a wake-up call to allies and non-2SLGBTQ+ professionals in positions of leadership and authority to begin building trust and dialogue with 2SLGBTQ+ in their workplaces to surface instances that may not have been brought to the agency's attention.

The community relies on seeing others like us in our workplace. If unchecked discrimination continues, it holds 2SLGBTQ+ back from being their authentic selves.

18%

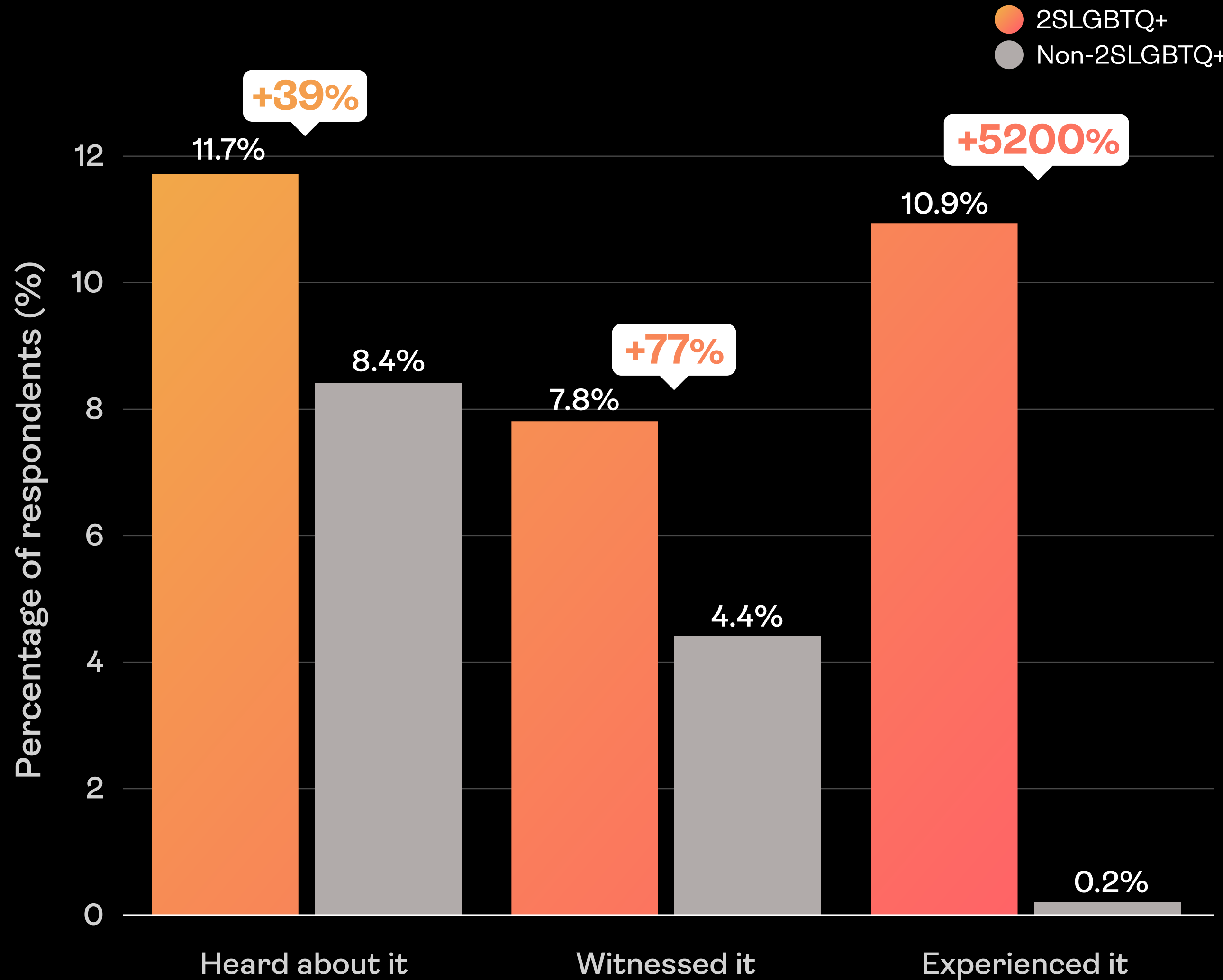
of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in agencies have witnessed racial bias discrimination in their agency.

23%

of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in agencies have experienced gender bias discrimination in their agency.

FINDING 3: DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

Homophobia in the workplace



2SLGBTQ+ professionals are

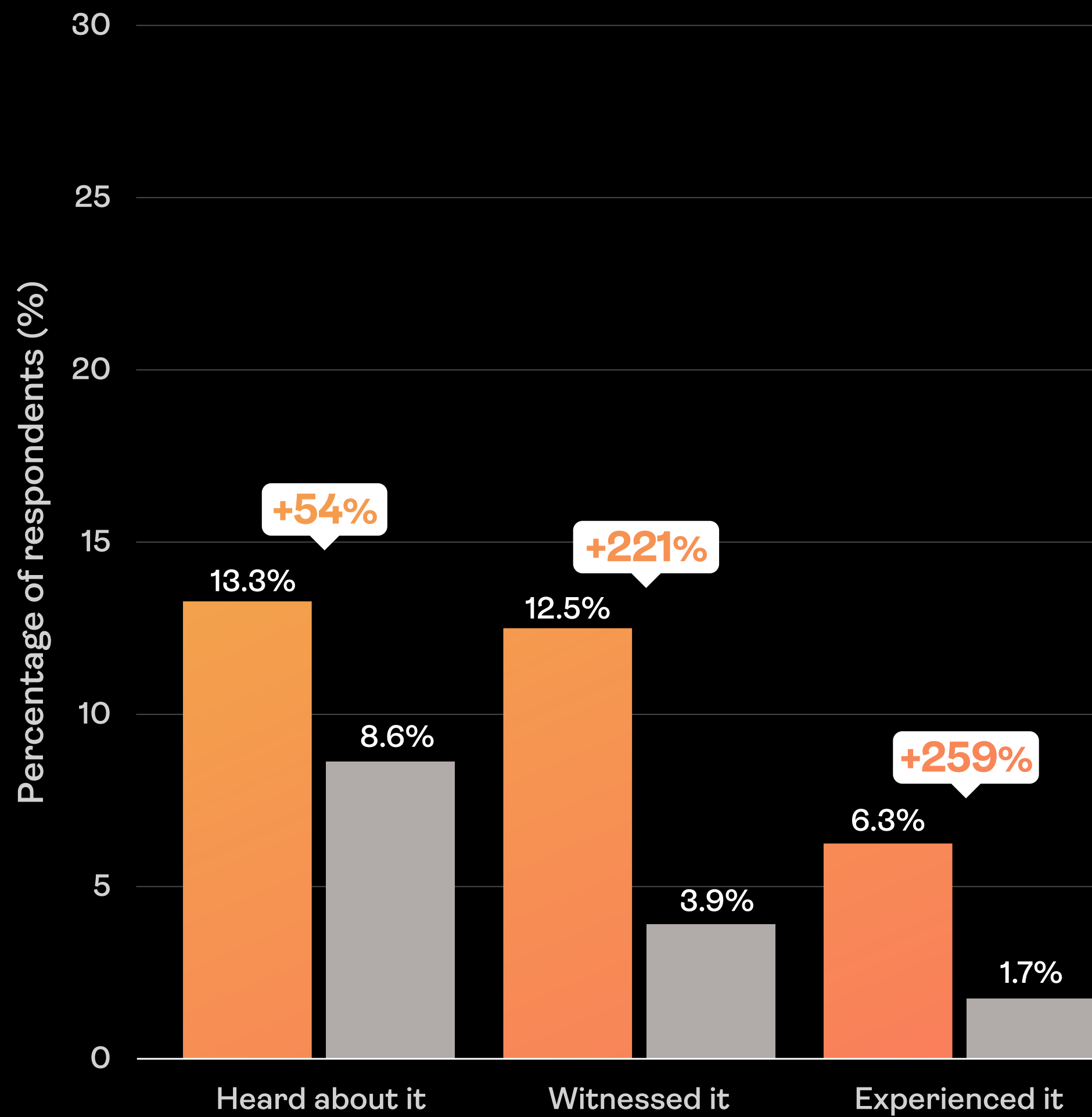
77%

more likely to witness homophobia. Coaching and education could help allies in the workplace to spot and support their colleagues.

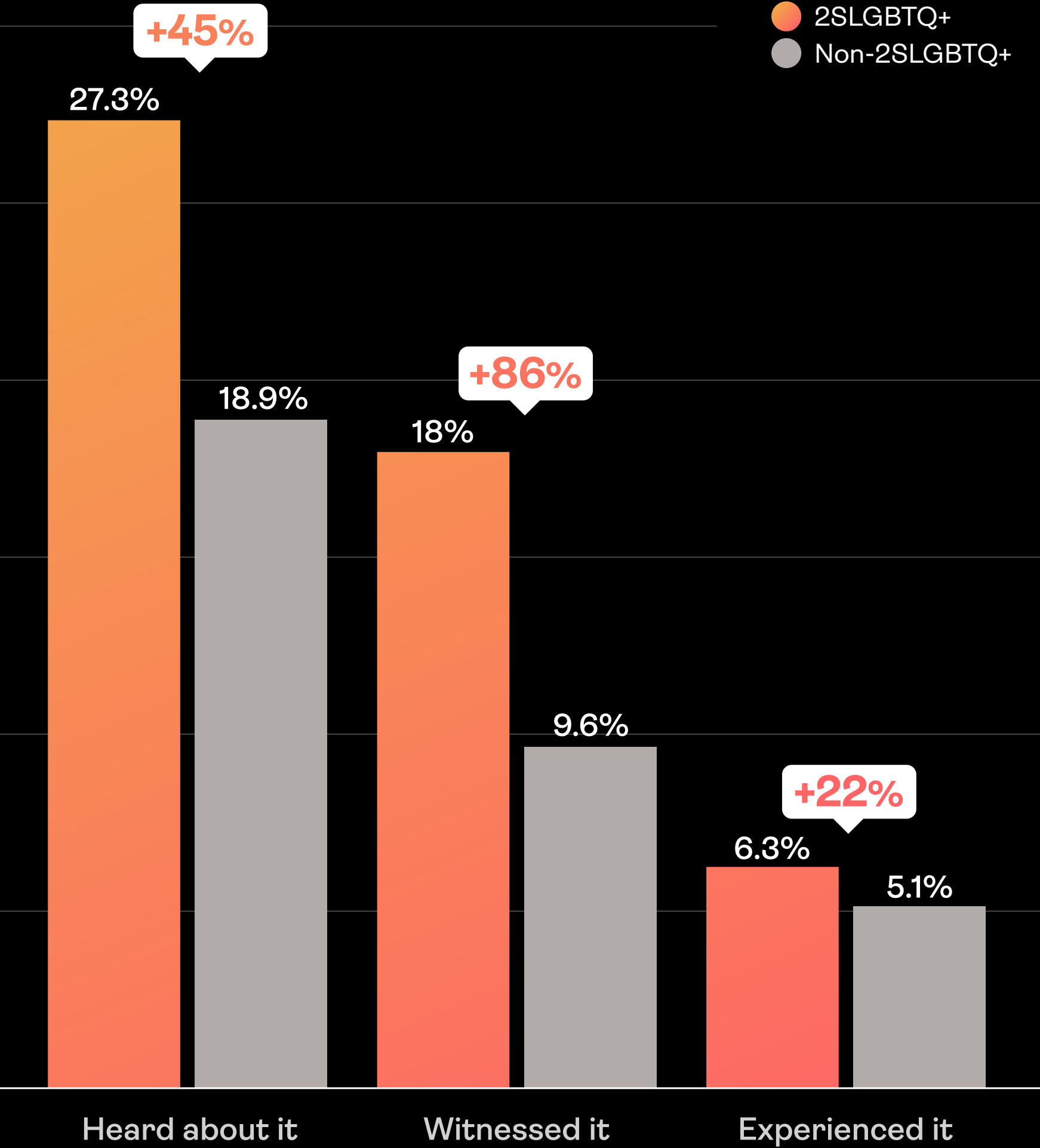
For example, gender expression and stereotypes. Masculine-presenting queer men and feminine-presenting queer women may be assumed to be “straight” and be held to certain expectations and benefit from certain advantages versus those who present differently.

FINDING 3: DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

Bias against those with visible or invisible disability in the workplace

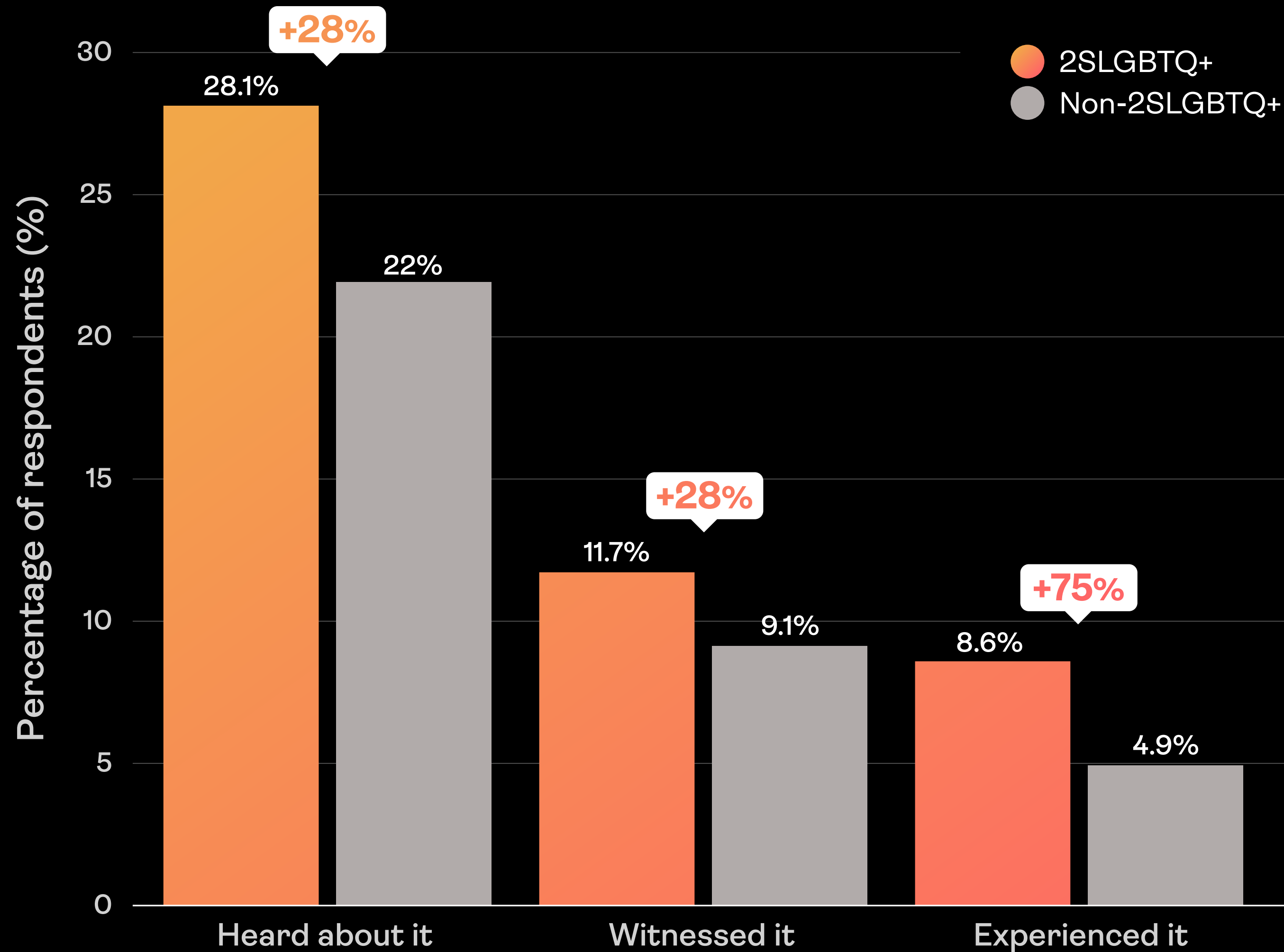


Racial bias in the workplace



FINDING 3: DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

Sexual harassment in the workplace



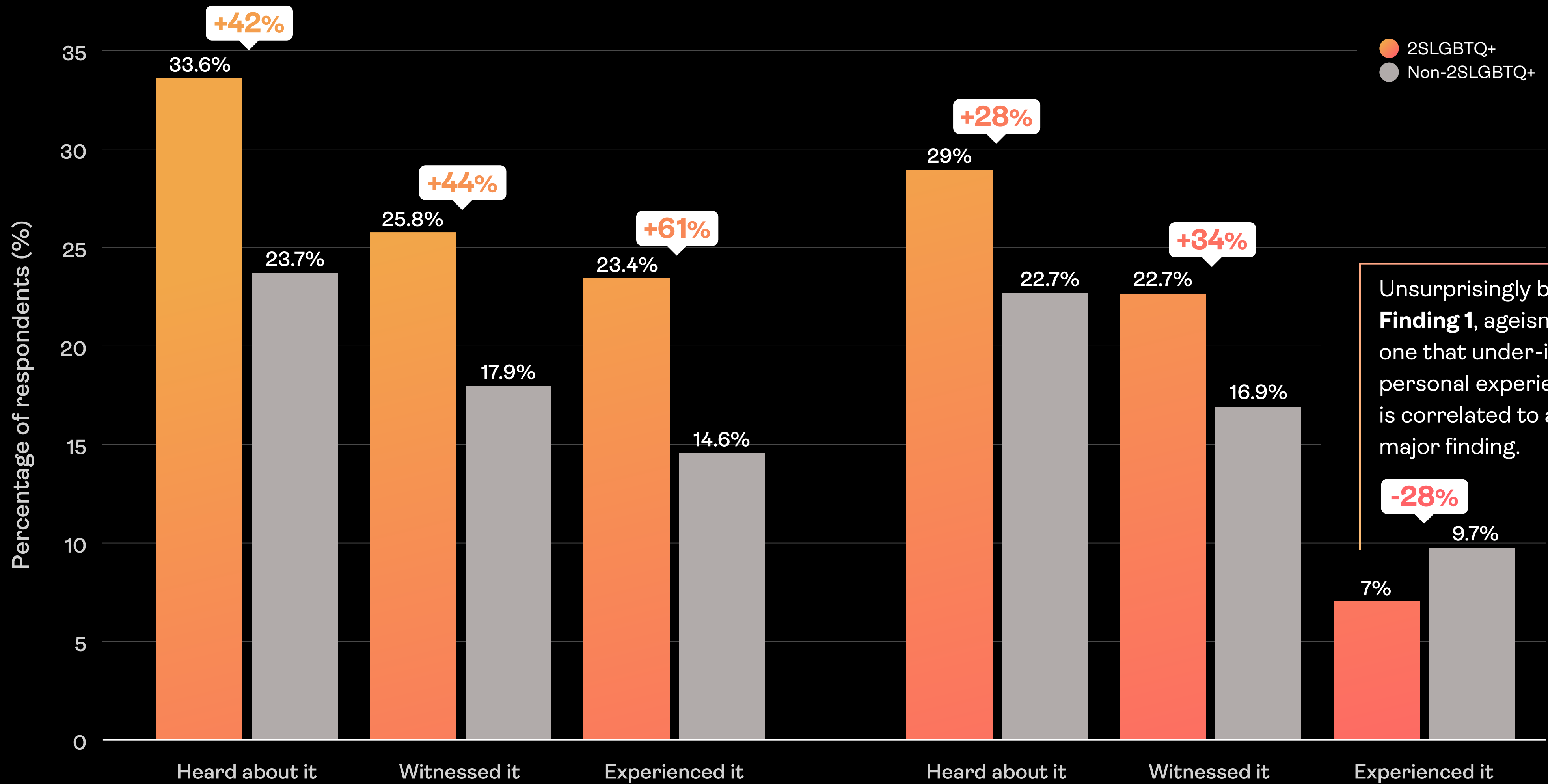
2SLGBTQ+ professionals are

75%

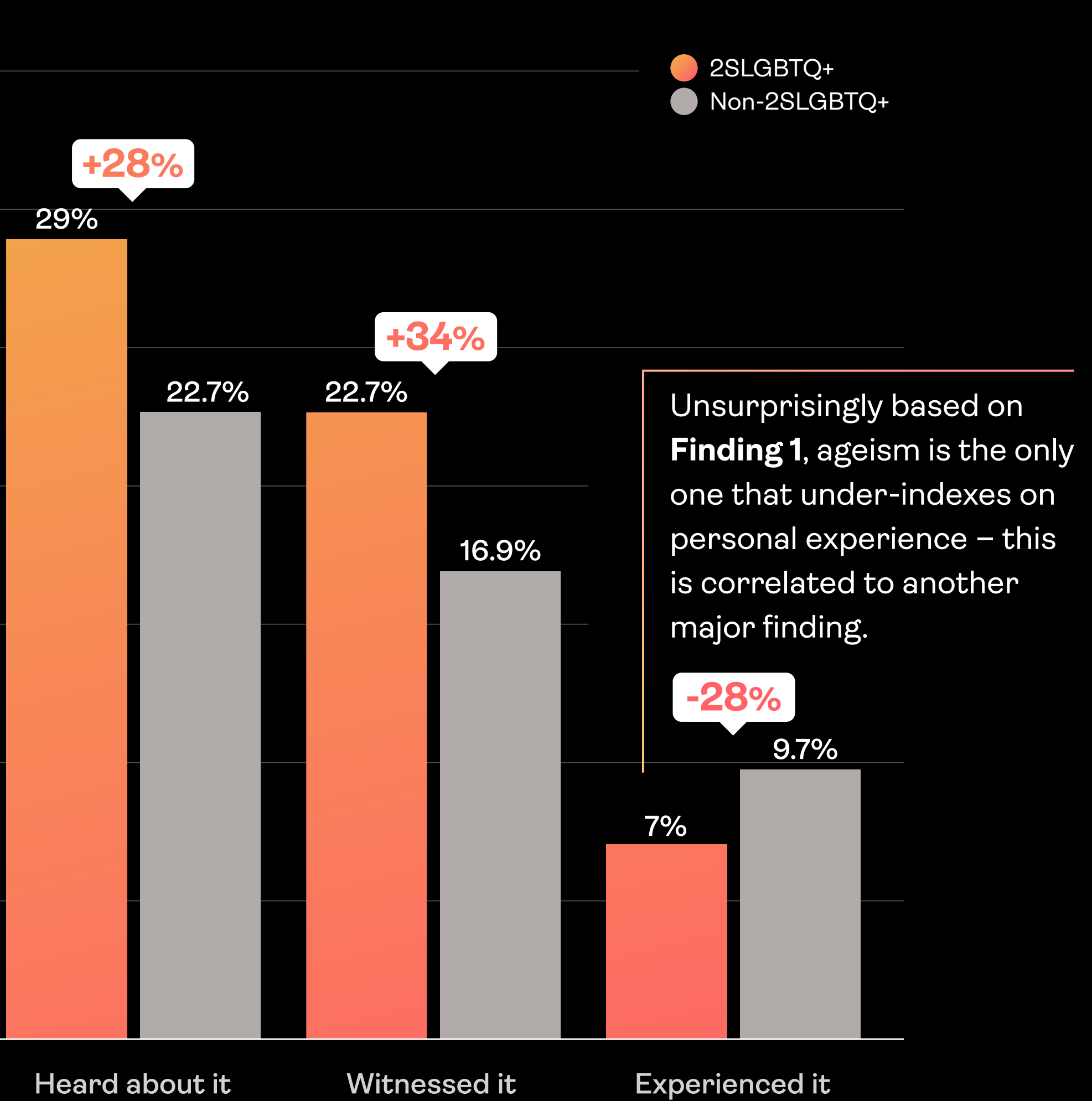
more likely to experience sexual harassment in the workplace.

FINDING 3: DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

Gender bias in the workplace



Ageism in the workplace



Finding 4: Opinion on Change

Finding 4: Opinion on Change

The response by Corporate Canada in the wake of the racial injustice and #BlackLivesMatter movement in 2020, and new revelations of Residential Schools in 2021 was that of intense reflection, assessment, and review of policies, practices, and culture.

Agencies – many for the first time – did in-depth investigations into the degree of inclusion in their workplace cultures. 2SLGBTQ+ employees noticed and hold favourable views on how their agencies are working towards less bias and equitable, diverse cultures – but not to the same degree as their non-2SLGBTQ+ counterparts.

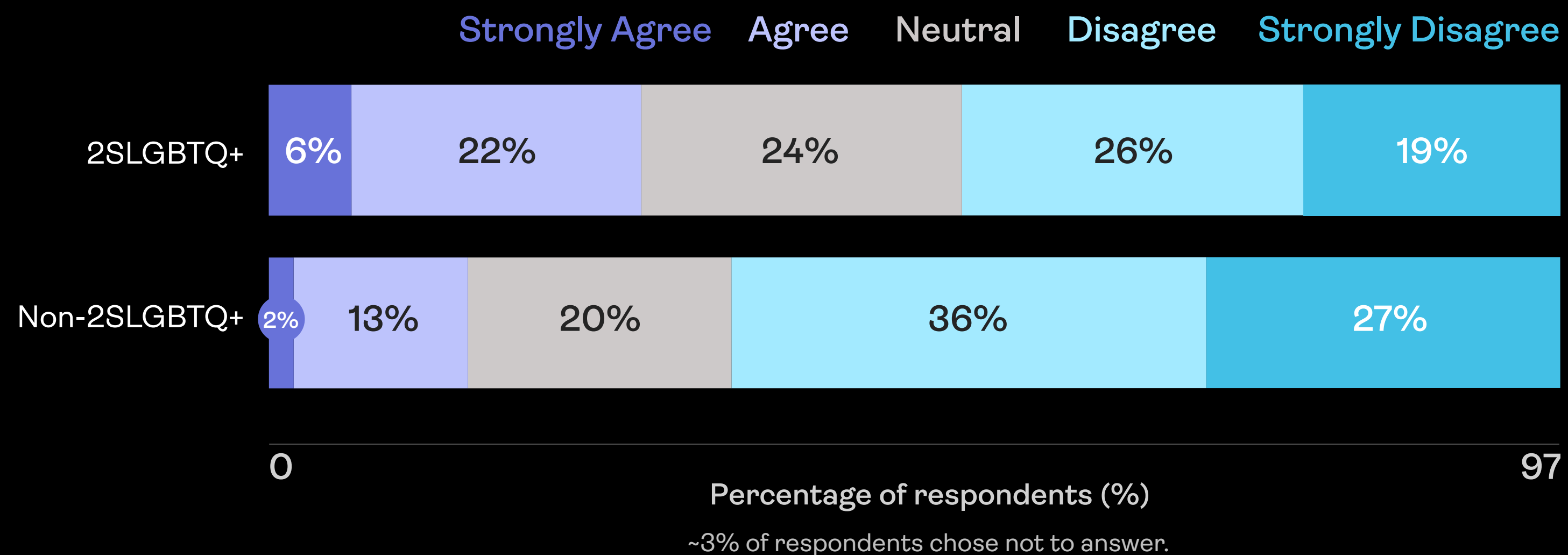
The community – especially those identifying as cisgender female, trans, or Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour – is aware of the fact that this interest in inclusion was driven by social trends, and that commitment and dedication can wane (and in some studies is waning) when public pressure and media interest dissipates. The added skepticism of 2SLGBTQ+ shouldn't be ignored, but rather fuel the creation of KPIs to improve on through the years and beyond.

FINDING 4: OPINION ON CHANGE

While 2SLGBTQ+ professionals hold overall favourable views on how their workplaces are creating bias-free and equitable, diverse, and inclusive work cultures, they are far more likely to hold more skeptical or negative views than their straight, cisgender peers.

Question

I believe something about my identity may hold me back at work.



28%

of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals agree or strongly agree that something about their identity is holding them back at work. But,

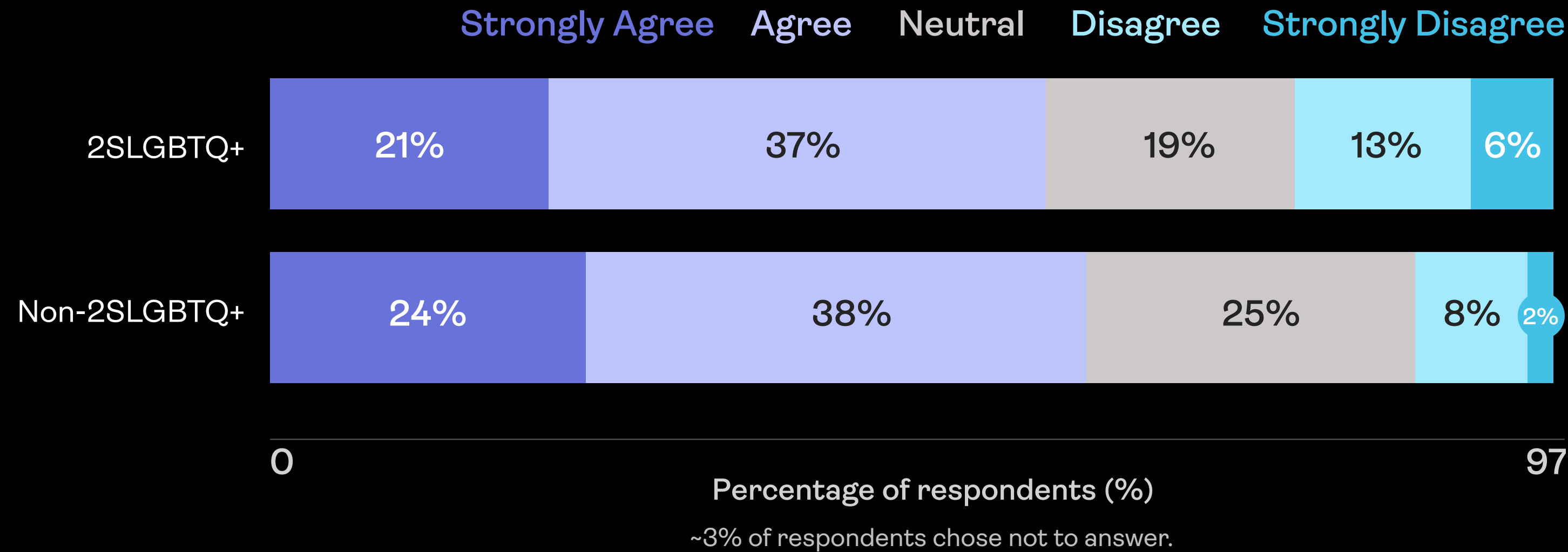
45%

disagree or strongly disagree with that statement.

FINDING 4: OPINION ON CHANGE

Question

I believe the agency's recruitment processes seek only the best candidates and are bias-free.



19%

of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals disagree or strongly disagree that recruitment processes are bias-free.

But,

59%

disagree or strongly disagree with that statement.

FINDING 4: OPINION ON CHANGE

23%

of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals would not disclose a disability as it could limit their opportunities.

84%

more likely than their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers.

But,

51%

would disclose, not fearing negative impact.

18%

less likely than their non-2SLGBTQ+ peers.

Our Appeal to the Industry

Our Appeal to the Industry

While the findings here may not point to a level of 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion that we wanted to achieve as an industry, it's an important starting point to acknowledge and understand in order to make positive and impactful changes.

Previously, your first instinct may have been to seek out one of your 2SLGBTQ+ employees and strike up a discussion on this subject, but we hope that your takeaway that more action needs to be done first on agency HR/Talent departments and leadership to cultivate trust and credibility.

Avoid tokenism and placing the burden on your out 2SLGBTQ+ employees to speak on behalf of the community, those in the industry, and those at the agency who might be withholding their authentic selves.

Transparently communicating the steps and actions taken to your agency will – over time – lead to open dialogue among 2SLGBTQ+ employees and allies, and be the entry points to effect changes in education, policies and practices.

We recommend any or all of the following:



Start a discussion with leaders in your agency/business and/or engage PrideAM.

Email us at queers@prideam.org



Begin with 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion training from one of the many accredited organizations for all people managers at a minimum.



Assess your level of 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion at your agency/business via equity, diversity, and inclusion surveys.



Review all HR/talent/people policies to ensure 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion (i.e. parental leave, fertility coverage, etc.)

Conclusion

This report is the first step in what we hope will be more reflection and transparency within the advertising and marketing industry.

For the non-2SLGBTQ+ in agencies we hope you see the opportunity to improve your understanding, respect and appreciation for your diverse peers. For the leaders among you, thank you for reading this, and we hope you recognize the power and responsibility you have to change this industry for the better.

For the 2SLGBTQ+ professionals working and thriving in agencies, through this report we hope you see the path ahead a little clearer. We'd also encourage any 2SLGBTQ+ and allies in the advertising and marketing industry to connect with us about participating and volunteering. You have a community within PrideAM.

Remember, **we're here to make the marketing industry a better place by straight up raising queer voices.**

CONCLUSION

This report is the work of numerous volunteers and members of PrideAM, including:

Jerry Jarosinski

Deven Dionisi

Sam Archibald

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