

## Targeting the needs of aging LGBTQ+: Addressing barriers to healthcare access

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# Targeting the Needs of Aging LGBTQ+: Addressing Barriers to Healthcare Access

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**Research question:** *What barriers, if any, do LGBTQ+ elders/aging face when accessing healthcare services?*

## Background

- ❖ The U.S. aging population will be **94.7 million in 2060**.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Approximately **50 million** people will identify as **LGBTQ+ by 2030**.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ LGBTQ+ are more likely to live alone and need equitable access to healthcare.<sup>3</sup>

## Objectives

- ❖ Understand LGBTQ+ experiences, barriers and perceptions of accessing residential care in Maine.
- ❖ Learn how the disparities in healthcare systems affect LGBTQ+ that are seeking and receiving services aimed at improving quality of life.

## Methods

- ❖ Partnering agencies distributed the survey link and shared on social media.
- ❖ Respondents were LGBTQ+, 18 years of age or older, residential care employees, friends and loved ones of LGBTQ+.

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Cummings, C. R., et al. As we age: Listening to the voice of LGBTQ older adults. *Social Work in Public Health*, 4, (2021):509–525
- <sup>2</sup>Czaja, S., et al. Concerns about aging and caregiving among middle-aged and older lesbian and gay adults. *Aging & Mental Health*, 20, (2015): 1107–1118.
- <sup>3</sup>Putney, J., et al. "Fear runs deep:" the anticipated needs of LGBT older adults in Long-Term care. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 8, (2016): 887–907.

As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, please rate the statements below on their level of importance when planning for the aging process:

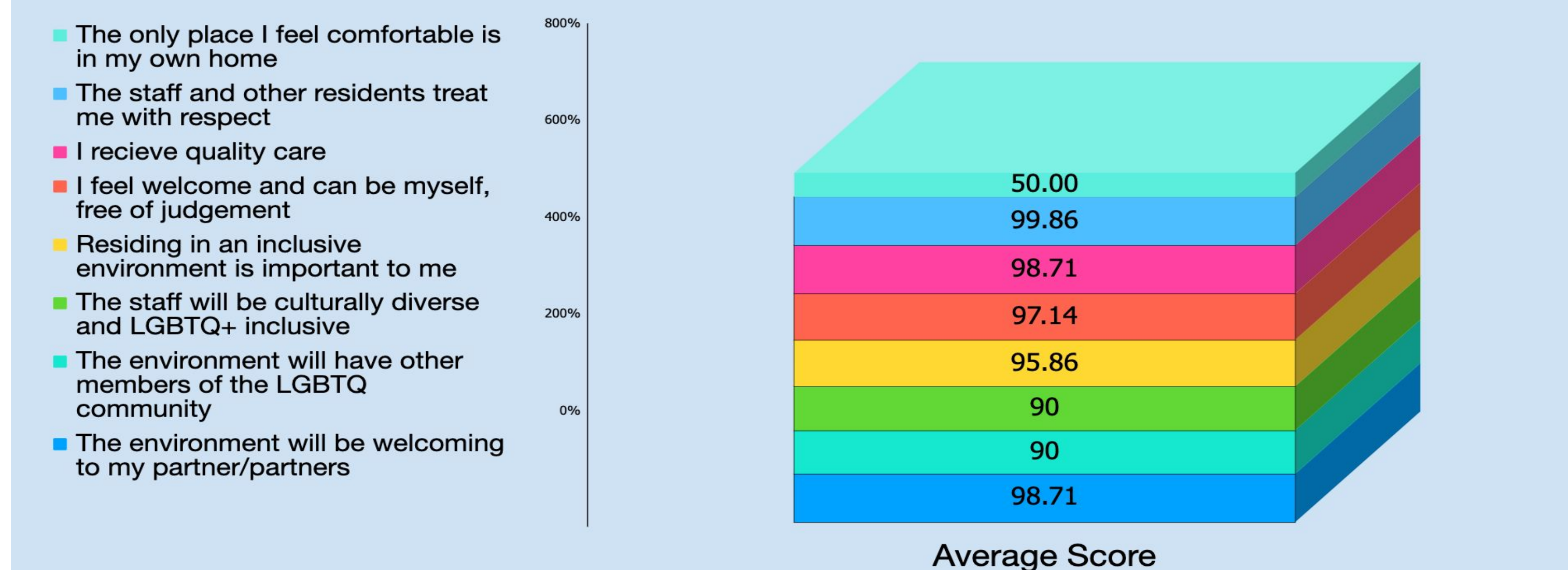


Figure 1. Factors of Importance

Do LGBTQ+ older adults that are open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in a residential care facility experience the following:

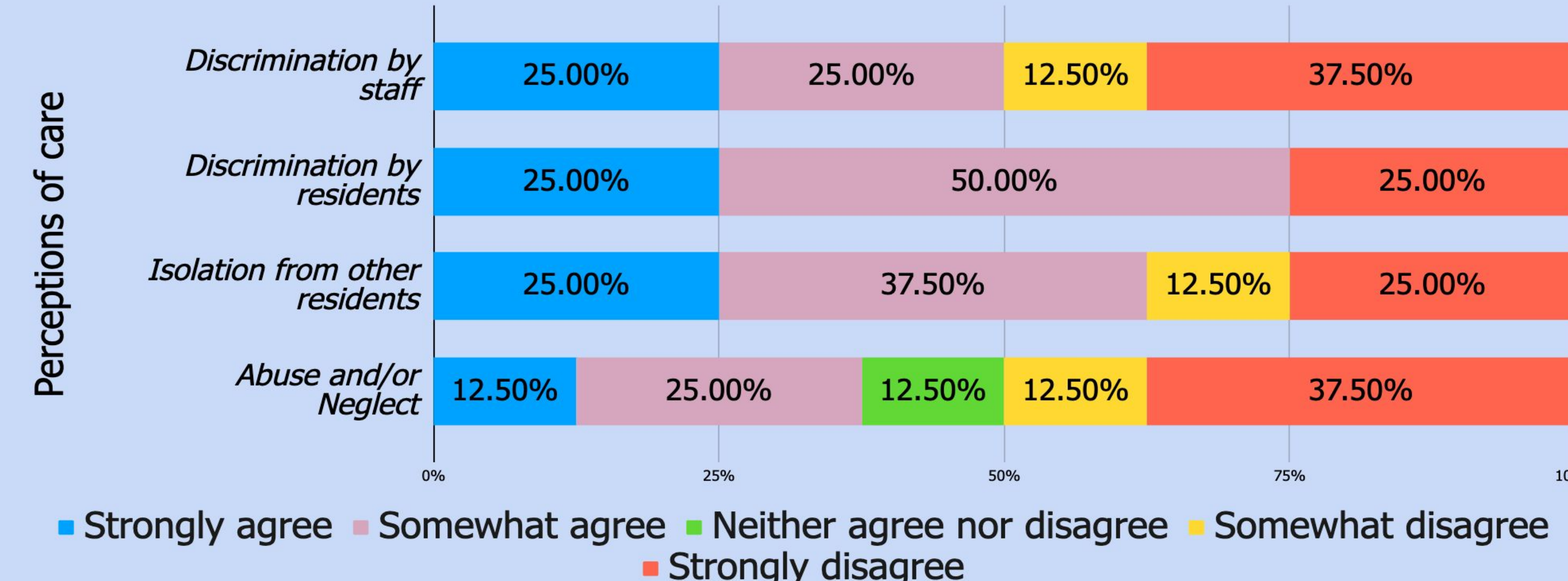


Figure 2. Perceptions of care

If you or a loved one identify as LGBTQ+ please indicate if you or a loved one have experienced the following when accessing care in a residential facility:

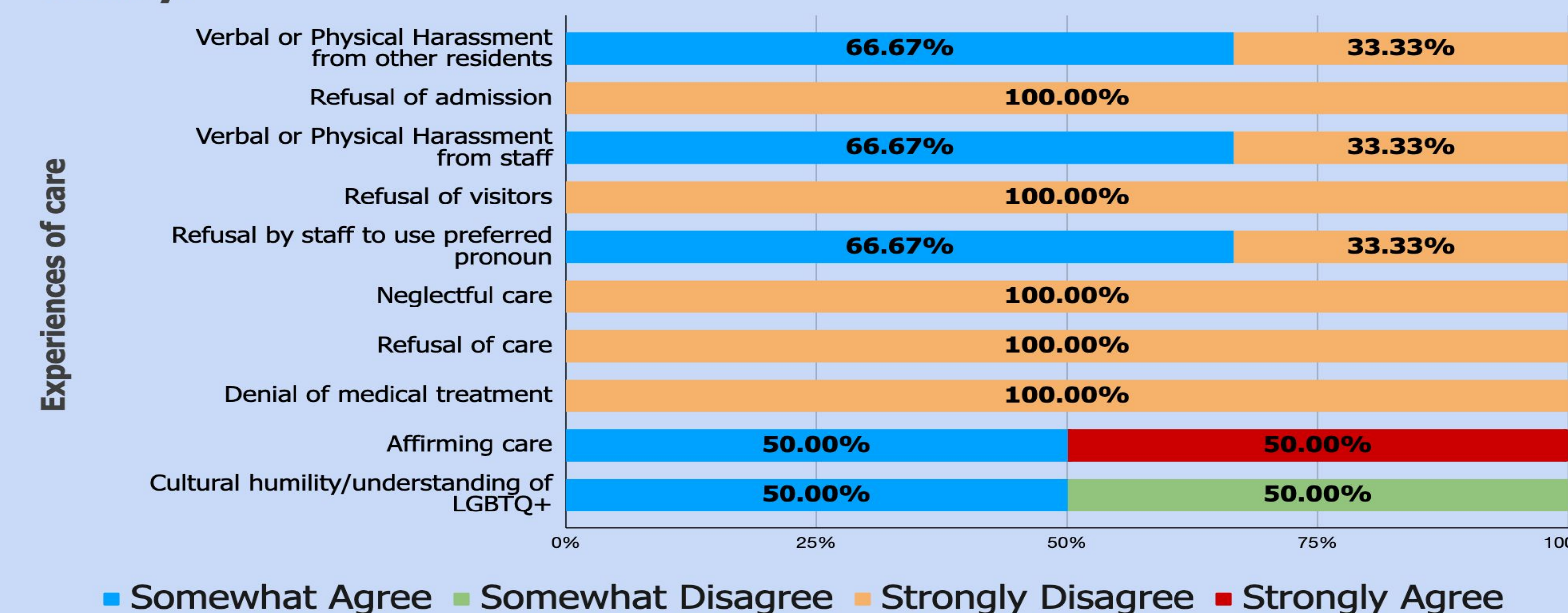


Figure 3. Experiences accessing care

## Findings

- ❖ **Respect, quality care** and **welcoming environment** are the top-rated considerations for the aging process. (Figure 1)
- ❖ **75%** of respondents perceive a **risk of discrimination** if open about sexual orientation/gender identity. (Figure 2)
- ❖ **66.67%** of LGBTQ+ have experienced **verbal or physical harassment** by residents and staff. (Figure 3)

## Discussion

- ❖ Addressing the barriers, perceptions and experiences of aging LGBTQ+ in Maine **is essential** to provide quality care.
- ❖ This information **is vital** to nursing care facilities in Maine, as there has been no prior research conducted.
- ❖ Affirming care **requires** a cultural understanding of LGBTQ+ needs.

## Limitations

- ❖ **100%** of respondents identified as white.
- ❖ Small sample size of **N=15**
- ❖ COVID-19 staff shortages impacted sample size.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to our community partners, and participants, without you this study would not have been possible.