



U.S. Department of Defense

Factor Rating Interpretation Guide Racially Harassing Behaviors

What is Racially Harassing Behavior?

This factor measures the experience or witnessing of offensive behaviors based on race or ethnicity that occurred over the past three months. These behaviors create a workplace that is intimidating, hostile, offensive, or unreasonably intrusive.^{2,12,13} These behaviors are representative of the types of behaviors included in the DoD's official past-year prevalence estimates of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination collected on the Workplace Equal Opportunity Surveys.

The following items are used to assess *Racially Harassing Behaviors* using a four-point response scale from *Never* to *Often*. Participants are asked to think about the past three months when responding, or to think about their time with their current unit/organization if they joined less than three months ago.

How often does someone from your unit make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by...

- telling racial/ethnic jokes?
- expressing stereotypes about your racial/ethnic groups?
- using offensive racial/ethnic terms?
- excluding you because of your race/ethnicity?
- showing you a lack of respect because of your race/ethnicity?

Note: Survey questions may differ depending on whether the organization is a military unit, Military Service Academy, or civilian organization. Please see the sample survey for each population on the Assessment to Solutions web site (<https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>) for exact wording.

Why is it important?

Research consistently shows that individuals who experience *Racially Harassing Behaviors* have decreased readiness and retention and are at risk for experiencing racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and suicide. For example, a 2014 study of U.S. military personnel found that workgroup discrimination was negatively related to workgroup performance.¹ The 2017 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey of Active Duty Members aligns with this finding and found that individuals who experience racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination have reduced retention intents and readiness.² This same study has found that many members often experience more than one racially harassing behavior indicating pervasive or permissive culture of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.² Similarly, experiencing ethnic harassment has been associated with lower organizational commitment, lower job satisfaction, and greater turnover intentions.^{3,4}

Experiencing *Racially Harassing Behaviors* can also lead to the continued experience of stressful life events, including rejection, stigmatization, and violence that may evoke suicidal behavior. Suicide rates have also been known to be higher among minorities who experience discrimination.⁵ For example, a U.S. study found that immigrant's suicide rates were positively correlated with the negative valence of the words used by the majority to describe their ethnic group.^{6,7}

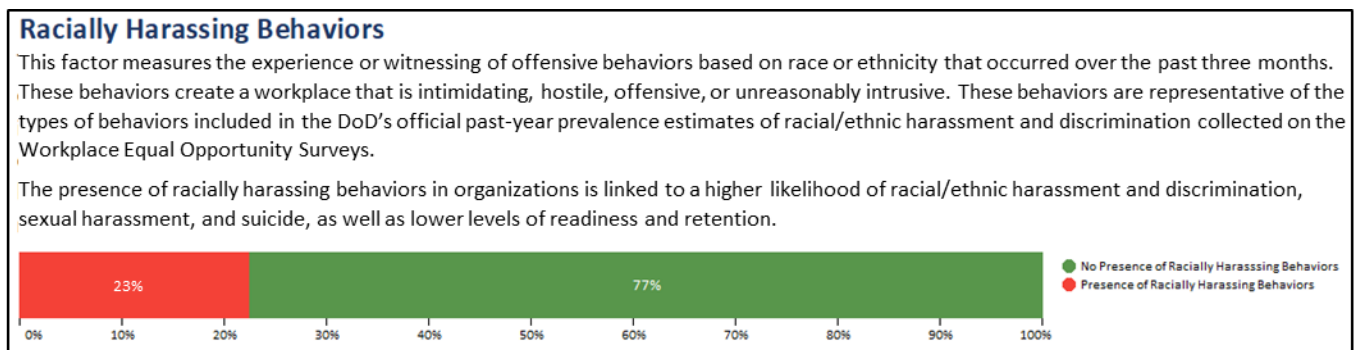
There is also evidence that women of color experience "double jeopardy" and are at risk of harassment based on race and sex simultaneously. Several studies have found that women

who report more sexual harassment also report more racial harassment.^{8,9,10} In one study that examined both workplace sexual and ethnic harassment, minority women experienced more harassment overall than majority men, minority men, and majority women.¹¹

For more information on how to review your DEOCS results with these key outcomes in mind, please see the “Strategic Target Outcome Guide” in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.

How do I read my factor ratings?

The DEOCS dashboard displays results for *Racially Harassing Behaviors* in a stacked bar graph showing ratings for **Presence of Racially Harassing Behaviors** and **No Presence of Racially Harassing Behaviors**. While *Racially Harassing Behaviors* is a factor that is measured by multiple questions, because of the way it is calculated, you should interpret the results as “X% of participants.” An example is shown below:



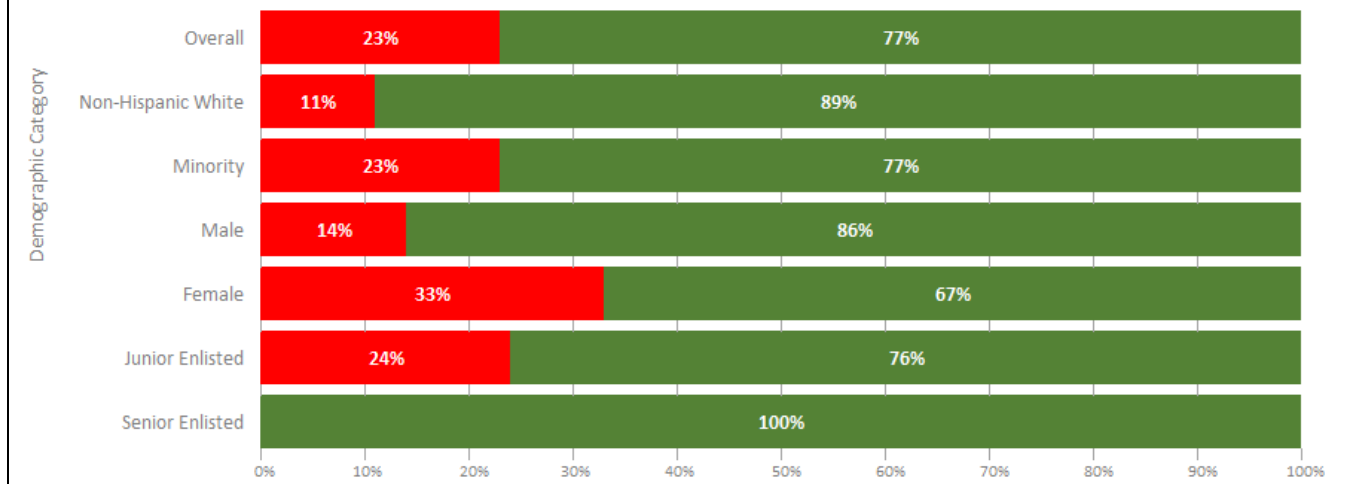
Unfavorable rating: 23% of participants reported experiencing at least one of the five behaviors rarely, sometimes, or often (i.e., they reported a **presence of racially harassing behaviors**).

Favorable rating: 77% of participants reported never experiencing any of the behaviors (i.e., they reported **no presence of racially harassing behaviors**).

For the graph showing results by demographic categories, the percentages represent the percentage of participants from each demographic category who reported unfavorable or favorable responses.

Racially Harassing Behaviors Ratings by Demographic Category

This graph displays Racially Harassing Behaviors ratings by demographic category. No data are displayed if fewer than five people from a demographic category responded to this set of questions.



The first bar will always show the overall results and will be the same percentages that are shown in the stacked bar graph. The next bars will represent various demographic categories for your organization. These results can help determine whether some groups of people in your organization have particularly high or low perceptions of climate factors. In addition, you may have different categories than in the example above. If your organization did not have any participants from a particular demographic category or had fewer than five participants from a particular category, you would not see those categories in your graph. For more information on how the demographic groups are created, please see the “Data Overview” in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.

In this example, the unfavorable ratings (marked in red) can be interpreted as:


- 11% of non-Hispanic White participants reported experiencing at least one of the racially harassing behaviors *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*, while 23% of minority participants reported experiencing at least one of the racially harassing behaviors *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*;
- 14% of male participants reported experiencing at least one of the racially harassing behaviors *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*, while 33% of female participants reported experiencing at least one of the racially harassing behaviors *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*;
- 24% of junior enlisted participants reported experiencing at least one of the racially harassing behaviors *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*, while 0% of senior enlisted participants reported experiencing at least one of the racially harassing behaviors *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*.


The favorable ratings (marked in green) can be interpreted as:

- 89% of non-Hispanic White participants reported never experiencing any of the racially harassing behaviors, while 77% of minority participants reported never experiencing any of the racially harassing behaviors;
- 86% of male participants reported never experiencing any of the racially harassing behaviors, while 67% of female participants reported never experiencing any of the

- racially harassing behaviors;
- 76% of junior enlisted participants reported never experiencing any of the racially harassing behaviors, while 100% of senior enlisted participants reported never experiencing any of the racially harassing behaviors.

You may also see trends over time for your *Racially Harassing Behaviors* unfavorable rating if there are previous surveys with the same unit identification code (UIC) and the same commander/leader.

When applicable, trends over time are available in the dashboard by clicking on this icon: . They also appear in the PDF reports as a table. Even if your report includes trends over time, the results may not be comparable in certain circumstances. First, the questions used to measure this factor changed from the DEOCS 5.0 to the current version, DEOCS 5.1. There were slight wording changes between versions. Use caution when comparing trends from DEOCS 5.0 to 5.1 for this factor in particular. Second, it is important to understand differences in roster size and roster composition at different time points as these items may also impact comparability of trend results. Take a close look at the number of participants registered, surveys returned, and the response rate for any surveys for which trends are available to report; use caution when comparing trends over time if there are big differences in these numbers between surveys. Other things, such as deployments or changes in policy, may also make trends less comparable. For more information on factor rating trends, please see the “Data Overview” in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.

Finally, you may see an alert  for your *Racially Harassing Behaviors* ratings. This means that your unit’s/organization’s unfavorable rating for *Racially Harassing Behaviors* is **very high** compared to the other unfavorable ratings for this factor from all other units/organizations that completed a DEOCS. When applicable, this alert icon appears in the dashboard inside the “Risk Factors – Unfavorable Ratings” heading; click on the icon to see if *Racially Harassing Behaviors* is listed in the table. The alert icon may also appear in the *Racially Harassing Behaviors* section of the PDF reports. To identify whether your *Racially Harassing Behaviors* ratings receive an alert, cut-off scores were created by rank-ordering all unfavorable ratings for this factor. If your unfavorable rating for *Racially Harassing Behaviors* is above the cut-off score, this icon will appear in your report. There are unique cut-off scores for each factor. Because of this, you may notice that some of the factors for which you have an alert have very different ratings. For more information on how these alerts are created, please see the “Data Overview” in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.

How are my unit’s/organization’s ratings created?

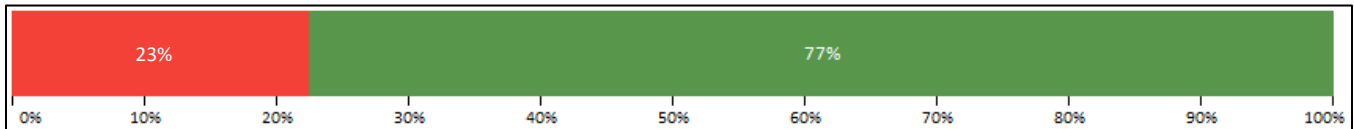
Racially Harassing Behaviors ratings are created from the responses to five questions on a four-point *Never to Often* scale. Because these behaviors are more serious, the scoring is slightly different and the threshold to be included in the percentage reporting “presence of behavior” is low. The DEOCS team considers any experience of any of these behaviors to be problematic. Therefore, the unfavorable factor ratings represent the percentage of participants who reported experiencing any behavior with any frequency. In order to create these ratings, participants are grouped into one of two categories depending on how they responded to the set of five questions:

- “presence of behavior” = participant reported experiencing at least one behavior either *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*

- “no presence of behavior” = participant reported *Never* experiencing any or at least half of the behaviors (and did not report experiencing any behavior *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*).

Because of this, you cannot recreate these ratings using the Item Summary table on the *Racially Harassing Behaviors* details page in the DEOCS dashboard. The Item Summary table displays aggregate responses to the five questions that are used to create the *Racially Harassing Behaviors* ratings; you would need access to individual-level data to understand whether an individual should be categorized as reporting a “presence of the behavior” or “no presence of the behavior.” An example using mock data is below.

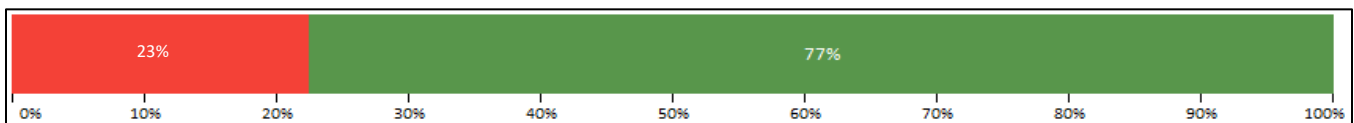
In this example, a unit has 13 members. They receive the following *Racially Harassing Behaviors* results in the DEOCS dashboard:



Interpretation: 23% of participants reported experiencing at least one of the five behaviors *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*. In other words, 23%, or a total of three individuals, reported a presence of *Racially Harassing Behaviors* in the unit.

Individual-level data: This score is created based on how each individual responded across the five behaviors. The table below shows responses from the three individuals who were included in this rating.

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Participant 1	Rarely	Never	[no answer]	[no answer]	[no answer]
Participant 2	Rarely	Never	Never	Sometimes	Never
Participant 3	Often	Rarely	Often	Often	Often



Interpretation: 77% of participants reported *Never* experiencing all five behaviors or *Never* experiencing at least three of the behaviors (and did not report experiencing any behavior *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*). In other words, 77%, or 10 individuals, reported no presence of *Racially Harassing Behaviors* in the unit.

Individual-level data: This score is created based on how each individual responded across the five behaviors. The table below shows the responses from the 10 members who were included in this rating.

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Participant 4	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never
Participant 5	Never	Never	Never	Never	[no answer]
Participant 6	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never
Participant 7	Never	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	Never
Participant 8	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never
Participant 9	Never	Never	[no answer]	[no answer]	Never
Participant 10	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never
Participant 11	[no answer]	Never	Never	Never	Never
Participant 12	Never	Never	Never	[no answer]	[no answer]
Participant 13	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never


The aggregate data would appear in the Item Summary table like this:

Racially Harassing Behaviors Questions	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Total
Question 1	75% (9)	17% (2)	0% (0)	8% (1)	100% (12)
Question 2	92% (11)	8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (12)
Question 3	91% (10)	0% (0)	0% (0)	9% (1)	100% (11)
Question 4	78% (7)	0% (0)	11% (1)	11% (1)	100% (9)
Question 5	90% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (1)	100% (10)


Note that percentages in the above table are calculated out of the total number of participants to that question and not the total number of participants to the full survey. Participants can skip questions, so you may notice that total responses to questions vary. In addition, factor ratings may not always add to 100% due to rounding.

How do I know if my factor ratings are good or bad?

The DEOCS team is working on a data-driven approach that will help you understand what a rating means for an organization’s likelihood of positive or negative outcomes. In the meantime, we recommend using the following strategies to help put your *Racially Harassing Behaviors* ratings into context and understand whether actions should be taken to address high unfavorable ratings:

1. If applicable, review the information in the alert icon  to see if your *Racially Harassing Behaviors* ratings are called out. This icon would appear in the dashboard and in the PDF reports if your unit’s/organization’s unfavorable rating for *Racially Harassing Behaviors* is very high compared to all other units/organizations that completed a DEOCS. You should consider taking action to lower this rating.
2. Look at the Item Summary table on the *Racially Harassing Behaviors* details page to understand how often participants reported experiencing the five behaviors. While the overall unfavorable factor rating provides a high-level view, it is still important to understand which of the five behaviors is reported to occur most often. Actions can be taken to address all behaviors that occur, or you may feel it is more appropriate to only

address behaviors that occur more frequently (e.g., only those reported to occur *Sometimes* or *Often*, or only those reported to occur *Often*.)

3. Examine the bar graph showing the overall unfavorable rating for *Racially Harassing Behaviors* and the unfavorable ratings by various demographic groups. Look at each group's rating in relation to the overall unit/organization rating. If any groups have particularly high unfavorable ratings for *Racially Harassing Behaviors*, this could help you plan actions to decrease your unfavorable rating in specific areas of your organization.
4. If applicable, review your *Racially Harassing Behaviors* unfavorable rating trends over time. You can view these trends by clicking on this icon  in the dashboard; they also appear as a table in the PDF reports. Take note if your ratings are going up over time. You may need to take action to reverse this trend.

Factor Improvement Tools for Racially Harassing Behaviors

The following resources may be useful as you make plans or take action to improve your *Racially Harassing Behaviors* ratings. Each resource listing contains a description, a link, and the relevant audience. Some resources may be more appropriate for the commander/leader, unit/organization personnel, survey administrators, or the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW); the relevant audience advises which group may benefit from use of the recommended resource.

- **Do Actions Speak Louder Than Words? A Comparison of Three Organizational Practices for Reducing Racial/Ethnic Harassment and Discrimination.** Journal article assessing which three aspects of climate—resources, training, or implementation—have the most influence on the prevalence of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261402626_Do_Actions_Speak_Louder_Than_Words_A_Comparison_of_Three_Organizational_Practices_for_Reducing_RacialEthnic_Harassment_and_Discrimination
Audience: Commander/Leader, survey admin, IPPW
- **Effects of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination on the Health Status of Minority Veterans.** Military health article about the relationship between racial discrimination and health outcomes.
<https://academic.oup.com/milmed/article/173/4/331/4557654?login=false>
Audience: Commander/Leader, survey admin, IPPW
- **Military Leaders Open Up About Race.** Highly ranked U.S. Military leaders discuss racism in the Military.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRID9w_V88U
Audience: Commander/Leader, unit personnel, survey admin, IPPW

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