Do Americans Really Care For Each Other?

What Unites Us—And What Divides Us

Richard Weissbourd, Milena Batanova, Eric Torres, Joseph McIntyre, and Sawsan Eskander

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Executive Summary

How much do Americans really care for each other? For whom do we care and in what ways? Do we care for those who are different from us in ethnicity, race, political and religious orientation, and other characteristics?

This report seeks to shed light on the answers to these questions and on what might spur more Americans to value and invest in others, particularly those who are different from them. It is based primarily on our research over the last few years, including a survey in April, 2021 of a nationally representative sample of about 2,600 Americans.

What we have found is heartening in many respects. Large numbers of survey respondents report caring for others, taking steps to improve others' lives, and feeling a sense of collective or civic care, including a bottom-line concern for all Americans. Perhaps most surprising and encouraging, while many Americans clearly have contempt for the other political party, our data suggest that Americans still tend to care for each other across the political divide. Approximately two-thirds of respondents, for example, reported caring for all Americans regardless of their political views (only 10% reported not caring), and almost two-thirds of respondents preferred living in a politically diverse neighborhood to a politically homogeneous one (54% reported they would probably prefer this; 12% reported definitely). Americans do not appear ready for a political divorce—only 8% of respondents were in favor of peacefully dividing the country in two, with one country being Democratic and the other Republican. Uniting the country, our data indicate, is also a very high priority for both Republicans and Democrats.

> **Our data suggest that Americans still tend to care for each other across the political divide.**

But we also found that many Americans are not engaging in the harder forms of caring that are central to healthy, fair workplaces and communities and that promote and safeguard the common good. Many Americans don't appear to have substantial concern for people who are different from them in background and character. Many Americans also struggle to extend compassion when others disappoint them or make mistakes and fail to treat as fully human those with whom they disagree. And large numbers of Americans are failing to address obstacles to caring, including their own stereotypes and biases. Our data and a mountain of other data suggest that Americans have biases and stereotypes of many kinds, but only 9% of respondents view themselves as having biases or stereotypes they need to work on against African Americans

and Muslim Americans (26% and 27%, respectively, responded "maybe," and the remainder responded "no"), and even fewer believe that they have biases against other major American racial, ethnic, or religious groups.

> …many Americans are not engaging in the harder forms of caring that are central to healthy, fair workplaces and communities and that promote and safeguard the common good.

Respondents tend to view racism as a significant problem in the country, but they tend to think of it as other people's failing. Republican respondents are far more likely to claim, for example, that they're less racist against Black Americans than Democrats and vice versa. In an online survey we conducted in July 2020, respondents were far more likely to see themselves as less racist than people in their families, people they interact with daily, and people in the country in general. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents thought, for example, that they were "much less" or "less" racist than people they interact with regularly outside their family and only 6% thought they were more racist.

Finally, our data suggest that large numbers of Americans are rushing to judgement and struggling to hold conflicting feelings, including anger and compassion, towards fellow Americans. In an online survey we conducted in May, 2021, for example, we asked respondents whether they would feel bad for people who don't take the COVID-19 vaccine and end up hospitalized; only about half of respondents expressed substantial levels of concern.

We urgently need to work to strengthen Americans' capacity to care, bridge divides, and to reduce bias. But the goal should not be a type of unity that papers over dishonesty or injustice. We need to bridge divides while advancing core values, including honesty, integrity, and justice. This report offers eight key strategies we see as promising.

1. **Wrestling with our biases.** Moving beyond current bias trainings, which are commonly ineffective, and developing and rigorously assessing new approaches for motivating Americans to address biases, including public education campaigns that help Americans identify and reflect on gender, ethnic, and racial biases that affect individuals and institutions.

2. **Creating conditions that enable constructive conversation.** Developing norms and conditions in our workplaces and institutions, including listening respectfully, that enable people to talk constructively about their political views across political difference while being guided by principles of justice. Only 15% percent of survey respondents reported being interested in talking across political difference, but when we asked respondents if they would be interested in these conversations if they would "be listened to respectfully," the percent interested jumped to 61%.

3. **Finding fulfilling and fun ways for people to connect across difference.** Creating many types of energizing formal and informal opportunities for Americans across economic, racial, political, and religious divides to engage with one another and to express varied aspects of their identities, whether around shared interests, personal challenges, or service to others.

4. **Bringing people together in common cause.** Developing coalitions that bring people together regionally or nationally across various divides around common causes, e.g., initiatives to increase access to broadband, efforts to secure more affordable housing, or campaigns to support new parents or to alleviate loneliness.

5. **Challenging our own party.** Challenging not only our political opponents but members of our own party when they act hypocritically or violate important moral principles. Our data indicate that Democrats are significantly more likely to agree with criticism about hypocrisy in their party when the messenger is a Democrat versus a Republican, and Republicans are significantly more likely to agree with criticism about racism in their party when the messenger is a Republican versus a Democrat.

6. **Lifting up the bonds that unite us.** Elevating the voices of those who are fed up with our current antagonistic politics and want greater fairness and unity. These efforts might take many forms, including media stories of the many individuals and organizations engaged in bridging divides, schools supporting and elevating parents who are willing to uphold norms of decency and respect in their parent communities, or local elections that utilize ranked choice voting, which tends to favor candidates who are less extreme.

7. **Combining a moral narrative with moral action.** Supporting political and community leaders who combine a moral narrative that emphasizes decency and fairness with concrete actions that promote decency and fairness across divides. Americans need to see community leaders, for example, taking actions that tangibly improve their lives and who belong to different political, racial, ethnic, and religious groups than they do.

8. **Preparing the next generation.** Focusing in our homes, schools, and communities on developing children's capacities to care across difference, to bridge divides, and to advance justice.

Key Findings

Americans tend to value caring and are engaged in a range of caring actions:
- About two-thirds of Americans report that it's "very important" or "important" to them to be caring, and high percentages of Americans report engaging in caring acts, including helping a neighbor, going out of their way to express gratitude, or reaching out to someone who is lonely.
- When asked what they want said about them at the end of their lives, Americans across race, ethnicity, economic class, gender, and political orientation were most likely to rank "that I took care of my family," "that I was kind," and "that I tried to do the right thing" as most important.

Americans care for each other across political difference and aren't ready for a "divorce":
- Approximately two-thirds of respondents either "agreed" or "completely agreed" with the statement, "In the end, I care about all Americans, regardless of their political views." Only around 10% disagreed or completely disagreed and the remainder were neutral.
- Uniting the country appears to be a high priority for Americans. Provided with a list of priorities for President Biden, respondents were most likely to think that uniting the country should be the president's top priority.
- Large majorities of Democratic and Republican respondents reported that they had at least one to two friends in the other political party.
- When asked whether they would prefer to live in politically homogeneous or politically diverse neighborhoods, almost two-thirds of respondents preferred a politically diverse neighborhood (54% reported they would probably prefer this; 12% reported definitely).
- We gave respondents a thought experiment: "Would it be a good idea to peacefully divide the country in two, with one country being Democratic and the other Republican?" Only a small percentage of respondents were in favor (8%).
- Americans tend to be interested in talking about their political views with people they disagree with politically if the conditions are right. Only 15% percent of survey respondents reported being interested in talking about political issues with someone they generally disagreed with, but when we asked respondents if they would be interested in these conversations if they would "be listened to respectfully," the percent interested jumped to 61%.

Large numbers of Americans aren't doing the "hard work" of caring, including addressing their own biases.

- Substantial majorities of survey respondents don't report high levels of concern for the problems and challenges faced by racial or ethnic groups other than their own.
- Our data and a mountain of other data suggest that Americans have biases and stereotypes of many kinds, but only 9% of respondents view themselves as having biases or stereotypes they need to work on against Black and Muslim Americans (26% and 27%, respectively, responded "maybe," and the remainder responded "no") and even fewer respondents believed that they had biases against other major racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the U.S.
- Americans are far more likely to prioritize their own happiness over caring for others, and they're far more invested in cultivating their children's happiness than their children's caring for others.

Americans tend to view racism as a significant problem in our country, but they tend to think of it as other people's failing.
- Both Republicans and Democrats are far more likely to believe that they're less racist than people in both their own political party and the other party. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of Democrats reported that they're "less" or "much less" racist than Republicans, and 69% of Republicans indicated that they're "less" or "much less" racist than Democrats.
- In an online survey we conducted in May, 2020, respondents were far more likely to view themselves as less racist than people in their families, people they interact with daily, and people in the country. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents thought, for example, that they were "much less" or "less" racist than people they interact with regularly outside their family and only 6% thought they were more racist.

Americans struggle to hold conflicting feelings and too often lack compassion for those whom they see as misguided.
- Our data suggest that large numbers of Americans are rushing to judgement and struggling to hold conflicting feelings, including anger and compassion, towards fellow Americans. In an online survey we conducted in May, 2021, for example, we asked respondents whether they would feel bad for people who don't take the COVID-19 vaccine and end up hospitalized; only about half of respondents expressed substantial levels of concern.

Americans appear to be more responsive to criticism from within their party than from the other party.
- Our data indicate that Democrats are significantly more likely to agree with criticism about hypocrisy in their party when the messenger is a Democrat versus a Republican, and Republicans are significantly more likely to agree with criticism about racism in their party when the messenger is a Republican versus a Democrat.

Introduction

How much do Americans really care for each other? For whom do we care and in what ways? Do we care for those beyond our circles of family and friends? Do we care for those who are different from us in economic background, race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and other characteristics? In this time of fierce political division, do we care for those with opposing political views? Most importantly, how do we motivate more Americans to care for others, especially those who are different from them in significant ways?

This report seeks to shed light on several key dimensions of caring in America and on what might spur more Americans to value and invest in others, particularly those who are different from them in ethnicity, race, religion, and political orientation. It is based primarily on our research over the last few years. We have conducted several surveys (see Methodology), including a survey in April, 2021 of a nationally representative sample of about 2,600 Americans (unless otherwise noted, the survey findings reported here are from this survey). We've also conducted about 35 formal individual interviews and have had dozens of informal conversations with people in various parts of the country at different stations in life.

> **How much do Americans really care for each other? For whom do we care and in what ways?**

What we have found is heartening in many respects. Large numbers of Americans report caring for others, taking steps to improve others' lives, and feeling a sense of collective or civic care, including a bottom-line concern for all Americans. But we also found that many Americans are not engaging in the harder forms of caring—such as valuing people different from them and addressing their own biases—that are central to healthy, fair workplaces and communities and that promote and protect the common good.

Here's the good news. About two-thirds of respondents report that caring is very important to them. When asked to consider 12 options for what they want said about them at the end of their lives, respondents across race, economic class, and political orientation were most likely to rank "that I took care of my family," "that I was kind," and "that I tried to do the right thing" among their top three. Most survey respondents also report engaging in a range of caring acts, such as helping a neighbor.

Perhaps most surprising and encouraging, our data suggest that Americans still tend to care for each other across the political divide, and that there are vital bonds that still connect us.

Americans are regularly subjected to a media-fueled narrative that Democrats and Republicans are hopelessly divided and on the verge of a civil war—a narrative that can become dangerously self-fulfilling. But the real story is far more complex. While there is clearly antagonism across the political divide, about two-thirds (66%) of survey respondents agreed with the statement, "In the end, we're all Americans. I genuinely care about all Americans no matter their political views." Only about 10% disagreed. Almost two-thirds of respondents would prefer to live in a politically diverse neighborhood than a politically homogeneous one. When asked if they would prefer if the country were divided peacefully into two countries—one a Democratic country and the other Republican—only 8% of respondents endorsed this preference (20% were neutral). Provided with a list of priorities for President Biden, respondents were most likely to think that uniting the country should be the president's top priority.[1]

But we also found much that is troubling. It is one thing to value caring. It is another thing to do the hard work of caring, including caring for others even when we find them disappointing or infuriating; respectfully engaging those with whom we disagree; putting others' interests before our own at pivotal times; and valuing people who are different from us in background and character. "Hard" caring also means working on what undermines caring, including facing our own biases, stereotypes, and self-righteousness. When we can recognize our biases we are both more likely to be aware of institutions and practices that are unfair toward particular groups, and less likely in our daily interactions to unintentionally express care for others in ways that are patronizing or degrading. There is a vast difference between being "nice" or "kind," as we commonly use these words, and engaging in the focused, subtle, and disciplined work of actually caring for someone else in ways that are particular and uplifting to them.

> There is a vast difference between being "nice" or "kind," as we commonly use these words, and engaging in the focused, subtle, and disciplined work of actually caring for someone else in ways that are particular and uplifting to them.

And large swaths of Americans don't appear to be engaged in these harder forms of caring. According to our data, Americans are far more likely to prioritize their own happiness over their

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[1] Our sample also tended to rate "preserving America's freedoms" and "providing more economic opportunities for struggling Americans" as high priorities. Though "uniting the country" was the most popular response among survey takers, 95% confidence intervals for the mean priority given to each of these three choices overlapped, indicating that the relative rank of these choices among the population of US adults is ambiguous.

care for others, and they're far more invested in cultivating their children's happiness than their children's care for others. Our data and a mountain of other data also suggest that people in the U.S. have biases and stereotypes of many kinds,[2] but only 9% of respondents view themselves as having biases or stereotypes they need to work on against Black Americans and against Muslim Americans (26% and 27%, respectively, were undecided). Even fewer respondents believed that they had biases they need to work on against other major racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the U.S.

Respondents tend to view racism as a significant problem in the country, but they tend to think of it as other people's failing. Substantial majorities of respondents believe, for example, that they're less racist than people in their own political party and in the opposing political party. Republican respondents are far more likely to claim that they're less racist against Black Americans than Democrats and vice versa. In an online survey we conducted in July, 2020, respondents were far more likely to see themselves as less racist than people in their families, people they interact with on a daily basis, and people in the country in general. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents thought they were "much less" or "less" racist than people they interact with regularly outside their family and only 6% thought they were more racist.

And while there are still ties that bind us across political divides, there is also deeply personal antagonism and demonization. Asked on our survey how much they respect the other party on a scale of 1-10, nearly a quarter of Democrats and Republicans gave the other party the lowest possible score: 1 out of 10. Other researchers recently found that 1 out of 5 Democrats and 1 out of 5 Republicans view the other side as "subhuman" and like "animals,"[3] the kind of dehumanization that removes the constraints against all sorts of political violence, degradation, and cruelty.

Finally, our data suggest that large numbers of Americans are rushing to judgement and struggling to hold conflicting feelings, including anger and compassion, towards fellow Americans. Many Americans' anger toward the unvaccinated, for example, is eclipsing their compassion even when unvaccinated people become seriously ill. A popular subreddit (with over 400,000 members) makes sport of viciously harpooning vaccine skeptics who have died from COVID-related causes.[4] In a follow-up online survey we conducted in May, 2021, we asked respondents whether they would feel bad for people who don't take the COVID-19 vaccine and end up hospitalized; only about half of respondents expressed substantial levels of concern.

We must do better; too much hangs in the balance. Whether we can solve pressing, shared problems such as climate change; whether we can create institutions that are widely viewed as

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[2] See Banaji & Greenwald, 2013; Eberhardt, 2020; Making Caring Common, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2015; O'Donnell, 2020; Priest et al., 2018.

[3] See Kalmoe & Mason, 2019, as cited in Edsall, 2019.

[4] See https://www.reddit.com/r/HermanCainAward/.

trustworthy and just; whether our communities and workplaces strengthen or deplete us; the integrity of our voting process; and the fate of our democracy all hinge in large measure on whether we can care for those who are different from us and for the common good—and not just when it benefits us or when it's easy. We spend a great deal of time and energy cultivating our happiness and pursuing our achievements——just consider how inundated we are with books, podcasts, and videos related to self-help, happiness, and effectiveness at work. We need to be far more intentional and systematic about developing our capacity——and our children's capacity——to care for and tend to others and our collective fate.

This report offers eight strategies for increasing Americans' capacity to care for others, especially for those who are different from them, and for bridging our differences. The goal of these strategies, to be clear, is not a superficial unity that papers over falsehoods or injustice. These strategies seek to advance unity as well as honesty, integrity, and justice:

1. **Wrestling with our biases.** Moving beyond current bias trainings, which are commonly ineffective, and developing and rigorously assessing new approaches for motivating Americans to address biases, including public education campaigns that help Americans identify and reflect on gender, ethnic, and racial biases that affect individuals and institutions.

2. **Creating conditions that enable constructive conversation.** Developing norms and conditions in our workplaces and institutions, including listening respectfully, that enable people to talk constructively about their political views across political difference while being guided by principles of fairness and justice. Only 15% of survey respondents reported being interested in talking across political difference, but when we asked respondents if they would be interested in these conversations if they would "be listened to respectfully," the percent interested jumped to 61%.

3. **Finding fulfilling and fun ways for people to connect across difference.** Creating many types of energizing formal and informal opportunities for Americans across ethnic, racial, class, political, and religious divides to engage with one another and to express various aspects of their identities, whether around shared interests, personal challenges, or service to others.

4. **Bringing people together in common cause.** Developing coalitions that bring people together regionally or nationally across various divides around common causes, e.g., initiatives to increase access to broadband, efforts to secure more affordable housing, or campaigns to support new parents or to alleviate loneliness.

5. **Challenging our own party.** Challenging not only our political opponents but members of our own party when they act hypocritically or violate important moral principles. Our data indicate that Democrats are significantly more likely to agree with criticism about hypocrisy in their party when the messenger is a Democrat versus a Republican, and Republicans are significantly more likely to agree with criticism about racism in their party when the messenger is a Republican versus a Democrat.

6. **Lifting up the bonds that unite us.** Elevating the voices of those who are fed up with our current antagonistic politics and want greater fairness and unity. These efforts might take many forms, including media stories of the many individuals and organizations engaged in bridging divides, schools supporting and elevating parents who are willing to uphold norms of decency and respect in their parent communities, or local elections that utilize ranked choice voting, which tends to favor candidates who are less extreme.[5]

7. **Combining a moral narrative with moral action.** Supporting political and community leaders who combine a moral narrative that emphasizes decency and fairness with concrete actions that promote decency and fairness across divides. Americans need to see community leaders, for example, taking actions that tangibly improve their lives who belong to different political, racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

8. **Preparing the next generation.** Focusing in our homes, schools, and communities on developing children's capacity to care across difference, to bridge divides, and to advance justice.

This report proceeds as follows. We first report the good news—the many ways in which Americans value and express caring, as well as the bonds that still unite Americans across the political aisle. We then examine the degree to which Americans prioritize caring in relation to other values, the degree to which Americans care for those outside of their circles of family and friends, and whether Americans believe they have biases and stereotypes and are motivated to examine and curb them. Finally, we take up our eight strategies.

Americans Still Value Caring

Americans appear to highly value caring for others and to view themselves as caring. When asked how well the statement, "It's very important to me to be a caring person" describes them, about two-thirds reported "well" or "very well" and almost a quarter reported "somewhat well." People across race and religion reported similar levels of care, although women were far more likely than men to identify as caring (76% vs. 55%, respectively).

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[5] See Politico, 2019.

We also sought to assess how important caring is to Americans by asking respondents about what David Brooks[6] calls "eulogy values"—what people hope will be said about them at the end of their life. We provided twelve options (see Figure 1) and asked respondents to identify their top three choices.[7] Some reflected self-interests—e.g., achievement or status—and others involved caring for others. Values involving caring for others were consistently ranked at the top, and that was true across ethnicity, race, class, gender, and political party. Democrats and Republicans are divided in many respects, but both were most likely to rank "that I took care of my family," "that I was kind," and "that I tried to do what was right" among their top three values. Republicans ranked caring for family first followed by doing what was right, while Democrats ranked kindness first followed by doing what was right.

To shed additional light on how much respondents valued caring, we asked whether they would prefer to have a lot of money and do little good in the world or to live modestly and do a lot of good in the world. A large majority of Americans—88%—reported that they preferred to live modestly and do good. Older people were significantly more likely to choose the modest life (95%) than young people (83%).

How Americans want to be remembered

I took care of my family	58%
I tried to do what was right	56%
I was kind	54%
I was honest	43%
I worked hard	29%
I was funny and made people laugh	26%
I contributed to my community	10%
I achieved a great deal in my work	8%
I worked to create a more just society	7%
Other	4%
I was recognized as an important person	2%

0%   20%   40%   60%

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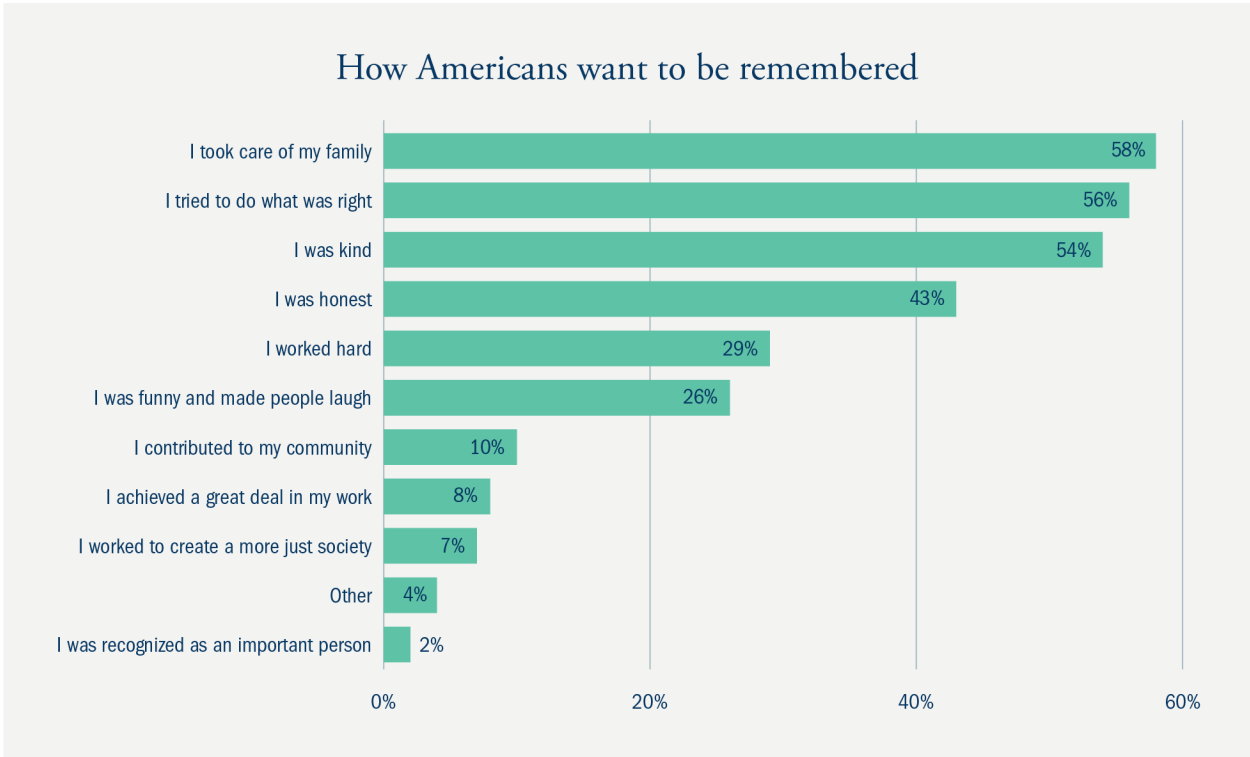
[6] See Brooks, 2015.
[7] It is possible that people's responses were influenced by the order of choices (also known as response bias due to question order effects). Had we randomized the order of values, like we did for most other questions that warranted randomization, we may have seen some different rankings.

Actions, as they say, speak louder than words, so we also asked respondents how often they engaged in the following caring acts over the past few months: doing "something nice for neighbors or people in your community," volunteering for a social cause, making a donation, going out of their way to express gratitude, reaching out to people who might be struggling or having a hard time, and reaching out to people who might be lonely. Almost all respondents reported at least some caring behaviors (see Figure 2). The most popular and frequent caring act involved gratitude: 52% of Americans said they went out of their way to express gratitude three or more times in the past few months, and 34% said they did this once or twice.
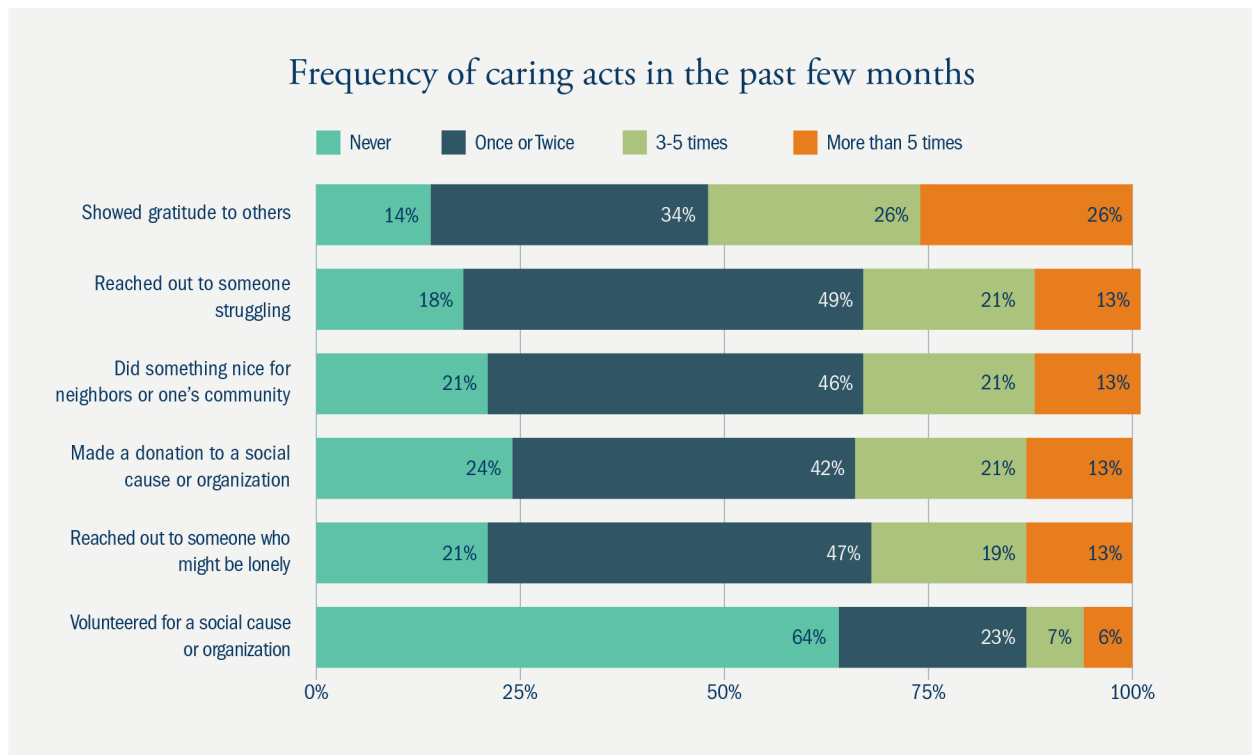
Frequency of caring acts in the past few months

Legend: Never · Once or Twice · 3-5 times · More than 5 times

	Never	Once or Twice	3-5 times	More than 5 times
Showed gratitude to others	14%	34%	26%	26%
Reached out to someone struggling	18%	49%	21%	13%
Did something nice for neighbors or one's community	21%	46%	21%	13%
Made a donation to a social cause or organization	24%	42%	21%	13%
Reached out to someone who might be lonely	21%	47%	19%	13%
Volunteered for a social cause or organization	64%	23%	7%	6%

Figure 2. Responses above (the choices have been abbreviated) were to the question: "In the past few months, how many times have you done the following?" Percents may not add up to 100% due to rounding by response option.

While we don't know whether respondents actually engaged in as many of these behaviors as they reported (and research suggests that people tend to over-report socially desirable behaviors[8]) it nevertheless seems clear that most Americans value caring and to some degree are engaging in a range of caring acts.[9] These caring acts are vital to our communities and our

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[8] See Grimm, 2010; Brenner, 2011.
[9] Of the choices or options we provided, volunteering was the least-often reported activity, perhaps due to the timing of the survey (April, 2021) when coronavirus-related restrictions (such as social distancing) were still in place, prohibiting

society—and that's the main reason we should engage in them—but they also may enrich the lives of those undertaking these caring actions.[10] In our survey, respondents who reported that they value caring and those who engaged in more caring acts also reported being happier and having a greater sense of purpose than other respondents. Although we can't know from this correlation whether caring is a cause of happiness or a sense of purpose, there are good reasons to believe caring is an important source of happiness (see "Is caring a source of happiness?").

Is caring a source of happiness?

While the relationship between caring and happiness is clearly complex, a good deal of evidence suggests that caring is an important source of happiness and that cultivating caring in children may, in fact, be the best way to promote their happiness. When our children develop the capacity to tune in to and to attend meaningfully to others, they're more likely to have close, healthy relationships, including being good friends, romantic partners, parents, and co-workers. And these relationships are one of our most important and durable sources of happiness (Carter, 2010; Lyubomirsky, 2008; Valliant, 2012). The capacities for empathy and perspective-taking, central to caring for others, are also associated with effectiveness at work, another key aspect of well-being (Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, 2007).

Do We Still Care Across the Aisle?

Americans, we are routinely told, are deeply politically polarized and may be veering toward some kind of political divorce or civil war. Many of our major news outlets and political and community leaders seem hell-bent on highlighting our divisions, our social media feeds scream our intolerance for the other party, and we hear about family members and friends with opposing political views who find each other unbearable. According to a 2021 national survey by pollster

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certain kinds of volunteering. According to Fidelity Charitable (n.d), for example, nonprofits across the U.S. saw big drops in volunteering since the pandemic emerged.

[10] See Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003; Kim, Wang, & Hill, 2018; Williams & Bartlett, 2014.

John Zogby, slightly more Americans now view a future civil war as likely (46%) than unlikely (43%), with younger people more dire about this prospect (53%) than older people (31%).[11]

There are, to be sure, understandable reasons for these concerns. Affective polarization—negative emotions about those with opposing political views—appears to be high and climbing.[12] In an August, 2021 paper, "Cross-Country Trends in Affective Polarization," researchers from several universities reported that in 1978, "the average partisan rated in-party members 27.4 points higher than out-party members on a 'feeling thermometer' ranging from 0 to 100. In 2020 the difference was 56.3."[13] Asked on our survey how much they respect citizens in the other party on a scale of 1-10, nearly one in four Democrats and Republicans gave the other party the lowest possible score: 1 out of 10 (see Figure 3). Research by Nathan Kalmoe and Lilianna Mason indicates that 42% of both Republicans and Democrats view members of the other party as "downright evil" and that 1 in 5 agree with the claim that those with opposing political views "lack the traits to be considered fully human—they behave like animals."[14] Our survey respondents also tended to give people on the other side high ratings for hypocrisy and low ratings for moral goodness (whether they are caring and fair). When asked what bothers them most about the opposing party, respondents tended to be as, if not more, troubled by these personal characteristics than by the other party's policy positions (see Appendix A).

Yet our data also reveal an entirely different—and far more hopeful—side of this story. Americans do not seem to have given up on each other and are not seeking some kind of political divorce. Consider the following findings from our national survey:

- **Americans still tend to care about each other.** About two-thirds of respondents either "agreed" or "completely agreed" with the statement: "In the end, I care about all Americans, regardless of their political views." Only around 10% disagreed, some "completely"; the remainder were neutral.

- **Uniting the country appears to be a high priority**. When we asked respondents how important certain priorities should be for President Biden on a scale of 1-10 (options included achieving racial justice, uniting the country, preserving traditional values, providing economic opportunities for struggling Americans, and preserving America's freedoms), uniting the country was ranked as most important, with an 8 out of 10 average.[15] Democrats and Republicans prioritized it almost identically.

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[11] See Zogby, 2021.
[12] See Boxell, Gentzkow, & Shapiro, 2020; Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, & Westwood, 2019.
[13] See Boxell, Gentzkow, & Shapiro, 2020, p.2.
[14] See Kalmoe & Mason, 2019, as cited in Edsall, 2019.
[15] Please refer back to the footnote about these findings in the Introduction.

- **We don't exist entirely in ideological bubbles.** Large majorities of Democratic and Republican respondents reported that they had friends in the other party (See Figure 3). Only 15% of Democrats and 10% of Republicans reported *not* having any friends from the opposing party (21% of Democrats and 24% of Republicans "didn't know" whether they had friends from the other party). More than a third of Democrats and Republicans (34% and 41%, respectively) reported having three or more friends from the other party.

- **We want to live in politically mixed communities.** Americans appear to favor living in places that include their political counterparts. Although Americans tend to be politically segregated both between and within localities,[16] when asked whether they would prefer that their neighborhoods were politically homogeneous or politically diverse (defined as at least 25% of residents from each party), almost two-thirds of respondents preferred a politically diverse neighborhood (54% probably, 12% definitely). Republicans and Democrats alike tended to prefer living in politically mixed neighborhoods.

- **We don't actually want a political divorce.** There has been lots of talk over the last several years, some of it seemingly serious, about whether we would be better off as two separate countries, one Democratic and the other Republican. We gave respondents a thought experiment: "Would it be a good idea to peacefully divide the country in two, with one country being Democratic and the other Republican?" Only a small percentage of respondents were in favor. Approximately 55% "completely disagreed" and another 17% disagreed. Only 8% agreed, with the rest being neutral. Democrats were slightly more in favor of preserving the country than Republicans. Across the political spectrum, "very liberal" respondents were most in favor (82%), and very conservative respondents were least in favor (55%) of preserving the country.

- **We are tired of polarization and want greater harmony.** Our research, as well as far more extensive research by More in Common,[17] suggests that many Americans, including large numbers of Independents, are fed up with polarization and hostility and long for greater comity and decency. More in Common calls these Americans the "exhausted majority."

As we take up in the final section of this report, we urgently need to elevate the voices of the large number of Americans who may be angry but still care for their political counterparts and who recoil from the current tenor of political debate. The risks of passivity in the face of the narrative of our division and disintegration are too great. Convinced that the other side views them with contempt and pessimistic about the prospects of repair, both sides, for example, are more likely to retreat into their own party—ingesting its assumptions and fiercely guarding its interests—to hold less nuanced views on a range of political issues and to create or aggravate

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[16] See Brown & Enos, 2021.
[17] See Hawkins, Yudkin, Juan-Torres, & Dixon, 2018.

gridlock on a wide array of community and political matters. They're also likely to increasingly stereotype and demonize the other side and to justify increasingly aggressive and self-interested actions on the basis of that demonization.
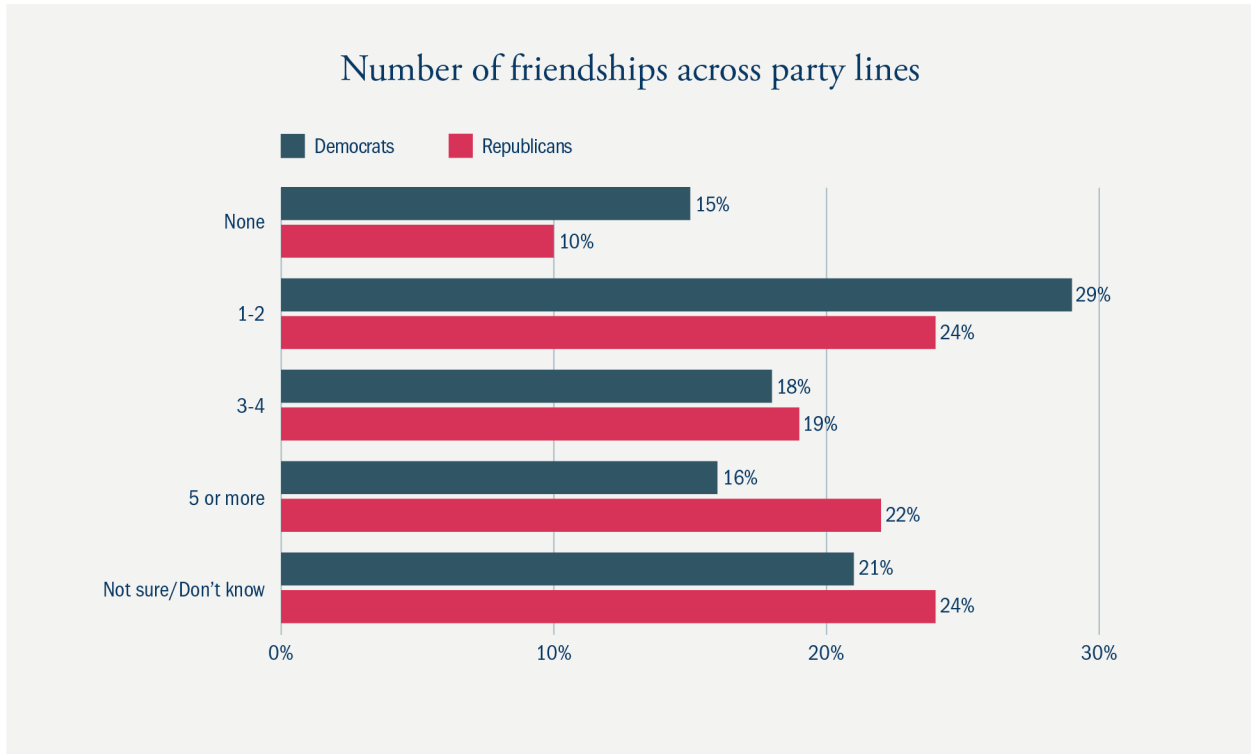
Number of friendships across party lines

Figure 3. Responses above were to the question: "How many of your friends who you see or talk with regularly are [opposing partisans; Republicans/Democrats]?" For example, Democrats were asked how many of their friends are Republicans, and vice-versa. Percents may not add up to 100% due to rounding by response option.

How Much Do We Care? And Who Do We Care For?

While the number of Americans who value and express caring is encouraging, when it comes to crucial dimensions of care, our data also point to much that is concerning. In particular, our data raised questions about how much Americans care for others when caring collides with their own self-interests. We asked respondents, for example, what is more important to them—caring, happiness, or achievement. They were almost twice as likely to prioritize their own happiness (62%) over caring for others (32%). In a survey we conducted in 2014, high school students were far more likely to prioritize aspects of success—happiness or achievement—than caring for others, and they were even more likely to view their parents as prioritizing these aspects of success over caring for others. Youth were also three times more likely to agree than disagree that their parents are prouder of them if they receive good grades than if they are "caring community members in class and school." While happiness and achievement are clearly

important, individuals in any healthy society must balance self-concerns with concerns for others and the common good, and our data and other data suggest that we are out of balance.[18]

Large numbers of Americans seem to lack caring in another crucial sense—they care little for those outside their immediate circles. When we talk about caring in this country we often talk about quantities—we describe people as being "very caring" or as uncaring, as being selfish or indifferent, for example. And the amount of caring one has is certainly important.

But in many ways the more important question is *who we care for*. Almost all people care for family and friends—only sociopaths lack caring entirely—and we all typically care deeply for at least a few people. What is perhaps a more critical task for many of us—a task that many of our great moral leaders and religions have asked us to take up—is to expand our circles of concern beyond our family and friends, including taking responsibility for those with whom we may not feel a natural kinship because they are different from us in background, beliefs, or character. It is this type of caring that holds together our communities, enabling us to consider the needs of those community members who are unknown or abstract to us or who we may find strange or off-putting. And it is this caring that is the foundation for justice. When we are able to take the perspective of and value those who are different from us, even when our own needs are pressing, we are far more likely to make decisions that fairly reflect the interests of everyone in our communities.

> …many of our survey respondents expressed little care for those outside of their immediate circles.

Yet many of our survey respondents expressed little care for those outside of their immediate circles. Large numbers of respondents across ethnicity, race, and economic background did not express high levels of concern, for example, for the problems and challenges faced by people of different races or ethnicities. Respondents had the highest levels of concern for the problems and challenges faced by Black Americans and undocumented immigrants, yet most were only "somewhat concerned," "a little concerned," or "not concerned at all" (see Appendix B).

We also asked respondents whether they agreed with the statement, "In the end, I have to look out for myself, my family, and my friends. I don't really have responsibility for anyone else." While Americans appear to have a wide array of views on this question (see "Who do we care for?"), overall, about 38% of respondents thought they do have responsibility for people outside their

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[18] Jeste et al., 2019; Making Caring Common, 2014; Putnam & Garrett, 2020; Shapiro, 2020; Way, Gilligan, & Noguera, 2018.

circle of family and friends, but 27% were neutral and 36% of survey respondents did not feel this responsibility.[19]

What Gets in the Way of Caring?

Talking about caring as simply a quantity diverts attention from the hard work of caring in another respect: The issue for many of us is not how much we care, but what undermines our caring. Cultural and community norms and traditions, such as a focus on independence or interdependence, or the degree to which a community defines itself by its enemies, can profoundly affect who we care for and how much we care for them. Emotions such as jealousy, pride, shame, competitiveness, fear, and anger often impede our capacity to care—to both value other people and to treat them in ways that are valuable to them. The hard work of caring often involves holding conflicting feelings, including being able to care for others even when, for example, we are frightened by or angry at them.

And many Americans are failing at this form of caring. Consider how many Americans have responded to those refusing COVID-19 vaccines. There are certainly good reasons to be angry at those who fail to take the vaccine, including that the unvaccinated endanger others and prolong the pandemic; that anger itself can be a form of care for those who are endangered. But it's hard to make a case that one should not also feel compassion for unvaccinated people who become seriously ill, especially because the media has paid substantial attention to the fact that many people are refusing vaccines because they're inundated with misinformation about both the disease and vaccines or have histories that give them good reasons to distrust the medical establishment.[20]

In a follow-up online survey we conducted in May, 2021, we asked respondents whether they would feel bad for people who don't take the vaccine and end up hospitalized. About half felt "quite bad" or "very bad" but the other half only felt "somewhat bad," "slightly bad," or "not at all bad." About 1 of 7 respondents did not feel bad at all. As one respondent put it, "I have no empathy for people who cause their own hardships because of their stupidity."

Many Americans struggle to hold both negative feelings and compassion in a range of other circumstances. One can both fear, for example, that more lenient immigration policies will be damaging to our country and still have great compassion for immigrants who are fleeing terrible

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[19] It is possible that respondents interpreted the statement ("In the end, I have to look out for myself, my family and my friends. I don't really have responsibility for anyone else") to mean "In matters of life and death, I would choose family and friends over others." To better understand how people interpreted the statement, we conducted a follow-up survey (with other U.S.-based adult participants; see Methodology) which included the same question but with an open-ended option for respondents to explain their answer. The open-ended responses, however, suggested that respondents likely interpreted the question as we intended, to more generally mean something along the lines of, "Do I have a fundamental responsibility for people outside of my family and friends?" (also see "Who do we care for?").
[20] For example, see Bosman Hoffman, Sanger-Katz, & Arango, 2021; Tufecki, 2021.

hardships to safeguard their families. Yet as a number of studies demonstrate, many Americans succumb to cruel stereotypes about immigrants and seem unable to summon the compassion that should inform any humane immigration policy.[21] "Hard caring" often means not only being able to hold conflicting feelings, but being able to spot and manage our tendencies—especially when we are uncertain, scared, or angry—to look for easy targets, whether immigrants or the unvaccinated.

Who do we care for?

In a follow-up online survey we conducted in May, 2021, we gave respondents (U.S-based adults) an open-ended option to further elaborate on the question, "To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statement? In the end, I have to look out for myself, my family and my friends. I don't really have responsibility for anyone else." Some respondents clearly felt this responsibility. For example, one person said, "I think we should all look out for each other. We are all part of humanity and need to help each other get through life." Others clearly did not feel this responsibility, making assertions such as, "I have a responsibility to my circle of people. They are the only ones who benefit directly from anything I can do for them and vice ver-

sa." But some were also quite honest about the complexity of the question and were neutral. One person admitted, "That is a hard question. I would say in general, I do look out for only my family and friends, but I am also thoughtful about my community too. So I can't really say one way or another." Whether people feel a sense of greater responsibility may have significant consequences for their communities. In our primary survey, we found that those with a narrower sense of responsibility were significantly less likely to report engaging in caring actions over the past months, including helping out neighbors, making donations, expressing gratitude, reaching out to those who might be struggling, or reaching out to those who might be lonely.

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[21] See Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut, 2015; Flores & Schachter, 2019.

There is much else that can obstruct our capacity to care, including biases and stereotypes. That we're all vulnerable to biases has received a great deal of public attention over the last decade. Articles and books on bias and diversity trainings that take up bias in workplaces and many other institutions have proliferated in recent years. And there's a great deal of evidence, including our own research, that Americans have many kinds of stereotypes and biases, including biases based on gender, race, and ethnicity,[22] that can have damaging consequences in health care,[23] education,[24] criminal justice,[25] and many other fields as well as in our daily lives. A good deal of research suggests that biases are, in fact, built into the architecture of our brains and naturally arise as we sort information about people.[26] Being caring or a moral person in a broader sense is not simply about knowing right and wrong or being motivated to uphold our moral principles; it's also about addressing our stereotypes and biases in ways that reduce their harm to others.

In addition to reviewing research on both bias and stereotyping, we assessed in our primary survey whether respondents held common stereotypes by simply asking them directly. We asked respondents whether the following assertions are true: "Jewish people tend to be greedy," "Black people tend to lack a strong work ethic," "Many Muslim people are a threat to America," "Asian people tend to be cold or lack warmth," "Hispanic or Latino/a people tend to not value education," and "Asian Americans are more likely than other Americans to be carriers of the coronavirus."[27]

> **Being caring or a moral person in a broader sense is not simply about knowing right and wrong or being motivated to uphold our moral principles; it's also about addressing our stereotypes and biases in ways that reduce their harm to others.**

Many respondents agreed that at least one of these statements was a little true, and a smaller but still significant number of respondents thought these statements were "pretty" or "very"

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[22] See Making Caring Common, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2015; Priest et al., 2018.
[23] See Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, 2020; Anchocia et al., 2020; Dovidio, Eggly, Albrecht, Hagiwara, & Penner, 2016.
[24] See U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Chin, Quinn, Dhaliwal, & Lovison, 2020.
[25] See Maryfield, 2018; Levinson & Smith, 2012; Rachlinski, Johnson, Wistrich, & Guthrie, 2009.
[26] See Banaji & Greenwald, 2016; Eberhardt, 2020; Fiske, 2021.
[27] To arrive at these six stereotypes, we reviewed recent reports in the media as well as literature on common biases based on race and religion.

true. Thirty-three percent (33%) of respondents agreed that the statement was at least a "little true" about Black Americans, 32% that it was at least a "little true" about Muslim people, and about 27% agreed that the statements were at least a "little true" about Jewish Americans and Latino/a Americans. In total, over half of respondents (53%) viewed at least one of these stereotypes as at least a "little true." About 9% of Americans thought the stereotypes were pretty or very true of Black people, followed by Muslims (8%), Jews (7%), Asians (specifically the stereotype that Asians lack warmth - 6%), and Hispanic or Latino/a people (6%).

Yet relatively few Americans seem to think they have biases or stereotypes against any racial or religious group that they should work on. We asked: "Do you think you have any biases or stereotypes against any of the following groups that you need to try to reduce or eliminate?" and listed several groups, including Black Americans, Native or Indigenous Americans, Latino/a Americans, Muslim Americans, and Asian Americans. Only 9% of all respondents agreed that they had biases against Black and Muslim Americans they needed to work on (26% and 27%, respectively, responded "maybe," and the remainder responded "no"). Respondents were even less likely to report they had biases to work on against other racial and religious groups (See Figure 4).
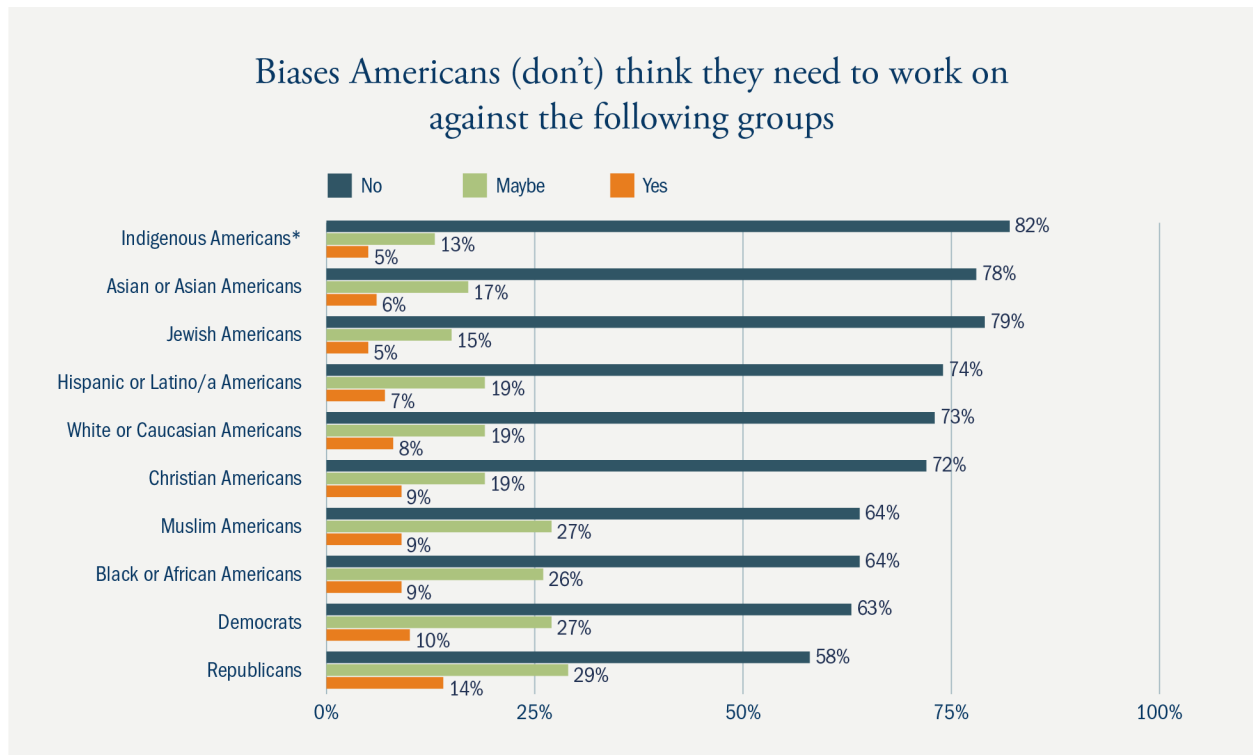

Biases Americans (don't) think they need to work on against the following groups

Legend: ■ No ■ Maybe ■ Yes

Group	No	Maybe	Yes
Indigenous Americans*	82%	13%	5%
Asian or Asian Americans	78%	17%	6%
Jewish Americans	79%	15%	5%
Hispanic or Latino/a Americans	74%	19%	7%
White or Caucasian Americans	73%	19%	8%
Christian Americans	72%	19%	9%
Muslim Americans	64%	27%	9%
Black or African Americans	64%	26%	9%
Democrats	63%	27%	10%
Republicans	58%	29%	14%

Figure 4. Responses above were to the question: "Do you think you have any biases or stereotypes against any of the following groups that you need to try to reduce or eliminate?" *The full description or response choice for "Indigenous Americans" was American Indians, Indigenous Americans, or Native Americans. Percents may not add up to 100% due to rounding by response option.

The problem may be that Americans view biases as primarily other people's defect. In particular, our data suggest that Americans tend to view racism not as their own but as other people's failing. High percentages of Americans believe racism is pervasive in this country. About 77% of our survey respondents, for example, reported that it is at least "somewhat true" that Black Americans "experience racism or discrimination in America," and 55% reported that they experience "quite a bit" or "a great deal." Further, 70% of respondents said it was at least somewhat true that Hispanics experience racism, and 67% that it was at least somewhat true that Asians do. These findings are consistent with a recent Pew survey which found that 80% of Americans perceive there to be a lot or some discrimination against Black people, 76% against Hispanic people, and 70% against Asian people.[28] In our primary survey, we found that high percentages of Americans also think combatting racism should be a priority for President Biden.[29]

> …our data suggest that Americans tend to view racism not as their own but as other people's failing.

But while Americans seem aware that racism is pervasive, they tend to view other people as the main source of the problem. Consider these findings:

- We asked Democrats and Republicans whether they think that they're more or less racist both than people in their own party and in the other party: 89% of Democrats reported they're "less" or "much less" racist than Republicans, and 69% of Republicans indicated they're "less" or "much less" racist than Democrats. Only 2% of Democrats and 7% of Republicans thought they were "more" or "much more" racist than members of the other party. Slightly more than two-thirds of respondents from both parties also report being "less" or "much less" racist than members of their *own* party.

- In our July, 2020 online survey, most respondents reported being less racist than other people in their families, in their communities, and in the country.

  - 58% of respondents thought they were "much less racist" or "less racist" than people in their extended family, and only 4% thought they were "more" or "much more" racist.

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[28] See Pew Research Center, 2021.
[29] When we asked respondents how important certain priorities should be for President Biden on the same scale described earlier (from 1 to 10, the latter being the highest priority), respondents gave achieving racial justice a 7.16 out of 10 (on average), a slightly lower rating than most of the other choices but still a strong indication of importance.

- 55% of respondents thought they were "much less" or "less" racist than people they interact with regularly outside their family and only 6% thought they were "more" or "much more" racist.

- About two-thirds (66%) of respondents thought they were "much less" or "less" racist than the typical person in the country and only 4% thought they were "more" or "much more" racist.

In our primary survey, respondents were more likely to report having biases they needed to work on against the opposing political party than against any particular racial or ethnic group. Twenty-four percent (24%) of Democrats thought they had biases or stereotypes against Republicans that they should reduce (40% reported "maybe"), while 15% of Republicans said they need to reduce their stereotypes or biases against Democrats (39% reported "maybe").

Some Possible Solutions

While Americans do appear to care in many ways, including caring across the political divide, far too many of us are not engaged in harder forms of caring, and our ties across the divide are dangerously fraying. We urgently need to work to strengthen Americans' capacity to care and bridge divides, to reduce bias, and to advance core values, including honesty, integrity, and justice. The following are eight key strategies we see as promising.

1. Wrestling with our biases

Cultivating both civic, collective care and interpersonal caring, particularly caring for those different from oneself, means far more effectively engaging Americans in recognizing and addressing their biases in workplaces, health care, police forces, and many other settings. Far too many current bias trainings appear to backfire or fail to produce long-term effects.[30] For example, one large-scale study of bias trainings indicated that while employees can easily be taught to answer questions about bias correctly, they very quickly forget the right answers.[31] Other research suggests that compulsory bias or diversity trainings tend to dampen employees' interest in addressing their biases.[32] The point is not that we should give up on bias trainings; the point is that we should try new approaches, including approaches that are deeper and more sustained, rigorously evaluate their impact,[33] and make adjustments as part of a continuous improvement process. We also need to go far beyond bias trainings, particularly one-shot bias trainings, and institute organization-wide systems and practices that are likely to reduce bias in meaningful ways. These practices include hiring more employees of color, especially in

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[30] See Forscher et al., 2019; Paluck & Green, 2009; Lai et al., 2016.
[31] See Dobin & Kalev, 2016; Kalev, Dobin, & Kelly, 2006.
[32] See Anand & Winters, 2008; Kulik, Pepper, Roberson, & Parker, 2006.
[33] See Eberhardt, 2020.

leadership positions; regularly checking for differences in employee conditions and treatment, such as variations in promotions and pay raises based on various factors, including gender, ethnicity and race;[34] and observing who takes up the most "air time" in the organization and intentionally taking steps to assure diverse voices are heard.

Political and community leaders might also take up public education campaigns that increase awareness of and destigmatize bias, underscoring that we are all vulnerable to biases of various kinds. These campaigns might also emphasize that biases are not, as so many Americans appear to believe, other people's problem, and that we are prone to see bias in others but not in ourselves, which in itself is a type of bias. Further, these campaigns can encourage people to ask themselves questions that might alert them to bias: Would I treat a co-worker differently if they were a different gender, ethnicity, or race? Why or why not? Would I be more or less likely to encourage my child to invite a neighborhood child to our house if I knew the child's parents were Democrats versus Republicans? Why or why not? Do I feel different levels of compassion for people who refuse to take the Covid vaccine based on their economic background, race, or party affiliation? If I do, is there a valid reason for that difference? Public education campaigns might also underline the importance of constructively engaging others who express harmful biases and give people tools, including actual words, that they can use in these situations.

2. Creating conditions that enable constructive conversation

Many Americans are clearly struggling to talk about political issues with those who hold opposing views, whether they are family, friends, or colleagues. Bridging divides and strengthening Americans' caring will partly hinge on helping people navigate these conversations, but that won't be easy. A majority of respondents from our survey (56%) reported being either "not at all interested" or "not that interested" in talking across the aisle, with only about 15% "interested" or "very interested." Nor do respondents tend to imagine that their political opponents want to talk to them—only 8% imagined their opponents would be "interested" while 30% imagined they would be "somewhat interested." One reason for this reluctance may be that these conversations have not gone well in the past. In our July, 2020 online survey, only 17% of respondents reported that they tended to find conversations with those with opposing political views "useful" or "very useful," while 59% reported that these conversations were only a "little useful" or "somewhat useful," and 24% reported that they were "not at all" useful.[35]

But when we changed one condition of these conversations, respondents' openness to these conversations jumped dramatically. We also asked respondents if they'd be interested in talking

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[34] See Dobin & Kalev, 2016; Kalev, Dobin, & Kelly, 2006.

[35] Both Democrat and Republican survey respondents indicated a number of reasons why these conversations have been difficult and unproductive, and their reasons tended to mirror each other, including viewing those with opposing views as rigid—as unwilling to listen or modify their views—and as relying on opinions rather than facts.

to people with different political views *if those people listened to them respectfully*, and the percent of people interested shot up from 15% to 61%. The perception that one won't be heard and respected appears to be torpedoing interest in these conversations.

It's important to expand the many strong programs—for example, the Better Arguments Project, Braver Angels, Millions of Conversations, the Village Square, and StoryCorps—that are seeking to enable Americans to talk more productively across the aisle (see our recommended resources at the end of this report). Yet reaching far more Americans means that our major social and cultural institutions ought to do much more to encourage these conversations, to assure that they are guided by trained facilitators, and to create the norms and conditions, including respectful listening, that make constructive conversation possible (see Appendix C for a list of our recommended norms). Workplaces, colleges and universities, community organizations/associations such as PTAs, and faith-based organizations are among legions of groups that could be far more intentional and systematic in fostering these conversations.

In the course of this work, it's critical to be mindful of what burdens we are asking people to bear and who we are asking to bear them. People who have been marginalized or rendered invisible, for example, shouldn't be expected to bear the burden of educating people with power or to enter conversations where they are likely to feel further misunderstood or degraded. These conversations also should advance moral values; the goal shouldn't be to reach some kind of false harmony that ignores falsehood or injustice, but instead to deepen understanding of what is true and just by, for example, careful listening, searching for agreement on trusted sources of information, taking multiple perspectives, and applying fundamental principles of human rights and fairness (see Appendix D).

3. Finding fulfilling and fun ways for people to connect across difference

Strengthening ties across the political divide and reducing biases and stereotypes also means creating more opportunities for Americans from different backgrounds to spend time together in ways that are fun or fulfilling and enable people to expose each other to many sides of themselves, their communities, and their cultures. These interactions certainly do not magically create understanding and harmony. But they at least create the opportunity for us to challenge stereotypes and biases and to experience one another with a measure of complexity and humanity. Many Americans also appear to exaggerate the degree of contempt the other political party has for them,[36] and these exaggerations are associated with many negative attitudes.[37] Positive interactions may soften these perceptions of contempt, bringing them more in line with reality and reducing the barriers to cross-party relationships.[38]

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[36] See Graham, Nosek, & Haidt, 2012; More in Common, 2019.
[37] See Moore-Berg, Ankory-Karlinsky, Hameiri, & Bruneau, 2020.
[38] See Druckman, Klar, Krupnikov, Levendusky, & Ryan, 2020.

Do we overestimate political hostility toward our own party?

Research indicates that both Democrats and Republicans tend to substantially overestimate how much the other side dislikes and dehumanizes them (Graham, Nosek, & Haidt, 2012; More in Common, 2019). In most respects, our survey respondents accurately estimated the other party's negative views of them. But both sides underestimated how much the other respects their intelligence.

More ideologically extreme partisans in our survey also believed that members of the other party have more negative views about their party (i.e., that they are hypocritical or not as smart or caring and fair). This may cause them to express even more hostility, which is returned in a downward spiral (Moore-Berg, Ankory-Karlinsky, Hameiri, & Bruneau, 2020).

Political and community leaders might bring people together around shared problems, as Alcoholics Anonymous and other support groups do, around shared interests, or to do community service—a tremendous need now in the face of the pandemic.

Many of our major institutions could also work to become far more ethnically, racially, and politically diverse. Many workplaces and higher education institutions, for example, are engaged in long-overdue efforts to increase their racial and gender diversity. Bridging divides will mean strengthening these efforts as well as increasing these institutions' geographic, religious, and political diversity, such as working to create universities with more politically mixed student bodies and faculties.

4. Bringing people together in common cause

Our political and community leaders should work to build coalitions that cut across the usual divides and that bring politically, racially, religiously, and ethnically diverse people together around common causes. These could be, for example, racially and politically diverse coalitions focused on reconnecting fathers to families, supporting veterans, or preventing loneliness; or diverse coalitions focused on affordable housing or expansion of broadband. Organizations such as Unite, The One America Movement, IFYC and Over Zero are seeking to build these coalitions.

5. Challenging our own party

While constructively engaging those with opposing political views is clearly important, it's also crucially important that people within political parties are willing to criticize each other, hard as that often is. In our primary survey, we sought to assess whether the "messenger" is important, i.e., whether and to what degree respondents will agree with a criticism of their party when it is delivered by someone within their party rather than a political opponent.

We provided survey respondents with two scenarios, one criticizing Democrats and one criticizing Republicans. In the scenario we provided Democrats, a Democrat is told by a friend that Democrats talk about social justice but aren't willing to take steps to help achieve it, including living among low-income families; in the scenario we provided Republicans, a Republican is told by a friend that Republicans are too tolerant of racism within their own party. But we randomly varied the political party of the friend: about half of Democratic respondents were told their hypothetical friend was also a Democrat (the other half were told the friend was Republican), and about half of Republican respondents were told their hypothetical friend was also a Republican (the other half were told the friend was a Democrat).

Respondents were more likely to agree with the criticism of their own party when the messenger belonged to the same party. Only 16% of Republican respondents agreed with the friend criticizing their own party when the friend was identified as Democratic compared to 27% who agreed when the friend was a fellow Republican. Democrats were substantially more likely to agree with the criticism about Democrats when it was delivered by a Democrat (49%) than a Republican (31%).

> ...we can't ask people in the other party to stand up against wrongs in their party if we're unwilling to stand up against wrongs in our own.

It is, of course, much harder in many ways to risk alienating people in our own political party—people who are more likely to be our friends, our neighbors, or otherwise in our social circles—than people in the opposing party who we tend to depend on far less. But it seems that this kind of criticism is more likely to have an impact, and we can't ask people in the other party to stand up against wrongs in their party if we're unwilling to stand up against wrongs in our own.

6. Lifting up the bonds that unite us

Our community and political leaders at every level should work to lift up the voices of people who care about integrity and justice and are striving to connect across the political divide. This might

take many forms, including media stories of the many individuals and organizations engaged in bridging divides, schools supporting and elevating parents who are willing to uphold norms of decency and respect in their parent communities or local elections that utilize rank choice voting, which tends to benefit candidates who are less extreme.[39]

7. Combining a moral narrative with moral action

Americans also need leaders who can convey that while we all have different stories we are also part of the same story, a "story of us"—a story about what it means to be an American that resonates with diverse people across the country.[40] Woven into this narrative should be more thoughtful and consistent talk about the moral values that should guide us.[41] Americans seem to be longing for moral leadership. Seventy-one percent (71%) of respondents in an online survey we conducted in October, 2020 agreed or completely agreed with the statement, "I'm very troubled by the moral state of our country," and only 13% disagreed. The Reverend William Barber, the leader of the Poor People's Campaign, argues that our country needs a "moral defibrillator," a revival of moral principles in our daily lives.

Yet calls to honor moral values are vacuous and are likely to generate cynicism if they are not matched with actions that reflect these values. What may matter most in caring across political, ethnic, and racial divides is when people see community and political leaders from other ethnic, racial and political groups actually listening to them and taking concrete actions that tangibly improve their lives—actions that express care and a commitment to fairness—whether that is providing better jobs, more affordable health care, or more parks and recreational activities. Our interviews over the last couple of years, as well as research from More in Common, indicate powerfully that large numbers of Americans want their political and community leaders to be less focused on the other party and more focused on actions that address their problems.

8. Preparing the next generation

In the long term, strengthening caring will require far more concerted and thoughtful efforts to cultivate it in children and youth. We need to make caring—and caring for those different from oneself—a priority in our schools, homes, and communities and promote it regionally and nationally through, for example, national service for young people. Further, in Making Caring Common's work with scores of schools across the country, we have found that it's the rare school that effectively helps students understand biases—whether based on gender, sexual orientation, economic class, race, or other characteristics—or that equips students to talk constructively across the political divide. Our formal and informal conversations with a wide

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[39] See Politico, 2019.
[40] For example, the Aspen Institute's Citizenship and American Identity Project is currently exploring the question of what it means to be American, and how to promote a shared sense of national identity.
[41] Chong and Druckman (2007) provide a framework for understanding the role of framing language in the construction of political narratives.

variety of parents and caregivers also suggest that these adults tend not to talk to children about biases. Schools and parents need engaging, age-appropriate, racially and culturally attuned resources and activities that generate these types of learning (see "Talking across the aisle in schools" and our recommended resources at the end of this report).

Talking across the aisle in schools

Many educators avoid conversations across political difference because they can be fraught and filled with landmines. Parents and other stakeholders on both sides, for example, worry about "political indoctrination" and can be quick to lash out. Yet students and staff in our Caring Schools Network (CSN), a diverse range of schools across the country, have repeatedly expressed interest in resources that will help them better facilitate these conversations. It's also often possible to create a curriculum for these conversations that has input and buy-in from politically diverse parents and other stakeholders. Schools can, too, access useful resources for preparing students and educators to engage in these difficult conversations as well as resources for discussing bias (see our recommended resources at the end of this report).

Conclusion

Uniting the country and increasing our capacity to care across difference will require work on many other fronts as well. For one, it will be very hard to bridge divides or to restore a shared morality without a shared reality. Establishing that reality will require, among other things, preparing young people to be critical consumers of media and to discern trustworthy news sources and seeking ways to curb the spread of misinformation on social media. Local communities might also consider developing bipartisan truth commissions, composed of widely respected, high-integrity community members, who can weigh in on factual matters. We will also need to act within our own spheres. As one interviewee stated: "We have to work—individually—to unite. Can't just be performative. We each need to decide in our homes, our lives… What's my legacy? Who am I? And then model that for our communities."

Now is not the time for passivity or a retreat from public life. Now is the time to engage in both the easier and the hard forms of caring, types of caring that may be our most promising route out of our precarious, troubling times.

Methodology

Over the past two years, we have conducted several online surveys, conducted about 35 formal individual interviews and have had dozens of informal conversations with Americans in various parts of the country at different stations in life. This section describes the methods behind our interviews and surveys, for which we obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The primary survey data cited in this report was made possible through our partnership with NORC,[42] an independent research institution at the University of Chicago that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Specifically, NORC conducted the nationally representative survey on behalf of Making Caring Common (MCC) using NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel.

AmeriSpeak® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. Randomly selected U.S. households are sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame. These sampled households are then contacted by U.S. mail, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P. O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. While most AmeriSpeak households participate in surveys by web, non-internet households can participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by telephone. Households without conventional internet access but having web access via smartphones are allowed to participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by web. AmeriSpeak Panelists participate in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, media and commercial organizations, and academic researchers.

For the current research, the national survey was conducted in English and by web only, reaching a total of 2,625 U.S.-based adults 18 years and older from the AmeriSpeak® Panel. Our sample was selected from the panel using sampling strata based on age, race/Hispanic ethnicity, education, and gender (48 sampling strata in total). As is standard for NORC's sampling methods, the size of the selected sample per sampling stratum was determined by the population distribution for each stratum. In addition, sample selection took into account expected differential survey completion rates by demographic groups so that the set of panel

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[42] Please visit www.norc.org for more general information, and for more information about the panel, email AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org or visit AmeriSpeak.norc.org.

members with a completed survey was a representative sample of the target population. If a panel household had one more than one active adult panel member, only one adult in the household was eligible for selection (random within-household sampling).

To encourage survey completion for the current study, NORC sent email and SMS text message reminders to sampled web-mode panelists on about 10 separate dates, starting April 6th and ending April 24th, 2021. Panelists were offered the cash equivalent of $3 for completing this survey. NORC then prepared a fully labeled data file of respondent survey data and demographic data for MCC. In total, 125 cases had been removed from the final set of completed surveys based on three cleaning rules: removing speeders (n=102), respondents with high refusal rates (n=36) and straight-liners (n=25).

Statistical weights for the study eligible respondents were calculated using *panel base sampling weights* to start. *Panel base sampling weights* for all sampled housing units are computed as the inverse of probability of selection from the NORC National Frame (the sampling frame that is used to sample housing units for AmeriSpeak) or address-based sample. The sample design and recruitment protocol for the AmeriSpeak Panel involves subsampling of initial non-respondent housing units. These subsampled non-respondent housing units are selected for an in-person follow-up. The subsample of housing units that are selected for the nonresponse follow-up (NRFU) have their panel base sampling weights inflated by the inverse of the subsampling rate. The base sampling weights are further adjusted to account for unknown eligibility and nonresponse among eligible housing units. The household-level nonresponse adjusted weights are then post-stratified to external counts for the number of households obtained from the Current Population Survey. Then, these household-level post-stratified weights are assigned to each eligible adult in every recruited household. Furthermore, a person-level nonresponse adjustment accounts for non-responding adults within a recruited household. Finally, panel weights are raked to external population totals associated with age, sex, education, race/Hispanic ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, and Census Division. The external population totals are obtained from the Current Population Survey. The weights adjusted to the external population totals are the *final panel weights*.

Study-specific base sampling weights are derived using a combination of the final panel weight and the probability of selection associated with the sampled panel member. Since not all sampled panel members respond to the survey interview, an adjustment is needed to account for and adjust for survey non-respondents. This adjustment decreases potential nonresponse bias associated with sampled panel members who did not complete the survey interview for the study. Thus, the *nonresponse adjusted survey weights* for the study are adjusted via a raking ratio method to general population totals associated with the following topline socio-demographic characteristics: age and Census Division, and the following socio-demographic interactions: age x gender, age x race/ethnicity, age x education, and race/ethnicity x gender.

The weights adjusted to the external population totals are the *final study weights*. At the final stage of weighting, any extreme weights were trimmed based on a criterion of minimizing the mean squared error associated with key survey estimates, and then, weights re-raked to the same population totals. Raking and re-raking is done during the weighting process such that the weighted demographic distribution of the survey completes resemble the demographic distribution in the target population. The assumption is that the key survey items are related to the demographics. Therefore, by aligning the survey respondent demographics with the target population, the key survey items should also be in closer alignment with the target population.

Other survey data described in this report came from three online surveys (out of five total) we conducted via Amazon's Mechanical Turk, or Mturk, a fee-for-service survey panel that attracts diverse samples (i.e., Workers) from all over the United States (and other countries). We have described two of these surveys—the online survey conducted in October, 2020 and an earlier survey in July, 2020—in greater detail in previous MCC reports: *Loneliness in America: How the pandemic has deepened an epidemic of loneliness and what we can do about it* and *Bridging America's political divide*, respectively. Following the April, 2021 primary survey disseminated by NORC, we conducted another Mturk survey of U.S.-based adults over 18 years of age in May, 2021 (N=697; 52% men, 14% Black, 71% white).

Finally, the interviews (N=36) we conducted spanned two separate time periods: early 2020 and April through July of 2021. We recruited through various channels, including personal outreach, word-of-mouth, targeted Facebook ads, and our monthly MCC newsletter. Individuals were eligible to participate if they were 18+ years of age, lived in the U.S., and spoke and understood English. Of those eligible and still interested, the final sample was diverse in terms of gender, age, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, community (urban, suburban, rural), and political ideology. All interviews were virtual and semi-structured, such that we asked a consistent set of questions but also allowed for digressions into unanticipated but related content. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes (on average), and most participants consented to their interview being audio-recorded; we then transcribed interviews using Rev.com and two members of the research team reviewed all transcripts for thematic analysis. Each participant received a $20 gift card to thank them for their time.

The first set of interviews (n=18) helped to inform our Mturk surveys, and our second set of interviews (n=18) helped to illuminate and make meaning of the primary survey data (i.e., the survey disseminated by NORC). We asked interviewees, among other topics, about their general attitudes towards those with different political views, their interest in having conversations across difference, and about who is inside and outside their circles of concern. We also asked some of the same "core" primary survey questions to gain deeper understanding about their feelings and perspectives behind their answers. For example, in response to the question, "If you are honest with yourself, how concerned are you about the problems and challenges faced

by each of the following groups in the United States?" it was clear the interviewees generally understood and thought carefully about the question.

Appendix A. What bothers Democrats and Republicans most about people from the other party?

In our primary survey, we asked respondents from either party what bothers them most about people who identify with the other party, and we gave them four possible options and asked them to pick one: *the opposing partisans' policy positions, the opposing partisans' negative attitudes toward them, the hypocritical ways people from the other party lead their lives, and something else.*

Survey respondents tended to emphasize personal characteristics as much, if not more, as policies (see Figure 5). Combined, 59% of Democrats were troubled most by either Republicans' hypocrisy (36%) or their negative attitudes toward Democrats (24%), while 34% were most troubled by Republican policies. Among Republicans, the split between policy and personal criticisms was even: 48% of Republicans reported that Democrats' political positions were what bothered them most, while another 48% emphasized Democrats' hypocrisy (30%) and the negative attitudes Democrats held towards Republicans (18%).

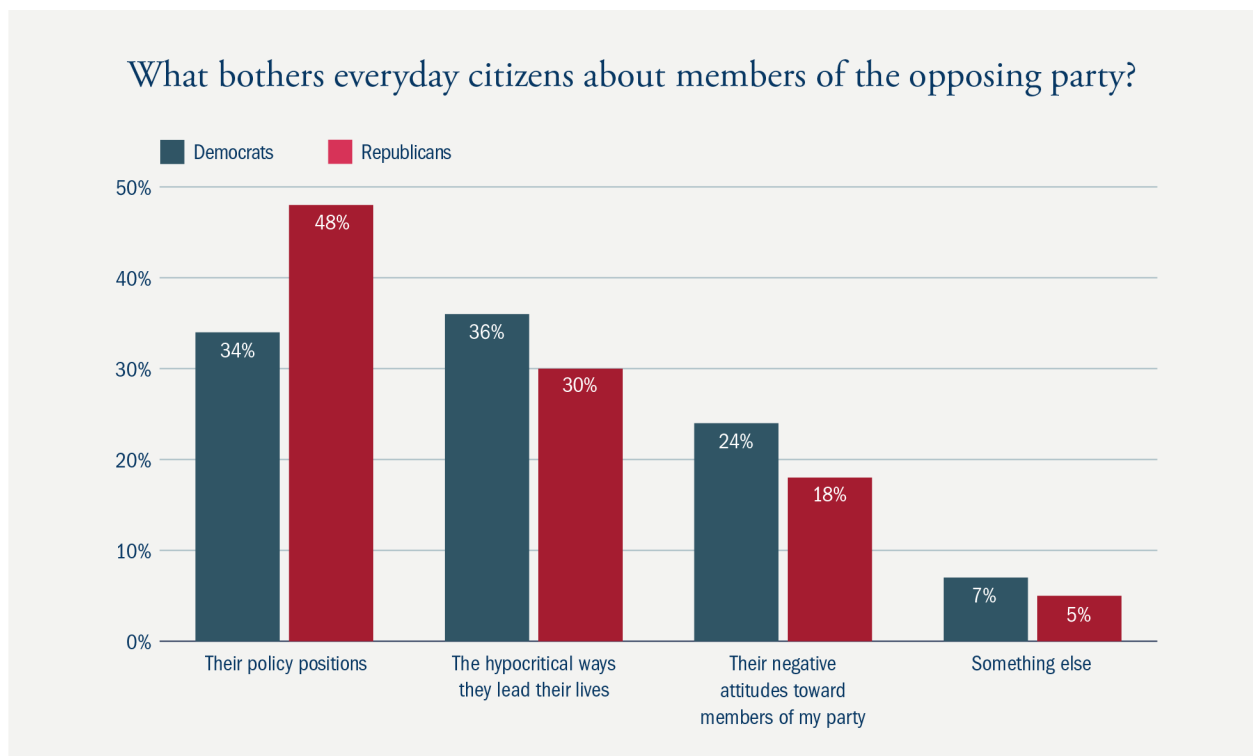*Figure 5.* Responses above were to the question: "Which of the following bothers you the most about [opposing partisans; Democrats/Republicans]?" At the beginning of this section in the survey, we made sure to emphasize that

respondents will be asked about their "general views of Democrats and Republicans as everyday citizens, not political leaders. Percents may not add up to 100% due to rounding by response option.

Appendix B. How concerned are Americans about the problems and challenges faced by different groups of people?

Large numbers of survey respondents did not express high levels of concern for the problems and challenges faced by various groups of people in America. Specifically, we asked, "If you are honest with yourself, how concerned are you about the problems and challenges faced by each of the following groups in the United States? People who identify as …" and we listed several majority and minority groups based on race, religion, gender, immigration status, and political orientation (see Figure 6).

Overall, respondents had the most concern (i.e., they indicated "quite concerned" or "very concerned") for people in America who identify as Black or African American (44%), undocumented immigrants (42%), Asian or Asian American (36%), and women (34%). Less than one-third of respondents indicated feeling quite or very concerned for all remaining groups.
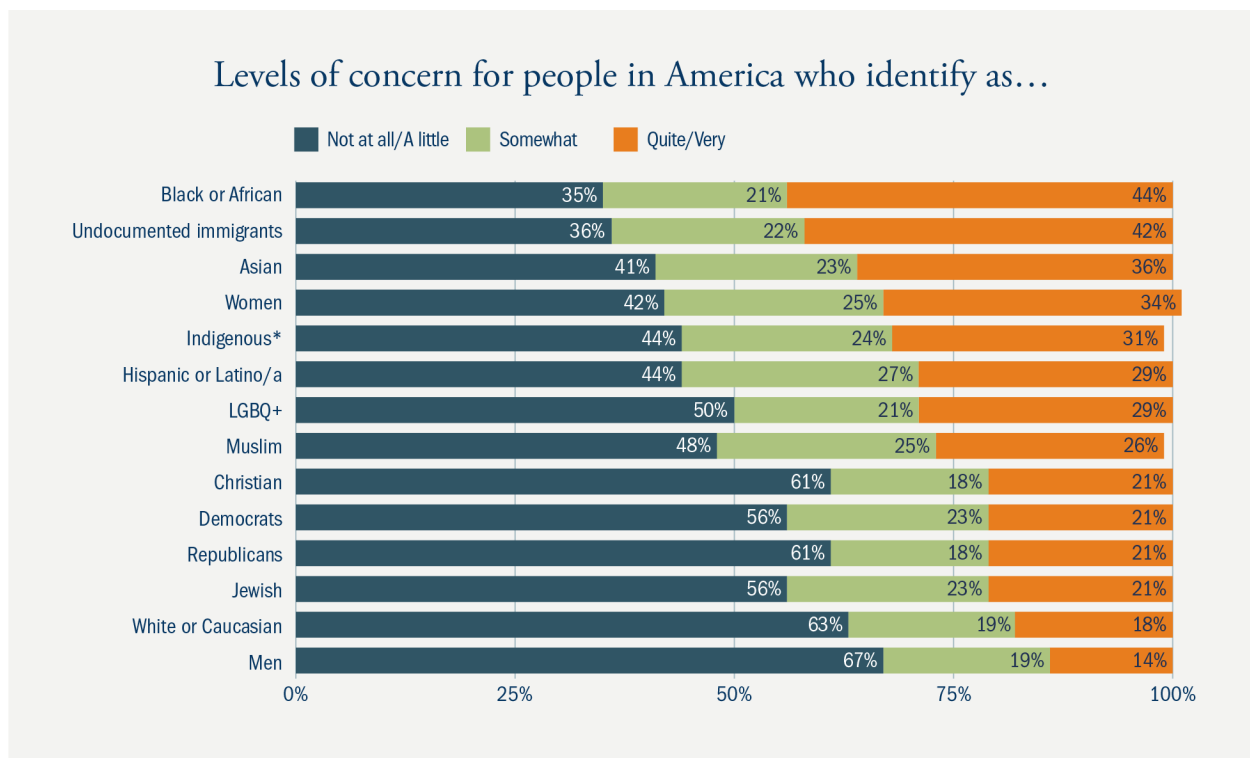

Levels of concern for people in America who identify as…

■ Not at all/A little ■ Somewhat ■ Quite/Very

Group	Not at all/A little	Somewhat	Quite/Very
Black or African	35%	21%	44%
Undocumented immigrants	36%	22%	42%
Asian	41%	23%	36%
Women	42%	25%	34%
Indigenous*	44%	24%	31%
Hispanic or Latino/a	44%	27%	29%
LGBQ+	50%	21%	29%
Muslim	48%	25%	26%
Christian	61%	18%	21%
Democrats	56%	23%	21%
Republicans	61%	18%	21%
Jewish	56%	23%	21%
White or Caucasian	63%	19%	18%
Men	67%	19%	14%

Figure 6. Responses above (the choices have been abbreviated) were to the question: "If you are honest with yourself, how concerned are you about the problems and challenges faced by each of the following groups in the United States? People who identify as…" In the original list, we added "Americans" after each racial and religious group (for example, "Asian or Asian Americans" or "Muslim Americans"). Percents may not add up to 100% due to rounding by response

option. *The full description or response choice for "Indigenous" was: American Indians, Indigenous Americans, or Native Americans.

Appendix C. Recommended norms to guide difficult political conversations

The following norms are drawn from one of our core educator strategies, *Establishing Norms (for grades 6-12),* available to schools as part of our [Caring Schools Network](). Despite their original development for K-12 school classrooms, these norms can be applied to other settings where sensitive or charged issues will be discussed. Shared norms begin to build a foundation for safety within any community by setting expectations and creating accountability.

1. Challenge ideas rather than people.

2. Assume good intentions and "listen generously."

3. Take responsibility for your impact on others in the room.

4. Expect and accept non-closure. If you leave class with questions, it's ok and it's likely.

5. Stay engaged.

6. Try to avoid sweeping generalizations and stereotypes. Remember that there are wide variations within and between races, ethnicities, and economic classes.

7. Consider the diversity of the people in the room and imagine how others in the room might experience your comments.

8. Consider what responsibilities you are asking others to bear. It is not ok, for example, to ask a person to speak on behalf of all members of the community or the group to which they belong.

9. Remember that people have varying levels of familiarity with different topics.

10. Remember that mistakes are normal and are useful learning opportunities in meaningful discussions.

11. Keep mistakes and conflicts among those in the room and seek to work out mistakes and conflicts within the group.

12. Maintain confidentiality of group discussions, especially on sensitive topics; take and share lessons from these discussions, not people's stories.

13. Treat diverse opinions as an opportunity. Challenge yourself to try out new ideas you hear and see how they apply in your life.

14. Seek to constructively engage with views you may disagree with.

15. Aspire to create an ethical community in your group discussions - a community that expects and supports honesty, candor, appreciation, forgiveness, fairness, and deep engagement with challenging questions.

Appendix D. Listening and engaging respectfully across political difference

In our report and in the recommended resources below, we list just some of the hundreds of organizations working to help bridge divides and promote better, more constructive conversations. Better Arguments, for example, provides trainings, practical exercises and other opportunities to help individuals practice their five principles of better arguments: take winning off the table, prioritize relationships and listen passionately, pay attention to context, embrace vulnerability, and make room to transform.[43]

There are also basic principles of human rights and justice that need to guide our exchanges and conversations. The United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR)[44] contains 30 fundamental principles, including that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

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[43] See https://betterarguments.org/our-approach/
[44] See https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

Recommended resources

Our selection or inclusion criteria for a quality resource include the following: 1. seeks to reach a broad base, 2. draws on meaningful evidence, 3. easy to navigate, and 4. the overall mission is related to bringing people together across difference. There are many other quality resources and organizations doing this important work, and we will keep adding to this list as we learn more about them.

Wrestling with our biases

Facing History and Ourselves

The first of two 50-minutes classroom lessons that explore the ways in which biases affect news and information; while this resource is geared towards classrooms, its contents (and related resources on their website) can be applied in a variety of settings where the goals are to understand some of the different types of biases and why people sometimes maintain their beliefs in the face of information that refutes them.

Greater Good Science Center (Magazine)

A resource by Dolly Chugh, who wrote *The person you mean to be: How good people fight bias,* outlining seven practical and research-informed ways to fight bias in your everyday life.

Learning For Justice (formerly known as Teaching Tolerance)

Provides tips and examples for reflecting on our biases; while this resource is geared towards parents, its contents can be generalized into the myriad ways in which our own biases influence how we communicate about valuing (or not valuing) difference.

Making Caring Common

Our free tips, strategies, discussion guides and other resources to help schools address biases, particularly around gender. Some of these have also been adapted for families (see here). We currently provide more in-depth resources for schools part of our Caring Schools Network—so please contact us to learn more and join!

Ongig & their 25 examples of biased language

A platform that provides job descriptions and job-related content for employers and job candidates alike; using their Text Analyzer Software, they detected a number of exclusionary

words which can deter good candidates. Their examples provide easy suggestions for different ways of expression.

Project Implicit

A non-profit organization and international collaborative of researchers who are passionate about educating the public about bias and providing a "virtual laboratory" for collecting data on the Internet. See the various exercises you can take to assess your conscious and unconscious biases from a list of possible topics, like race, weight, and religion.

Engaging across difference: Organizations and initiatives

Better Arguments Project

A national civic initiative with guiding dimensions, principles, and resources designed to encourage better arguments in various settings, including business, education, community, home, faith, and public office.

Braver Angels

A citizens' organization dedicated to bringing people together across political difference through debates, skills training, workshops and opportunities for building alliances.

Essential Partners

Cambridge-based organization that helps civic groups, faith communities, colleges, and organizations build resilience, cohesion, and trust across deep divides of values, beliefs, and identities.

Greater Good Science Center: Bridging Differences

An GGSC initiative that combines science and storytelling to help address cultural and political polarization through a variety of resources, including articles, videos, podcasts, a playbook (see below), online courses, and more.

ListenFirst Project

A movement to heal America by providing tips and opportunities to join campaigns that collectively offer hundreds of bridging opportunities, skills, and resources. Their #ListenFirst Coalition comprises a network of 325+ organizations (local, state, and national) working together to mend our frayed social fabric by building relationships and bridging divides.

Living Room Conversations

An open source project offering a suite of conversation guides and opportunities to connect with or facilitate connections between people despite their differences.

Millions of Conversations

An organization that seeks to promote positivity and inclusion by means of combating disinformation, stereotypes and bigotry on- and offline.

More in Common

An organization that conducts research and tests on-the-ground initiatives to build more united, inclusive and resilient societies in which people believe that what they have in common is stronger than what divides them.

National Conversation Project

A collaborative platform that aggregates, aligns, and amplifies the efforts of the #ListenFirst Coalition (see above) to mainstream conversations in which we #ListenFirst to understand people across difference.

National Institute for Civil Discourse

An institute based at the University of Arizona that offers a number of programs (e.g., Common Sense America) to engage constructive conversation across the political divide.

One America Movement

A national nonprofit that works with faith communities to confront division and solve problems across political, racial, and religious divides.

Over Zero

An organization founded in response to the global need to counteract and prevent identity-based violence and other forms of group-targeted harm; their programming is focused on the United States, Central Europe, and East Africa, as well as engagement with the wider atrocity prevention field.

Resetting the Table

An organization that collaborates with strategic partners to equip community leaders with the tools and skills they need for courageous communication across political siloes within and across communities.

StoryCorps' One Small Step

An initiative committed to undoing the narrative of "us" versus "them" and remembering our shared humanity by empowering people across divides to record interviews with each other.

The Village Square

An initiative seeking to innovate democracy by building communities with strong and deep relationships that engage in open and constructive dialogue.

The People's Supper

An organization that provides tools, resources, and storytelling content that anyone anywhere can apply and adapt to their own communities, the goal being to build trust and connection among people of different identities and perspectives.

Weave: The Social Fabric Project

A program of the Aspen Institute whereby ordinary citizens join as "Weavers" to repair the country's social fabric through relationship-building.

Zeidler Group

A nonprofit dedicated to helping people have difficult conversations through professional facilitation, team building, strategic planning and community engagement services, and working with organizations, neighborhoods, businesses and faith communities across a range of issues.

Engaging across difference: Digital tools and media

A Starting Point

A video-based civic engagement platform that aims to create a bipartisan channel of communication and connection between Americans and their elected officials, the goal being to develop a more informed electorate. *Fun fact:* one of its creators is Chris Evans, also known as one of our favorite superheroes, Captain America!

Kialo & Mismatch

Online platforms for structured debates.

Middle Ground Series

Videos of structured discussions of people of different political beliefs.

OpenMind

A psychology-based interactive platform that fosters openness to diverse perspectives and equips people (across campuses, companies, organizations, and communities) with essential skills to communicate constructively across differences. *Fun Fact:* one of its co-founders is Jonathan Haidt, renowned professor and social psychologist who wrote the New York Times bestseller, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (2012).

ProCon.org

Website with arguments for and against a variety of debatable issues.

thechisel.com

An easy-to-use tool to engage in public policy-making with experts from nonpartisan organizations and bipartisan coalitions.

Willer TED Talk

On how to be more persuasive and less divisive in political conversations.

Engaging across difference: education resources, curriculum, activities

All Sides for Schools

A joint nonprofit initiative of AllSides (addresses news literacy and media bias), Living Room Conversations (see above) and the Mediators foundation (fiscal sponsor) comprising resources, classroom activities, and lesson plans to encourage critical thinking and constructive discussions across ideological differences.

American Exchange Project

A domestic exchange program that allows American high school students to study abroad in their own country, the goal being to build enduring respect and understanding across economic, political, and geographic divides.

Common Sense Media

Repository of award-winning lesson plans and interactive games for effective digital citizenship (K-12).

Facing History and Ourselves

Repository of online resources, frameworks, and professional development opportunities on a variety of topics including democracy and civic engagement, race in US history, justice and human rights, bullying and ostracism, and global immigration.

Greater Good Science Center's *Bridging Differences Playbook*

A compendium of research-based strategies to promote positive dialogue and understanding across differences.

Harvard Bok Center

Resource providing guidance on inclusive teaching moves and addressing hot moments in difficult conversations.

Harvard Graduate School of Education's *Instructional Moves*

A project to help educators incorporate and refine their teaching practices tailored to the higher education context. Modules include "Building Community" and "Facilitating Discussions," with spotlights on specific topics like inviting students to take a stand and disagree.

Learning for Justice (formerly known as Teaching Tolerance)

Repository of online resources, frameworks, and professional development opportunities to educate and empower youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy.

Making Caring Common

We conduct and use research to develop and provide resources that enable children to care about others and the common good. Explore our educator, family, and college resources! You can also join our Caring Schools Network for more support and resources.

Quandary

An engaging, free computer game that helps students develop skills related to reasoning, evidence-seeking, and argumentation.

Vanderbilt Center for Teaching

Resource providing guidance on norm-setting and addressing hot moments in difficult conversations.

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