Perceptions of Social Support in Response to Racism: Consequences of White People Validating Versus Reframing Racial Discrimination

by

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A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfillment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Psychology

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2022

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

People of color (POC) commonly experience racism, yet little research examines how POC wish to be supported after instances of discrimination. This research draws on close relationship and intergroup relations literature to theorize which types of social support are perceived as more responsive. In past experimental work (Jansen, Kwok, Ashcroft, Marigold, & Bergsieker, in prep.), White people intended to give negative validation (acknowledging difficulty) more than positive reframing (downplaying negatives) after reading about racial discrimination experiences. The current experiments (N = 435) examine how such responses are received by POC (and Whites). Participants (270 POC, 165 White) viewed realistic Facebook posts where POC shared racial discrimination versus non-racial negative experiences, then rated the supportiveness of validating, reframing, and claimed understanding responses from Whites. POC (and Whites) rated negative validation and claimed understanding as more supportive than positive reframing, especially for reactions to racial (vs. non-racial) experiences. In the racial experience condition, negative validation was perceived more supportive (overall and relative to positive reframing) when participants more strongly attributed the experience to race. Implications for how White people can provide more responsive support to POC who disclose racism are discussed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr. Hilary Bergsieker, for all her support, patience, and precision. I would also like to thank my collaborators Erik Jansen, Sherman Kwok, and Denise Marigold for laying the groundwork of this project and providing their own respective expertise. I also thank my readers, Dr. Richard Eibach and Dr. Ramona Bobocel, for their time and insights on this work!

Finally, I would especially like to thank my friends, family, and community for supporting me through a tough two years in both graduate school and a global pandemic. To my new friends and colleagues in Kitchener-Waterloo to my long-time friends in Winnipeg, thank you for holding space for me! To my family, gracias por tu amor y apoyo! And to my community, thank you for making me who I am and guiding my research endeavors.

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Introduction

Imagine your colleague discloses a recent experience of discriminatory treatment based on their race. How would you respond? How could you best support your colleague? Despite your best intentions, your response may not always be well-received by a colleague who has experienced racial discrimination. Racism is an ever-present reality for people of colour (POC), yet psychology research lacks empirical studies on which types of social support responses are perceived as helpful for POC who have disclosed racial discrimination experience to others. Racism is conceptualized as multifaceted in the social sciences, expressed across "visible" (e.g., overt, blatant, explicit) and "invisible" (e.g., covert, aversive, implicit) dimensions, as well as manifesting at institutional, structural, and systemic levels, not just individual and interpersonal levels. The focus of this thesis, however, is on the interpersonal dynamics of "everyday" racism, which often falls between the two extremities (e.g., not too subtle like microaggressions, not too extreme like hate crimes) that are often contrasted in social psychology research. As well, we will focus on intergroup dynamics using a relational approach (Shelton & Richeson, 2006), incorporating perspectives of multiple groups who may be positioned as "perpetrators" or "targets" of racism and focusing on how they interact.

Despite its seemingly innocuous name, "everyday" racism has cumulative negative consequences for the physical and mental health of communities of colour (Carter, 2009; Pascoe & Smart Richmond 2009; Levula, Harre, & Wilson, 2017). However, social support networks can "buffer" the negative consequence of racial discrimination on mental health and well-being of POC (Steers et al., 2019). Within communities of colour, social support in response to racism comes with the lived experience and shared understanding of the realities of navigating a racist society. POC often share their personal experiences with racism to their social network to

alleviate racial stress and trauma (Feagin and Sikes, 1994; Carter, 2009). However, social support networks that include both in-group (POC) and out-group (Whites) members can complicate social support attempts. Racial out-group members, and especially White people, may have a limited personal understanding of how racism affects a given group. Although White individuals can experience oppression because of other dimensions of their identity (sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ableism, etc.), whiteness often affords privileges denied to POC and mitigates against barriers that POC often face. Although White people may want to help POC in their social support network, intergroup interactions are generally susceptible to misunderstandings and divergent perceptions (Shelton & Richeson, 2006; Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010). Even "well-intentioned" members of the White majority group often overestimate how much they understand their POC interaction partners (Holoien et al., 2015), while unsurprisingly, POC individuals feel misunderstood. These misunderstandings lead to lower-quality interactions in live (Bergsieker et al., 2010) and anticipated (Holoien et al., 2015; Holoien, 2016) interactions.

Furthermore, another source of divergence between POC and White who may occupy the same social support network is differences in early race socialization. Families of colour often socialize their children using a race conscious approach, such that children of colour are taught to understand their own racial/ethnic identity and strategies on how to cope with the inevitable reality of racial discrimination (Abaied & Perry, 2020; Hughes et al., 2006). In contrast, White parents often use a colour-blind approach to interracial interactions, teaching White children to downplay the role of race and embrace "egalitarianism" (Abaied & Perry, 2021; Hughes et al., 2006; Plaut et al., 2018). Although the colour-blind approach to socialization is well-intentioned, this seemingly egalitarian perspective can lead to providing responses that are unsupportive, or

even damaging (minimizing or invalidating hurt feelings, denying racism). Together, divergent perceptions and differences in race socialization can lead to awkward interracial interactions that may otherwise be beneficial to both parties. In fact, cross-race friendship provide opportunities for closeness and a deeper understanding of racial dynamics, but conversations about race are sometimes averted because they can be uncomfortable, even "threatening" (Sanchez, Kalkstein, & Walton, 2022). Furthermore, White people are often well-positioned to provide resources and use their power to help support POC within their social network, but good intentions and willingness to help is not enough to providing appropriate and helpful social support to POC colleagues. As such, this study will draw upon close relationship research on social support provision to investigate how different types of social support are perceived when White people respond to a racial discrimination disclosure.

Past empirical work by Jansen and colleagues (in prep.) examined which type of support White people tended to give in response to a POC sharing a racial discrimination versus non-racial negative experience (Jansen, Ashcroft, & Bergsieker, 2022). Using a close relationship framework (Marigold et al., 2017), social support was coded into three categories: (1) positive reframing—downplaying a negative experience and casting this experience in terms of opportunities for growth or "silver linings" (e.g., "it's not so bad if you think about it this way"), (2) negative validation—legitimating negative feelings as an appropriate response to an aversive experience (e.g., "this must be terrible, I am so sorry,") and (3) claimed understanding—assuming one can 'relate' to that experience (e.g., "I know exactly what you mean"; Holoien et al., 2015; Marigold et al., 2017). Across four experiments, White participants claimed to provide high levels of negative validation (relative to other forms of social support) when a Black person shared an experience of racial discrimination (Jansen et al., in prep; Jansen, Ashcroft, &

Bergsieker, 2022). However, when this support was provided to a Black confederate disclosing a racial discrimination (vs. non-racial negative) experience, perceptions of White participants and their Black conversation partners diverged significantly. Black conversation partners reported receiving less negative validation from participants when disclosing discrimination compared to negative non-racial experiences, whereas participants said they intended to provide comparable negative validation in both conditions (Jansen et al, in prep). These discrepant perceptions highlight a potentially critical gap between Whites' efforts and reality (i.e., wanting to help vs. truly helping), underscoring the need for establishing which types of social support are perceived as helpful in responses to racial discrimination.

Overview of Present Research

To summarize, the main research question that this study seeks to answer is which forms of social support from White people are seen as helpful in response to POC sharing an "everyday" experience of racism. Specifically, how do people perceive Whites attempts at negative validation, positive reframing, and claimed understanding in the context of racial vs non-racial disclosures? Do White people provide specific type of social support to POC vs White people? How do attributions about the disclosed experience influence perceptions of support responses?

To answer such questions, I report two experiments that vary disclosure type (non-racial vs racial), discloser's race (White vs. POC), and social support response (positive reframing, negative validation, and claimed understanding) to test what type of support responses are seen as helpful when White people try to support POC who disclose racial discrimination. Varying disclosure type will test how White people's response to racial vs non-racial scenarios are perceived. Varying discloser's race will test whether people expect White people to have

differential responses to White vs POC support recipient. Together, disclosure type and discloser's race will disentangle how observers view White people's response to POC in general versus POC who specifically disclose an experience of racism. As well, variations by discloser race and disclosure type tests how people perceive Whites' support to other Whites in general (i.e., after non-racial negative disclosures).

Furthermore, I examine whether White versus POC observers make similar attributions about the discloser and disclosure type. Participants' attributions for situations are important to consider when people offer support because attributions offer insight into why support providers think the support recipient was upset. As highlighted by attribution theory, people can make a range of dispositional/internal versus situational/external attributions (Kelly, 1967). Individuals' ability to recognize and differentiate appropriate, effective social support for disclosures of racial (vs. non-racial) negative experiences may critically depend on first attributing these experiences to race. In this study, I examine how attributions about the disclosed experience (discloser's race, discloser's personality, bad luck, other people's incompetence, other factors about the situation) influence perceptions of support responses.

Next, an integrative analysis pooling data across these experiments probes underlying mechanisms for emerging patterns about support perceptions. For instance, do perceptions of support responses vary by underlying responsiveness dimensions (understanding, validation, caring)? How are different attributions about the disclosed experience related? How do attributions, specifically race attributions for racial scenario, moderate support perceptions? Which individual differences moderate support perceptions? How do both individual differences predict the type of attribution people make? The following sections will explore social support perceptions and test underlying factors that may explain emerging patterns.

Study 1

In this study, we aim to examine perceptions of social support in the context of racial discrimination. Specifically, we examined how third-party observers perceive social support provision from a white person after an instance of racial discrimination was disclosed by a person of colour (POC). A 3 (disclosure condition: White non-racial, POC non-racial, POC discrimination) x 4 (social support type: negative validation, positive reframing, claimed understanding, filler) fully within-participant design was conducted to measure participants' perception of supportiveness across racial and non-racial scenarios. The scenarios were incidents in which a discloser posted about a negative experience on Facebook, while comments of support were exchanged in the comment section of the post. Scenario conditions varied by race of the discloser (White, East Asian, or Black) and content of the disclosure (generic negative experience or racial discrimination experience). Generic negative experiences (e.g., being stuck in traffic) were meant to convey a common "everyday" experience, while the discrimination experiences (e.g., differential treatment at a restaurant) were meant to convey an instance of "everyday" discrimination that is obvious (e.g., not subtle or ambiguous discrimination) yet not extreme (e.g., blatant discrimination such as a hate crime). Discrimination scenarios were always disclosed by a POC because we were interested in racial discrimination, although we acknowledge other types of discrimination (sexism, homophobia, transphobia, antisemitism, classism, etc.).

Depending on the content of the scenario (racial discrimination vs generic negative experience), we expect participants' perception of supportiveness for each comment to shift depending on whether the support provision is in response to discrimination or generic negative experience. Past close relationship research on support provision (Marigold et al., 2014) found

that positive reframing was perceived as especially unhelpful in response to negative experiences being disclosed. We predict that positive reframing will be especially harmful in the context of racial discrimination being disclosed, especially because positive reframing contains elements of minimizing the situation. In contrast, negative validation was perceived as more helpful than positive reframing when responding to generic negative non-racial experiences. We expect negative validation responses to be seen as helpful across scenarios, regardless of racial context. Based on Marigold et al. (2014), negative validation contains elements of empathy, such that empathetic responses tend to be well-received after negative events in general. Based on research in the intergroup relations domain (Holoien, 2016), we expect social support responses that include claimed understanding to be perceived as less helpful than other types of response such as negative validation, given that the former is coming from a White person claiming to understanding racial discrimination. Holoien (2016) finds that White people- despite lacking personal experience on the receiving end of racial discrimination— tend to overestimate what it is like to be the targets of racism, more than what POC perceive them to understand racism. This discrepancy between perceived and actual understanding may lead to issues when it comes to providing supportive responses to discrimination, such that White people think they are being more supportive than they actually are from the perspective of POC. To summarize, we predict that POC observers will perceive negative validation as more supportive than positive reframing and claimed understanding, especially in the context of White people responding to racial discrimination disclosures from POC.

Method

Participants

A total of 306 participants were recruited for partial course credit between July and September 2019. Analyses excluded 37 participants for failing the memory check (i.e., remembering only half the targets or less, *n = 27)*, completing the survey in less than half the median survey time (unless they also had a perfect memory check; *n = 9)*, or leaving over half the outcome measure blank (*n = 1)*. The 269 participants in the final sample self-identified as White (39%), East Asian (28%), South Asian (20%), Black/African (6%), Middle Eastern (2%), Hispanic/Latino (1%), Indigenous (1%), or another identity (3%). Non-White participants were aggregated into a POC category (*n* = 164; 61%) to create adequate subgroup size comparisons.

This sample was 81% women and 19% men with a median age of 20 years (*SD* = 3.4). On a scale from 1 (*very liberal*) to 5 (*very conservative*), the mean political orientation for this sample was 3.3 (*SD* = 1.4).

Procedure

Participants were told this study was about how people provide support to individuals who share negative experiences online. Once consent was given, participants were asked about their social media habits to bolster the cover story about investigating online behaviour. Participants were told that they would be asked to view cached Facebook posts by different individuals (henceforth "disclosers") who shared a "bad day" and then evaluate the responses people gave in the comment section of the Facebook posts. Each participant viewed three posts—corresponding to the three disclosure conditions—in the same sequence: one non-racial negative experiences disclosed by a White person, one non-racial negative experience disclosed by either a Black or East Asian person, followed by one racial discrimination experience

disclosed by either an East Asian or Black person (see Appendix A). The sequence was held constant to reduce suspicion that this study investigated interracial interactions and responses to discrimination.

The race of the disclosers was conveyed via profile pictures (e.g., prototypical racial appearance such as skin tone and facial features) and names displayed: Connor Wellington and Jessica McNeil (White), De-Andre Williams and Michelle Johnson (Black), Hao-Ran Chen and Tae Kyo Lee (East Asian). Participants and disclosers were gender matched to rule out any within-participant gender effects.

Under each Facebook post were five comments displayed simultaneously (see Appendix A) in a fixed order, with order of comment types randomized across posts. The comment types were filler (control), negative validation, positive reframing, and claimed understanding. We used two filler comments to make the posts look realistic, but the filler comments were then collapsed as the same comment type in the analyses. The comments are displayed in Table 1.

After reading the disclosure post (e.g., a White person disclosing a negative non-racial scenario, a POC disclosing a negative non-racial scenario, and a POC disclosing a racial discrimination scenario) and the overall comment section under each post (e.g., three White commentors providing negative validation, positive reframing, and claimed understanding each, two POC commenters providing a filler comment each), participants rated the perceived supportiveness of each comment. Participants rated a total of five comments per disclosure post, totaling fifteen comments (see Appendix B). Each comment was rated one at a time ("COMMENT 1 OF 5: Please consider the following reply to this post."). Next, participants completed measures on potential moderators (refer to material section below) and demographic background (race/ethnicity, gender, age). Participants were then debriefed.

Materials

Scenarios. The posts described six scenarios (half non-racial, half racial discrimination) taken from a previous study in which students described their own experiences with racial discrimination or other negative experiences unrelated to discrimination (Carter & Murphy, 2017). Each participant viewed two of three possible non-racial negative scenarios and one of three possible racial discrimination scenarios. The three non-racial negative scenarios were: getting stuck in traffic (viewed by n = 59), a professor belittling the students still writing an exam (n = 59), and a group of coworkers receiving rude comments from a manager (n = 61). The three racial discrimination experiences described differential treatment at a McDonalds (n = 40), coffee shop (n = 30), or a restaurant (n = 29).

Comments. The social support comments included in this study were gathered from a related line of research by Jansen et al. (2022) on White peoples' spontaneous social support comments to these same six scenarios. In this previous study, comments were collected in the context of cached Facebook posts, where participants were asked how they would respond if their friend posted a negative experience. Comments were coded for the degree to which they provided three forms of social support (negative validation, positive reframing, claimed understanding) from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Participants were also asked— after providing a response to all six scenarios— to re-read each of their previous comments and rate how much support of each type they had attempted to provide. Comments were rated by trained coders as high in the specified types of social support were selected to be included in the study. The comments for each scenario are shown in Table 1. The focal social support comments were provided by White individuals (conveyed via profile pictures and names), with filler comments provided by Latino and Middle Eastern individuals, both to avoid arousing suspicion about the

likelihood of a Black or East Asian Facebook user receiving reactions from only White friends and to focus on cross-race interactions as opposed to same-race interactions.

Table 1

Social Support Comments by Scenario Number

	Comment type			
#	Negative validation	Positive reframing	Claimed understanding	Filler
1	This is honestly unfair and I'm sorry you had to go through this. I believe in you.	The prof is just trying to mess with you. As long as you put your best effort forth then you will do just fine.	My prof did that to me too so I know how you feel. You can not judge how well a person performed on the test based on how long they took to complete it.	Wow Oh my gosh
2	That sucks! Being stuck in traffic is the worst, especially when you have somewhere to be.	These kinds of things happen everyday, it does no good for you to be frustrated.	Oh, my gosh yes I know! I have been there! all you can do then is just blast some awesome music!	Ugh :O (emoji)
3	I am so sorry to hear about that. That is very strange that they wouldn't offer you details. Please feel free to message me if there is something I can help.	Don't worry about it! Maybe the Assistant Managers got crapped on by their manager and needed to crap on some other people.	I had the same situation at my job. Clarity would've been nice there too. I get why you're so frustrated.	OMG Yikes
4	Wow that's horrible. That is so unprofessional and no one should be discriminated against! I'm really sorry that they did that to you and your cousins!	Having worked fast food before, don't take things at face value. If she really had a problem with you, that's her problem.	I know exactly what you mean. It seems like every time I go to one of these places, I get treated poorly in some way, so I get why you're feeling down about it!	What?! OMG
5	This really sucks L I'm so sorry ignorant people had to ruin your night!	Just go where the service is best. For example, I eat at this brunch place where they serve such great food, and their service is incredible.	I have literally had experiences just like that, it sucks. I feel your annoyance.	Oh no :'((emoji)

6	Honestly so annoying! Treat people the way you want to be treated. Shocking that the lady totally disregarded you and I'm sorry that happened!	Maybe it was just your perception of the event? I wouldn't take it personally :)	I can relate to that. I would be so annoyed too if someone blatantly did that to me.	Strange >:((emoji)

Note. Scenarios: 1 = Exam, 2 = Traffic, 3 = Manager, 4 = McDonalds. 5 = Coffee shop, 6 = Restaurant. The two filler responses for each scenario are listed in the same column for concision.

Outcome measures

Support. Perceived supportiveness was measured using 8 items (α = .92, estimated across all scenarios and comments). Participants were asked to rate how each comment would make them feel (e.g., "supported"; "like this person cared about me"; "like this person intended to make me feel good") from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*).

Scenario Attributions. Five separate items captured participants' potential attributions about each disclosed scenario from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Specifically, participants were asked: "To what extent do you believe this experience is due to…[his/her] race; [his/her] personality/social skills; bad luck/random chance; others' incompetence; other aspects of the situation."

Potential moderators

Additional individual difference measures were included to probe any significant main effects and interactions. Measures pertained to the participants' relationship and communication style, personality, prejudice motives, and social media habits. These measurements were chosen based on close relationship research on attachment style and self-esteem (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Marigold et al., 2014) as well as intergroup relation research on internal vs external motives to avoid prejudice (Butz & Plant, 2009; Devine, Brodish, & Vance, 2005). However, results for these measures were analyzed in the Integrative Analysis section.

Data Quality Checks

To screen for inattentive or careless responding, participants were asked to match each discloser to the scenario they shared (e.g., "Please indicate which individual shared each Facebook post below.") and rate their engagement ("How engaged were you during this study?" 1 = *not at all*, 4 = *very*).

Results

Analytic Approach

Multi-level modeling (MLM) and dummy coding was used to investigate the effects of disclosure type (non-racial negative vs discrimination), race of the discloser (POC vs. White), and its interaction with comment type (negative validation, positive reframing, claimed understanding, and filler). MLM was used because we collected multiple observations from the same participant (15 data points per person), so the data were not fully independent and instead clustered. Dummy coding was used to make unconfounded comparisons based on disclosure type (racial = 1 vs. non-racial = 0) and discloser race (White = 1 vs. POC = 0). Thus, the disclosure condition reference group for initial models was POC sharing a non-racial negative experience (POC/non-racial). This model was chosen to compare the differences by race of discloser (White vs POC) and type of disclosure (racial vs non-racial). Follow-up models then shifted the reference group as needed (using revised dummy codes) to probe simple effects in other disclosure conditions. As well, for comment type positive reframing comments was chosen as a reference group to enable not only the primary comparison with negative validation but also secondary comparisons with filler comments (and claimed understanding). Social support ratings and scenario attributions were normally distributed ($|skew| < 3$, $|kurtosis| < 10$; Kline, 1998). See Table 2 for descriptive statistics.

Table 2

Scenario Attributions and Comment Supportiveness by Disclosure Condition (Study 1)

	Disclosure Condition			
Outcome	White/non-racial	POC/non-racial	POC/racial	Total
Attribution				
Race	1.21 (0.67)	1.35 (0.80)	3.15 (1.36)	1.91 (1.33)
Personality	1.79 (1.01)	1.68 (0.94)	1.86 (0.99)	1.78 (0.99)
Luck	2.95 (1.36)	2.97 (1.31)	2.63 (1.14)	2.85 (1.28)
Others' incompetence	2.82 (1.23)	2.76 (1.28)	3.53 (1.21)	3.04 (1.29)
Other factors	3.28 (1.12)	3.21 (1.07)	2.96 (1.13)	3.15 (1.12)
Rated Supportiveness				
Negative validation	6.04 (0.91)	5.99 (0.85)	5.98 (0.96)	6.00 (0.91)
Positive reframing	4.46 (1.57)	4.44 (1.66)	3.43 (1.38)	4.11 (1.61)
Claimed understanding	5.98 (0.94)	5.89 (0.90)	5.70 (1.06)	5.86 (0.98)
Filler	3.51 (1.06)	3.61 (1.01)	3.67 (1.10)	3.60 (1.06)

Scenario Attributions

As expected, attributions varied greatly by disclosure type. When POC disclosed racial discrimination experiences, as opposed to non-racial negative experiences, participants made stronger attributions to the discloser's race, $b = 1.80$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(432) = 18.71$, $p < .001$, others' incompetence, $b = 0.77$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(532) = 7.18$, $p < .001$, and—to a much lesser extent—the discloser's personality, $b = 0.18$, $SE = 0.08$, $t(532) = 2.19$, $p = .029$. Conversely, they made weaker attributions to bad luck, $b = -0.34$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(525) = -3.20$, $p = .001$, and other situational factors, $b = -0.24$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(533) = -2.55$, $p = .011$.

Discloser race influenced fewer attributions (with smaller effect sizes). Participants attributed negative non-racial disclosures from White (vs. POC) disclosers less strongly to race, $b = -0.14$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(516) = -2.21$, $p = .027$. Attributions to personality, $b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(531) = 1.28$, $p = .201$, bad luck, $b = -0.02$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(533) = -0.16$, $p = .871$, others' incompetence, $b =$

0.06, *SE* = 0.11, *t*(533) = 0.52, *p* = .606, and other situational factors, *b* = 0.08, *SE* = 0.10, *t*(533) = 0.83, *p* = .409, did not differ based on discloser's race.

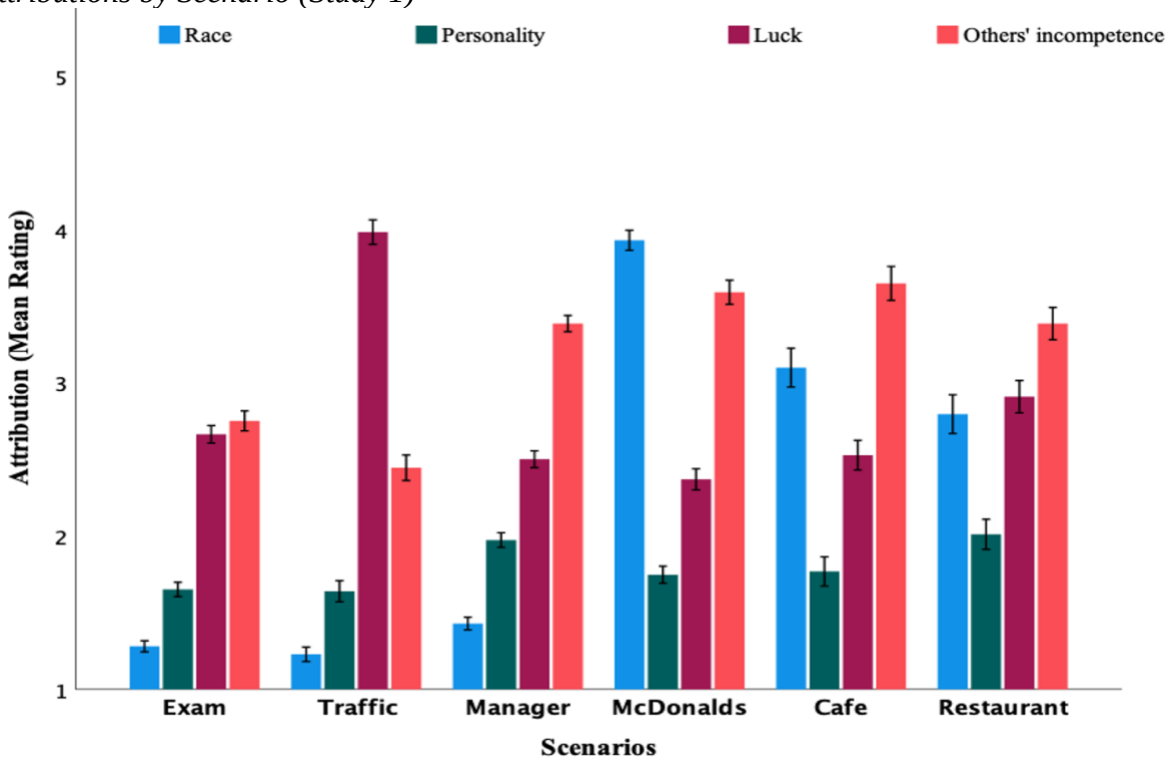
Race Attributions by Scenario. To identify which racial versus non-racial scenarios most clearly diverged on attributions to race, while maintaining maximal consistency across the other attributions, we tested post-hoc comparisons across the six specific scenarios, with a Bonferroni correction to limit familywise Type I error. These comparisons confirmed that participants made stronger attributions to the discloser's race for all three racial discrimination scenarios than the non-racial scenarios (all *p*s < .001) and that race attributions did not differ among the non-racial exam, traffic, and manager scenarios (all *p*s > .99). Among the racial scenarios, the cafe scenario did not significantly differ from the McDonald's and restaurant scenarios (*p*s > .300). However, participants gave higher race attributions to the McDonald's scenario than the restaurant scenario (*p* = .002). In other words, the McDonald's scenario elicited higher attributions to race than the exam, traffic, manager, and restaurant scenario (*p* > .001), but had similar ratings to the cafe scenario (*p* = .301; see Figure 1).

Personality Attributions by Scenario. For attribution to the discloser's personality and social skills, there was more variation across racial and non-racial scenarios. Among the non-racial scenarios, participants rated the manager scenario higher on personality attribution than the exam and traffic scenario (*p* > .05), and comparably to the racial scenarios (*p*s > .99), such that the manager scenario elicited similar personality attributions to the McDonald's, cafe, and restaurant scenario. For the racial scenarios, personality attribution did not differ (*p*s > .99). However, the restaurant scenario had higher personality attributions than the exam scenario (*p* = .008) and trending significance for the traffic scenario (*p* = .088). To summarize, among the non-racial scenarios, the manager scenario elicited the highest personality attributions. Among the

racial scenarios, the restaurant scenario had the highest person attribution. The manager and restaurant scenario had similar attributions due to personality ($p > .99$).

Figure 1

Attributions by Scenario (Study 1)



Note. Error bars represent ± 1 *SE*. Attribution to other situational factors was dropped from the graph to increase readability.

Other Attributions by Scenario. For attributions due to luck, the traffic scenario was rated as the most unlucky, more so than all other scenarios (ps < .001). The only other difference was that participants perceived the restaurant scenario to be more unlucky than the manager scenario (p = .002). The restaurant scenario did not differ from the other racial scenarios (ps > .99). In sum, participants made the strongest luck attributions to the traffic scenario, thus setting it apart from the other scenarios.

For attribution due to others' incompetence, traffic had the lowest rating and differed from all other posts (*p*s < .001), except for the exam scenario ($p > .99$). Participants made

significantly weaker attribution due to others' incompetence in the exam scenario compared to the manager, Mcdonald's, cafe, and restaurant scenario (*p*s < .001). No other differences were significant (*p*s > .100). To summarize, participants blamed others' incompetence the least in the traffic and exam scenario, and the most in the service industry job scenarios (McDonald's, restaurant, cafe, manager).

For attributions due to other aspects of the situation, there were significant differences only among the manager, McDonald's, and cafe scenario. Specifically, participants made stronger situational attributions for the manager scenario compared to the McDonald's and cafe scenario (*p*s < .05). The difference in situational attribution ratings between manager, McDonald's, and cafe scenario suggests that the manager scenario was perhaps more vague or multidetermined compared to the two racial scenarios with the highest race attribution.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Attributions and Scenarios (Study 1)

	Post Type					
Non-racial	Racial					
	Exam	Traffic	Manager	McDonalds	Café	Restaurant
Attribution	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
Race	1.25 (0.05)	1.23 (0.05)	1.36 (0.06)	3.56 (0.14)	3.10 (0.14)	2.80 (0.14)
Personality	1.56 (0.07)	1.64 (0.08)	1.99 (0.07)	1.81 (0.10)	1.77 (0.11)	2.01 (0.11)
Luck	2.59 (0.08)	3.97 (0.09)	2.35 (0.08)	2.46 (0.13)	2.53 (0.11)	2.91 (0.12)
Others' incompetence	2.58 (0.10)	2.44 (0.09)	3.33(0.08)	3.56 (0.14)	3.65 (0.12)	3.39 (0.12)
Other factors	3.19 (0.08)	3.13 (0.09)	3.41 (0.08)	2.88 (0.13)	2.91 (0.11)	3.10 (0.12)

Scenario Attribution Summary. To summarize, participants made stronger attributions due to discloser's race for the racial discrimination scenarios (vs. negative non-racial scenarios), validating the manipulation check. Additionally, participants gave the highest race attribution to

the McDonald's scenario (see Figure 1). The traffic scenario stood out from the others as mostly caused by bad luck, while the service industry scenarios (McDonald's, restaurant, cafe, manager) were strongly blamed on others' incompetence.

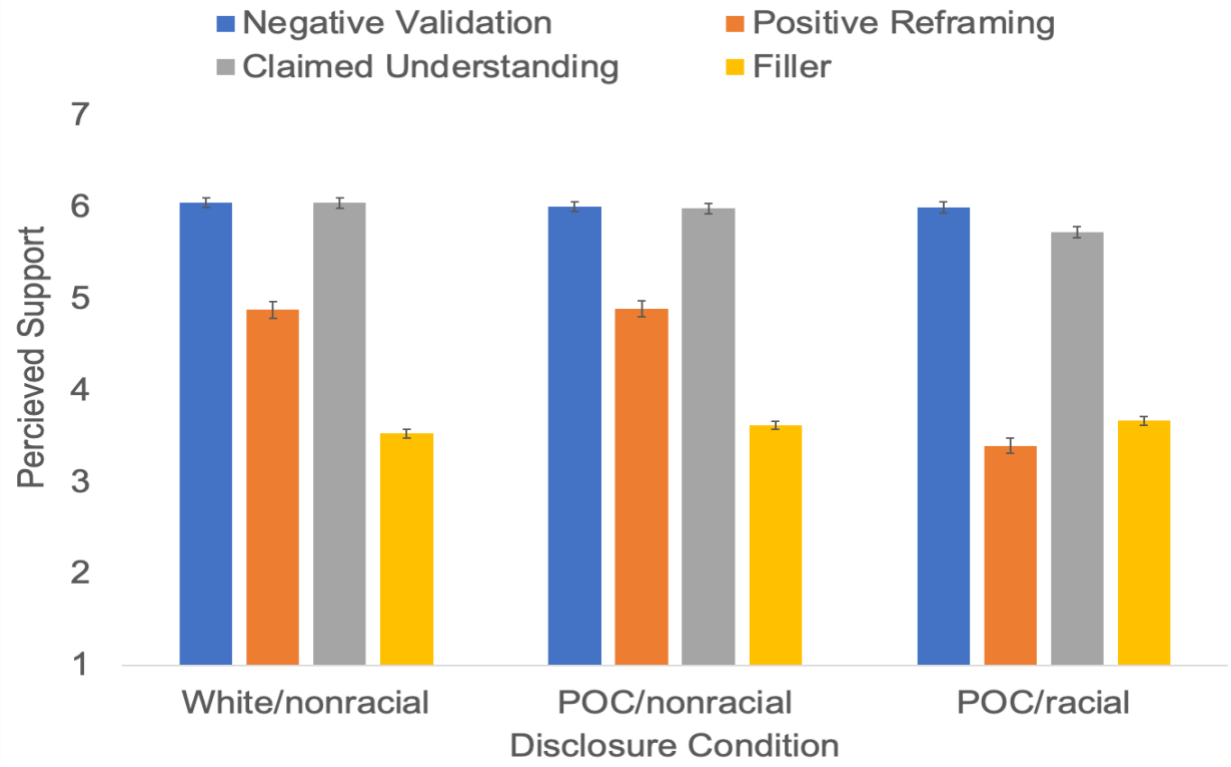
Supportiveness

Omnibus Results and Interactions. In Model 1, the reference group was POC disclosing a non-racial scenario while the outcome variable was supportiveness ratings for positive reframing. Participants tended to rate white people giving social support in the racial disclosure condition as less supportive compared to non-racial disclosure, b = -1.49, SE = 0.09, t(659.78) = -12.29, p <.001. Negative validation, b = 1.12, SE = 0.10, t(706.64) = 10.88, p <.001, and claimed understanding, b = 1.10, SE = 0.10, t(706.25) = 10.65, p <.001, was more supportive than positive reframing, while filler comments were significantly less supportive, b = -1.27, SE = 0.10, t(643.08) = -12.90, p <.001.

Supportiveness ratings also depended on the type of social support given following a racial (vs non-racial) disclosure. The interaction between non-racial disclosure and negative validation was significant, b = 1.48, SE = 0.14, t(1134.75) = 10.24, p <.001, meaning positive reframing was perceived as even less supportive relative to negative validation in the context of racial discrimination disclosure. There was also an interaction between non-racial disclosure and claimed understanding, b = 1.23, SE = 0.15, t(1145.87) = 8.39, p <.001. Interestingly, there was also an interaction between non-racial disclosure and filler comments, b = 1.54, SE = 0.14, t(1050.45) = 11.20, p <.001. This interaction between non-racial disclosure and comment type means that the gap between positive reframing and other types of social support (negative validation, claimed understanding, and filler) widens in the context of a racial (vs. non-racial) disclosure. No notable effects of discloser race emerged (see Figure 2 and Table 4).

Figure 2

Perceived Supportiveness by Disclosure Condition and Comment Type



Note. Error bars represent ± 1 *SE*.

Follow-up Comparison Models. In the next model, the reference group was POC disclosing racial discrimination (POC/racial), and the outcome variable was supportiveness ratings, with positive reframing as the reference group for comment type. Again, positive reframing was seen as less supportive compared to negative validation, $b = 2.60$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(473.55) = 25.38$, $p < .001$, claimed understanding, $b = 2.33$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(488.67) = 22.17$, $p < .001$, and filler comments, $b = 0.27$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(439.00) = 2.85$, $p < .001$.

In the final model, the reference group was Whites disclosing a non-racial scenario. Again, positive reframing was seen as less supportive compared to negative validation, $b = 1.17$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(721.21) = 11.31$, $p < .001$, and claimed understanding, $b = 1.17$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(720.15)$

= 11.27, p <.001. Filler comments were less supportive, b = -1.35, SE = 0.10, t(656.60) = -13.65, p <.001, relative to positive reframing.

Table 4

Perceived Supportiveness by Disclosure Condition and Comment Type (Study 1)

	Disclosure condition		
	White/non-racial	POC/non-racial	POC/racial
Parameter	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)
Intercept	4.87*** (0.09)	4.88*** (0.09)	3.39*** (0.08)
Support comments			
Negative validation (NV)	1.17*** (0.10)	1.12*** (0.10)	2.60*** (0.10)
Claimed understanding	1.17*** (0.10)	1.10*** (0.10)	2.33*** (0.11)
Filler	-1.35*** (0.10)	-1.27*** (0.10)	0.27** (0.10)
Disclosure type effects			
Racial disclosure		-1.49*** (0.10)	
Racial x NV		1.48*** (0.14)	
Racial x CU		1.23*** (0.15)	
Racial x Filler		1.54*** (0.14)	
Racial x NV		1.48*** (0.14)	
Discloser race effects			
White discloser		-0.01 (0.10)	
White discloser x NV		0.05 (0.15)	
White discloser x CU		0.07 (0.15)	
White discloser x Filler		-0.08 (0.14)	

Note. Reference groups are positive reframing (for comment type) and POC/non-racial (for disclosure condition). Redundant interaction terms are left blank; each model had 12 predictors.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Discussion

The main research question was about how social support is perceived when POC share their experience with racism to White people. Overall, both negative validation and claimed understanding were perceived as more supportive than positive reframing responses. There was

an even larger divergence in supportiveness ratings between negative validation and positive reframing in the racial condition (relative to the non-racial condition), such that negative validation was perceived as especially supportive when POC disclosed a racial discrimination experience. The same was true for difference in supportiveness ratings between claimed understanding and positive reframing, such that claimed understanding comments were rated as more supportive than positive reframing comments, although this difference was smaller than ratings between negative validation and positive reframing. Interestingly, filler comments—which were designed to be the "control" comments—were rated as more supportive than positive reframing responses in the racial discrimination condition. This finding suggests that White people's attempts at reframing a POC's experience with racism was worse than providing "empty" comments (e.g., emojis, "OMG"). The next study, which used consistent stimuli for all participants, aimed to replicate the main findings of Study 1.

Study 2

Study 2 was a replication of Study 1 using an identical procedure but updated materials. The first change was simplifying the design by having all participants see the same three scenarios, not a randomized subset of three out of six possible scenarios. With this change, we selected and included the racial discrimination experience with the highest ratings of race attribution (McDonald's scenario) and non-racial experiences with the lowest ratings of race attribution (Exam and Manager). Dropping the third non-racial experience (Traffic) also made the remaining scenarios more comparable in terms of attributions to bad luck. Thus, only one example of each comment type was tested for the racial discrimination scenario and two for the non-racial scenarios, as opposed to three variants. As well, new items were added to the dependent measure (refer to Materials section).

Method

Participants

A total of 191 participants were recruited from the University of Waterloo SONA pool between March-April 2021. Analyses excluded 23 participants for failing the memory check (i.e., remembering only half the targets or less, $n = 17$), completing the survey too fast (i.e., less than half the median survey time, $n = 4$), straight-lining ($n = 1$), or leaving over half the dependent measures blank ($n = 1$). The final sample of 168 participants included 60 White (36%) and 106 POC (64%) participants who self-identified as East Asian (20%), South Asian (28%), Black/African (2%), Middle Eastern (9%), Hispanic/Latino (2%), Indigenous (1%), or another identity (2%). The final sample was 72% women and 28% men with a median age of 20.5 years (SD = 3.7). Based on a 1 (very liberal) to 5 (very conservative) scale, participants tended to identify as slightly liberal to liberal range (M = 2.69, SD = 1.3).

Procedure

The procedure for Study 2 was the same as Study 1.

Materials

Scenarios. For Study 2, posts described only three of the six scenarios used in Study 1. All participants saw the same three scenarios (still two non-racial negative experience and one racial discrimination; Scenarios 1, 3, & 4 in Table 1), as opposed to a possible three out of six scenarios. The two non-racial negative scenarios were: a professor belittling the students still writing an exam and a group of coworkers receiving rude comments from a manager. The racial discrimination experiences described differential treatment at a McDonalds. We selected scenarios based on race attribution (refer to Figure 1).

Comments. For each retained scenario, we used the same social support comments as in Study 1.

Support. Perceived supportiveness was measured using 10 items (α = .92). Again, participants rated the supportiveness of each comment (e.g., "If I had shared this experience, this response would make me feel…") from 1 (not at all) to 7 (a great deal). Two items from Study 1 were removed: "worse" and "like this person was really paying attention to me." Four items were added to the Study 2 supportiveness measure: "like this person thought I was overreacting," "like my feelings were valid," "rejected," and "neutral (this response would not affect me)."

Potential Moderators. Study 2 used the same measures: scenario attributions, perspective taking, familiarity of scenario, perceived support availability, personality, attachment, IMS/EMS, self-esteem, and social media usage. However, results for these measures were analyzed in the Integrative Analysis section.

Results

We used the same core model for Study 2 to investigate the effects of disclosure type (non-racial negative vs discrimination), race of the discloser (POC vs White), and—for supportiveness ratings—interactions with comment type (negative validation, positive reframing, claimed understanding, and filler). The initial reference group was the condition in which POC shared a non-racial negative experience (POC/non-racial), and—for analyses of supportiveness—the positive reframing comment. Outcome variables were normally distributed (see Table 5).

Scenario Attributions

Attributions varied greatly by disclosure type. When POC disclosed race-related negative experiences, as opposed to non-racial experiences, participants made stronger attributions to

race, $b = 2.55$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(327) = 22.63$, $p < .001$, and others' incompetence, $b = 0.50$, $SE = 0.15$, $t(326) = 3.23$, $p = .001$, along with weaker attributions to bad luck, $b = -0.38$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(328) = -2.78$, $p = .006$, and other situational factors, $b = -0.68$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(311) = -5.04$, $p < .001$. Attributions to personality were marginally lower for racial disclosure, $b = -0.21$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(327) = -1.82$, $p = .069$. This last result suggests that switching to a narrower but better calibrated set of scenarios in Study 2 helped reduce the potential confound observed in Study 1, in which the racial (vs. non-racial) scenarios increased attributions not only to disclosers' race (as intended) but also to their personality ($b = 0.18$, $p = .029$ in Study 1, unexpectedly).

Table 5

Scenario Attributions and Comment Supportiveness by Disclosure Condition (Study 2)

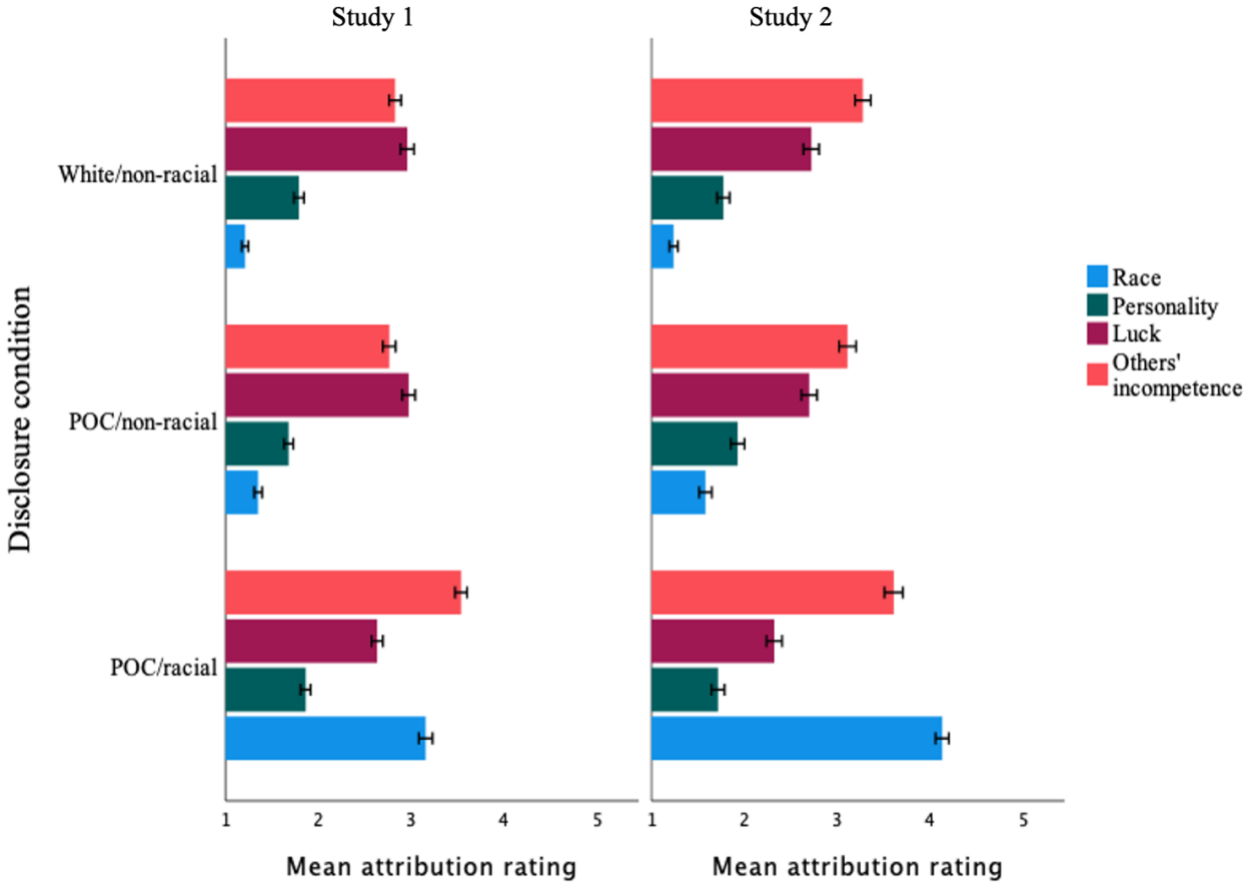
	Disclosure Condition			
Outcome	White/non-racial *M* (*SD*)	POC/non-racial *M* (*SD*)	POC/racial *M* (*SD*)	Total *M* (*SD*)
Attribution				
Race	1.24 (0.66)	1.58 (0.99)	4.13 (1.05)	2.32 (1.58)
Personality	1.77 (0.98)	1.93 (1.08)	1.72 (1.03)	1.81 (1.04)
Luck	2.72 (1.21)	2.70 (1.23)	2.32 (1.22)	2.58 (1.23)
Others' incompetence	3.27 (1.24)	3.11 (1.35)	3.61 (1.44)	3.33 (1.36)
Other factors	3.54 (1.12)	3.57 (1.07)	2.89 (1.35)	3.33 (1.23)
Rated supportiveness				
Negative validation	6.17 (0.88)	6.29 (0.71)	6.36 (0.69)	6.27 (0.77)
Positive reframing	5.31 (1.25)	5.29 (1.28)	3.80 (1.50)	4.80 (1.52)
Claimed understanding	6.33 (0.70)	6.38 (0.64)	5.98 (0.92)	6.23 (0.78)
Filler	3.79 (1.13)	3.92 (1.14)	4.11 (1.04)	3.94 (1.11)

Discloser race influenced fewer attributions (with smaller effect sizes). Participants attributed negative non-racial disclosures from White (vs. POC) individuals less strongly to race, $b = -0.34$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(286) = -3.69$, $p < .001$. Attributions to personality, $b = -0.15$, $SE = 0.11$,

$t(324) = -1.34$, $p = .182$, bad luck, $b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(327) = 0.17$, $p = .867$, others' incompetence $b = 0.17$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(325) = 1.16$, $p = .249$, and other situational factors, $b = -0.03$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(33263) = -0.27$, $p = .785$, did not differ based on discloser's race. In sum, participants made stronger attributions due to discloser's race for the racial discrimination scenario (vs. negative non-racial scenarios), validating our manipulation check (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Attributions by Disclosure Condition



Note. Error bars represent ± 1 *SE.* Study 1 includes 6 possible scenarios (3 non-racial, 3 racial). Study 2 includes 3 scenarios (2 non-racial and 1 racial). Attribution due to other situational factors was dropped from the graph to increase readability.

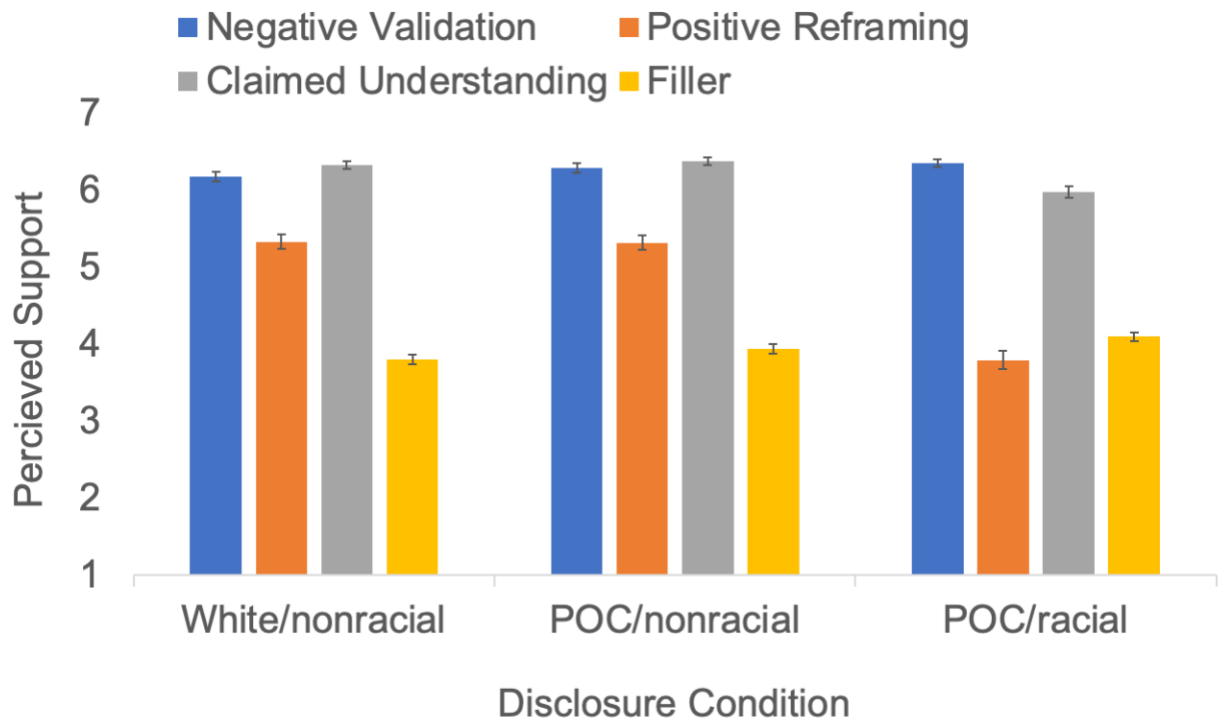
Supportiveness

Omnibus Results and Interactions. Analysis of supportiveness ratings replicated Study 1 results overall. Participants' ratings of supportiveness in the POC/racial condition were lower

than the POC/non-racial condition, b = -1.53, SE = 0.15, t(377.39) = -10.02, p <.001. Negative validation, b = 0.97, SE = 0.12, t(540.05) = 8.46, p <.001, and claimed understanding, b = 1.06, SE = 0.11, t(491.16) = 9.59, p <.001, were each rated more supportive than positive reframing. Filler comments were seen as significantly less supportive, b = -1.39, SE = 0.12, t(585.08) = -12.02, p <.001) compared to positive reframing (see Figure 4 and Table 6).

Figure 4

Perceived Supportiveness by Disclosure Condition and Comment Type (Study 2)



Note. Error bars represent ± 1 *SE*. Supportiveness ratings of each comment type as a function of disclosure condition.

Again, similar to Study 1, the interaction between disclosure type (non-racial vs. racial) and the contrast comparing positive reframing with negative validation was significant, b = 1.59, SE = 0.17, t(585.07) = 9.18, p <.001. The interaction between disclosure type and the claimed understanding contrast was also significant, b = 1.12, SE = 0.18, t(598.33) = 6.37, p <.001). As well, the interaction between disclosure type and the filler contrast was significant, b = 1.69, SE

= 0.17, t(620.15) = 9.70, p <.001. To conclude, the gap between positive reframing and all other types of social support (negative validation, claimed understanding, and filler) widened for a racial racial (vs. non-racial) disclosure, meaning positive reframing comments were perceived as even less supportive than other types of social support in the context of racial discrimination specifically. No notable effects of discloser race emerged.

Table 6

Perceived Supportiveness by Disclosure Condition and Comment Type (Study 2)

	Disclosure condition		
	White/non-racial	POC/non-racial	POC/racial
Parameter	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)
Intercept	5.34*** (0.10)	5.32*** (0.10)	3.80*** (0.12)
Support comments			
Negative validation (NV)	0.85*** (0.12)	0.97*** (0.12)	2.56*** (0.13)
Claimed understanding (CU)	1.00*** (0.11)	1.06*** (0.11)	2.18*** (0.14)
Filler	-1.53*** (0.12)	-1.39*** (0.11)	0.30** (0.13)
Disclosure type effects			
Racial disclosure		-1.53*** (0.15)	
Racial x NV		1.59*** (0.17)	
Racial x CU		1.12*** (0.18)	
Racial x Filler		1.69*** (0.17)	
Discloser race effects			
White discloser		0.01 (0.14)	
White discloser x NV		-0.12 (0.16)	
White discloser x CU		-0.06 (0.16)	
White discloser x Filler		-0.14 (0.16)	

Note. Reference groups are positive reframing (for comment type) and POC/non-racial (for disclosure condition). Redundant interaction terms are left blank; each model had 12 predictors. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Follow Up Comparison Models. In the next model, the disclosure condition reference group was POC disclosing racial discrimination (POC/racial), and the outcome variable was

supportiveness ratings (retaining positive reframing as the reference group). Again, positive reframing was seen as less supportive compared to negative validation, $b = 2.56$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(230.42) = 19.85$, $p < .001$, claimed understanding, $b = 2.18$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(4271.60) = 15.89$, $p < .001$, and filler comments, $b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(245.35) = 2.32$, $p = .021$.

In the final model, the reference group was Whites disclosing a non-racial scenario. Again, positive reframing was seen as less supportive compared to negative validation, $b = 0.85$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(550.42) = 7.33$, $p < .001$, and claimed understanding, $b = 1.10$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(449.55) = 8.97$, $p < .001$, while filler comments were less supportive, $b = -1.53$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(592.78) = -13.16$, $p < .001$, relative to positive reframing (see Table 6).

Discussion

Results from Study 1 were replicated in Study 2. For the racial discrimination condition, supportiveness ratings for positive reframing responses were especially low compared to all other conditions and compared to all other types of responses. Both negative validation and claimed understanding responses were perceived as more supportive than positive reframing responses. Again, filler comments were rated as more supportive than positive reframing responses in the racial condition, such that when a POC shares an experience with racism, positive reframing seems even less supportive than "empty" or neutral comments. Although, the caveat in this study design is that filler comments were always provided by a POC respondent. Follow-up studies can test how filler comments from a White respondent would be perceived.

Integrative Analyses

Study 1 and Study 2 had similar patterns of results, therefore we combined the two datasets to increase power and examine potential moderators that may explain our main findings about perceptions of social support provision. This section on integrative analysis seeks to meet five

objectives. First, a robustness check on material between Study 1 and Study 2 was conducted to confirm that key results do in fact follow a consistent pattern of results. Second, additional analyses examined what type of patterns emerge for perceptions of social support across supportiveness subscales. Third, correlations quantified the associations between ratings of perceived support, scenario attributions, and individual differences. Fourth, moderation analyses explored whether differences in social support perceptions based on disclosure condition or comment type were moderated by attributions or individual differences. We are especially interested in how race attributions for the racial scenario influences perception of social support comments. Fifth, follow-up analyses investigated which individual differences were associated with making attributions to race.

Individual Difference Measures

Before going into the main integrative analyses, the following section reviews measures that were collected and analyzed as potential correlates and moderators of the main outcomes.

Familiarity of Scenario. Three items measured the familiarity of the scenarios included in the study. This helped gauge how realistic the scenarios were as well as future directions on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). An example of an item was "How common is this type of scenario, in your opinion?" (α = .89).

Perceived Support Availability. A 5-item measure about participants' interpersonal relationships (e.g., with friends, family members, coworkers) asked them to rate the extent to which they felt generally supported from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). An example of an item was "There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress" (α = .81).

Personality. The Ten-item Personality Inventory (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003) was used to assess participants' personality traits on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*)

scale. The dimension of personality we were interested in was the "big 5", extraversion (α =.74), agreeableness (α = .37), consciousness (α = .59), neuroticism (α = .71), and openness to experience (α =.29). An example of an item is "I see myself as extraverted, enthusiastic."

Attachment Style. An adapted version of the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) was used to assess attachment style from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). We used 8 items from the measure to assess two main attachment styles in adults, avoidant attachment (α = .76) and anxious attachment (α = .82). The items were adapted to be about friends instead of romantic partners. A sample item was "I find that my friends don't want to get as close as I would like."

IMS/EMS. The 10-item Internal and External Motivation to respond without prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998) was used to measure people's primary source of motivation for non-prejudiced conduct on a -4 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) scale. An example internal item is "I try to act in non-prejudiced ways toward people of other ethnicities because it is personally important" (IMS α = .34) and a sample external item is "Because of today's PC (politically correct) standards, I try to appear non-prejudiced toward people of other ethnicities" (EMS α = .78).

Self-esteem. Participants' global self-worth was measured using Rosenberg's 10-item Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. An example item was "I am able to do things as well as most other people" (α = .80).

Social Media Usage. To corroborate the cover story, we created questions to measure participants' social media habits using 28 items across 3 composites: 8 items on social media frequency (α = .48), 7 items on Facebook usage (α = .82), and 13 items on internet content

consumption. The measure ranged from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*daily*). An example was "Approximately how often do you perform the following actions on Facebook…post status updates."

Robustness Checks

As previously stated, there were slight modifications in between the Study 1 and Study 2 material, specifically for the supportiveness item ratings and the scenarios included. To check whether such variations between studies affected key results, a robustness check was conducted on material that was consistent between the two studies. There were 6 consistent supportiveness rating items ("supported," "like this person cared about me," "like this person intended to make me feel good," "disappointed," "like this person didn't understand how I felt," "that this person knew what I was going through") and 3 consistent scenarios (Manager, Exam, and McDonalds). The main model (POC/non-racial) and follow up models (POC/racial and White/non-racial) was re-run with the consistent supportiveness items and scenarios. Items that differed across studies included: "worse" (reversed) and "like this person was really paying attention to me" (Study 1 only) and "like my feelings were valid," "like this person thought I was overreacting," and "rejected" (Study 2 only).

The main findings were replicated, except for the comparison between filler and positive reframing comments in the POC/racial condition. In this condition, filler comments were rated as more supportive than positive reframing comments in the original model, $b = 0.31$, $SE = 0.08$, $t(687.25) = 3.9$, $p < .001$, but not in models constrained to analyze only the 6 shared items ($b = 0.10$, $p = .234$), the 3 consistent scenarios ($b = 0.09$, $p = .307$), or both ($b = -0.15$, $p = .115$). Inspection of the estimated marginal means in the POC/racial condition suggested that this difference was driven by higher ratings for the positive reframing comment ($M = 3.80$, $SE = 0.09$) in the McDonald's scenario only ("Having worked fast food before, don't take things at

face value. If she really had a problem with you, that's her problem.") relative to the ratings of positive reframing comments from all 3 racial scenarios (e.g., "Maybe it was just your perception of the event? I wouldn't take it personally :)" M = 3.55, SE = 0.07). Additionally, constraining analysis to the 6 consistent items (omitting an additional reverse-coded item from Study 1 and two from Study 2) slightly lowered mean ratings for filler responses (M = 3.85, SE = 0.04 using all items vs. M = 3.65, SE = 0.05 with the 6 consistent items).

To test for potential variation in results across studies, additional models tested whether the observed results (including all scenarios and items) varied by sample (contrasting Studies 1 and 2). Although overall ratings of supportiveness were somewhat higher in Study 2 than Study 1, b = 0.411, SE = 0.13, p = .002, sample did not moderate perceived supportiveness comparisons of positive reframing comments relative to negative validation, claimed understanding, and filler comments as a function of disclosure type (racial vs. non-racial), all ts < 1, p = .793; p = .633; p = .599. Furthermore, the sample did not moderate key results in the POC/racial condition (p = .793; p = .633; p = .599).

Supportiveness Subscales: Understanding, Caring, and Validating

Perceptions of supportiveness may not be unitary, given that three distinct dimensions are theorized to underly interpersonal responsiveness: expressions of understanding, validation, and caring (Reis & Shaver, 1988). To investigate whether participants' subscales ratings varied across these dimensions, we ran the omnibus model using three theorized subscales: understanding ("like this person didn't understand how I felt" reverse coded, "like this person knew what I was going through" reverse coded; α = .68); validating ("like my feelings were valid," "overreacting" reverse coded, "disappointed" reverse coded; α = .72); and caring ("like this person cared about me," "like this person intended to make me feel good," "rejected" reverse

coded; α = .79). The understanding subscale items were identical across studies, whereas Study 2 added new validating items and 1 new caring item.

Again, the reference group was POC disclosing a non-racial scenario, with each supportiveness subscale as the outcome and positive reframing as the reference group for comment type. The results converged across the subscales, with one exception for the contrast between filler and positive reframing results in the POC/racial condition on the caring subscale (see Table 7). Participants tended to rate White people giving social support in the racial disclosure (vs. non-racial disclosure) condition as less understanding, b = -1.44, SE = 0.08, p <.001; caring, b = -1.53, SE = 0.10, p <.001; and validating, b = -1.50, SE = 0.12, p <.001. Similar to the overall supportiveness scale, participants rated negative validation (relative to positive reframing) as more understanding, b = 1.20, SE = 0.10, p <.001; caring, b = 0.94, SE = 0.09, p <.001; validating, b = 0.91, SE = 0.09, p <.001. As well, claimed understanding (relative to positive reframing) was rated as more understanding, b = 1.78, SE = 0.09, p <.001; caring: b = 0.55, SE = 0.09, p <.001; validating: b = 0.94, SE = 0.09, p <.001. Filler comments were rated as less understanding, b = -0.95, SE = 0.09, p <.001; and validating, b = -0.62, SE = 0.09, p <.001, but more caring, b = 2.14, SE = 0.08, p <.001.

The interaction results for the subscales were similar to the overall supportiveness results. In the context of racial disclosure, the gap widened between negative validation and positive reframing as well as between claimed understanding and positive reframing across all the subscales (see Table SS). Filler comments were rated lower than positive reframing on all three subscales in both non-racial conditions (although more caring in the POC/racial condition) but were seen as more understanding and validating in the POC/racial condition (see Table SS). These results suggest that the main problem with positively reframing a racial discrimination

experience is not that such responses convey a complete lack of caring (they at least outperform "empty" filler responses), but that they fail to convey adequate understanding and validating.

Follow Up Comparison Models

Using POC disclosing a racial scenario and positive reframing as the outcome variable as a follow up model, we investigated whether participants' ratings varied across the three composite dimensions. The results were similar to the overall supportiveness ratings (refer to Table SS), meaning that participants tended to perceive positive reframing comments as less supportive than negative validation, claimed understanding, and filler in the racial condition (POC disclosing a racial scenario). The main variation to note is that, compared to the overall supportiveness, $b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$, understanding, $b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$, and validating, $b = 1.01$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .001$, filler comments were rated as less caring, $b = -0.42$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$, relative to positive reframing comments. Meaning, participants perceived positive reframing comments as more caring than filler comments, despite rating filler comments as overall more supportive in the racial discrimination condition.

Correlations

Next, bivariate correlations were examined between supportiveness ratings for different comment types and attributions for the disclosed scenario, computed both averaging across all conditions (see Table 8) and separately within each condition (see Table 9).

Table 7

Perceived Understanding, Caring, and Validating by Disclosure Condition and Comment Type

	Subscales		
	Understanding	Caring	Validating
Parameter	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)	*b* (SE)
Omnibus model			
Disclosure type effects			
Racial disclosure	-1.44*** (0.11)	-1.53*** (0.10)	-1.50*** (0.12)
Racial disclosure x NV	1.37*** (0.14)	1.55** (0.13)	1.50*** (0.13)
Racial disclosure x Filler	1.40*** (0.13)	1.72*** (0.12)	1.62*** (0.14)
Racial disclosure x CU	0.87*** (0.14)	1.31*** (0.13)	1.24*** (0.13)
Discloser race effects			
White discloser	-0.05 (0.11)	0.05 (0.10)	<0.01 (0.11)
White discloser x NV	0.02 (0.14)	-0.07 (0.12)	<0.01 (0.12)
White discloser x Filler	-0.10 (0.13)	-0.13 (0.12)	-0.10 (0.13)
White discloser x CU	0.04 (0.13)	<0.01 (0.13)	-0.03 (0.12)
POC/non-racial condition			
Intercept	4.62*** (0.08)	5.26*** (0.07)	5.63*** (0.08)
Negative validation	1.20*** (0.10)	0.94*** (0.09)	0.91*** (0.09)
Claimed understanding	1.78*** (0.09)	0.55*** (0.09)	0.94*** (0.09)
Filler	-0.95*** (0.09)	-2.14*** (0.08)	-0.62*** (0.09)
Follow-up simple effects			
POC/racial condition			
Intercept	3.18*** (0.08)	3.73*** (0.08)	4.13*** (0.09)
Negative validation	2.57*** (0.10)	2.49*** (0.09)	2.41*** (0.10)
Claimed understanding	2.64*** (0.11)	1.86*** (0.10)	2.18*** (0.10)
Filler	0.44*** (0.09)	-0.42*** (0.09)	1.01*** (0.10)
White/non-racial condition			
Intercept	4.57*** (0.08)	5.31*** (0.07)	5.62*** (0.08)
Negative validation	1.22*** (0.10)	0.87*** (0.09)	0.90*** (0.09)
Claimed understanding	1.82*** (0.09)	0.55*** (0.09)	0.91*** (0.09)
Filler	-1.05*** (0.09)	-2.27*** (0.08)	-0.72*** (0.10)

Note. Discloser race was coded (POC = 0, White = 1) and disclosure type was coded (non-racial = 0, racial = 1) , such that the omnibus model reference group is the POC/non-racial condition.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Perceived Supportiveness Across Comment Types

When comparing across all conditions, supportiveness ratings for each comment type were positively correlated (*r*s > .10, *p*s < .001, see Table 8). This pattern means that higher supportiveness ratings for one type of comment (e.g., negative validation) were systematically linked to higher ratings of other types (e.g., positive reframing). Although comment types were highly correlated, the strength of these associations differed descriptively across comment types (and conditions, detailed subsequently). As shown in Table 8, claimed understanding comments were most strongly correlated with negative validation comments ($r = .45$, $p < .001$), likely reflecting the conceptual overlap between validating someone's experiences and understanding them. Filler comments tended to be more weakly associated with other comments (*r*s < .20, *p*s < .01), suggesting that control comment ratings were seen as distinct from the other types.

Table 8

Bivariate Correlations of Key Outcomes Overall (Across Disclosure Conditions)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. NV supportiveness	—							
2. PR supportiveness	.12*	—						
3. CU supportiveness	.45***	.34***	—					
4. FL supportiveness	.18***	.12*	.16***	—				
5. Race attribution	.05	-.25***	-.10***	.05	—			
6. Personality attribution	-.09†	.03	-.04	-.08	.10***	—		
7. Luck attribution	.00	-.05	-.01	.05	-.15***	.02	—	
8. Others attribution	.07	-.05	.08*	.05	.24***	-.01	.03	—
9. Miscellaneous attribution	.06	.12***	.18***	.02	-.16***	.04	.12***	.17***

Note. NV = negative validation, PR = positive reframing, CU = claimed understanding, FL = filler. These correlations use repeated observations per participant (collected in each disclosure condition), so significance levels were computed based on the sample size of $N = 435$ ($df = 433$).
† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

When conditions were disaggregated (see Table 9), similar correlations were observed in the two non-racial disclosure conditions, but not in the POC/racial condition. In the racial condition, positive reframing no longer correlated with negative validation, $r(431) = -.02$, $p = .652$; instead positive reframing more weakly correlated with claimed understanding in the racial condition, $r(431) = .17$, $p < .01$, compared to in the non-racial conditions (rs > .37, ps < .001). This weakened association may relate to the earlier finding that positive reframing comments were rated as much less supportive overall in the racial condition (vs. non-racial) condition.

Attributions

Averaging across all conditions, attributions due to discloser's race significantly correlated with attributions due to discloser's personality, $r(431) = .10$, bad luck, $r(431) = -.15$, others' incompetence, $r(431) = .24$, and miscellaneous attributions, $r(431) = -.16$ (see Table 6, ps < .05). Overall, when participants made stronger race attributions, they also tended to attribute the scenarios more to the person and/or others' incompetence, and less to luck or other factors.

However, when conditions were disaggregated (see Table 9), a very different pattern emerged. Race attributions did not correlate with others' incompetence in the White/non-racial condition, $r(429) = -.03$, $p = .506$), but correlated positively with others' incompetence in both POC conditions (rs > .11, ps < .001). It seems plausible that when participants believed that a POC (rather than White) discloser was experiencing negative treatment related to their race, they interpreted "others' incompetence" to encompass others' being bigoted. As well, race attributions correlated positively with personality attributions in both non-racial conditions (rs > .29, ps < .001), but an opposite (marginal) negative correlation emerged in the POC/racial condition, $r(431) = -.09$, $p = .069$. These correlations could indicate that stronger attributions to race in the non-racial conditions, where they are linked to stronger attributions to disclosers'

personality or social skills, reflect racial stereotyping (e.g., of White disclosers as privileged whiners or POC disclosers as oversensitive troublemakers, see Kaiser & Miller, 2001). In contrast, the marginal negative correlation between these attributions in the POC/racial condition suggests that participants here face an "either/or" choice between attributions to external factors (racism) or internal factors (individual traits). Whether attributions to race indeed have distinct connotations in the different conditions remains speculative. In sum, results for the POC/racial condition imply participants attributed the racial discrimination scenario either to external factors (race *and* other's incompetence) or other factors unrelated to race (personality *and* bad luck).

Attributions and Perceptions of Supportiveness by Comment Type

Across conditions, race attribution was negatively correlated with positive reframing, $r(432) = -.25$, $p < .001$, and claimed understanding, $r(432) = -.10$, $p = .045$. Attribution due to other factors about the situation was positively correlated with positive reframing, $r(432) = .12$, $p = .015$, and claimed understanding, $r(432) = .18$, $p < .001$. Attributions to personality and negative validation correlated marginally negatively correlated, although, $r(432) = -.09$, $p = .050$. As well, attribution due to others' incompetence and claimed understanding were marginally positively correlated, $r(432) = .08$, $p = .084$. Overall, when participants made stronger race attributions, they tended to see both positive reframing and claimed understanding comments as less supportive. In contrast, when participants made stronger attributions to other factors in the situation they tended to rate positive reframing and claimed understanding as more supportive.

Condition-specific correlations revealed varying relationships between support types and attributions (see Table 9). For instance, negative validation's supportiveness correlated with race attributions negatively in the White/non-racial condition, $r(429) = -.14$, $p = .003$, not at all in the POC/racial condition ($r \sim .00$), and positively in the POC/racial condition, $r(431) = .20$, $p < .001$.

Table 9

Bivariate Correlations of Key Outcomes by Disclosure Condition

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
White/non-racial condition								
1. NV supportiveness	—							
2. PR supportiveness	.19***	—						
3. CU supportiveness	.43***	.38***	—					
4. FL supportiveness	.14**	.14**	.13**	—				
5. Race attribution	-.14**	-.04	-.04	-.05	—			
6. Personality attribution	-.10*	-.05	-.06	-.10**	.40***	—		
7. Luck attribution	.02	-.18***	-.09†	.11**	-.04	-.15***	—	
8. Others attribution	.07	.07	-.07	.02	-.03	.01	.01	—
9. Miscellaneous attribution	.02	-.01	.13**	-.01	-.01	.00	.09†	.24***
POC/non-racial condition								
1. NV supportiveness	—							
2. PR supportiveness	.23***	—						
3. CU supportiveness	.47***	.42***	—					
4. FL supportiveness	.19***	.16**	.21***	—				
5. Race attribution	-.00	.14**	.03	-.02	—			
6. Personality attribution	-.06	.05	-.06	-.01	.30***	—		
7. Luck attribution	-.04	-.17***	-.12**	.10**	-.11**	-.05	—	
8. Others attribution	.09†	.04	.15**	.05	.12***	.00	.04	—
9. Miscellaneous attribution	.17***	.15**	.21***	.04	.02	.01	.00	.23***
POC/racial condition								
1. NV supportiveness	—							
2. PR supportiveness	-.02	—						
3. CU supportiveness	.47***	.17**	—					
4. FL supportiveness	.20***	.17**	.20***	—				
5. Race attribution	.20***	-.06	.03	.04	—			
6. Personality attribution	-.12*	.11*	-.01	-.12***	-.09†	—		
7. Luck attribution	.01	.06	.10*	-.04	-.09†	.16***	—	
8. Others attribution	.05	-.02	.13**	.05	.20***	-.04	.13*	—
9. Miscellaneous attribution	.00	.05	.14**	.06	-.13**	.12*	.21***	.17***

Note. NV = negative validation, PR = positive reframing, CU = claimed understanding, FL = filler. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .00$

Stronger luck attribution was associated with lower supportiveness ratings for positive reframing comments in both non-racial conditions (*r*s < -.16, *p*s < .001), but not in the POC/racial condition, $r(431) = .06$, $p = .207$). Stronger luck attributions were marginally related to claimed understanding, $r(430) = -.09$, $p = .061$. Higher supportiveness ratings for filler comments were positively associated with luck, $r(433) = .11$, $p = .022$, and negatively associated with personality, $r(433) = -.10$, $p = .037$. In sum, when a White person shared a generic negative scenario, comments that validated or reframed their experience were perceived as less helpful if they thought it was due to something about the person (i.e., race, personality). Positive reframing and claimed understanding comments were perceived as more helpful if participants thought the experience was due to factors outside the person (i.e., bad luck, other aspects of the situation).

For the POC/non-racial condition, it seemed that disclosers' race influenced what type of attributions were made and which types of comments were perceived as helpful. In this condition, personality attributions did not correlate with any of the supportiveness ratings (*p*s > .05). Race attribution was positively correlated with perceived supportiveness of positive reframing, $r(431) = .14$, $p = .003$, in sharp contrast to the POC/racial condition where this relationship was reversed and non-significant, $r(431) = -.06$, $p = .194$. Bad luck was negatively associated with positive reframing, $r(431) = -0.17$, $p < .001$. Interestingly, filler comment ratings were positively associated with luck attribution in both the POC/non-racial, $r(433) = .10$, $p = .037$, and White/non-racial condition, $r(433) = .11$, $p = .021$. This positive relationship between luck attributions and supportiveness ratings for filler comments suggests that filler comments were perceived as more helpful when participants thought the generic negative experience was due to bad luck. However, luck attributions negatively correlated with positive reframing, $r(431) = -.17$, $p < .001$, and claimed understanding, $r(431) = -.12$, $p = .016$. This negative relationship

between luck attribution and supportiveness ratings for positive reframing and claimed understanding suggests that when participants thought the scenario was due to bad luck, reframing and claiming to understand the experience were perceived as less helpful when the discloser was a POC (vs. White).

Put together, when a POC disclosed a non-racial experience, participants who made stronger race attributions tended to rate positive reframing as more helpful. This positive association between race attribution and supportiveness ratings for positive reframing is interesting because even though the generic negative experience was objectively "not about race," insofar as participants took the discloser's race into account, they saw positive reframing as more (not less) supportive. This association is also compatible with the interpretation of race attributions in this condition as potentially reflecting racial stereotypes about the POC discloser (e.g., that they are just "overreacting" and would benefit from positive reframing). However, positive reframing was perceived as more helpful when participants made stronger attributions due other aspects about the situation and weaker attributions due to bad luck. Claimed understanding followed a similar pattern, such that, participants rated this support type as helpful when there were stronger attributions due to external circumstances– others' incompetence in this case– and weaker attributions due to bad luck (ps < .05).

For POC/racial condition, as noted above, negative validation was perceived as more supportive when participants more strongly attributed the racial discrimination experience to the POC's race. However, negative validation was seen as less supportive when participants instead made attributions to the discloser's personality, $r(431) = -.12$, $p = .015$. Furthermore, when participants made stronger attributions due to personality, positive reframing was rated as more helpful, $r(431) = .11$, $p = .022$. Claimed understanding comments were rated as more supportive

when participants made stronger attributions due to bad luck, $r(431) = .10$, $p = .034$, other's incompetence, $r(431) = .13$, $p = .006$, and other aspects of the situation, $r(431) = .14$, $p = .004$. Interestingly, filler comments were less supportive when participants made stronger personality attributions. To summarize, when a POC discloses a racial discrimination experience, negative validation was rated as more supportive when participants acknowledged that the experience to be due to discloser's race. Thus, participants thought negative validation was more helpful when they recognized that the shared experience was racist. This positive association between stronger race attribution and higher ratings for negative validation comments flipped when people made stronger attributions due to personality, such that, negative validation (and filler) comments were perceived as less helpful the more that discrimination was blamed on the POC's personality. In fact, when participants made stronger personality attributions, positive reframing was seen as more helpful, suggesting that downplaying discrimination is preferred when the POC's personality is blamed for the experience. Finally, claimed understanding comments were more helpful when participants thought racial discrimination was due to other's incompetence and other aspects about the situation.

Support Comments, Attributions, and Individual Differences.

Correlations between supportiveness ratings for the different support types and individual differences are not reported in tables but key findings are summarized below.

Internal Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice (IMS). IMS positively correlated with support ratings for negative validation $r(433) = .17$, $p < .001$, and claimed understanding, $r(433) = .12$, $p = .013$, but not with positive reframing or filler comments (ps > .100). IMS was strongly correlated with support ratings for negative validation and claimed understanding in the non-racial and racial conditions (rs > 0.10, ps < .05). Thus, across and within both racial and

non-racial conditions, participants who were more internally motivated to respond without prejudice were more likely to rate negative validation and claimed understanding as more supportive. External motivation to respond without prejudice (EMS) was not associated with supportiveness ratings for comments (*r*s < .10, *p*s > .05).

Personality Traits. Across conditions, only agreeableness and conscientiousness were significantly correlated with support comment ratings. Specifically, agreeableness was positively associated with support ratings for negative validation, $r(433) = .11$, $p = .024$, while contentiousness was positively associated with claimed understanding ratings, $r(433) = .11$, $p = .027$. Agreeableness and negative validation were significantly correlated in the non-racial conditions, $r(431) = .15$, $p = .003$ for White/non-racial; $r(431) = .10$, $p = .030$ for POC/non-racial, however, this relationship was not significant in the racial condition, $r(431) = .08$, $p = .119$. Conscientiousness and claimed understanding ratings were significantly correlated in the White/non-racial, $r(431) = .12$, $p < .001$, and POC/racial condition, $r(431) = .13$, $p = .006$, but marginally insignificant in the POC/non-racial condition, $r(432) = .08$, $p = .081$. Neuroticism and extraversion were not associated with supportiveness ratings for comments (*r*s < .10, *p*s > .05). Openness to experience was positively associated with negative validation, $r(432) = .13$, $p = .008$, and positive reframing, $r(432) = .10$, $p = .042$, only in the POC/non-racial condition. In sum, these findings suggest that highly conscientious participants tend to rate claimed understanding as most supportive across conditions, suggesting that perhaps conscientious people prefer this type of support. Furthermore, highly agreeable people tend to rate negative validation comments as overall most supportive, except when a POC shared a racial discrimination experience.

Relationship Measures. For overall conditions, only perceptions of support availability and avoidant attachment style significantly correlated with supportiveness ratings. Support availability was positively associated with negative validation, $r(432) = .08$, $p = .081$, and claimed understanding, $r(432) = .08$, $p = .081$. This relationship was the same within racial and non-racial scenarios (rs > .15, ps < .01). To a lesser extent, support availability was positively correlated with ratings for positive reframing, but only in the White/non-racial condition, $r(431) = .10$, $p = .047$. Avoidant attachment was negatively correlated with support ratings for negative validation across conditions, $r(1297) = -.11$, $p = .024$, and within the non-racial scenarios (rs > -.10, ps < .05). Avoidant attachment and negative validation support was trending significance in the racial condition, $r(431) = -.09$, $p = .053$. Interestingly, avoidant attachment negatively correlated with ratings for claimed understanding but only in the White/non-racial scenario, $r(431) = -.12$, $p = .016$. In sum, participants who reported more support availability in their interpersonal relationships were more likely to rate negative validation and claimed understanding as supportive. Participants with low avoidant attachment style were more likely to perceive negative validation as more supportive, except in the racial condition.

Moderators

Our main analysis found that positive reframing was perceived as less supportive than negative validation, especially in the racial discrimination context. We wanted to know whether attribution due to discloser's race moderated this result, specifically, are participants who make stronger attributions to race especially likely to perceive positive reframing as less supportive than negative validation? We also tested for moderation based on alternate attributions and personality.

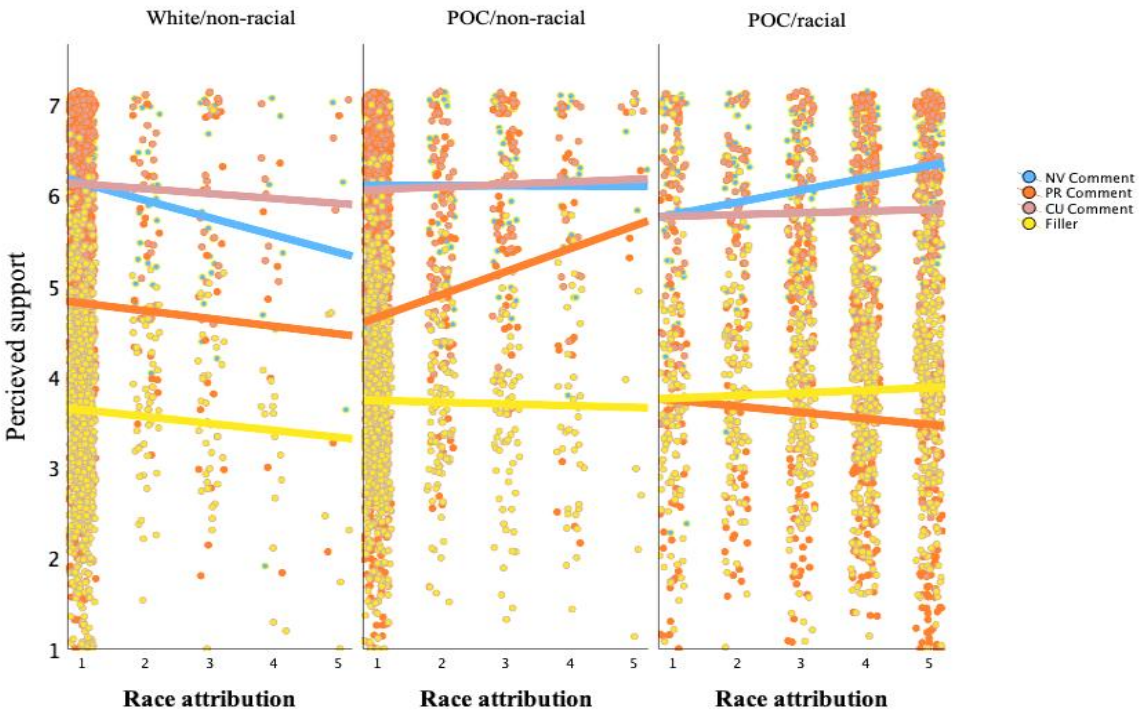
Race Attributions

When race attributions were entered into the model (POC/racial and positive reframing as the reference group), we found a three-way interaction between disclosure type, race attribution, and negative validation, b = -0.33, SE = 0.10, p =.002. Specifically, stronger attributions due to discloser's race in the racial condition resulted in negative validation responses being perceived as even more supportive than positive reframing. Meaning, when the POC discloser shared a racial discrimination (vs. non-racial) experience, participants who made stronger attributions due to discloser's race in the racial discrimination condition were more likely to perceive negative validation responses as particularly more supportive compared to positive reframing responses. This relationship between stronger race attribution and higher supportiveness ratings for negative validation was similar for claimed understanding, b = -0.21, SE = 0.10, p =.044, and filler comments, b = -0.22, SE = 0.10, p =.029, suggesting that stronger attribution due to discloser's race increased supportiveness ratings for claimed understanding and for filler comments, relative to positive reframing.

For the POC/non-racial condition, stronger attributions due to discloser's race significantly increased supportiveness ratings for positive reframing, b = 0.33, SE = 0.10, p =.002, relative to negative validation. Additionally, when participants made stronger attributions due to discloser's race, positive reframing comments were perceived as even more supportive than filler comments b = 0.22, SE = 0.15, p =.029. This pattern of results was in opposition to the POC/racial condition result, where supportiveness ratings for negative validation increased as attribution due to discloser's race increased. As well, as race attribution increased, positive reframing was rated as more supportive in the POC/non-racial condition but less supportive in the POC/racial condition.

Figure 5

Support Ratings by Disclosure Condition, Race Attribution, and Comment Type



Note. Data points are jittered to avoid overplotting of identical observations.

For the White/non-racial condition, stronger attributions due to discloser's race significantly decreased supportiveness ratings for negative validation, $b = 0.29$, $SE = 0.13$, $p = .031$, relative to positive reframing. Although negative validation was still perceived as more supportive than positive reframing, participants that made stronger attributions due to discloser's race rated negative validation responses as less supportive, specifically when White people share non-racial experiences (see Figure 5).

Other Attributions as Moderators

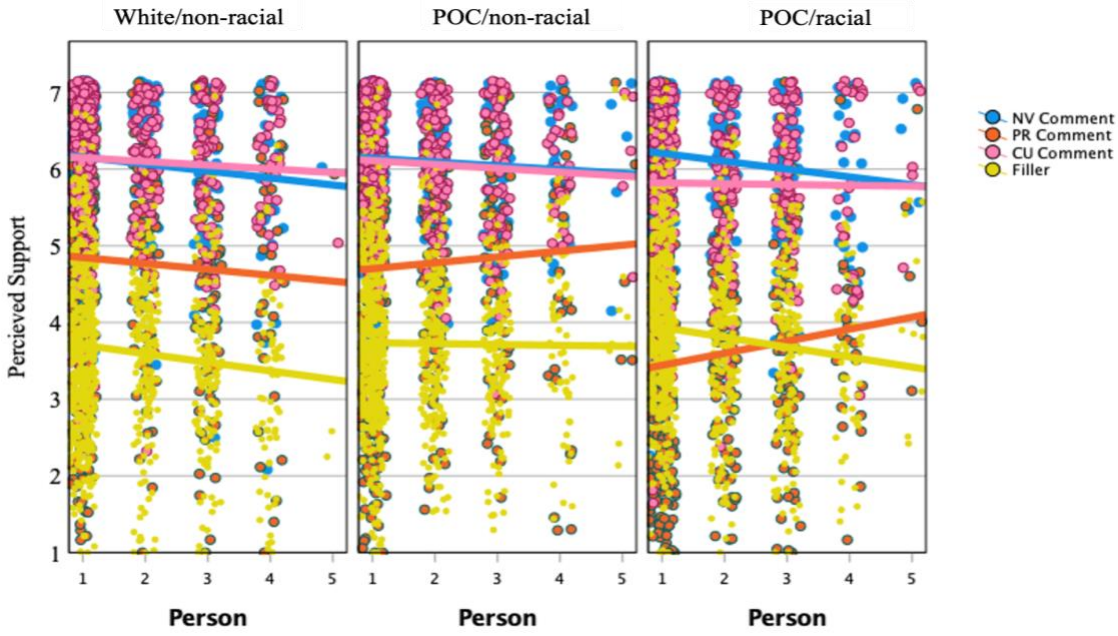
To assess whether the differences in supportiveness ratings between negative validation and positive reframing depended on whether participants attributed the scenario to alternative

explanations, we entered other attributions separately into the model. Attributions to bad luck, other incompetence, or other factors in the situation were not significant for any of the comments (*p*s > .100). This non-significant relationship between other attributions and support comment ratings suggests that other attributions do not moderate differences in supportiveness ratings between positive reframing and other comments, namely, negative validation, claimed understanding, and filler responses.

Attributions due to discloser's personality as a moderator was marginally significant for differences ratings between positive reframing and negative validation, $b = 0.20$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .068$, providing tentative evidence that negative validation was perceived as less supportive the more participants attributed a racial discrimination experience to the POC's personality. However, within the POC/racial condition, personality attributions did significantly moderate the difference in supportiveness ratings between positive reframing and filler comments, $b = 0.26$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .017$, such that filler comments were perceived as less supportive than positive reframing when participants attributed the racial discrimination experience to the POC's personality (see Figure 6). This relationship between personality attribute, positive reframing and filler comments contrasts how race attribution moderates the differences between positive reframing and filler comments in the same condition, whereas filler comments were rated as more supportive than positive reframing comments as participants made stronger race attributions, $b = -0.22$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .029$.

Figure 6

Support Ratings by Disclosure Condition, Personality Attribution, and Comment Type



Note. Data points are jittered to avoid overplotting of identical observations.

In sum, attributions to bad luck, other's incompetence, or other aspects of the situation did not moderate the relationship between support ratings for positive reframing and other comments. Personality attribution marginally moderated (p = .068) differences in supportiveness ratings between positive reframing and negative validation comments in the POC/racial condition, such that negative validation comments were becoming less helpful the more people thought the racial discrimination experience was caused by the POC's personality. Personality attribution moderated the relationship between differences in supportiveness ratings for positive reframing and filler comments, such that filler comments became less supportive than positive reframing comments the more people thought racial discrimination was due to POC's personality (see Figure 6).

Individual Differences as Moderators

We were interested in potentially divergent perceptions between White and POC participants for social support provision during intergroup interactions, paralleling prior work on differing goals and interaction experiences for POC and White people (Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010). Contrary to these predictions, participants' race (White vs. POC) did not moderate supportiveness ratings between positive reframing and comments, nor did participant gender, personality traits (agreeableness, contentiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience), attachment style, IMS/EMS, self-esteem, support availability, or social media use (ps > .05). Visual inspection of response patterns across each specific racial group (e.g., East Asian, South Asian) found little variation within the POC category.

Antecedents of Attributions to Race

When a POC discloser shared a racial discrimination (vs. non-racial) experience, participants who made stronger attributions due to discloser's race were more likely to perceive negative validation as more supportive than positive reframing responses, b = -0.33, SE = 0.10, p =.002. Because race attribution moderated supportiveness rating between negative validation and positive reframing comments as a function of disclosure type, we were interested in profiling individual differences for stronger race attributions, especially in the POC/racial condition. A variety of predictors were tested, organized here into clusters based on identity (race, gender, political orientation), personality (agreeableness, contentiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, self-esteem), social skills (attachment style, support availability), prejudice tendencies (IMS/EMS), and social media use.

We predict that people with identities that are typically the targets of discrimination (POC, women) will have a stronger preference for negative validation (especially coming from a

dominant group member). As well, people with marginalized identities will be more sensitive to instances of discrimination against POC (Norton & Sommers, 2011), such that they are more likely to attribute racial discrimination disclosures to race. Additionally, liberals tend to be more empathetic towards marginalized identities/communities (Eibach, 2021), such that they will perceive negative validation as more supportive than positive reframing.

Identity

For the racial discrimination condition, attributions due to discloser's race varied by participants' race, gender, and political orientation. Race attributions varied based on participant race (coded POC = 1, White = -1), such that participants of colour tended to make stronger attributions due to discloser's race in the racial discrimination condition compared to White participants, $b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(431) = 2.35$, $p = .019$. POC also made stronger race attributions than White participants in the POC/non-racial condition, $b = 0.10$, $SE = 0.04$, $t(431) = 2.41$, $p = .017$, suggesting that POC tend to make stronger race attributions in general, regardless of disclosure type, $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.08$, $t(749) = -0.63$, $p = .531$. For gender, because the total sample included more women ($n = 336$) than men ($n = 98$), weighted effects coding was used to account for the unequal group size across the gender category (coded women = -1, men = 0; weighted effects coded women = -0.29, men = 0). Attributions to race in the POC/racial condition did not vary based on participant gender, $b = -0.12$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(430) = -1.03$, $p = .304$. However, for the POC/non-racial condition, women made stronger race attributions than men, $b = -0.23$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(430) = -3.00$, $p = .003$. Meaning, when a POC shared a non-racial scenario, women tended to make stronger attributions due to POC's race than men did. Gender did not interact with disclosure type, $b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(744) = .79$, $p = .432$.

Lastly, analyses of political orientation found that conservatism predicted weaker attributions to disclosers' race in the racial disclosure condition, b = -0.15, SE = 0.05, t(420) = -3.19, p = .002. Political orientation interacted with disclosure type, b = 0.16, SE = 0.06, t(733) = 2.83, p = .005. Follow-up analyses on two-way politics identity and disclosure type interaction found that stronger liberal identity (-1 SD from political orientation mean) predicted stronger race attributions in the POC/racial scenario, b = 2.30, SE = 0.11, t(733) = 21.55, p < .001. Political identity did not predict stronger race attributions in the non-racial condition, both liberals and conservatives had similar race attributions. To recap, political orientation predicted stronger race attribution ratings as a function of scenario, such that liberal politics predicts stronger race attributions for the POC disclosing a racial discrimination experience.

To summarize, participants' race and political orientation predicted race attributions. Specifically, POC and liberals made stronger attributions due to discloser's race when a POC shared a racial discrimination experience. Gender did not predict race attributions in the racial condition, although women tended to make stronger race attributes when a POC shared a non-racial negative experience.

Personality

Personality traits and self-esteem were self-reported by participants and ratings were mean centered. For the POC/racial condition, self-esteem, openness to experience, contentiousness, and neuroticism did not predict attributions due to discloser's race (ps > .05) Extraversion was trending significance (b = -0.08, SE = 0.04, t(431) = -1.77, p = .077). Interestingly, there is preliminary evidence that neuroticism predicted race attributions as a function of disclosure type, b = -0.10, SE = 0.05, t(749) = -1.90, p = .057, follow-up analysis

suggests that people higher in neuroticism made stronger race attributions in the racial condition, $b = 2.23$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(752) = 20.57$, $p < .001$.

Only agreeableness predicted race attribution, specifically, agreeableness predicted weaker attribution due to discloser's race in the POC/racial condition, $b = -0.15$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(431) = -2.66$, $p = .008$. Furthermore, agreeableness also predicted race attributions as a function of scenario, b = 0.14, $SE = 0.07$, $t(752) = 2.01$, $p = .045$, such that people low in agreeableness were more likely to make stronger race attribution for the racial condition, $b = 2.24$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(752) = 20.87$, $p < .001$. To summarize, agreeableness predicted weaker race attributions for POC that shared a racial discrimination experience, such that low agreeable people made stronger race attributions for racial scenario.

Social Skills

For the POC/racial condition, perception of support availability and anxious attachment style did not predict race attribution (ps > .05). Avoidant attachment style predicted stronger attributions due to discloser's race, $b = 0.12$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(431) = 2.17$, $p = .030$, but this did not interact with disclosure type, $b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(751) = 1.67$, $p = .096$.

Internal versus External Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice

IMS predicted stronger attributions due to discloser's race in the POC/racial condition, $b = 0.24$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(430) = 3.41$, $p = .001$, while EMS did not, $b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.03$, $t(430) = 0.49$, $p = .627$. IMS also predicted more accurate race attribution as a function of disclosure type, $b = -0.33$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(748) = -3.80$, $p < .001$, such that people high in IMS had stronger race attributions in the racial condition, $b = 2.38$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(748) = 22.28$, $p < .001$.

Social Media Usage

Average Facebook use predicted weaker attributions due to discloser's race in the racial condition, b = -0.15, SE = 0.05, t(382) = -2.69, p = .007. Weaker race attributions in the racial condition was also observed for average social media use to a lesser extent, b = -0.16, SE = 0.09, t(431) = -1.77, p = .078. Furthermore, Facebook use interacted with disclosure type (albeit trending significance), b = 0.13, SE = 0.07, t(665) = 1.93, p = .054, such that participants with lower self-reported Facebook use tended to make stronger race attributions in the POC/racial condition, b = 2.22, SE = 0.11, t(665) = 20.04, p < .001. The relationship between Facebook use and race attribution suggests that less active Facebook users in this sample were more likely to attribute racial discrimination experiences to the person's race.

To conclude, when profiling which individual differences predicted race attributions for POC that shared a racial discrimination experience, stronger attributions were predicted by participant race (POC), liberal political orientation, low agreeableness, avoidant attachment style, and IMS (i.e., seeking to act without prejudice based on personal values). Weaker race attributions were predicted by high agreeableness and more active Facebook users. Further research could explore whether these same groups of people who tend to underestimate the role of race in discriminatory situations are also more likely to provide inappropriate support.

General Discussion

In both studies, negative validation was consistently perceived as more supportive than positive reframing in response to disclosures of racial discrimination. Across conditions, negative validation was the most supportive response, but the novel contribution from this study is that negative validation responses were especially supportive during inter-racial exchanges, i.e., when POC share their experience with racial discrimination to White people. Participants'

own race did not influence whether negative validation was perceived as more supportive, suggesting that White and participants of colour agreed that negative validation was significantly more supportive than positive reframing, especially in response to racism.

Claimed understanding responses were closely related to negative validation, such that the two types of responses were perceived as similarly supportive for the non-racial scenarios (*p*s > .05). Although negative validation was more supportive than claimed understanding in response to the racial discrimination scenario, the gap (i.e., differences in supportiveness rating) was smaller between negative validation and claimed understanding than between negative validation and positive reframing. This smaller gap between support ratings for negative validation and claimed understanding was unexpected because White people (as the dominant group) are not typically the targets of racism, therefore most cannot claim to fully understand a lived experience with racism. In fact, Holoien (2015) found that White people–especially those with greater desire to affiliate with Black people–are judged by Black people to overestimate how well they understand racism.

Positive reframing was a more insensitive response than claimed understanding. In fact, positive reframing was consistently rated as the least supportive type of response across scenarios, it was even worse than the filler comments provided in the racial condition. Compared to filler comments, positive reframing responses conveyed less understanding and validation. However, positive reframing was rated as more caring than filler, suggesting that this type of response was perceived as well-intentioned.

Furthermore, ratings of negative validation and positive reframing diverged greatly when participants attributed the racist experience to the POC's race, such that negative validation was seen as even more supportive in the racial disclosure context. Thus, when people acknowledged

that a racial discrimination experience was due to racism, they were more likely to see negative validation as more supportive than positive reframing. Knowing when to acknowledge race was important for facilitating positive interracial interactions, Apfelbaum and colleagues (2008) found that when White people ignored race in race-relevant situation, Black perceivers had more negative interpersonal perceptions towards Whites (e.g., colder non-verbal behaviour, greater racial prejudice). However, when race was ignored in non-racial situations, Black perceivers had more positive interpersonal perceptions towards White people (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). Similarly, the present study found that perceptions of social support shifted when people acknowledged race in race-relevant (vs. non-racial) scenarios, such that negative validation was especially preferred over positive reframing. POC and liberals were more likely to acknowledge racism, as well as people who saw themselves as more empathetic, less agreeable, more personally driven to be unprejudiced, and those who were less frequent Facebook users.

Conversely, making an internal attribution to the discloser's personality reduced the perceived supportiveness gap between positive reframing and negative validation, such that people saw negative validation comments as less helpful the more people thought the racial discrimination experience was caused by the POC's personality (although this relationship was only marginally significant). Filler comments when seen as less supportive than positive reframing when participants thought the racist experience was caused by the POC, this pattern was reversed when participants thought racism was to blame, such that positive reframing was actually worse than filler comments. Interestingly, correlational evidence suggests that participants thought reframing a racist experience was helpful when they thought the POC was overreacting.

Limitations

This study had many strengths and limitations worth noting. A main strength is that we used an empirical, fully within-participant design, which provided greater statistical power than a between-participants design. With this design, we could compare the same participant's responses across racial and non-racial conditions, to see how race influenced perceptions of social support. We also used multi-level modeling approach to cluster participants' responses at the scenario-level, comment-level, and participant-level. This clustering allowed us to analyze how participant own ratings (i.e., supportiveness ratings, strength of attributions, individual differences) varied across racial and non-racial conditions.

One limitation was that the study material included a limited range of social support types, comments, and reactions. We focused mostly on emotional support, however close relationship research has identified informational, esteem, social network, and tangible support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). Also, we only included positive, well-intended reactions instead of adverse reactions that can happen in real-life such as mockery, rejection, and blaming. Also, although the racist scenarios included was meant to be an "everyday" experience in terms of severity, it would be interesting to see how participants perceived the severity and whether high/low severity influenced perceptions of social support. Future studies can expand the number of comments, reactions, and scenarios (e.g., types, severity) that are included. Additionally, the POC discloser was either a Black or East Asian person, future research can explore whether results generalize to disclosers from a wider range of races/ethnicities (i.e., indigenous, Latine, Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern).

Another limitation was the online context of this study, which limits reactions to text and emojis. Online text-context does not allow for non-verbal reactions such as body language and

eye contact. Additionally, this study only used convenience sampling, namely, undergraduate psychology students from University of Waterloo. Future studies should consider designing an in-person study and recruiting from a more diverse population.

Implications and Future Directions

When it comes to supporting POC who share their experience with racial discrimination, White people are better off giving validating responses than reframing responses. POC and White observers agreed that validating responses were more helpful for interracial interactions involving social support for racial disclosures. As well, observers did not expect White people to support other Whites individuals in a different manner than POC for non-racial negative experiences, dispelling the lay belief that White people "support their own" in a specific way. Of course, this is a broad assertion to make about how Whites should support POC, given the diversity within each group. As such, future studies should disaggregate broad demographic categories such as "POC" and "Whites" to compare how specific racial/ethnic groups think about racism and social support.

When considering potential underlying mechanism as to why validating responses were perceived as more supportive than reframing responses, race attributions emerged as a robust moderator between support responses (i.e., validating vs reframing). Specifically, people who made stronger race attributions were more likely to see validating responses as more helpful for POC who have shared their racial discrimination experiences. The opposite was true for people that made stronger personality attribution, such that the more people blamed the individual for being responsible for their negative experience, the more people thought reframing responses were helpful. Blaming people for their own misfortunes and then telling them to "look at the silver linings" or doubt that the experience was really "all bad" or even see it as a "learning

experience" can be especially harmful in racial context. Preliminary results from this study show that for POC sharing a racial discrimination experience, White observers are more likely to make personal attribution, while POC are likely to make more race attribution. Such "victim-blaming" is detrimental in the racial context because this belief tells POC that they are responsibility for other people's racist behaviours, when really the onus of racism should be on the perpetrator. As well, when someone is sharing a sensitive and sometimes painful experience with racism, POC are likely not looking to White people for "solutions" as to how to navigate racism, given that racial socialization often happens early on in life. Instead, emotion-focused responses such as validating the negative emotions associated with distressing experiences are more helpful than "problem-solving" support strategies (e.g., reframing). Of course, these conclusions do not mean that people who engage in reframing responses are "bad"; in contrast, this problem-solving approach can be seen as the support provider trying to be caring (although this solution-focused approach was seen as less validating, understanding, and overall supportive when people are disclosing or "venting" about racial and non-racial negative experiences).

Another explanation as to why race attribution influences perceptions of support responses is noticing that racism is occurring in the first place. White people tend to be less likely to acknowledge racism and less accurate at identifying when a situation is due to racism compared to POC. Failure to acknowledge that racial discrimination is occurring can be a barrier for providing helpful social support to POC experiencing racism. People need to not only acknowledge racism, but also be able to accurately identify when discriminatory behaviours are occurring (instead of simply saying "everything is racist"). Support providers who are able to locate the source of the recipient's distress can provide more helpful social support because they

can utilize more appropriate forms of support that are tailored to the recipient's situation (i.e., emotion-focus vs problem-focus).

In conclusion, these empirical studies are a first step in developing a framework for how to effectively support POC experiencing racism. Future goals are to disentangle when support providers, specifically White people, should "step up" vs. "step down" when it comes to supporting POC. Such a framework has the potential to create stronger cross-race social networks that benefit diverse communities.

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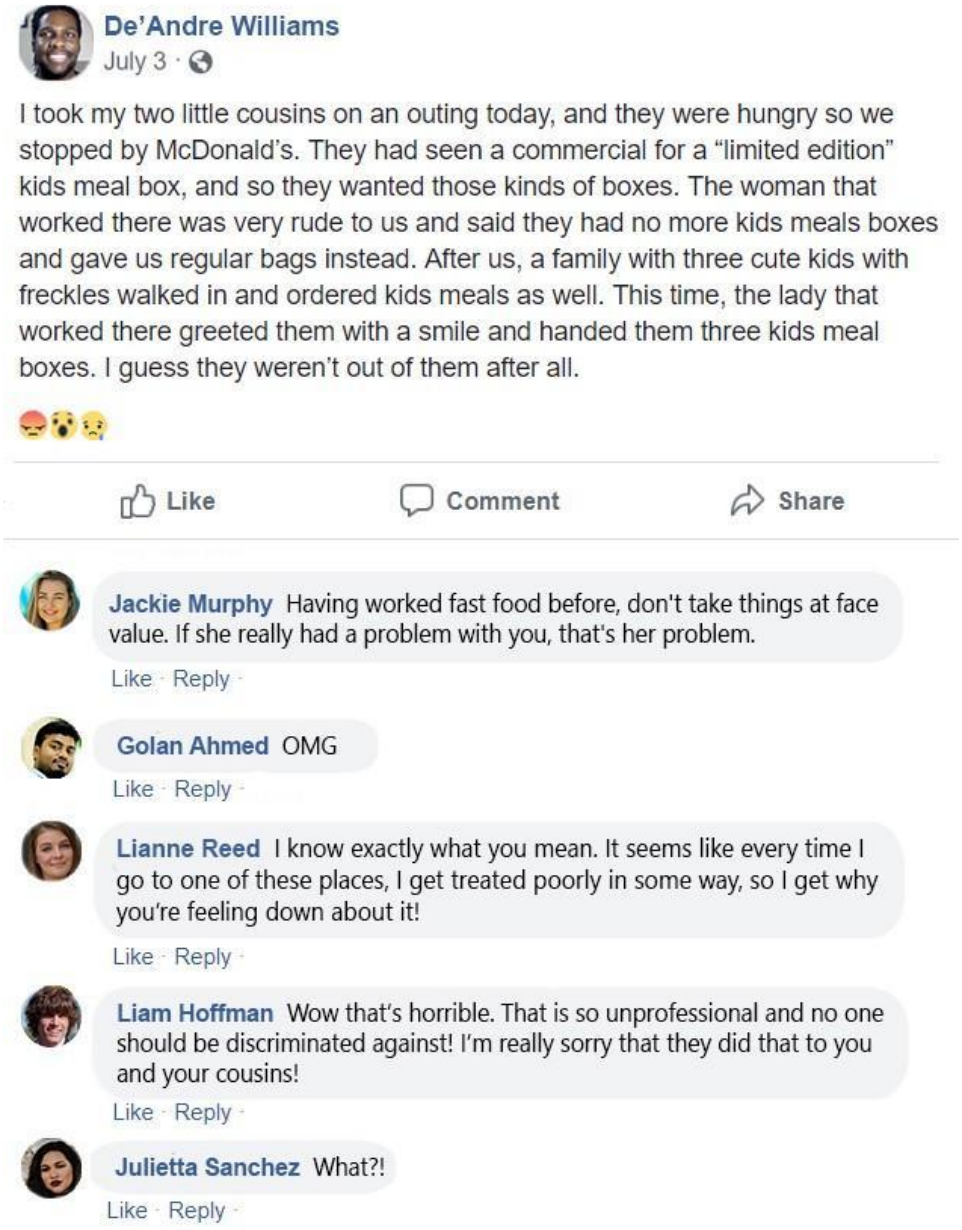
Appendices

Appendix A: Stimulus Materials Sample



To allow you time to read and react, the "Next" button will appear after a brief delay.

Appendix B: Ratings Sample

COMMENT 1 OF 5: Please consider the following reply to this post.

Jackie Murphy Having worked fast food before, don't take things at face value. If she really had a problem with you, that's her problem.

If I had shared this experience, this response would make me feel:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	A great deal 7
disappointed.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
like this person cared about me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
supported.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
like this person intended to make me feel good.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
like this person didn't understand how I felt.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
that this person knew what I was going through.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
like this person thought I was overreacting.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
like my feelings were valid.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
rejected.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
neutral (this response would not affect me).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○