

GAP-Santé Research Unit

Research Thrust

Risk, stress and resilience



2012 – 2017, SSHRC Insight

This research program continues more than twenty years of SSHRC work on psychological stress and risk by examining in depth individual and collective management concepts, in order to increase individuals' and communities' resilience, by their personal and collective sense of effectiveness, adaptation, well-being, and optimal functioning. From contemporary applied issues, such as risks of natural, accidental or terrorist disasters and social crises, the goal is to integrate perception, communication, and public, organizations', and communities' mobilization, within a general risks framework of psychosocial management.

This SSHRC program will therefore contribute to fundamental research and add a unique value for applied implications of emergencies, disasters, terrorism, and other social crises preparation. This research benefits from a unique access to decision makers and emergency stakeholders' network, interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial knowledge transfer in public communication and mobilization. In the pursuit of integration of social issues to technological problems, it is indeed important to better document and articulate the psychosocial impact dimensions of perception, uncertainty, communication, collective decision-making, and mobilization. This will allow developing and testing a preventive psychosocial risk management model by focusing on public and organizations preparation and collaboration.

From well-established methodology in the stress and risk perception sector, the data collections and analyses proposed here are mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative. For Part I (Individual resilience), the objective is to document with an in-depth discourse analysis the essential aspects of preparation, empowerment, and mobilization, to identify the important dimensions of perception and sense of control, to list representations, attitudes, functions, and intentions of prevention and protection behaviours, and to establish the stress and distress level related to certain scenarios. Part II (Organizational resilience) is used to develop an evaluation method to qualify the anticipated different types of risks. Part III (Community resilience) will develop through research-action the inventory, mapping and networking of community resources, and tests their mobilization with a field exercise, by using a quasi-experimental design including public communication intervention and an intervention by multi-sectorial collaborative decision making.

These projects continue the research path established in the last decade by the applicant with

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governmental agencies, professional and associative groups, for a research program of fundamental psychosocial risk and the mobilization of the Canadian population, organizations and communities. This program will increase scientific knowledge while delivering concrete tools to organizations and communities. It will also contribute to the training of a new generation of researchers mastering multiple methodologies.