

Liberté Égalité Fraternité



# BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS IN TIMES OF COVID-19

FRENCH BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS UNIT

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# HOW BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS HAVE BEEN USED TO ADDRESS COVID-19? AN OVERVIEW

### IMPROVING COMMUNICATION & INSIGHTS ABOUT BEHAVIOUR DURING COVID-19

- Confinement
- Deconfinement (support to mission Castex)
- Governmental website & communication

#### **PROJECTS**

- Nursing homes (EHPAD)
- Consumer protection: inform citizens about what to do to avoid new types of frauds that have emerged during COVID-19
- Physical activity: encourage French citizens to engage in physical activity at home

# IMPROVING COMMUNICATION & INSIGHTS ABOUT BEHAVIOUR DURING COVID-19 (1)



Kits: education, transports, associations, work
Elevators, summer holiday...
Etc.



General recommendations & operational inspirations



# IMPROVING COMMUNICATION & INSIGHTS ABOUT BEHAVIOUR DURING COVID-19 (2)

# PRINCIPLES

- Use as many visual aids as possible
- Less information is more information
- Tell people what to do and what not to do
- □ Make the danger visible
- □ Call to duty rather than personal interest
- Inform about social norms especially less visible ones
- Don't be reassuring if the situation isn't
- □ Make peace with uncertainty and talk about it

- □ Stay humble
- □ Rely on the trust people have in science
- Rely of influencers and the power of communities
- □ Take into account differences in contexts

# PROJECTS (1)

 Nursing homes: phone interviews in order to understand context in highly exposed nursing homes and avoid similar scenario in other nursing homes

#### Interesting Insights:

Overcommunication (attentional limitations):

- Send less information (only once or twice per week)... Yet less communication may be risky as it requires to arbitrate on what is vital and what is not → Risk aversion.
- Alternatively: put all information on a platform and occasionally send the most important elements

Habituation and cognitive fatigue:

- Cognitive and physical fatigues may impair decision-making and lead to more impulsivity and some complacency after many working hours.
- Designate "ultra-vigilant" referents each day.

Risk exposure and risk perception:

- Different groups are exposed to the virus and its risks to varying extents (e.g., healthcare practitioners are more exposed).
- When we go out, we do not see all the individuals who respect confinement guidelines.
- Put more emphasis on what we do not see.

# PROJECTS (2)

 Consumer protection: inform citizens on how to avoid new types of frauds that have emerged during COVID-19



• **Physical activity:** encourage French citizens to practice physical activity at home



# THE TEAM'S STRENGHTS



Close ties with an ecosystem of researchers & experts (webinar)

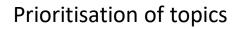


Close ties with other international behavioural insights teams



French behavioural insights community







Team flexibility & reactiveness

### COVID-19 SPECIFIC CHALLENGES



Structural challenges

• Masks, tests, etc.



#### Immediate response vs. scientific rigour:

- Difficult to perform randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in times of crisis, due to time constraints
- Consider **scientific literature** when possible: parallel research projects that have drawn evidencebased conclusions of what works and what does not
- Example : **nursing homes** → had to deliver interview synthesis within 2 days
  - => phone interviews: less time-consuming for health workers than filling long questionnaires
  - Allowed us to tackle sensitive and emotional topics in a diplomatic manner (avoid questionnaire ambiguity on touchy issues).

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



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Slides adapted from Mariam Chammat (2020)