

Initiatives of Belgian psychologists in response to the covid19 pandemic

Since the start of the pandemic, Belgian psychologists have been very active in research and policy advice on different psychological issues raised by the pandemic.

Several of these initiatives might be relevant also in an international context. We highlight here three important initiatives.

Special issue on Psychology and COVID19 in *Psychologica Belgica*, the official journal of the Belgian Association for Psychological Sciences (BAPS)

<https://www.psychologicabelgica.com/collections/special/psychology-and-covid-19/>

This special collection presents psychological studies that shed light on preventive behaviors in response COVID19, the (non)adoption of behavior to protect ourselves and others from getting infected, and the impact of COVID19 on integration in our daily lives. Apart from the immediate threat to public health, the pandemic has also fueled economic and social stressors, further exacerbated by confinement measures to restrain the spread of the virus. The studies included in this special collection address also long-term psychological effects of the pandemic on individuals, communities, and societies as a whole.

So far, thirteen papers have been published. Papers are still being added.

Expert Group on Psychology & Corona

<https://en.bfp-fbp.be/psychology-corona>

The expert group consists of researchers in motivation, social, clinical and health psychology, as well as members of professional associations of psychologists in Belgium. It was a grassroots initiative of colleagues who felt that the expertise of behavioral scientists and professional psychology was insufficiently represented in different expert panels and policy committees. The activities of the group started early May 2020 after several psychologists had taken individual initiatives to contribute to the debate in media and at the level of policy making. This initiative is supported by the Belgian Federation of Psychologists (BFP-FBP).

The group has the following aims:

- Put forward a conceptual framework on corona-related behavior as a basis for strategic advice
- Collect and disseminate information about ongoing psychological research related to COVID19
- Write and distribute regular short reports with practical and concrete do's/don'ts
- Develop visibility and building up a direct relationship with media/journalists and committees of other experts and policy makers
- Become the contact point for questions by media and policy makers on corona-related behavior

Motivation barometer

<https://motivationbarometer.com/en/>

This is a scientific research project bridging theory and practice based on interdisciplinary and interuniversity cooperation (UGent, UCLouvain, KULeuven, ULB). The group is composed of four professors and six researchers working in the domains of clinical, health, motivational, and social psychology.

Three main topics are addressed by the motivation barometer:

1) MOTIVATION AND COMMUNICATION

How does the motivation to follow the measures and the willingness to be vaccinated evolve throughout the crisis?

2) GENERAL MENTAL WELL-BEING

How is the mental health of the population evolving?

3) SPECIFIC THEMES AND TARGET GROUPS

What are the challenges for specific target groups (e.g. elderly, students, parents, etc.) and what are the psychological advantages and disadvantages of specific themes (e.g. boredom)?

The group working on the Motivation barometer published on a regular basis scientific reports (so far 40), including practical recommendations for the population and the political authorities. We also published scientific papers and toolkits.