

## CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

### Research Agenda-Setting Paper

*This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.*

#### Working Group Name:

Redefining Family Under COVID-19

#### Working Group Description:

COVID-19 is an inverted disaster wherein family can be both an asset and a burden. Infrastructure is intact, water is potable, power is running, yet the challenges to the maintenance of social order persist. Where family is often an asset in disaster preparation, survival, and recovery, the nature of COVID-19 requires social distance and isolation, preventing care work from retaining its traditional forms, while simultaneously keeping families together through spatial confinement. COVID-19 also demands the spatial rupture as well as the emotional congealing of what we refer to as social kin families—those of first responders, co-workers, neighbors, and even athletic teams and clubs into new systems of care, as the support work once completed by familial kin is now shared within different identity communities. This Working Group consists of ten (10) separate projects focusing on childcare, LGBTQIA+, disability, immigration, medicine, coping strategies, and sports during the pandemic. Each project operationalizes the family (broadly defined) as a key unit of analysis.

#### Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:

Priority Research Topics	Potential Research Questions
1. The Impact of Complete Social and Economic Shutdown on Family Life in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a rise in domestic violence in Indian families during the COVID-19 shutdown?</li> </ul>
2. The Impact of COVID-19 on the Lived Realities of North Americans who are Disabled, Living with a Chronic Illness, and Their Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are people who have one or more disabilities and their families experiencing COVID-19 and social distancing/shelter-in-place policies?</li> </ul>

3. The Impact and Resilience of COVID-19 on Economically Impoverished Families in Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways are economically marginalized families showing resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic?</li> </ul>
4. The Impact of COVID-19 on Medical Professionals Charged with Diagnosing COVID in a Laboratory Setting, Caring for Patients, and Developing and Testing COVID-19 Vaccines through Phase I-III Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the impact of COVID-19 on the trajectory of work done by medical professionals—from diagnosis and treatment to vaccine testing and production</li> </ul>
5. The Impact of Journaling during the COVID-19 Pandemic for Two Vulnerable Populations: Seniors and Children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect the target population’s perceptions of their own mental and physical health?</li> </ul>
6. The Impact of COVID-19 on Family Closeness and Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do individuals use interpersonal communication to make sense of COVID-19?</li> <li>• Is COVID-19 drawing families closer together or causing disruption?</li> </ul>
7. The Impact of COVID-19 on Children’s Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do pandemic safety plans look like in childcare centers? How are they implemented? How will “community” spread be handled?</li> </ul>
8. The Impact of COVID-19 on Familial and Residential Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do gender, oral history and stories of displacement combine with other disciplines of architecture, housing, preservation and community engagement to inform participatory practices at the household and neighborhood level?</li> </ul>
9. The Impact of COVID-19 on Educational Experiences and Outcomes for Students, Families, and Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways is family life affected by changes in K-12 education during COVID-19?</li> </ul>
10. The Impact of the Loss of Athletic Facilities on the Perceived Mental and Physical Well-being of Athletes due to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways has athletic fitness been redefined during the COVID-19 shutdown?</li> <li>• How does the closure of such facilities affect family fitness and health?</li> </ul>

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### **Ethical / Methodological Considerations:**

Our group has a number of independent scholars who are unaffiliated with college or universities. As a result, human subject review is a pressing methodological concern. We are addressing this issue by requiring all of our Working Group members to complete CITI training and provide a copy of the certificate that is issued at the end of this course. A second concern is how group members will be carrying out interviews with children. Parental assent is required, and specific care must be taken when engaging with minors in social research contexts. A third concern involves how the research questions and methods proposed by this Working Group perpetuate or challenge marginalization of marginalized groups.

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### **Other Frameworks, Considerations for Collaboration, and/or Resources:**

The working group will be structured using the Collective Method, which is a metamethod that transforms the typical working group experience into a more rigorous mechanism for in vivo peer-reviewed project design and development, scholarly support, and analytic review. Specifically, the collective method is

defined as: “an integrated, reflexive process of research design and implementation in which a diverse group of scholars studying a common phenomenon-yet working on independent projects-engage in repeated theoretical and methodological discussions to improve (1) research transparency and accountability and (2) the rigor and efficacy of each member’s unique project” (Pardee, Fothergill, Weber, and Peek 2018: 671). The main objective is to create an open Working Group that can help members develop their independent research studies, provide scholarly feedback at each stage of development for that work, as well as provide a space for completing the often-neglected emotional work for which researchers receive little, if any, training to manage.

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### **Reference:**

Pardee, Jessica, Alice Fothergill, Lynn Weber, and Lori Peek. 2018. “The Collective Method: Collaborative Social Science Research and Scholarly Accountability.” *Qualitative Research* 18(6): 671-688.

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