

COUPLE'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES INVOLVED IN THE FORMULATION OF A LONG TERM HOUSEHOLD BUSHFIRE PLAN

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Communicating Risk: Human Behavior Under Stress (2)

AIM

To identify significant couple/marital judgment and decision-making processes which influence survival-related decision making in forming a bushfire plan. These processes involve long-term planning and preparation decisions, rather than decisions made under imminent bushfire threat.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Broad-spectrum question:

What kind of decision-making processes are involved in couples' long-term bushfire planning and preparation?

That is:

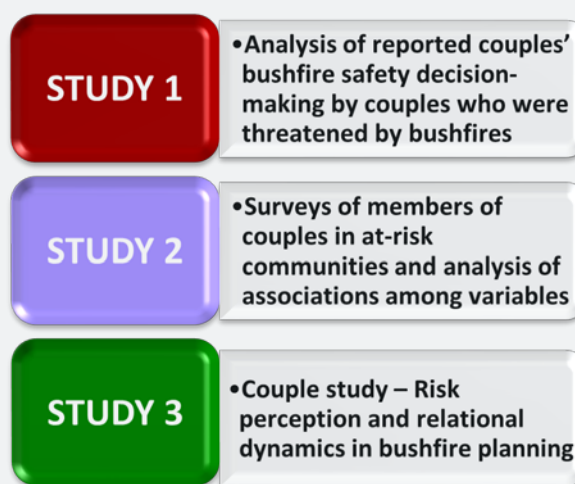
- ⌘ What psychological processes are involved in decision making by couples about long-term planning and preparation to survive bushfire threat?
- ⌘ What are the key relational dynamics which sustain couple's long-term planning and preparation decisions about bushfire safety?
- ⌘ What kinds of relational, cognitive, and affective processes are likely to compromise survival-related decision making processes in formulating a family bushfire plan?

RESEARCH

Relevant factors to be examined:

- ⌘ Bushfire risk perception and engagement
- ⌘ Affective and relational processes
- ⌘ Decision-making styles
- ⌘ Couples' relationship: Attachment and Quality
- ⌘ Gender Role Preferences

METHODOLOGY: the research in three studies



STUDY 1 METHOD: Content analysis of 40 transcripts of Lake Clifton interviews

Transcript example:

Female: "I already had all these box files that had all our passports, wills, documents, insurance, that was all packed". [...] "I packed a couple of bags with clothes and medication".

Male: "We downloaded all the computer stuff onto a Terabyte drive, all the photos and everything".

Major findings of Study 1

- ⌘ Awareness about the risk but only moderate level of concern
- ⌘ Only few couples planned; many made some *ad hoc* preparations
- ⌘ Rather than "WAIT AND SEE" some "**WENT TO SEE**" what the fire was like
- ⌘ Long term preparation focused narrowly on protection of the house
- ⌘ Household bushfire preparation mainly managed by husbands
- ⌘ If threatened by a bushfire in the future, most of these couples would act in the same way as they had on the day of the fire

STUDY 2 METHOD: On-line (or postal) self-report questionnaire ...

... incorporating measures of each of the constructs to be investigated:

- ✓ Decision making styles
- ✓ Attachment styles
- ✓ Quality of relationship
- ✓ Gender role preferences

STUDY 3 METHOD: Observation of joint decision-making tasks

