

LET'S TALK ABOUT DISASTERS &



SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

1) WHAT IS SOCIAL VULNERABILITY?

Social vulnerability refers to the **socio-economic conditions** that lessen a population's ability to prepare for, cope with, and recover from a shock or hazard event.

2) HOW DO DISASTERS AFFECT VULNERABILITY?

Social vulnerability is not a permanent condition. Disasters can both worsen existing inequalities and create new ones.

3) WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT?

Once we identify **what** makes people vulnerable to floods and **how** to assess it, we can begin to address it.

Our goal is to determine **who is most disadvantaged** so that we can reduce their risk and create a more equitable and resilient future for all.



4) HOW CAN SOCIAL VULNERABILITY BE ASSESSED?

A **social vulnerability index**, or SoVI for short, is a **decision-support tool to assess and visualize relative social vulnerability within a specific area**. SoVIs combine different socioeconomic variables (*for example: demographics, income, housing type*) from a dataset, such as the Canadian Census.

SoVIs enable us to compare social vulnerability between areas, such as across cities or between different neighbourhoods. In doing so, we can pinpoint areas that may need extra attention or support!

5) HOW CAN SOVI BE USED TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE RESILIENCE?

SoVIs can be combined with other data, such as flood exposure, to map areas that have both:

- Relative high hazard exposure **AND**
- Relative high social vulnerability

In doing so, we can work to ensure that we are allocating resources, time, and energy to those who need it most!





INCLUSIVE RESILIENCE

In 2019, Red Cross and Public Safety Canada started a four-year project, the **Emergency Public Awareness Contribution Program**. This program develops and tests materials, methods, and tools to engage and empower communities in culturally relevant ways. It relies on continuous monitoring and evaluation to enhance emergency and disaster preparedness.

As part of this program, the **Inclusive Resilience** project aimed to promote inclusive approaches, tools, and actions that foster inclusive disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness across Canada. As part of this project, P4A conducted research on public outreach and risk communications, and on understanding and identifying where disproportionate social vulnerabilities exist within a community.

uwaterloo.ca/inclusive-resilience/

