



UNIVERSITÉ  
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Chaire de recherche  
en santé mentale, autogestion  
et travail, propulsée par Beneva



PRESS RELEASE  
For immediate release

## **Science confirms it: experiencing heritage can reduce burnout and anxiety**

**Québec City, November 25, 2025** – Three new studies conducted by VITAM – Centre de recherche en santé durable and Université Laval reveal that experiencing heritage at Le Monastère des Augustines helps reduce burnout and improve well-being, especially among healthcare workers and caregivers. The findings show that the Augustinian Sisters’ tangible and intangible heritage (history, caring values, architecture, and artefacts) activates multiple psycho-environmental mechanisms that foster well-being. By transferability, the results establish the potential role of heritage institutions as key contributors to individual and collective health.

### **A serene place to stay and work**

A first study, conducted with 344 overnight guests and 34 staff members and partners of Le Monastère, highlights that the Augustinian Sisters’ tangible heritage creates an immediate sense of refuge. The site is perceived as safe and soothing, reducing stress, sadness, and burnout. The beauty of the heritage encourages contemplation and “a timeless pause,” allowing people to step back from daily routines. The experience of the site also nurtures self-compassion, helping individuals adopt a gentler and more balanced approach in both personal and professional lives.

### **Lasting benefits for caregivers**

A second study, conducted with 73 caregivers, shows a significant decrease in burnout and anxiety after their respite stay at Le Monastère, along with several well-being improvements that persist up to three months afterward. The Augustinian Sisters’ intangible heritage supports self-compassion and reinforces the importance of the caregiving role, reminding participants of the importance of caring for themselves in order to care for others. Many reported that teachings inspired by the Augustinian Sisters help them better manage day-to-day stress.

### **A place of respite for healthcare workers**

A third study, involving 73 healthcare workers who attended a rejuvenation day at Le Monastère, reveals that the environment provides a restorative space that helps reduce emotional exhaustion. Immersion in the calm atmosphere and caring values inherited from the Augustinian Sisters encourages participants to realign and prioritize self-care—an essential condition for sustainable practice. For most, the experience significantly strengthened their sense of purpose at work,

reconnecting them with the roots of their profession. It also fostered renewed compassion for themselves and others.

The studies were conducted by Simon Coulombe (professeur titulaire au Département des relations industrielles et titulaire de la Chaire de recherche en santé mentale, autogestion et travail, propulsée par Beneva), Émilie Dionne (chercheuse régulière, VITAM – Centre de recherche en santé durable), and Yan Leblond (professionnel de recherche, VITAM – Centre de recherche en santé durable).

### Quotes

*“Our work shows that heritage, when intentionally mobilized, can become a powerful lever for well-being, particularly for healthcare workers who evolve in demanding work environments. To our knowledge, these are the first studies to examine in depth how both tangible and intangible heritage can be activated to support meaning and vitality. These results open the door to new approaches in well-being promotion.”*

- Simon Coulombe, Chaire de recherche en santé mentale, autogestion et travail, propulsée par Beneva, à l’Université Laval

*“Cultural heritage is emerging as an essential component of sustainable health, carrying multiple positive impacts for community well-being.”*

- Émilie Dionne, VITAM – Centre de recherche en santé durable

*“Since the opening of Le Monastère in 2015, we had the intuition that heritage could act as a lever for holistic health. These studies confirm it. We hope to continue this collaboration with researchers, professionals, and the community to make Le Monastère a true living laboratory in heritage and health.”*

- Isabelle Duchesneau, Le Monastère des Augustines

To access the full results, please consult the following links (in French only):

- [Rapport contribution du patrimoine au bien-être](#)
- [Rapport patrimoine proche aidance](#)
- [Rapport répit soignants](#)

### About VITAM — Centre de recherche en santé durable

**VITAM** is a research centre part of Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux (CIUSSS) de la Capitale-Nationale affiliated with Université Laval, bringing together about 400 researchers, students, and staff members. VITAM’s mission is to develop and share knowledge to help promote and improve sustainable health in communities through participatory, intersectoral, and socially responsible approaches. Sustainable health is defined as healthy minds and bodies living in healthy environments on a healthy planet.

### **About Chaire de recherche en santé mentale, autogestion et travail, propulsée par Beneva, à l'Université Laval**

Led by Simon Coulombe, PhD in Community Psychology, the [Chaire de recherche en santé mentale, autogestion et travail](#), propulsée par Beneva, aims to develop and mobilize knowledge to improve psychological well-being in the workplace. It studies self-management, designs evidence-based interventions, and explores innovative approaches—including artistic and cultural ones—in partnership with organizations such as Le Monastère des Augustines. Through its local, national, and international collaborations, the Chaire de recherche supports workplaces in implementing practices that foster balance and mental health among workers and their relatives.

### **About Le Monastère des Augustines**

[Le Monastère des Augustines](#) occupies the former wings of the Hôtel-Dieu de Québec monastery (1639), which gave rise to the first hospital in the Americas north of Mexico. Completely restored and refurbished, and open since August 2015, this non-profit organization offers visitors a unique wellness experience, as well as several original ways to connect with the Augustinian Sisters' heritage, in a non-denominational approach: experiential accommodation, museum, archives center, global health and cultural activities, mindful eating, boutique, specialized global health care services and room rentals.

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### **Media Contact**

Caroline Maheu, Director, Communications and Marketing  
Le Monastère des Augustines  
[cmaheu@monastere.ca](mailto:cmaheu@monastere.ca)  
581 985-3457