

TIPS TO ENCOURAGE SAFE BEHAVIOR DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



1. Appeal to concern for others.

Research shows that a human's first instinct in a disaster is to act "prosocially" - meaning, acting to benefit the welfare of others rather than doing what benefits oneself. Studies show people were significantly more willing to take recommended pandemic precautions if the messaging about doing so focused on benefiting others.

2. Be a role model.

We're subtly influenced by the behaviors of those around us. So, if we are exposed to people who are generally adhering to recommended guidelines, we are more apt to adhere to them ourselves, and that behavior can spread in a community.



3. Appeal to common humanity and shared values.

Our tendency to go along with what we see others doing depends on our personal identities. It's important to highlight our common humanity and remember our shared moral values. We can encourage people to remember their identities as Americans, parents, or community members, to help the norm of mask wearing and social distancing spread.



4. Make the messages authoritative and consistent.

Messaging matters when it comes to individual behavior. This means that consistent messaging from authorities about the importance of maintaining social distancing and other forms of protection is helpful for encouraging ongoing compliance.



5. Make the positive impact visible.

People need to hear that their actions are making a difference. Research suggests that we can encourage compliance with prevention measures by reporting on the benefits of accrued cooperation.



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