

EXITING LOCKDOWN



As countries pass their peaks of COVID epidemic and start to lift restrictions, how do we communicate this transition, while both signaling the presence of risk and motivating the population to gradually resume life as usual?

ABOUT THE PLAYBOOK

Playbook for Pandemic Response, an initiative led by Final Mile, is a real time documentation of strategies and solutions impacting behavioral outcomes critical to pandemic response that can immediately be used by a variety of stakeholders. A practitioner toolkit is

built weekly on a critical behavior theme and compiled into the comprehensive playbook. Elaboration and additional resources / references on the contents of this toolkit are available on the [Pandemic Playbook website](#). Help us build the playbook by submitting ideas [here](#).

Note: Click on the corresponding links to read detailed posts

MASS COMMUNICATION

WHAT MIGHT WORK

1. The communication during the phase of transition needs to clearly spell out that while that the relaxation is [just a pitstop and not the destination](#). The idea of being in a marathon and being vigilant for a much longer time, will keep the risk available for people.
2. Communication should entail directly [calling out coping fatigue in people](#). While some part of it may be eased, people need to be prepared for more coping in the form of adjusting to changes outside their homes.
3. Communication about phasing plan should be clear and detailed. Communicate that successful exit and continued [lifting of restrictions are conditional](#) on the public adhering to rules and safety actions, and if the spread of infection is under control.

WHAT TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT

1. [Communication projecting end of fear or employing over-reassurance](#) might have an undesired effect by lowering vigilance of people. The focus therefore, should be to keep the fear alive through communication but increase the self-efficacy of people to deal with it.

USER SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

POLICYMAKERS / GOVERNMENTS, PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND EXPERTS

WHAT MIGHT WORK

1. A [phased exit strategy](#) spreads the risk of a second wave over a longer duration, so that it can be monitored and managed better, while immediately providing certain concessions to the public and businesses.
2. Decentralization of the decision at the province, state or even city level would allow for [better risk evaluation and communication](#).
3. In the first phase of easing lockdowns, it is helpful to [acknowledge the coping fatigue of people](#). Providing access to more open, green spaces like parks and allowing small gatherings of family and friends might act as a good motivation to resume all other activities.
4. The trajectory of the pandemic is still uncertain and while relaxing lockdowns, the possibility of both a [second wave and a re-containment plan](#) should be put in place and communicated to the people.
5. The framing of the transition period of relaxations from lockdowns can provide significant cues for desired behaviors. The [choice of framing](#) should be based on the challenges faced and should signal the presence of risk while building motivation.

WHAT TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT

1. If lockdown relaxation guidelines assume a linear drop in risk perception across social groups, then there is potential of failure. A better strategy would be to [contextualize the risk involved in various activities](#) being allowed post lockdown, and tailor messages around preventive behaviours even while engaging in those activities.