

USE OF FACE MASKS



Universal mask usage not only helps prevent spread of virus from infected persons as well as those who are not aware that they are infected, but it can also improve compliance to other protective behaviors by acting as a visible signal and a reinforcement of individual commitment to comply.

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](#).

MASS COMMUNICATION

WHAT MIGHT WORK

01. Build Intent

- [Leverage solidarity](#) while simultaneously allowing for the [expression of individuality](#) within the design of masks.
- Build motivation by [linking behavior to self-image](#) of being more alert and [medically aware](#) to deal with an epidemic.
- [Appeal to the altruism of people](#) and mutual responsibility in collectivist societies and anchor communication to personal safety and protective measure in individualistic societies.
- For long term sustainability, project it as a [sign of mutual assurance](#) and a commitment device so that society could gradually ease into regular life.

02. Enable Access

- Provide [specific instructions](#) for what types of masks individuals should use, where to get masks and how to make masks at home.

03. Help Cope With Inconveniences And Discomfort

- Communicate clearly [what discomforts people](#) should expect and the fact that these are normal and people adapt easily with continued usage.
- Use the reference of [inspirational actors](#) who use mask heavily, like health care providers.
- The discomfort could be [communicated as a trade-off](#) to avoid bigger inconveniences like a more prolonged lockdown.

MASS COMMUNICATION

WHAT TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT

1. Mask usage should [not be promoted standalone](#), and messaging about mask usage should be accompanied by reinforcement of other protective behaviors such as social-distancing and hand hygiene. Mask usage is ineffective by itself and could lead people to slack off on other protective behaviors.

USER SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

POLICYMAKERS / GOVERNMENTS, PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND EXPERTS

WHAT MIGHT WORK

1. While definitive evidence takes time, policy makers should [rely on past experiences](#) and knowledge, and act on precautionary measures such as mask usage, as long as these don't have the potential to do more harm than good.
2. Public health authorities should also [seek advice from experts](#) that study highly unpredictable phenomena, such as complexity experts and risk experts.

WHAT TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT

1. Selective mask usage advisory only for infected, suspected and at-risk populations [may lead to stigma](#) being attached to mask usage.

IMPLEMENTERS AND ENFORCERS / ADMINISTRATORS, LAW ENFORCERS, BUSINESSES

WHAT MIGHT WORK

1. Control and [manage supply](#) to populations at [highest risk](#) of infection (health workers, hot spots) or lowest access to protective measures (low income households).
2. [Mandatory mask requirements](#) are better at driving compliance than voluntary recommendations. [Increase scope and punishments](#) gradually.

WHAT TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT

1. Authorities should be cognizant of community norms around mask usage so as to [not alienate or stigmatize](#) any communities.
2. [Acts of aggression](#) or threats against those that have yet to adopt the new norm of wearing a mask in public must be punished and publicly condemned.
3. Mask usage guidelines should include an [easily consumable decontamination protocol](#) to avoid health risks to users because of prolonged usage.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS / SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS, COMMUNITY LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS

WHAT MIGHT WORK

1. Use specific [community-level framing](#) to communicate actions people are currently taking to provide a signal that change is already occurring at a local level
2. Identify and capacitate 'Social Referents', informal/formal local social leaders (e.g. religious leaders, community leaders), to disseminate the message of adoption of mask wearing.

DESIGN EXAMPLES

Example 01

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE
Step out of the house only with a mask on!

Everyone looks so normal. Anyone could be infected and I will never know for sure. I am glad I have my mask on!

Oh the mask in this heat is so uncomfortable, but at least it's keeping me safe. I am sure it will get easier in a few days.

Provide a heuristic for mask usage

Building on risk rather than altruism, by highlighting asymptomatic nature of the disease.

Nudging to move away from visual heuristics.

Calling out the discomfort in using masks and building empathy.

