Emphasize the Many and the Influential Who Are Wearing Masks

Psychological insight: We often look to how others behave to inform our own decisions.

1. Advertise mask-wearing as common within the community:
   - Use factual statistics which show most people wear masks (e.g., "8 out of 10 Philadelphians mask-up before leaving their homes").
   - Feature the voices of "convert communicators," who once believed mask-wearing was unnecessary, and can tell powerful, nonpolitical stories explaining why they changed their minds.
   - Feature images of many individuals wearing masks.
   - Avoid highlighting accounts of high-risk behaviors (i.e., photos of crowded bars) as these exaggerate its frequency and can create a counterproductive social norm (i.e., "All those people are doing it, so I can too.")

2. Highlight mask-wearing among influential authority figures:
   - Provide information about what scientific and medical experts do (e.g., "Most doctors wear masks every time they leave their homes, even when they're off-duty.")
   - Enlist local leaders and celebrities to post selfies of themselves wearing masks on social media.

3. Invite people to join in on increasing mask-wearing in their community:
   - Emphasize that wearing a mask helps convince others to wear a mask too.
   - Encourage parents to create rituals with their children around mask-wearing.
   - Recommend that people carry extra masks to give to others.

Respect Individual Freedom

Psychological insight: If we perceive a threat to our individual freedom, we can react against what is being advocated. Softening the ask can help mitigate this tendency.

1. Reduce any perceived threat by drawing the focus to individual freedoms:
   - Emphasize that wearing masks is a choice, not a mandate.
   - Communicate to citizens when/where they don't need to wear a mask.
   - Distribute clear masks.

2. Reframe the issue:
   - Create easy-to-understand analogies to other safety measures that individuals are already receptive to (i.e., comparing the life-saving effects of seatbelts to those of masks).
   - Encourage businesses to normalize mask-wearing by integrating it into existing requirements: "No shoes, no shirt, no mask, no service."
   - Celebrate that something as simple as wearing a mask effectively prevents the spread of COVID-19. Treat it as an easy solution rather than a necessary burden.

3. Establish guidance that is unambiguous, categorical, and concise to reduce confusion and eliminate plausible excuses for not wearing a mask.

Make It The Right Thing to Do

Psychological insight: We are more likely to engage in behaviors that are aligned with our morals and values.

1. Emphasize the moral component of wearing a mask:
    *   Communicate the benefit to the community, not just the individual (i.e. do it for others, not for yourself; wearing a mask makes you a hero).
    *   Emphasize reciprocity toward healthcare workers who are risking their lives to care for others.

2. Highlight how mask-wearing is consistent with a person's identity and values:
    *   Ask individuals to reflect on the people that are important to them. Implore them that wearing a mask is a small sacrifice to make to protect friends and family.
    *   When targeting certain groups, seek quotes and images highlighting that masks do not conflict with their values or sense of identity. i.e. Some men may feel that wearing a mask undermines their masculinity. Quotes and imagery should align mask-wearing with independence and strength.

Use Emotional Appeals

Psychological insight: We find emotional appeals far more compelling than even the most staggering health statistics (i.e. rate of infection, death rate, probability of transmission).

1. Remind people that masks reduce the chance of experiencing significant illness about which there are still many unknowns.

2. Emphasize that failing to wear a mask can harm others, and remind people of the guilt they would feel if they infected a friend or loved one.

3. Trigger disgust and aversion to contagion by reminding people that without masks, they are likely to get up close and personal with undesirable germs.

4. Remind people that they may miss out on important life events if they contract COVID-19.

Invite Ownership and Personalization

Psychological insight: We place greater value on things we own and helped create. Opportunities for personalization can increase the perceived value of a mask and promote more frequent use.

1. Distribute masks that can easily be decorated and provide inspiration and instructions.

2. Distribute masks with local sports team logos.

3. Distribute masks with snappy slogans.

4. Convey that masks can be fashion items allowing for self-expression.

Other Resources:

Opinion | There are 3 Things We Have to Do to Get People Wearing Masks — *The New York Times*

Advice for Reducing Undesirable COVID-19 Behaviors — *Influence At Work*

Should you confront someone who isn't wearing a mask? Here's what the experts advise. — *NJ.com*

Secondhand Smoke, Moral Sanctions, and How We Should Respond to COVID-19 — *The Behavioral Scientist*

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