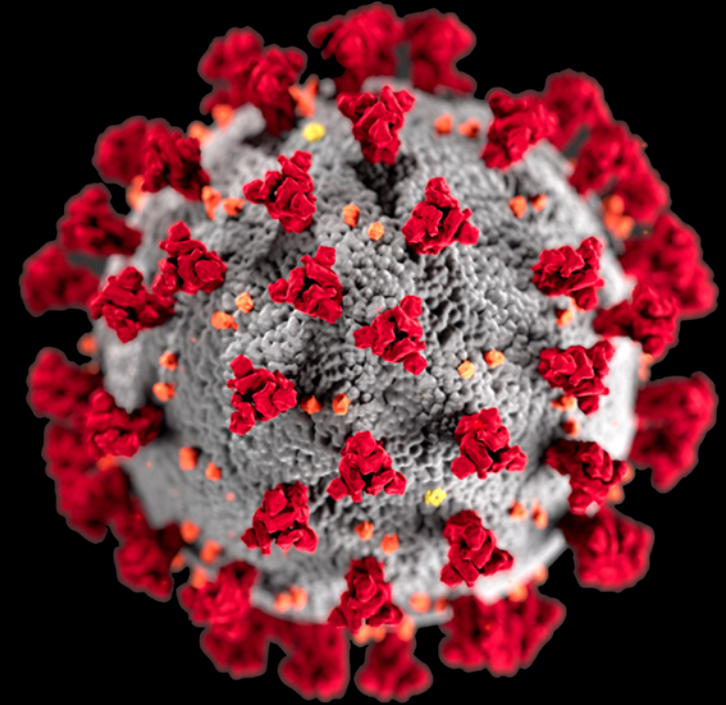


Pandemic Management & Communications

A Local Leader's Guide

#NOCOVID

National Organizing Coalition on Virus Information Distribution
For a full listing of the founding members go to: <https://nocovid.us>



How to Use This

This is a quick and practical guide and toolkit for local leaders to support your efforts to combat the COVID19 pandemic. The recommendations are from a diverse group of behavioral science & health communications experts together with mayors and governors and filmmakers and storytellers. They have seen what works and what doesn't from scientific studies and from past pandemics. But it is up to you--our local leaders-- to tailor this to your own communities. We're just here to support you doing so, as we combat the virus, so we can all get back to work.

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NOCOVID is a non-partisan coalition of state and local government leaders, storytellers and entertainers, doctors and pandemic experts, health communicators, behavioral science and data analysts, historians and influencers.

Why people may not heed the warnings...

“No Evidence Yet”

When a pandemic is coming, it will take hold before there is widespread sickness. People can transmit the disease before they have any symptoms. So they wonder what the big deal is. People are really bad at picturing exponential contagion. They cannot imagine how fast it will grow.

“Not so bad”

They hear it is overhyped and that the sickness is not really so bad. Or maybe not so bad for young people.

“I will beat the odds”

Most people think they can beat the odds (that’s why lotteries work so well). So even if they understand the disease will be widespread, they think they will dodge the worst.

“I don’t see people like me doing it”

Most people take their cues from people they know and trust who are a lot like themselves. If they don’t see and hear those people taking action, they will be reluctant to do so.

“Just can’t live without seeing my friends”

Some feel it is worth the risk because they just cannot imagine being away from close friends. “Besides, none of us are sick.”

...and what to say.

“It’s an invisible killer that is already here.”

“This disease sneaks in and takes hold without sounding the alarm. If you wait for that alarm (lots of sick people) then it is already too late. We need to starve it and cut it off before it does that.” (Use example of other towns that waited too long and are now in real trouble).

“It’s a killer. Some random, some known.”

“While it’s not bad for some, it can kill a lot of others and we just don’t know in advance who it will take down. We do know it will kill the older folks and the vulnerable more than others. That means parents, grandparents, anyone who is fighting cancer or has a weakened immune system.”

“That’s what others thought too...”

“Lot’s of people thought that-- then they got hit hard.” (Use examples of people like them—perhaps in other towns or videos from news reports of people who regret they did not take action).

“Smart people like you are already doing it...”

Use local influencers targeted to matching ingroups to send this message. People need messengers they feel are part of their own group. Warning that “no one is doing it” backfires because people then think that is the norm.

“You’ll be back together soon but don’t be a killer.”

“You guys feel fine now but remember that you can spread the disease before you feel sick. You can be a carrier even if you never feel sick. And while you all are fine, you can infect others without knowing it and end up killing them by accident. It’s really easy to save lives now.” (Share the joy some are finding in video parties and family reunions).

Social Distancing: Best Messaging Match for Your Community

You know your own community best. Using messaging that does not sound or feel like it comes from your community will not work very well—or could even backfire. So look at the descriptions below to find the one that feels closest to yours, and then find the messaging that may resonate best with your community.

My community would describe itself as...

More conservative. More traditional. Values first responders and military extremely highly. Values law & order. Values individual liberties. Believes business solutions and free markets work best. Believes you are what you make of yourself--don't blame the world and don't expect a handout. Not big on global, international, or government intervention.



Messaging that works best for my community.

"Keep our community strong. Health security is as important as national security. You wouldn't let a fellow soldier, or first responder get needlessly taken out by the enemy. Do your duty. Our doctors and nurses are like medics in battle right now. Support your local businesses –but do so by doing take out and delivery or buying gift cards to celebrate when we win. We're neighbors here, and we need everyone to do their part and not let each other down. Stay home. Stay strong. And keep your distance."

More liberal. More pro-change. Values scientists, academics and institutions very highly. Values taking care of the most vulnerable first and believes government should take a lead role. Believes in redistribution of resources to help the neediest. It's not your fault if you were born into a bad situation. Believes in closing all gaps such as income, gender bias, LGBTQ bias. Suspicious of markets being unfair and think they need more regulation.



"We know the science proves that the only way to beat this virus is to starve it to death by not letting it spread. It can spread without your knowing because you can be contagious without symptoms. So to protect our treasures like our grandparents, and to guard those who are too weak to fight off this enemy like cancer patients-- just stay home. Their lives are in your hands right now. When this is over you can feel proud to have protected our community."

R.E.S.T – Physical Distancing Formula for Young People

Young people struggle mightily with the whole idea of physical distancing. It strikes them as the most painful thing imaginable. They also may feel people are all the time worrying more than necessary. Their brains have not yet come into balance when it comes to risk assessment, which does not happen until you get into your late twenties. So they have a hard time worrying about any future consequences. Just scolding or lecturing does not work for many young people. People—especially young people—struggle with these forces. So deploy the R.E.S.T. method.

MAKE IT REAL

Let them know the threat is real. This is killing people. They may not believe officials, but they may believe influencers, celebrities or sports stars they admire, or peers who have had the disease.

MAKE IT EASY

Emphasize how easy this is to do (rather than focus on the pain of isolation). Use testimonials of some who thought it might suck but now are finding ways to connect and have fun.

MAKE IT SOCIAL

Using influencers that resonate with this group, suggest the more fun aspects of this, from the Zoom parties, to House Party (app) gatherings, to gaming.

MAKE IT TIMELY

The earlier we do it and the more people get on board, the shorter this will last. But the cost for not getting on board is that this could stretch on for a much longer time.

Enlisting Influencers

People often comply with requests better when they come from someone they admire, trust or know, or who comes from their own in-group. To scale up your efforts, you will need to enlist them and give them a unified approach but allow them to custom tailor the messaging to their own audience.

Deputize an army of volunteers

Enlist an army and give them pride through social capital and acknowledgment (such as a temporary title and badge). Even the most charitable people sometimes like to be acknowledged in front of others for their good deeds.

Enlist local radio & TV talent

Ask radio hosts, TV anchors, talk show hosts, podcast hosts.

Make sure they have the same key messages so people hear them repeated from different sources, but allow them to use their own words so long as the core message is correct.

Social media influencers

Within the local community, there may be Instagrammers or TikTok video creators who have an audience of thousands and are effectively highlighting the more fun aspects of staying at home. Assign someone on your team to conduct research using relevant and local hashtags (i.e. #ugoodchallenge #quarantinelifelife #your town name) such as #newportnews) to identify influencers. Then direct message (DM) them to encourage specific messaging and/or amplify their content using your social media presence. Search Instagram by location (your town).

Local Leaders Best Practices & Resources 1

National League of Cities	Best practice sharing by cities around the USA.	https://covid19.nlc.org
National Association of Counties	What steps counties have taken. Resources.	https://www.naco.org
United States Conference of Mayors	Best practice sharing by cities around the USA.	https://www.usmayors.org/issues/covid-19/
National Governors' Association	State-by-state tracking of what each state is doing.	https://www.nga.org/coronavirus/#actions
International City/County Management Assoc. (ICMA)	Resources for local governments	https://icma.org/coronavirus-crisis-response-resources-your-community
New York State Conference of Mayors	Templates and resources useful for all cities.	https://www.nycom.org/2-uncategorised/1404-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance
Strong Towns	Best practice sharing by cities around the USA.	https://www.strongtowns.org/stmedia

Local Leaders Best Practices & Resources 2

US Chamber of Commerce	Coronavirus response toolkit	https://www.uschamber.com/coronavirus-response-toolkit
Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives	Coronavirus response best practices for business.	https://resources.acce.org/crisismanagement
Small Business Guide	Loans, Emergency Paycheck Protection, Stimulus Aid	https://www.uschamber.com/co/small-business-coronavirus
MultiState COVID-19 Policy Tracker	State and county policies tracked and mapped.	https://www.multistate.us/pages/covid-19-policy-tracker
National League of Cities Local Action Tracker	Continuously updated list of actions taken in each city.	https://covid19.nlc.org/resources/covid-19-local-action-tracker/
AARP Mutual Aid Community	People helping people.	https://aarpcommunityconnections.org
Coronavirus Guide for Supermarkets, Grocery	Full set of guidelines and best practices	https://necsi.edu/coronavirus-guide-for-supermarkets-grocery-stores-and-pharmacies

Supermarket Best Practices

- Take temperature of each employee as they come on shift and as they leave for the day.
- Post a sign(s) at the entrance(s) and throughout the store alerting customers that they must follow the 6ft separation rule.
- Announce social distancing expectations through PA system periodically throughout the day.
- Set up floor markers in stores to show people how far apart they need to be from each other when waiting to check out.
- Post “wash before consuming” signs in produce sections.
- Regularly clean the conveyor belt with a disinfectant and sanitizing wipes between shoppers checking out.
- Have designated employee(s) regularly walk the floor to ensure that customers are following social distancing rules
- Consider staggering the number of shoppers in the store at one time to allow for increased distance between shoppers.
- Control the flow of shoppers through the store by use of one-way aisles
- Place shield guards in front of the cashier and/or bagger that may not have the ability to stand 6ft away from the customer.

Supermarket Best Practices (examples)



Take temperature of all employees and, if possible, customers. Reject at 100°.



Offer special hours for seniors.



Make one-way aisles and put most-commonly sought goods at periphery.



Mark floors to space out people at checkouts and one-way direction flow.



Sanitize periodically or between customers. Include carts and belts. Put up plastic barriers if possible.



Employees should wear gloves. Some recommend masks as well.