We all have a responsibility to slow the spread of COVID-19. It is imperative that we protect each other by doing things like wearing masks and practicing social distancing so we can return to a strong economy and normal day-to-day activities.

Our finest medical researchers are clear: If we fail, there will be even worse consequences for our families and our economy.

We all have a personal responsibility to slow the spread of the pandemic and eliminate the virus as quickly as possible.

Therefore, it’s imperative that we take an effective, fact-based approach … by doing things like wearing face masks and practicing social distancing.

Let’s do what needs to be done now so we can return to a strong economy and normal day-to-day activities.

**Sample Language**

**SHORT:** We all have a responsibility to slow the spread of COVID-19. It is imperative that we protect each other by doing things like wearing masks and practicing social distancing so we can return to a strong economy and normal day-to-day activities.

**LONGER:** We all want a return to normal, and we all want the economy and our schools to open. And we also want to protect our family and friends from the pandemic.

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**CHANGING THE COVID CONVERSATION**

**Communications Cheat Sheet**

Effective communication is always important in public health, but it’s never been more important to understand the perceptions of Americans and modify your language accordingly. These recommendations are based on the “Changing the COVID Conversation” poll, conducted by Frank Luntz in partnership with the de Beaumont Foundation, Nov. 21-22, 2020. Learn more at debeaumont.org/changing-the-covid-conversation.

**TIPS**

**FOCUS ON THE BENEFITS OF SUCCESS, NOT JUST THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE.**

- We understand that people are tired, but public health measures are not the enemy — they are the roadmap for a faster and more sustainable recovery.
- Scientists and medical professionals are developing and preparing to distribute a safe and effective vaccine that will help us return to normal day-to-day activities.

**EMPHASIZE THAT THE SCIENCE IS SETTLED.**

- The science is clear. There is no doubt that mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing reduce the spread of COVID-19 and saves lives.

**DON’T EXPECT PEOPLE TO TAKE PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES BECAUSE IT’S GOOD FOR THEM. SPEAK TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT TAKING THESE MEASURES.**

- Because COVID-19 is highly infectious, one infection can quickly grow into an outbreak that could shutter a neighborhood, community, or entire city.

**DON’T LET POLITICS OR PARTISANSHIP SLIP INTO YOUR MESSAGING, BECAUSE THAT WILL HARM YOUR CREDIBILITY. KEEP YOUR LANGUAGE NEUTRAL AND REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZE “EVERY” AND “ALL.”**

**Use These Words MORE:**

- the pandemic
- eliminate/
eradicate/
get rid of
the virus
- social distancing
- an effective and
safe vaccine
- protocols
- face masks
- essential
workers
- personal
responsibility
- a stay-at-
home order
- public
health
agencies
- policies that are
based on facts/
science/data

**Use These Words LESS:**

- the coronavirus
defeat/crush/knock out the virus
- physical distancing
- a vaccine
developed quickly
- orders/
imperatives/
decrees
- facial coverings
- frontline workers
- national duty
- a government
lockdown/shutdown
- government
health agencies
- policies that are sensible/impactful/reasonable

**Use These Words TIPS:**

- FOCUS ON THE BENEFITS OF SUCCESS, NOT JUST THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE.
  - We understand that people are tired, but public health measures are not the enemy — they are the roadmap for a faster and more sustainable recovery.
  - Scientists and medical professionals are developing and preparing to distribute a safe and effective vaccine that will help us return to normal day-to-day activities.

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