

40% of South Africans we asked said that 'wearing a mask made them anxious'

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Research shows that 40% of South Africans find wearing a face-mask makes them anxious and 61% said it makes communication very difficult. We created a series of viral videos to address this.



Wearing a face mask is one of the few weapons we have against the spread of Covid. Yet some people are not wearing masks as much as they should or not at all. Why is that?

This month we did some research around how South Africans feel about wearing face masks.

61% of South Africans agreed said wearing a mask makes communication really difficult when we asked them questions around why some people aren't wearing masks.

We, as humans, are social beings, and communication is key to how we operate in the world, so this frustration may explain why some people just aren't wearing masks as much as the government and health organisations are specifying, and legislation stipulates.

40% of South Africans we asked said that "wearing a mask made them anxious".

The wearing of a mask (while essential) is something new to us as a society, and was introduced suddenly as a result of the pandemic. Researchers elsewhere in the world have suggested that some people reject the wearing of masks because wearing it is to tacitly acknowledge that the world is going through a very strange and scary time. Thus while it is the one of the only weapons we have against the pandemic, wearing a mask can make some people feel *more* anxious, and motivate them to *not* wear them when they should.

To address this concerning attitude to the wearing of face masks, we then produced a series of viral videos designed to highlight the importance of wearing face masks. Given that people have been bombarded with 'serious' messaging about behaviour during the pandemic, we took a different tack and used humour to make the point that it is *really* really important that we continue to wear masks during this time to slow the spread of the virus.

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