

Grande Prairie Volunteer Services Bureau **WEEKLY** **SANE-ITIZER**

**Helpful information for Not-for-Profits,
Individuals and Businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

The Employer's Kitchen

– creating ideas just for you!

Someone posts on Facebook, others repost, twitter and link etc. and so it starts. The problem, if one doesn't stop to think or to check facts, misinformation, pseudoscience, outright fabrication and 'might be true' becomes 'is true'. In the era of fake news, contrasting and competing data and the volume of information that we are processing every day, critical thinking is the only way to make sense out of nonsense.

As humans we process information in a biased fashion, if we are convinced then we work to convince others to believe the same information that we do. So what happens if what we believe is based on simplistic thinking, or a lack of critical thinking? After all most people naturally make decisions based on personal bias, self-interest or irrational emotions. When we lack or don't use our critical thinking skills we make bad decisions, repeat mistakes and can be easily manipulated. This can lead to serious consequences: loss of opportunities, of relationships, financial resources and even the loss of life.

It is important to understand that you can't think critically all the time and that's okay. For example you probably don't need to apply critical thinking to what you wear to the gym, however, you might apply it for what you wear to an important meeting. It is equally important to realize that thinking for yourself is essential to answering tough questions and making important decisions. Mature decision making requires fact checking, sourcing information and weighing your personal bias and beliefs against the information.

It goes above and beyond common sense. Critical thinking is a learned skill. It is the ability to think rationally and to organize and understand connections between facts and ideas in order to arrive at a decision or conclusion. The purpose is to think about thinking, identifying, analyzing and then fixing the flaws in the way we think and what we believe in.



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As an employer I value and expect the people I employ to use their critical thinking skills. I want them to be creative and innovative to be able to problem solve. I want my people to be smarter than I am, to present different ideas and viewpoints, to debate issues and support their hypotheses by weighing the strengths and limitations of all possible options. I expect them to check their sources and examine the validity of them. I expect them to identify their own assumptions and balance their conclusions with those in mind. I expect them to pause and consider possible impacts and to provide structured reasoning and support for their conclusions. We may not always agree but at least we know how we got there.

And I am not alone: numerous studies and research indicate that more and more employers place the greatest weight on employee adaptability and critical thinking skills. – lets question this: have I gathered this data because I am naturally biased towards this belief or have I reached this conclusion based on the data that I have gathered? Guess you will have to use your own critical thinking skills to figure it out. Or I could simply post the answer on Social Media and then we all breath a sigh of relief because of course then its 'true' and no one needs to think.

Now that we are back at Social Media – Let me get this straight: the pandemic is an attempt by a cabal of global elites to control the world and therefore, if I wear a face mask, I am a victim of government mind control? Ok, lets go down that rabbit hole! CAP

"Many people would rather die than think—in fact, they do."

- Bertrand Russell

"Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your own understanding!"

- Immanuel Kant, 1784

"Children learn by asking questions. Students learn by asking questions. New recruits learn by asking questions. Innovators understand client needs by asking questions. It is the simplest and most effective way of learning. Brilliant thinkers never stop asking questions because they know that this is the best way to gain deeper insights.'

– Paul Sloane



DAD JOKES!

**What is a prehistoric monster called when they sleep?
A dinosnore!**

I'd like to get a job cleaning mirrors. It's just something I can see myself doing.

**How do you know when the moon is nearly broke?
It's down to its last quarter.**

How Face Masks Can Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

By Diana Kwon

As communities and businesses reopen amidst the pandemic, masks—in addition to other social distancing measures—are crucial for preventing new outbreaks.

Face masks have been a matter of intense debate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Early on, several government officials and health authorities were discouraging healthy people from wearing masks—noting that there was little evidence for the practice’s ability to prevent spread among the general public and citing concerns that protective face coverings, which were desperately needed by healthcare workers, were in short supply. Gradually, however, governments began to either require or recommend that their citizens wear face masks in public. In June, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended widespread mask-use as a way to prevent coronavirus transmission. One model estimates that if at least 95 percent of people wear masks in public between June and October, approximately 33,000 deaths could be avoided in the US.

There are three broad categories of face coverings: tight-fitting masks known as N95 respirators that are designed to filter out both aerosols (often defined as particles that are smaller than 5 micrometers in diameter) and larger airborne droplets, loose-fitting surgical masks that are fluid resistant and capable of filtering out the bigger particles, and cloth masks, which vary widely based on how they’re made.

Different Types of Masks



N95 respirator: Tight-fitting single-use masks typically made with synthetic materials such as polyester and polypropylene. These masks are able to filter out at least 95 percent of both large airborne droplets and aerosols.

Surgical/medical masks: Loose-fitting single-use masks made with three or more layers of synthetic materials. These can filter out large airborne particles, but some aerosols can leak through, and particle-containing air is able to flow around the edges.

Fabric masks: These often homemade masks vary widely in their construction and effectiveness. Aerosols are likely to leak through, and particle-containing air is able to flow around the edges. With appropriate washing or a couple of days to decontaminate, fabric masks are reusable.

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A growing body of research supports the use of all three types of masks, though the quality of evidence varies. One of the most comprehensive examinations to date, published in *The Lancet* in early June, systemically assessed 172 observational studies—mostly conducted in healthcare settings—looking at the effect of physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection on the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and two related coronaviruses. The results revealed that N95 respirators provided 96 percent protection from infection and surgical masks (or comparable reusable masks made with 12 to 16 layers of cotton or gauze) were 67 percent protective.

While research on cloth masks is much more limited, one group of researchers demonstrated that, in the lab, multilayer masks made of hybrid materials (cotton and silk, for example) could filter up to 90 percent of particles between 300 nanometers and 6 micrometers in size. However, it's important to note this is only the case when there are no gaps around the edges of the mask, which are often present when people wear cloth or surgical masks. Indeed, the researchers' findings suggest that gaps around any mask can reduce filtration by 60 percent or more. Still, scientists using computational models have reported that, in general, widespread use of facemasks, when combined with lockdowns, may help prevent future waves of infection.

"We're recommending that N95s still be primarily saved for the healthcare situation," says Kirsten Koehler, a professor of environmental health and engineering at Johns Hopkins University. "For individuals in the public, wearing a fabric mask is probably still the way to go."

There are several factors, including the number of layers and type of material they are made from, that contribute to how effective a mask will be, explains Raina MacIntyre, a professor of global biosecurity at the University of New South Wales in Australia. According to the WHO, fabric masks should ideally have at least three layers: an inner layer made with absorbent material (e.g., cotton), an outer layer with water-resistant material (e.g., polyester), and a middle layer (made with absorbent or water-resistant material) to act as a filter. In addition, MacIntyre adds, "the design should fit around the edges of the face because air will flow down the path of least resistance." In other words, if there are gaps on the sides of your mask, your breath will slip through those cracks instead of being filtered through the mask itself.

Although evidence is building to support the use of masks to stem the coronavirus' spread, many questions remain, such as whether the coronavirus spreads through aerosols or just through larger respiratory droplets. There is also little research on the efficacy of face masks, particularly cloth ones, in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in community settings, Julii Brainard, a senior research associate at Norwich Medical School in the UK, tells *The Scientist* in an email.

Amidst the uncertainty, what is clear is that mask wearing is not the only action people should take to slow the spread of COVID-19, Koehler says. "None of these masks are going to be perfect, especially against the aerosols. You want to continue to encourage people to work from home, avoid being crowds—things like that are going to work, regardless of how good your mask is."

**"None of these masks are going to be perfect, especially against the aerosols."
- Kirsten Koehler,
Johns Hopkins University**



HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

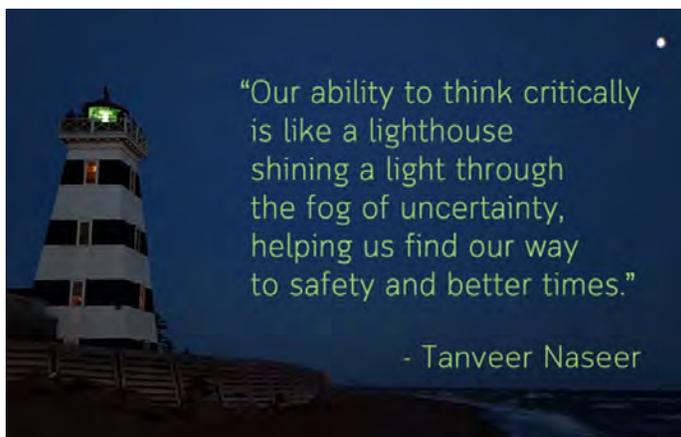


ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

[Source: <https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174>]

3 Steps To Boost Your Critical Thinking Skills During The COVID-19 Pandemic



Here are 3 steps you can take to put those various measures put in place to fight the spread of COVID-19 to work to help you boost your critical thinking skills.

1. Schedule "thinking time" in your work week

One of the biggest work impacts to come from the current health pandemic has been a disruption to our everyday work routines. With so many of us now working from home, those usual activities we'd do in our work spaces have been replaced with new ones – some good, and some not so good.

Of course, one of the challenges this creates is making sure we're focusing our attention and efforts on what matters most.

As such, the first step you need to take here is literally schedule "thinking time" in your work week, which admittedly is now both easier and harder to do. It's easier to do now as we have more control over how we spend our days because of the fact that so many of us are still working from home. But that's also the reason why it's also harder for us to do as a result of the numerous distractions found in our homes that we're not used to tuning out.

And yet, if you want to successfully dig yourself out of that brain fog and boost your critical thinking skills, you need to make time to exercise your brain, in much the same way many people are making sure to schedule time to exercise to avoid spending their days just sitting on the couch or at the kitchen table working away on their laptop.

2. Go for a walk to get some 'quiet time'

Speaking of exercise, the next step you want to take to boost your critical thinking skills during this global pandemic and the chronic stress it engenders is to get out of your house and go for a walk.

Similarly, when it comes to boosting your critical thinking skills, it's important that you make time to go out for walks to not just give you that quiet time critical thinking requires, but also to give you a change of scenery that actually aids with this process. In fact, studies have shown that going for walks can not only improve your ability to focus, but it can actually boost our creative problem-solving skills.

At the very least, it gives you a chance to take a break from all the negative news surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and enjoy sunny blue skies of summer.

3. Breathe deeply (yes, this really makes a difference)

Whether you're out for a walk or at home in front of your laptop, scientists have discovered that how you breathe can actually impact the way you feel and think, both of which have an impact on your critical thinking skills.

Several studies that have already shown how deep breath exercises can help reduce stress levels and calm our emotional state, something that's no doubt needed in this stressful time. But what this study also demonstrates is how paying attention to how we breathe can also help activate areas of our brain that will boost our critical thinking skills by improving our memory, decision-making, as well as our emotional state.

Some final thoughts

As much as we'd all like to know when this global pandemic will finally

end and we can return to some new form of normalcy that doesn't require social distancing measures, the simple truth is that no one at this point knows for certain how long we'll have to be at this or when we'll finally beat this virus once and for all.

And there's little doubt that now is the time when we need leaders in all areas of society – both within the public and private realms – to not only be that voice of reassurance that we will collectively find a way through the storm and reach that safe harbor, but who will help us transform the way we work and live so as to improve the opportunities and experiences had by all under their care.

The fundamental key to addressing a crisis is for leaders to not only *be honest* about the situation and *what you're going to do about it*, but that you do so with *clarity, humility and heart* so as to remind people *we're in this together*.
- Tanveer Naseer

[Source: <https://www.tanveernaseer.com/boost-critical-thinking-skills-during-covid-19-pandemic/>]