

Headline	It's about practising the right kind of normals
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## POST COVID-19 ETIQUETTE

# It's about practising the right kind of normals

**T**HE whole world is impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. While it creates chaos, it also reveals lessons that we might not have realised otherwise.

But, more importantly, whether we have learnt from these lessons?

Covid-19 promotes new normals. We have been consistently told to keep our distance from one another and to wear face masks in public places, and to practise personal hygiene such as keeping hands clean, and exercise cough and sneeze etiquette. However, are these the only extent of new normal post-Covid-19?

We should learn more from Covid-19 episode, especially lessons regarding mental health, good values and environmental sustainability. These must also be the normals post-Covid-19.

Many parties, including Befrienders KL, have warned that mental health is going to become a major concern post-Covid-19 due to various factors, including loss of jobs, loss of family mem-



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bers and also due to being isolated during the period of the Movement Control Order (MCO).

However, mental wellbeing has yet to be promoted as one of the new normals post-Covid-19. Instead of social distancing, what is needed now is physical distancing but with social bonding so that people do not feel isolated.

To combat mental health problems, the public must also be equipped with skills to manage stress and building resilience.

Covid-19 also brought out good values like empathy and generosity among the people, especially during the MCO period.

The public have been quick to offer various kinds of assistance

to those in need during the lockdown.

Donation drives were aplenty to collect money to buy food to be distributed to the most affected, often the marginalised segments of the community such as the Orang Asli, the homeless and the poor. Individuals and organisations also contributed resources, both monetary and labour, to produce Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontliners.

But, will all these values like empathy and generosity be forgotten post-Covid-19? We must continue to promote and practise these good values even when Covid-19 has gone.

Covid-19 has also reminded us how environmentally damaging our activities have been in the past. It was reported by the Minister of Environment and Water that the country has experienced 14 per cent of increase in days with 'clean' Air Pollutant Index during the MCO period as a result of restricted activities, especially of factories and transportation.

Various reports have also highlighted improved water quality,

especially at upstream of rivers.

However, more recent reports showed that air quality has begun to deteriorate during this Recovery Movement Control Order period as a result of more economic activities being allowed to operate.

This indicates that we have failed to make environmental sustainability as a new normal post-Covid-19. While we are focusing on restarting the economy, we must not forget the recuperating environment.

We should take the opportunity presented by Covid-19 to reset the way we do things. We must be more sustainable in our fight against Covid-19 and ensure that sustainability is part of the way we conduct our daily businesses and live our lives post-Covid-19.

While we are promoting new normals like washing hands regularly, we must also promote water saving. Taps should not be left running while we lather soap and scrub our hands.

Wearing face masks can be a new normal, but we must encourage the use of more sustainable

face masks instead of the surgical masks. The popular surgical masks are single-use and non-biodegradable, and now they can be seen littered everywhere, on the roadside, in the drain and even in office compounds.

Online deliveries can be a new normal, but we must avoid the use of plastic bags and polystyrene packaging, especially for food deliveries, which make up the bulk of online deliveries during Covid-19 pandemic and post-pandemic periods.

Education is an important platform to send these sustainability messages across, especially to the younger generation who will continue to inherit this planet. Students must be educated on the right normals, not just new normals.

They must be taught that our normal post-Covid-19 must not only protect ourselves, but also protect the planet.

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