

## AFTER THE PANDEMIC: THE NEW NORMAL

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In March of 2020, the Philippines entered the most challenging two years in its modern history. The spread of the coronavirus or the covid19, took almost the whole globe by surprise. In its onset, experts did not think that it will grow to the catastrophic scale that it did. In fact, from the turn of the new millennium, there were several viruses that gave the same scare but did not deliver (i.e. H1n1, SARS, EBOLA, etc.).

However, the nature of the virus made it so much harder to contain and eradicate. Coronavirus is an infectious illness conveyed by droplets in the air. After interaction with the virus, the virus incubates in the human body for 5-14 days. A blood test and swabbing can be used to identify the infected person. The most typical symptoms of a coronavirus infection are recurrent difficulties such as dry cough, sore throat, and trouble breathing. People infected with COVID-19 also have high fever and exhaustion. As a symptom, people may lose their sense of smell and taste.

Because of how long the incubation period of the virus in the human body before it shows any symptoms, it is hard to identify infected individuals, making it impossible to isolate the sick from the not. The infection rate is also very high at the beginning without immunization or proper antibodies to fight it.

Due to the threat of the COVID-19 virus, the Philippines enacted the first enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). To try to stop the spread of the fatal virus that has ravaged our Asian neighbors, public schools and government offices have been closed and limitations have been imposed. However, no one anticipated that normalcy would take so long to return, or that the epidemic would claim the lives of many of our countrymen, particularly our health care personnel.

Many governments lack the necessary contingency plans to deal with a catastrophe of this size. To decrease exposure and the hazards that come with it, several countries have opted to shut schools, colleges, and institutions. The issue exemplifies the difficulties authorities have in determining whether to close schools in order to decrease contact and save lives, or to keep them open in order to keep people employed and the economy afloat.

Now as the cases lessen and the infection rate drops, people are starting to return to their normal lives. But then again, as you walk outside, you can still see remnants of the pandemic. Facemasks are now a normal part of our daily attire, as well as alcohol sprays, and vaccination cards. People now carry these items religiously. It even became a way to express personal style and creativity. Some individuals match the color of their facemasks to their outfits or OOTDs, lanyards of different colors, materials, and even design, are used to hold the masks in place.

Because of the pandemic, people are more conscious of health and sanitation. Especially in a day to day setting. The pandemic is a terrifying circumstance for which no one has prepared, but it is up to us to figure out how to survive it. It simply takes a little self-control and discipline to help avoid the worst-case situation. The sooner we all follow health norms and procedures; the sooner we can return to our regular lives.

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