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NEWS

5 TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WHILE WEARING A MASK

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Communicating in the age of coronavirus can be tricky, even before adding masks into the equation. With the mask bylaw now in effect, here are some tips to keep the conversation flowing while donning a mask.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Keep the conversation simple when it comes to engaging others. According to Dr. Eric Christensen, an audiologist with Carris Health, it's better to use shorter, everyday phrases and words to get your point across.

Rather than repeating the words that others may have missed or not understood, it's recommended to rephrase them.

SPEAKING LOUDER

Speaking at a regular or slightly lower pace is also one of the suggestions listed on the blog post. You may want to speak a bit louder, though not necessarily to a point of yelling. There is no need to over-enunciate. Just speak naturally, according to Christensen.

BODY LANGUAGE

In a blog post, Dr. Susan Krauss Whitbourne, a professor emerita of psychological and brain sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, suggests using body language — from hand gestures to body postures — to convey and accentuate emotions.

The nonverbal elements help provide cues and gauge "the feelings, sincerity and intent" of people you're trying to communicate with.

EYE CONTACT

With smiling not being an option, the professor says there's a lot of information "contained in the eyes." In addition, eyebrows can also be used to communicate your thoughts and feelings.

"... your eyebrows can still become responsive to your emotions and you can use this information in reading other people's feelings," she wrote. Similarly, Christensen noted the importance of maintaining good eye contact while speaking.

USE PEN AND PAPER OR PHONE

When (muffled) words fail, have a pen and a paper ready if required, or type the words out on your phone and show the screen while still maintaining a safe distance. You can also use the speech-to-text function on the phone that voice assistants like Siri on the iPhone or Google Assistant offer.

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