

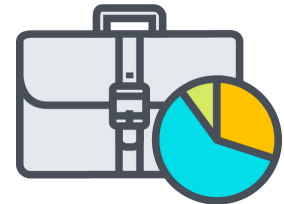
Fighting COVID-19 with Social Science

Insights from the Research

Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Small Businesses

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unquestionable impact on the economy, forcing many businesses to close their doors—some temporarily, many permanently. Early evidence from one recent economics study involving more than 5,800 small businesses illustrates the ways in which this crisis has hit small businesses particularly hard, thanks to their preexisting economic vulnerability. It also sheds light on ways future federal assistance can be tailored to better meet the unique needs of small businesses, particularly in the hardest-hit industries.

»<https://www.nber.org/papers/w26989>



Helping Hospitals Allocate Scarce Resources

As this crisis has demonstrated, during a pandemic, the demand for essential resources can greatly exceed the ability of industries to supply them. This is especially challenging for hospitals that may need these resources in large quantities in order to respond. Political scientists at the University of Pennsylvania have developed a step-by-step instruction guide on how to make resource allocation decisions in the middle of an emergency. The guide builds upon typical healthcare contingency plans by providing a strategic and ethical basis for providing care and saving the most lives when hospitals experience unforeseen resource shortages.

»<https://ldi.upenn.edu/news/how-can-hospitals-address-scarce-resources-during-covid-19>



The Promise and Challenges of Working from Home

Many businesses have been forced to transition to remote work in order to stay open during the pandemic. Social science research into the advantages and disadvantages of remote work can help us identify ways for businesses and workplaces to continue to be productive under this new paradigm. Research from digital anthropology provides insight into the benefits of remote work, such as greater flexibility for employees and reduction of resources necessary for businesses. However—as many of us are discovering for ourselves—remote work presents challenges including lack of social interaction and community, as well as increasing pressure on employees to be “on call” at all times. Social science research has identified strategies to address these challenges such as strict enforcement of work-life balance and fostering social connections in the workplace through coworking strategies. »[https://](https://theconversation.com/remote-working-the-new-normal-for-many-but-it-comes-with-hidden-risks-new-research-133989)

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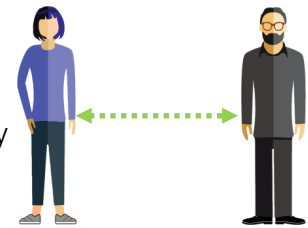
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The Science Behind Social Distancing

In the absence of a vaccine to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, communities have turned to social distancing in order “flatten the curve” of public infection and alleviate the disease’s burden on the health care system. However, determining how and when to implement social distancing measures effectively—and when to lift them—requires insights from the social sciences. A rapid expert consultation produced by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine synthesizes the existing research regarding various forms of social distancing interventions, such as closing work and schools, cancelling public events, implementing travel restrictions, and wearing face masks.

»<https://www.nap.edu/read/25753/chapter/1>



Supporting Vulnerable Communities

As we have already seen, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and put the most vulnerable communities at even greater risk of harm—both medically and economically. Findings from disciplines across the social sciences can help identify policy solutions that address the unique needs of a diverse array of vulnerable populations, including senior citizens, low-income families, those with preexisting conditions, health care workers, people experiencing homelessness, and incarcerated Americans. »<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/vulnerable-populations>

Addressing a Potential Student “COVID Slide” Using Research on Summer Learning Loss

Widespread school closures could slow students’ academic gains as part of a “COVID-19 Slide.” Students in grades 3-8 could see the retention of 70 percent of learning gains in reading compared to a normal academic year and 50 percent of learning gains in math. Social science research has examined ways to address a similar decrease in learning gains – the “summer melt” – that can be applied to educators’ response to a potential COVID-19 slide. »https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/04/Collaborative-Brief_Covid19-Slide-APR20.pdf



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