

# New research about emerging 'COVID-19 personality types'

January 29 2021

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New research by Mimi E. Lam (University of Bergen) just published in *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* identifies and explores the impacts of salient viral or COVID-19 behavioral identities that are

emerging.

"These emergent COVID-19 behavioral identities are being hijacked by existing social and political identities to politicize the pandemic and heighten racism, discrimination, and conflict," says Lam. She continues: "the COVID-19 pandemic reminds us that we are not immune to each other. To unite in our fight against the pandemic, it is important to recognize the basic dignity of all and value the human diversity currently dividing us."

"Only then, can we foster societal resilience and an ethical COVID-19 agenda. This would pave the way for other global commons challenges whose impacts are less immediate, but no less dire for humanity.

Lam argues that liberal democracies need an ethical policy agenda with three priorities:

1. to recognize the diversity of individuals
2. to deliberate and negotiate value trade-offs
3. to promote public buy-in, trust, and compliance.

Some emergent "COVID-19 personality types":

- Deniers: who downplay the viral threat, promoting business as usual
- Spreaders: who want it to spread, [herd immunity](#) to develop, and normality to return
- Harmers: who try to harm others by, for example, spitting or coughing at them
- Realists: who recognize the reality of the potential harm and adjust their behaviors
- Worriers: who stay informed and safe to manage their uncertainty and fear

- Contemplators: who isolate and reflect on life and the world
- Hoarders: who panic-buy and hoard products to quell their insecurity
- Invincibles: often youth, who believe themselves to be immune
- Rebels: who defiantly flout social rules restricting their individual freedoms
- Blamers: who vent their fears and frustrations onto others
- Exploiters: who exploit the situation for power, profit or brutality
- Innovators: who design or repurpose resources to fight the pandemic
- Supporters: who show their solidarity in support of others
- Altruists: who help the vulnerable, elderly, and isolated
- Warriors: who, like the front-line health-care workers, combat its grim reality
- Veterans: who experienced SARS or MERS and willingly comply with restrictions

**More information:** Mimi E. Lam. United by the global COVID-19 pandemic: divided by our values and viral identities, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* (2021). [DOI: 10.1057/s41599-020-00679-5](https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00679-5)

Provided by University of Bergen

Citation: New research about emerging 'COVID-19 personality types' (2021, January 29) retrieved 14 August 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-emerging-covid-personality.html>

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