

## How do PHSM work during health emergencies?

Public health and social measures (PHSM) refer to non-pharmaceutical interventions implemented by individuals, communities and governments to protect the health and well-being of communities affected by health emergencies. PHSM aim to reduce the risk and scale of transmission of infectious diseases by reducing transmission-relevant exposures and/or making them safer. Examples of PHSM include hand washing, mask-wearing, physical distancing, school and business measures, modifications of mass gatherings and international travel and trade measures.

PHSM are often the first and sometimes the only intervention available at the onset of an outbreak when effective vaccines and therapeutics are not (yet) available or equitably distributed. PHSM play a critical role throughout the different stages of health emergencies and act in concert with medical countermeasures.

Recent health emergencies have revealed, however, that individuals and communities experienced unintended negative consequences of PHSM, including unemployment, interrupted education, domestic violence and slowed economic productivity. People living in vulnerable conditions disproportionately experienced these consequences, highlighting the critical importance of social protection policies and other mitigation measures.

## Collaboration

The PHSM initiative is based on collaborations and contributions from multisectoral, multidisciplinary technical experts representing WHO Member States, public health agencies, academia, international organizations, communities and civil society organizations.



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# PHSM



## Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) during Health Emergencies

WHO page on the PHSM initiative



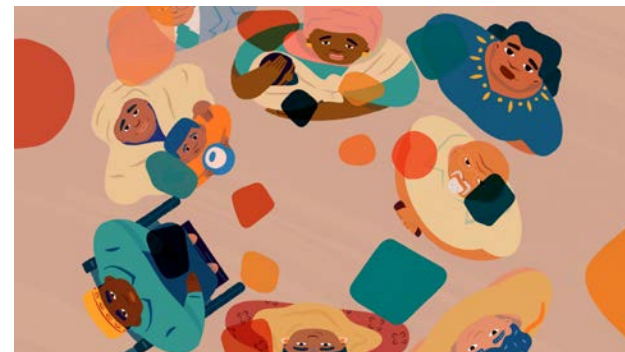


## WHO's approach to strengthening PHSM

The WHO PHSM initiative on **measuring the effectiveness and impact of PHSM** during health emergencies addresses the need for strong coordination for research and policies related to PHSM. The initiative aims to accelerate research and precisions in decision-making related to PHSM and works on the four strategic areas:

- 1) Global monitoring and reviews of PHSM data and research** to support countries in accessing and using multidisciplinary and context-specific knowledge about PHSM to strengthen understanding about PHSM effectiveness, unintended negative consequences and implementation strategies.
- 2) PHSM research methodology and capacity** to support countries in conducting and contributing research using a harmonized conceptual understanding of PHSM and in methodological, legal, ethical and political challenges of PHSM research.
- 3) Equitable and context-specific PHSM decision-making** to support countries in making risk-based, evidence-informed decisions about PHSM implementation while taking into account evolving contextual factors and unintended negative consequences of PHSM.
- 4) Systematic integration of PHSM into the existing leadership and governance** into health emergency management plans, policies, financing, governance and leadership in all relevant sectors at national, subnational and local levels across the health emergency spectrum of action.

*PHSM are life-saving interventions which are often the first and sometimes the only intervention available at the onset of an outbreak*



### Key achievements and proposed way forward

