



People walk along Sainte-Catherine Street in Montreal on Jan. 2, 2022, as measures put in place by the Quebec government, including the closure of stores, go into effect. (The Canadian Press/Graham Hughes)

---

**VIEWPOINTS**

# It's Time to Drop the Hysteria and Learn to Live With COVID



**Bruce Parly**

---

January 8, 2022 Updated: January 9, 2022

**A**   Print

*Commentary*

For most people, [Omicron](#) is a highly contagious cold. Lots will catch it, and most will get sniffles and a sore throat. Yes, even with Omicron, as with the flu, some people will get seriously ill, and a few will die. Masking, social distancing, capacity limits, lockdowns, curfews, and “vaccines” are not stopping the spread. People who dodge Omicron this time will face the next variant, or the one after that. Like other respiratory viruses in circulation, [COVID-19](#) is here to stay. Therefore, COVID is done. Either mild Omicron is the end of COVID madness, or there is no off-ramp. The panic-demic must finish or we will be doing this forever.

For the past 23 months, the real [pandemic](#) has not been COVID but anxiety. According to Mattias Desmet, professor of clinical psychology at Ghent University in Belgium, the COVID crisis is a product of “mass formation,” a collective psychosis that can occur when a significant portion of the population develops an irrational fixation on an external cause. Mass formation is most likely to occur, Desmet says, when a critical mass of people suffers from a lack of social bonds, a lack of meaning in their lives, free-floating anxiety that has no specific source or cause, and free-floating frustration and aggression not directed at a particular target.

The virus may have made people anxious, but it was more the other way around. Those already afraid, disconnected, and adrift in their lives were more susceptible to media messaging that portrayed COVID as a bigger threat than it really was. The virus offered an external phenomenon on which to focus their distress. It gave purpose to fear. Masks, lockdowns, social distancing, and vaccine mandates provided the illusion of control and a justification for imposing the burden of their anxiety on others. For some, hiding behind masks, staying home, working online, and being isolated gave respite from social interactions that they found uncomfortable anyway.

COVID is a righteous platform from which to rage against non-conformists. COVID cranks cheer when small businesses are shut, workers dismissed, university students ousted, and schools closed, all to assuage their anxiety. The country was never “in this together.” As Aldous Huxley wrote, “The surest way to work up a crusade in favor of some good cause is to promise people they will have a chance of maltreating someone. To be able to destroy with good conscience, to be able to behave badly and call your bad behavior ‘righteous indignation’ – this is the height of psychological luxury, the most delicious of moral treats.”

COVIDians who feel threatened by the end of the cause for which they have lived these past two years will clamour for more and harsher restrictions. In Canada, the game is still on. Quebec imposed new curfews. Ontario throttled down on widespread testing but then lurched back into partial lockdown and closed its schools again. Booster campaigns are in full swing and “the pandemic of the unvaccinated” rhetoric continues. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau even suggested during last fall’s election campaign that the unvaxxed are racists and misogynists who should not be tolerated.

And yet, signs of the Great Backtrack are slowly emerging. In the United States, the CDC has put the kibosh on PCR tests, while the Biden administration has admitted that there is no federal solution to COVID. In some states, stadiums are still full, and there are no masking requirements or vaccine mandates. Perceptive pundits, formerly in solidarity with the COVID regime, are delicately heading for the exit, trying not to be the last one in the room when the music stops.

In some jurisdictions such as Ontario, the vaccinated have been catching Omicron at a higher rate per capita than the unvaccinated. For those who judge themselves to be at low risk from the virus, why expose yourself to disputed side effects from a therapy not yet fully tested? People should have the right to make their own medical choices. After being suspended, dismissed, ousted, banished, and demonized, the unvaccinated have defended that right the hard way. They are not likely to give it up now.

COVID rules, say some apostles, protect the right to be kept safe from respiratory viruses. But no such right exists. If it did, lockdowns would be the established practice against colds, flu, and the many other respiratory viruses in circulation. Society would have come to a screeching halt long before now. Viruses are part of human existence. If you're sick, stay home. Remember when we used to just say that? People who are susceptible to COVID, even to Omicron, should keep themselves safe as best they can. The rest of humanity must get on with their lives.

As a health crisis, COVID is over. The hysteria, however, will be more stubborn.

*Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.*



**Help us spread the truth. Share this article with your friends.**