

Dr. Andrew Mendonsa

PSYCHOLOGY EXPERT | THOUGHT LEADER | VISIONARY | CONSULTANT

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AS VACCINATED PEOPLE DROP THE MASK, IT'S TIME TO SHED BAD PANDEMIC HABITS

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, Dr. Andrew Mendonsa encourages people to confront post-pandemic anxiety

SACRAMENTO, CA — The unprecedented coronavirus pandemic that hit the United States more than a year ago dramatically changed lives and behaviors. With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) signaling a turning point in the pandemic with new guidance indicating vaccinated people can end mask use, there is likely to be increased anxiety as we emerge from COVID and our masks. Nationally respected clinical and forensic psychologist [Dr. Andrew Mendonsa](#) has noticed patients experiencing anxiety as they prepare to resume “normal” life. Many have also developed detrimental habits since the pandemic began.

“Life became difficult and isolated during the pandemic, but it also got a little easier in some ways. Many no longer had to commute to work, only dressed from the waist up for virtual meetings, and experienced less office politics and stress than the pre-pandemic hustle and bustle,” Dr. Mendonsa explains. “However, this newfound freedom also set the stage for bad habits to take traction. People have found it easier to watch more TV, watch porn, masturbate, and cheat on their partners.”

Dr. Mendonsa has seen a dramatic increase in people reporting:

- Poor sleep habits in terms of staying up later and sleeping in more.
- Increase alcohol and recreational drug consumption
- Weight gain and more sedimentary lifestyles
- Increases in masturbation, casual sex, and day-time flings
- Less attention to work and family

Of these behaviors, Dr. Mendonsa says, “When done in excess or in place of healthy, social relationships, these habits can destroy a person’s life. While most of the above is safe in moderation, people have

begun to report that they cannot stop themselves like they used to. This is a sign that negative behaviors are getting worse and need attention.”

The psychologist, who is licensed in 20 states, offers the following advice for anyone who has developed new habits during the pandemic or is grappling with post-pandemic anxiety.

- Gradually reengage your pre-pandemic life and routines, including sleep schedule, eating habits, and exercise. Don't try to rewind 18 months in one week. Slow, achievable, and measurable goal setting is key.
- Focus on what matters to you. Embrace new discoveries about yourself, hobbies, and interests that emerged during the pandemic. Not everything that changed needs to be changed back. Spend some time reflecting and prioritizing.
- Give yourself permission to go at your own pace. Recognize that not everyone is going to rush to a return to “normal.” Give people and yourself a break to mess up and focus on extra care, appreciating we are navigating this together.
- With new CDC guidelines indicating fully vaccinated people can go out mask-less, take the opportunity to reengage with friends and family, plan a gathering or vacation. It's important to have social connection and events on the calendar to anticipate.
- Be open to options presented at work and school such as part-time telecommuting, virtual classes and meetings, and hybrid office staffing.
- If your anxiety, depression or mental health needs are causing you impairment, seek professional help.

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ABOUT DR. MENDONSA

As a licensed clinical and forensic psychologist, Andrew Mendonsa, PsyD, MBA, offers a unique perspective on the mental health industry. He has worked in a variety of settings, including juvenile justice, correctional facilities, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, and hospital emergency departments. This varied perspective, combined with his executive experience, gives him a unique voice on a range of topics, from social justice in healthcare to addiction recovery treatments. Dr. Mendonsa's vast expertise has made him a valuable source on a wide range of topics for news outlets such as NBC, ABC, Forbes, Huffington Post, and USA Today. He was also featured in the Mayo Clinic article: “Top 30 Psychology Authors Bringing a Revolution in the World of Mental Health.” Dr. Mendonsa is a member of American Psychological Association, American Psychology-Law Society, American Association of Suicidology, Rotary, Forbes Business Development Council, and Sutter Club. For more info about Dr. Mendonsa, visit www.andrewmendonsa.com.