

‘Post-coronavirus trauma’: Why a growing group of ‘perma-maskers’ say they won’t forgo face coverings anytime soon

Last year, protesters [staged rallies against](#) official requirements to wear masks, [built pyres](#) to burn them in protest and touched off wild screaming matches when confronted about not wearing them inside supermarkets.

But as more Americans become vaccinated and virus restrictions loosen, masks are at the center of a second round in the country’s culture brawl. This time, people who choose to continue to cover their faces have become targets of public ire.

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For a number of so-called perma-maskers, the decision is informed by trauma: They endured the coronavirus or witnessed loved ones die, and they say taking off their mask makes them feel terrifyingly vulnerable.

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Post-coronavirus trauma appears to be common: A survey of nearly 400 Covid patients by doctors at Agostino Gemelli hospital in Italy showed [30 percent developed post-traumatic stress disorder](#) after a severe illness.

“There is an element of precaution that is brought on by the emotional and psychological impact with what I went through,” [COVID survivor Joe] Glickman said of his masking. “I don’t think it is necessarily unjustified. I think it is somewhere in the middle.”

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