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Smiling lessons in Japan after years of mask-wearing – 8th June 2023

Level 0

Many Japanese people still wear masks. Some people who do not wear masks are having smiling lessons. They have "forgotten" how to smile because they wore a mask for three years. They want to learn how to smile again. A "smile coach" wants to help people to smile. She said smiling is good for our health.

Smile coaches in Japan are busy. Around 28% of young workers in Japan still wear masks. Just over 67% said they sometimes use masks, and 5.5% never wear them. The smile coach taught 4,000 people how to smile. She said smiling helps communication. It makes people feel positive.

Level 1

In Japan, many people still wear masks. Some people who no longer wear them are having smiling lessons. They have "forgotten" how to smile naturally. This is because they wore a mask for three years. They want to relearn how to smile with confidence. A "smile coach" from a "smile education" company spoke about her work. She said masks made people smile less, so they developed a complex. She wants people to smile for their health.

Smile coaches in Japan are busy. A survey found that 28% of workers in their 20s to 50s still wear masks. Just over 67% said they sometimes wear a mask. Only 5.5% have stopped wearing a mask. The smile coach has coached 4,000 people how to smile. She said smiling makes a good impression and helps communication. It makes people feel positive. The smile coach said relaxing is the key to a good smile.

Level 2

Many people have not stopped wearing masks. In Japan, many people still wear them. Some of those who have gone maskless are having lessons in how to smile. Some people say they have "forgotten" how to smile naturally because they had a face covering for three years. They are taking smiling lessons to relearn how to smile with confidence. "Smile coach" Keiko Kawano from a "smile education" company spoke about her work. She said people smiled less because of masks, so they developed a complex. She wants people to smile for their mental wellbeing.

Smile coaches in Japan are busy. A survey by Laibo Research found that 28% of company workers in their 20s to 50s wear masks. Just over two-thirds said they wear a mask depending on the situation. Only 5.5% said they stopped wearing a mask. Ms Kawano has coached 4,000 people in the art of smiling. She has also trained hundreds of "smile specialists". She said: "Smiling makes a good impression on others and helps communication. It also has the effect of making yourself feel more positive." She said: "Moving and relaxing the facial muscles is the key to a good smile."

Level 3

People in most countries have stopped wearing masks. In Japan, many people are still covering up. Some of those who have gone maskless, or who want to, are taking lessons in how to smile. A lot of adults say they have "forgotten" how to smile naturally after three years of wearing a face covering. They are taking lessons from "smile coaches" to relearn how to smile with confidence. One coach, Keiko Kawano from a "smile education" company, spoke to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper about her work. She said: "Mask wearing became normal, so people had fewer opportunities to smile. Many people developed a complex about smiling. I want people to smile for their physical and mental wellbeing."

Smile coaches in Japan may be busy for some time to come. A recent survey by Laibo Research found that 27.8% of company employees in their 20s to 50s would continue to wear masks. Just over two-thirds of people said they would wear a mask depending on the situation. Only 5.5% said they would go mask-free. Ms Kawano is well known in Japan. She has coached more than 4,000 people in the art of smiling. She has also trained hundreds of "smile specialists". She said: "Smiling makes a good impression on others and helps communication. It also has the effect of making yourself feel more positive." She added: "Moving and relaxing the facial muscles is the key to a good smile."