

Community Conversations: NJ's COVID-19 Storytelling Project

Participant 364

Interview conducted by Amani Soto on January 18, 2021

Transcribed by Amani Soto on January 22, 2021

0:00-15:12

Interviewer: Hello, I am working with the YMCA collecting experiences from people who may have been impacted during the start of the pandemic. Are you willing to participate?

Participant: [Laughs] Absolutely, I am ready when you are.

I: Thank you. Now, when we know that the start of the virus began in Wuhan, China but when it made its way to the United States how serious did you take it?

P: To be honest I did not take it as seriously as I should have. I did not expect it to blow up at extreme levels. I also did not think that we would still be dealing with this situation almost a year later.

I: Has there been any changes in your life since March as a result of the coronavirus pandemic?

P: Since the pandemic I definitely have more trust issues. I've always been a little guarded but now I find myself keeping to myself and staying away from absolutely anyone and everyone. I am 25 years old and I am absolutely petrified to come into contact with anyone because I don't want to be the reason that someone could get sick.

I: I completely understand. I definitely find myself questioning whether others are taking precautions. Do you think you are balancing your work like and your personal life?

P: In the beginning I definitely didn't know how to balance out my work life and personal life. However, now that my personal life has somewhat calmed down due to COVID restrictions, I've had more time & energy to balance work. I was in the middle of

situation positions at my job when this all started and it was all put on hold because no one knew what to do. Now that we have an idea of what we are dealing with I was able to successfully transition into this new position.

I: What were some of the hardest or biggest challenges for you or your family during/admits Covid-19?

P: I think my biggest challenge for my family & I was definitely not being able to get together anymore or as often. I have a big family and we would religiously see one another. It didn't have to be a holiday; this was just a weekly thing. Of course we wanted to do nothing more than be with each other because the pandemic has shown us how short life could be but we didn't want to put each other at risk.

I: It sucks that we don't have an idea when we will be able to get together with our families again. There were so many weddings that I was invited too that have been cancelled and no one knows when they will be able to reschedule their wedding or if they will be able to get any of their money back (coughing). On a hopefully happier note was there anything that helped you find happiness during this difficult time?

P: To be honest, nothing has brought me happiness during this difficult time.

I: I am sorry to hear that. I hope that things get better for you soon. When the vaccine for Covid-19 is made available to the public will you choose to receive it? Why or why not?

P: I personally do not feel comfortable getting the vaccine at this moment. Obviously if this became a mandatory thing, I would have no choice, but I definitely wouldn't be happy if it was forced upon me. I don't feel like there's enough evidence behind it. It was developed in only a couple of months and there are a lot of unknowns.

I: Could you explain to me any of your greatest fears moving forward?

P: Having to face another pandemic, one being worse than COVID-19.

I: My final question for you... do you think there was something that you or someone else could have done differently, if so what would it be?

P: I would have started the quarantine process earlier. I didn't decide to start quarantine until it was basically forced upon us.

I: I think that is definitely an answer I would agree with. I wasn't able to really quarantine because I was working in the hospital but if I was able to take some time during the beginning to quarantine I definitely would have. However, I wanted to thank you so much for allowing me to conduct this interview.