

Community Conversations NJYSA COVID-19 Project

Participant 448

Interview conducted by Amani Soto on January 11,2021

Transcribed by Amani Soto on January 25,2021 & February 2,2021

Interviewer: Good morning, my name is Amani Soto. I am currently working with the YMCA collecting some experiences from individuals who may have been impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic [coughing]. Are you willing to just answer a few questions for me?

Participant: Of course I can.

I: Thank you so much. I would like to first ask you what do you do for a living --as a career and what setting are you placed in, you don't have to be too specific?

P: I work as a radiologic technologist at a local hospital. We also play a big role when confirming if an individual has the virus.

I: As a fellow radiologic technologist I agree. In the very beginning when there weren't enough tests to give out everyone was getting chest X-rays in order to view what the lungs look like and still there are constant x-rays being ordered to make sure if patients are admitted that their conditions haven't worsened. But onto the first question (coughing) when you first heard about the coronavirus and it's severity in China did you feel the need to take precautions in case the virus had surfaced in the United States?

P: To be completely honest I did not take any precautions [nervous laughing]. As sad as it sounds I never thought in a million years that it would find its way here. I did not think it would blow up to the extent that it did.

I: Understandable I feel like in the beginning we really didn't know what was going on and how to deal with it. We didn't accept that this was going to be our reality. Since the onset has your life changed because of the pandemic?

P: My life has completely changed. I am super cautious nowadays of all the things I do and tough-touch. Being in health care especially in a hospital setting I had to take the initiative to stay away from my parents because they are at high risk. I ended up contracting the virus and the only ones I was worried about was my parents so I basically isolated myself in our basement. I didn't come out for fourteen days. Luckily we have a bathroom down there and my mom would leave my food outside the door everyday.

I: Just know you're not alone. We are all trying to cope with what's going on. We all just have to be there for one another. Do you think you are able to balance out your work life and your home life?

P: At the moment I cannot find a balance. I seem to- I catch myself bringing home my problems from work and dwelling in negative thoughts. I know that it doesn't help because I begin to lash out on those close to me but I am trying to take it day by day.

I: I also have some issues with keeping my work life at the front door. I always think it's because we are so young and we are very new in this field . When I speak to fellow co-workers who have been here for years they always tell me they were in my shoes at one point. It was just easier to handle after time goes by. Was there anything that helped you find happiness during this difficult time?

P: I tried to do at home yoga which didn't really work out for me. I also tried doing some home projects but it was hard to keep the positive energy. So I wouldn't really say I found happiness, I found myself constantly watching Netflix or baking just to keep myself occupied. I missed going to the gym whenever I needed a pick me up that's usually where I would go but the gyms were closed and then when they opened back up it wasn't worth it because of all the restrictions.

I: I miss going to the gym too. I feel that because I haven't been to the gym in so long I don't have the energy I use to have. I also feel burnt out from all the long hours that when I get home I just want to eat and sleep which definitely doesn't help.

P: Me too (laughing)! I have no motivation to do anything.

I: Do you think that you will get the vaccine when it is available?

P: In my current state of mind no. I will not be getting the vaccine right now. I have a lot of questions and concerns that I can't get answers too. I feel like we are being used as guinea pigs. We don't know any long term or short term effects of this vaccine that it could possibly cause. I know in order to get back to a normal life at least 75% of the population needs to be vaccinated but I won't be part of that population right now.

I: Everyone should be able to choose whether or not they want it. And no one should judge your opinion. At the end of the day it is your body and you should be able to make decisions especially when you can't get any answers to your questions.

P: Thank you, I feel like when you tell people your opinion they are so quick to tell you why your thinking is wrong.

I: I understand and especially when you are young we are always told our thinking is wrong because we don't have any experience. However, I just wanted to thank you for letting me interview you. I hope you and your family stay safe.

P: Thank you.