

Community Conversations NJYSA COVID-19 Project

Participant 382

Interview conducted by Amani Soto on January 12,2021

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Interviewer: Hello there, I just want to ask you if you would mind answering some questions about your personal experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. I am working alongside the YMCA gathering stories and presenting them so others can understand that no one is alone during these difficult times.

Participant: I have no problem answering a few questions.

I: Great, thank you. My first question to you is how serious did you take the pandemic when it first surfaced in the United States?

P: I took it extremely seriously. I had to take into consideration my parents health conditions. My parents are older and as the eldest out of my siblings I needed to make sure that all precautions were taken.

I: That's very thoughtful of you and can be a little stressful as well taking on all that responsibility at the same time. Have you seen any changes that have come about since March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic?

P: I've noticed that I have become more socially distant to many individuals who are close to me. I never intentionally wanted to push people away but I just had other things to take of. I am trying to work on reaching out to others because you never know what will happen and I don't want to have any regrets.

I: I know what you mean, I also have distant myself from those close to me. It is just crazy times right now and I am trying to keep my mind occupied without falling into negative energy. Are you balancing your work like and your personal life equally?

P: I think I've done a pretty good job balancing my work and personal life. When I am not working I was able to do the normal stuff I usually do but just alone. I would work out, go fishing or hunting pretty much anything outdoors.

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

P: For me personally it was putting in so many extra hours at work. I was constantly taking the over time because at this point why not. Another challenge for me was not being able to see my family. There were some big events that were supposed to be celebrated and because of the pandemic we weren't able to.

I: I understand I had a lot of big events that were cancelled but we will celebrate when things go back to normal. Was there anything that helped you find happiness during this difficult time?

P: Not really. The year 2020 has been basically a routine of work and home. It just grew into a habit and now I am numb to it.

I: Well I am sorry to hear that I know it's been a difficult year and we just can't wait until we are somewhat back to normal. On the top of normalize once the vaccine for Covid-19 is made available to the public will you decide to receive it? Why or why not?

P: No I won't be obtaining the vaccine. I believe it only works 50% of the time and it's either you won't get the virus or it'll be less severe when you get it. I don't get the flu vaccine because I know many people who got the vaccine and ended up getting the flu regardless. So if I am going to get it regardless then I don't see why I should get the vaccine. Also as much as they say it is so effective I don't see how you could give those results after only a few months. No one knows the long term effects. There are a lot of unknowns for me.

I: I have a mutual feeling. Yes I believe in science but there isn't enough evidence to make me feel comfortable. If it became mandatory for my job I would have no choice but to get it like they make me get the flu vaccine.

P: I don't (cough) feel like my employer should force me to inject something within my body. If I don't feel comfortable doing they should respect that and if they don't see it that way I will look elsewhere. I take enough precaution and as a result of that my family nor I have had covid thus far so I think we are doing a pretty good job at staying safe and socially distancing.

I: Understandable. Are you available to answer one last question?

P: I definitely can answer one last question.

I: Do you think there was anything that could have been done differently neither by you or your family or anyone with some authority?

P: I feel like that President Trump should have taken it a little more seriously. I feel like his attitude toward what was actually going on was as if this was all a joke. I'm not saying that nothing was done about what was going on but his outlook on it made a lot of people believe this was not to be taken seriously. Even after it was reported out that he was confirmed to have the virus. Yes of course he was able to get undeviated attention to him and his wife in order to make sure they would beat this virus but everyone doesn't have that luxury.

I: I understand but we just have to hope that now people do take what's going on seriously. I always tell individuals I don't take all these precautions for myself I take them for my family. If I keep taking precautions I can say I did everything I could to keep the ones I love safe... I just want to thank you for taking the time out and answering some questions. I appreciate it and I hope you have a wonderful day.

P: I'm glad I could give you some of my input. Have a great day.