

Community Conversations NJYSA COVID-19 Project

Participant 314

Interview conducted by A.S. on January 16,2021

Transcribed by A.S. on January 18,2021-January 29,2021

Length of Recorded Interview

0:00-10:36

Interviewer: Hello, let's get started with our interview. My first question for you is how serious did you take the pandemic when it came to the US?

Participant: Extremely! This was something that was very new and not very well understood. I work at a hospital, and we were not prepared for an outbreak this big. Rules at the hospital were chang-- constantly changing every day depending on what new information came out about the virus. My home/social life changed completely. I didn't allow friends over and was frequently cleaning everything I touched.

I: (Laughing) Well you definitely knew what my next question was.. So could you elaborate how has your life changed since March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic?

P: I definitely have less of a social life now. I haven't been going out nearly as much as I used to, not even to get groceries sometimes. Ever since March, I have been mainly ordering the things I need online so I have less contact with people. My family lives in Georgia, and because of the pandemic and the travel restrictions that are now in place, it doesn't make sense to visit them, in a time like this. I haven't seen them since December 2019. I miss them a lot, and it is really hard not seeing them. Now, I couldn't imagine doing nearly as many things that were normal before, like shaking hands, sharing food or a drink with someone. It all seems taboo now, and I couldn't see it going back to normal anytime soon. I think wearing masks will become the new norm, especially around a hospital, which makes the most sense and maybe should've been something that was implemented before.

I: It's scary how much change we've made in our lives. I know for me I constantly think about all those times we never wore a mask in the hospital and patients would just cough and sneeze all over the place. How are you balancing your work like and your personal life?

P: In the beginning of the pandemic, like in March-May range, I wasn't doing a good job. I was taking my feelings of anxiety from work and bringing it home. I was scared of this virus and being the one to spread it even more. I was scared my loved ones were going to get it from me, and I wasn't allowing myself much joy. I'm better about not bringing my work home with me now, but dealing with this pandemic was a learning curve.

I: That is great to hear, I'm still having some trouble myself separating my home and work life. My next question is what were some of the hardest or biggest challenges for you or your family during/admits Covid-19?

P: Some of the hardest challenges to deal with was probably not being able to see my family. Even though we have the technology where I can technically still see them, it's not the same though. Another challenge, which was more with my boyfriend's family, was setting boundaries and learning to respect them. I felt like some of his family members haven't been taking this pandemic seriously and were still trying to come over to our house for birthdays or any sort of event really. I felt everything I was telling them that I had experienced still didn't feel real to them because they were not the ones to experience it for themselves.

I: Was there anything that helped you find happiness during this difficult time?

P: Since most things were closed down, I found I was able to find joy in a lot of my hobbies again. I like to be crafty, and I was able to create new things. I also like to draw and paint. It was honestly so nice to be able to do those things again. Before the pandemic, I usually didn't find much time for that. Also my pets helped me a lot. They were a huge distraction, and I felt like they enjoyed me being home more often.

I: When the vaccine for Covid-19 is made available to the public will you choose to receive it? Why or why not?

P: It is currently available to me, but I won't get it just yet. I read a bit of the study that was done, and I feel there's not enough information about how it'll affect young women. It is also not FDA approved yet. It was only authorized for emergency use. As it's being used, clinical trials for the drug are still going on so that it can get the proper licensure to be approved. Until it does, I don't think I will get it.

I: Understandable I have some of the same concerns as well. Could you explain to me any of your greatest fears moving forward?

P: I think my greatest fear is how much longer this is going to go on. I just really miss my family and want to visit them. There were so many missed events, like birthdays and holidays. Now that cases are up again, I'm scared that there's a chance of my mom getting sick.

I: My last and final question is there was at least one thing that you or someone else could have done differently, what would it be?

P: I would probably refer to my boyfriend's family. There are some individuals that we do not see because we don't feel like they're taking precautions. I wish some of them would just stop going out so much. My boyfriend still has one of his grandparents still around, and if anything were to happen to her, it would just be so devastating.

I: Thank you so much for letting me interview you.

P: You're welcome.