

Kaitlynn: Ok, my name's Kaitlynn Barkey. I'm a first year pharmacy student at Butler University.

Matteo: Hi, my name is Matteo Palazzolo. I'm also a student at Butler University. Today I'm going to be asking you questions about the impact of Covid on your life. My first question is: how did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your daily life?

Kaitlynn: COVID started when I was in 8th grade. I was a part of my school's basketball team, so when the pandemic started our practices stopped momentarily until they could come up with a safe way for us to all be together. They came up with a solution quickly and we were able to still practice and play games against other schools, but whenever someone was sick, we had to quarantine ourselves for a week to stop any potential spread. The pandemic started near the end of the basketball season so it did not have that much of an impact. What about you?

Matteo: For me, COVID stopped me from hanging out with my friend. It helped me to grow closer to my family because we were stuck together. I especially got closer with my brother as we would play games together during our zoom classes. I was also a football player during this time, and COVID stopped me from offseason training and going to the gym in the offseason. Which is one of the reasons I switched into doing shotput and discus, which is a sport that I continued throughout high school. I also had to learn how to cook how to cook because my parents would have me make them dinner most nights after they got home from work. What were some of the biggest challenges you faced during the pandemic?

Kaitlynn: I was thankful to not have not faced any crazy challenges during the pandemic. The only challenge I faced was being bored and wanting to go out and not being able to do anything. Other than that, everything was fine. What were some of the challenges you faced?

Matteo: For me, one of the biggest challenges was not being able to go to the gym because I was a football player, so not going to the gym caused me to put on a lot of extra weight, missing all that physical activity I got. Another was I couldn't hang out with my friends as we were all very close and before covid, and we're still close now, but during covid we weren't able to hang out as much as we could. This affected me quite a lot because I am a very social person. Were there any family members you know that contracted Covid, and did that experience affect you?

Kaitlynn: Yeah, so, I contracted COVID multiple times regardless of me receiving the vaccine. Each time I contracted COVID it was after the height of the illness. Both of my parents have also contracted it. My mom had just started a medication that lowered her

immune system, so this was a scary time because we didn't know exactly how it was going to affect her or if it would at all. This experience thankfully did not have that much of an impact on my life, because everyone was fine and back to normal after a week or two. Most of my family lives in Canada, so it was interesting to see how the pandemic was affecting them in different ways than it was us. An example being that the US had a mortality rate twice of what Canada's was. What about you?

Matteo: For me, my whole family contracted COVID and none of us had really bad experiences with it. We all just had low fevers, and we could not taste or smell, which was pretty typical. This experience really didn't really affect me, because there wasn't much to do in the first place, so getting sick didn't matter too much anyway. However, my Nonna was not able to go out and do what she wanted because she was immunocompromised, so I couldn't go and see her because if I got her sick I'd feel really bad. One of my friends she had just recently gotten a kidney transplant so I wasn't able to hang out with her, because I'd hang out with her for a while before covid started and that affected me quite a bit. Were there ways that you'd take care of your physical and mental health during the pandemic?

Kaitlynn: During the pandemic I took care of my physical healthy at basketball practices, and outside of that I spent a lot of time outside once the weather was nice. I went on walks and played basketball with my brother. I did not really do anything for my mental health other than talking to my friends on the phone and I would hang out with a friend that lived in the same neighborhood as me. What about you?

Matteo: For me, I took care of my mental health by calling my friends and playing video games with them whenever I could. During our zoom classes freshman year, we would sometimes call each other all the time during them. For my physical health my mom would make me go on walks with her when she came home from work. Was there any situation that happened during the pandemic, especially in your school?

Kaitlynn: At the start of the pandemic my school did not have zooms, so we would do our work similarly to eLearning. Teachers would post our assignments and pages to read, and we would do them. The best part about this is that I got to do the work on my own when I wanted to do it. The worst part was that I couldn't see any of my friends, so it felt very isolating. Freshman year we had the option to choose between in person and online. So, I chose in person, and everything felt somewhat normal after that. What about your school situation?

Matteo: For me, during eighth grade year, we didn't have too many classes, all the assignments were just posted and we didn't have to do anything. Teachers were not

allowed to lower our grades past what they were already at, so if you had an A you would leave it at an A and do no work. However, during my freshman year I had zoom classes, but they were all very easy, I was able to call my friends and do stuff with my brother during them. However, second semester of freshman year it was more normal, we had four classes a day with 85 each and there was a 5-minute passing period for those classes. Was there a way that your family helped you get through covid?

Kaitlynn: My family wasn't really there to help me get through covid. They were both considered essential workers, so they were working every day. I didn't see them that often, but my friends and I were always there to help each other out whenever we needed it. What about you?

Matteo: For me, my family also wasn't really there. My mom is a teacher, so she had to go into school and teach her zoom classes from her classroom. My dad owns his own company, so he had to go into work and make sure his employees were doing things right and practicing proper covid safety regulations. And the only person that was home with me was my brother, and all we really did together was play video games which I guess somewhat helped.

Kaitlynn: Were there any news stories or events during the pandemic that had a significant impact on you?

Matteo: Yeah, there were a few stories. Some of the news stories that stood out to me were the shortage of toilet paper and hand sanitizer. I found that really funny because people thought that these were more important than food in many cases. I remember people would wash their wrappers of food and produce before they ate them, to get rid of the covid germs. There was always news about the vaccine being a form of mind control which was kind of interesting that people would think that. There was also a lot of news about Trump as he was the current president, and people were not very happy with him at this time. Did you discover any new apps or technology that helped you during the pandemic?

Kaitlynn: During the pandemic I discovered TikTok. I would spend a majority of my day scrolling through a bunch of short videos made from people all over the world. I think I can speak for everyone and say that it helped make us feel more connected in a time that we weren't able to connect with people in person. Today, I still use TikTok, and it has become a bad habit of mine to spend hours scrolling through videos every day. Recently, the US has been trying to implement a ban on TikTok. So, it will be sad to see something that helped so many people through the pandemic go. What are your thoughts on the long-term societal impacts of the pandemic?

Matteo: I think that the pandemic has caused many people to rely on their phones and that more people have gotten addicted to their phones than before the pandemic. A lot of people definitely lowered their attention spans and retention on long term things because of TikTok being prevalent at this time. I also think the addition of Netflix gaining popularity during covid people would lead people to hate ads even more than they did already and this led to people getting more and more streaming services than channels. I think COVID also brought about the addition of picking up and getting groceries delivered instead of going to the store yourself. How did the pandemic influence your future travel plans or desires?

Kaitlynn: So, I was supposed to attend a family reunion in Canada, but because of the pandemic the border closed. People could not enter or leave Canada. So, those plans got put on hold. It was difficult knowing that I wouldn't be able to see my family if something bad were to happen. What about your travel plans?

Matteo: For me, my family was meant to go to Ireland with to see my cousin and some of my extended family that I'd never met down there. Because of covid though, Ireland was not letting people in. We had to postpone it a year. It kind of worked out, because my cousin got engaged during this time, so we could actually see him propose to his girlfriend at the time, so that was really cool.

Kaitlynn: Thank you for sharing with me today.

Matteo: Thank you for talking with me.