

Caleb: I'm Caleb Cletcher. I'm a pre-pharmacy major here at Butler. I'm first year student.

Hibba: And I'm Hibba Mahmood and my major is also pre-pharmacy and I'm also a first year.

Caleb: How did the social distancing and restrictions affect your relationships or social life?

Hibba: I would say, so obviously like being I mean, being at home all the time, my main way of like communicating with everyone was always like over the phone or over text or FaceTiming. And so I definitely think at the beginning of when it started, I was very much like trying to make sure that I maintained all my relationships and trying to reach out to people and making sure that they're okay because I think my coping strategy of like not being able to see everyone was just talking over text But I would say as far as like affecting it, I definitely think I developed a little bit of like social anxiety going back Because obviously. The rest of like my eighth grade before I went to high school was like all online. And so when I went back And if we had that kind of mental block of meeting new people and having that social anxiety. So I think that's kind of like a long lasting effect that it had on my social life and relationships.

Caleb: Mine was pretty similar. I kept in touch with a lot of my friends through you know phone calls, FaceTime, but also like my... best friends we played video games. So we talk over that. But it did affect our friend group as a whole because not all this could play video games. So, yeah, it was hard to like... make plans because we weren't really allowed to do much with quarantine so it definitely made it harder but i wouldn't say that it had any bad lasting impressions on... my way of meeting people, though. Thankfully.

Hibba: Since traveling was restricted, how did you stay connected with loved ones during the lockdowns and quarantines?

Caleb: Mostly through phone calls. I would visit my grandparents from time to time, but we tried to not do it very often because it was risky obviously So yeah, mostly just phone calls, FaceTime.

Hibba: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I would say the same thing. Most of my family, I only have some family that lives in America. They live in Chicago. And so the rest of my family lives in

Pakistan and we normally don't visit very often. My mom is the one who would go the most. And so she didn't go for a little bit. And then as far as like my family in Chicago. I think when things started to get a little bit better, they would come here or we would go visit them. But mainly it was just FaceTimes, phone calls, text messages. Seeing each other on social media. I think that's the only way that we've really stayed connected during the lockdowns and quarantines.

Caleb: Yeah. What was your reaction to first hearing about the pandemic and how did your day-to-day routine change?

Hibba: I think because I was in eighth grade when everyone was talking about it at first, I didn't really think it was going to be that big of a thing. I didn't really understand because I was in eighth grade. I didn't really understand like the severity of it. And so it didn't really mean, it didn't my reaction was like, oh, this is not that big of a deal. But then when School got canceled for, I think it was two weeks first and then it was like the rest of the year it was all online. That's when I was like, oh, this is serious. And then obviously seeing things on the news where when you go out, you have to wear masks and kind of just, I think everything felt very eerie because, you know, everyone was rushing to like grocery stores to get supplies. And I think that's when it kind of started to hit like, oh, like this is serious but i would say like my reaction about first hearing about it was about it's not that big of a deal just because I was young and I didn't really understand And then my day-to-day routine, obviously, like I wasn't going to school so I think I kind of slacked towards the end of the year just because like being at home, I was just very like unmotivated to do any school. So I think, you know, I would just wake up, I would do my school and then I would just like play video games or something like that. So I definitely think my routine changed a lot just because I was at home all the time but That's what I would say for that question.

Caleb: Yeah, I had a very similar experience i remember I was hanging out with a group of friends when we found out that we were getting quarantined. And I think it was two weeks for me too. And we were like super excited about it and everything is no school you know so But yeah, I didn't realize how different it would be. And classes were a lot Honestly, in my experience they weren't harder at all. I would say it was a lot easier just because they didn't know how to do it like we'd never done that.

So there wasn't really a baseline So for me, it was really easy. And I actually couldn't do most of the stuff that I had been doing for most of my classes, like I had a music class where I was doing a project and that got completely scrapped because of this. So, yeah, it was... It was a lot and it was very different. From what it had been before and anything anyone had experienced. So it was It was hard at times not being able to see. But yeah.

Hibba: Did COVID make it hard to meet new people in high school?

Caleb: I would say definitely because i would say definitely with social distancing, I felt a lot less encouraged to meet people in general and talk to people. It was also harder because We had block scheduling and we'd go home before one o'clock most days. So it was a combination of like the social distancing aspect along with the fact that We didn't have school for a year as long. And... It definitely did make it hard to meet new people. I felt like I didn't start really developing relationships with people until sophomore year when it died down a lot.

Hibba: Yeah, I would definitely say the same thing, especially going back to that first question I talked about like kind of developing that social anxiety And for my school, when we went back freshman year, we were split up into like cohorts so it was based off of your last name. So I only went to school like every other day. And a lot of my friends were in the other cohort. So I had to meet new people and the people that were in my cohort. And I would definitely say it was hard just because I obviously like going into freshman year, you want to be able to be with your own friends first to make yourself comfortable. And I didn't have that because everyone else was in the different cohorts. So I definitely do think it was hard to meet new people, but there were a lot of people that I met that first year back that I'm still friends with now, which is good but i definitely think kind of being away from people for a while and getting that social anxiety made it hard to meet new people in high school for sure. But I would definitely say the same thing. I don't really think I branched out as much until sophomore year when I was going back to school like every day.

Caleb: Yeah, that's really interesting. My school did something somewhat similar, but it wasn't based on last name. It was we'd only have the first four classes of the Monday and Thursday, I think. And then the second half of the day, Tuesdays and Fridays. And then Wednesdays we would have completely remote day. So, yeah, I mean... Both of these obviously make it hard to meet people when we're not around them as much.

Hibba: Yeah. And I also think like it affected um just like that stamina of like doing work too, because I was only going up your other day. So it was either I was going two days a week or three days a week. So those days where I would like have off, I think it's very easy to like Slack, and not want to do work because you're at home, but then you have like you have to go back the next day. So it's kind of that constant of like working, not working and trying to like keep up in school and also coming back from being like all virtual to going every other day. Don't think was as much of like a smooth transition either because you kind of have to get back into like actually working and going to school and then also juggling meeting new people. So I definitely think it was hard for sure.

Caleb: Yeah. Did COVID change how you view life and did you have any sort of self-growth self growth from it.

Hibba: Yeah, I definitely do think it changed how I viewed life. Not to make things deep, but I definitely think it kind of shows like, you know, life is very short because I don't think anyone was expecting it to get as big as it did. And it even affects, I mean, to this day, like we still have COVID cases. But I definitely think it made me grow an appreciation for my family more just because I was home all the time. And as far as like self-growth, I definitely do think um being away from school made it... like nice to kind of work on myself and kind of get into like healthier habits because i think sometimes when you're working in school all the time and you're always so focused at school, it's easy to forget about yourself. So I think just kind of realizing, you know, I'm not at school right now. I can take things to do, like do things that are mentally better for myself as well. But yeah, as far as changing how I view life, I definitely will say that, you know, just life is short because I mean, it hit us out of nowhere and it got big out of nowhere. So I think just kind of like that severity is what definitely made me realize that.

Caleb: Yeah, I would say... made me think the exact same way, especially with My grandfather actually died due to covid from uh in December, I think January freshman year It was really hard and just makes you think Like, you know, sometimes we feel invincible like it's not going to affect us, but it really can and it will. And it's It makes you appreciate the time you spend with people. I would say definitely made me realize that a lot more than I ever did before.

Hibba: Yeah, I definitely do think like even if you didn't have like a family member that passed away from it in some way shape or form, it definitely affected everyone in some sort of way for sure.

How did COVID affect you academically and what was your experience going back to school?

Caleb: I would say it probably made me a little more lazy, to be honest. I mean, I've always been lazy, but not having to do as much as like in eighth grade definitely made it may not want to do it even more because it just felt Like I had no drive to. But thankfully. My mom is very encouraging and made sure that I would do my homework. So that was my whole thing of growing up. Like she always pressured me to just make sure I got my work done. So I wouldn't say COVID affected my worth work ethic a ton. And I still maintained a good GPA so it was not... terrible but going back to school is definitely hard just with the learning style we had it was hard to feel as focused and learn as well.

Hibba: Yeah, I would definitely say the same thing. Going back Because obviously just going from being all virtual and then you go back and you have for me like going back every other day Even the every other day system was just so like annoying because it was I felt like I didn't have like a consistent schedule. It was like either I'm going two days a week or three days a week, which was a little bit annoying. As far as it goes like academically, I do think like I was also pretty lazy Because, I mean, I was virtual for the rest of the year and I just didn't really want to put in that much work. And then obviously like, and also our time was a little bit different because we were transitioning to a whole nother school.

So we were going from like middle school to high school where things get a little bit more real so i think Academic wise it's also like you have to understand like high school you have to work a lot harder than you did in middle school. And I think COVID definitely strained that because we kind of had that lazy I think at first, and then you come to high school and it kind of carries on, especially going back every other day. So I would definitely say like for me academically just trying to get back into that work ethic was very hard. And then obviously just juggling everything else like personal life and trying to do

You know get back to where I was when I was actually working and not being lazy for sure.

Caleb: Yeah, that honestly makes me think about how hard it would be if this happened to us going into college from high school and how much Like, I can't even... imagine how hard that would be.

Hibba: Yeah, because I think as I mean, you go from middle to high school and it's one change but then high school to college is like a completely different change So I definitely think kind of transitioning from one school to another is during COVID was one of probably the hardest parts.

Caleb: Yeah, especially with Yeah, trying to meet all these new people. You're going completely new environment, especially college and having Having to be on your own like away from your family usually also not being able to meet people as easily like. I can only imagine that affected people.

Hibba: Yeah, that's the other thing I was like talking about is like, not only do you have to like transition back into getting into that work ethic But you also have to meet new people and like get that social life going too, especially going to a new school. And for me, it was like, because I was in a different cohort Then all my other friends. So I was like forced to meet new people And obviously, when you go to high school, there's always a lot of people there, but that's like shortened because it's like every, you know, that cohort thing. So I definitely think it was a lot because you have to struggle you have to juggle work life school like social life and that was definitely, definitely very hard

Caleb: Were there any coping strategies that you used to help manage stress or anxiety during the pandemic?

Hibba: Yeah. I think the only coping strategy that I would say is just kind of talking to people. I'm a very like people person and I love talking. And so I think anytime I'm like stressed or anxious about something, I'll talk it out with people. So I think that's pretty much the coping strategy that I used during the pandemic was just really making sure that I was staying connected with everyone and also kind of just getting closer with my family as well, I would definitely say was a coping strategy.

Caleb: For me, I definitely think it was having the ability to talk to people online. And, you know, like I said, play video games with my friends that definitely helped a lot. And I think if I didn't have that, it would have been very difficult to get through that time. Just not being able to see people like ever I'm very grateful for having that ability.