

WEBVTT

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Today's Sunday, September 22nd. My name is Carleigh Olive. I'm a senior in middle secondary education in history at Bowler University.

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I'll be interviewing myself about experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and give consent for this audio to be used for academic and archival purposes.

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How did you first react to hearing the news that schools were closing and the nation would be put under quarantine?

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I was certain that schools would not shut down. I remember the day that

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Quarantine was announced.

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I was sitting in my school cafeteria.

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And I was talking to my friends, and they were very fearful that might happen, and they were very

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Nervous about what it could mean, and I

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Was, I was indifferent about it. I didn't think it could possibly happen, but.

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It's very unlikely that schools, as institution, close down

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For for long periods of time, so I couldn't believe that this was ever

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Happening. And

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Later that day, my friend texted me

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About the national announcement that happened, and I felt like my whole world was cracking.

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I was in shock, and I couldn't understand why something like this was happening.

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So I remember immediately doing so much research on what the lockdown meant.

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How Covid spreads, looking at new sources and the CDC.

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The Mayo clinic all these different

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Resources are just trying piece together my world.

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I wouldn't say I was fearful, but underneath that shock and instability there was definitely an air of unease.

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Was my daily routine like during the pandemic?

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I don't really remember much. From the first few months of the pandemic my conception time became very warped, and

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Unstable, and some things have just been completely forgotten

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Because of that, but I do remember most things based on tracking my mental health and my habits.

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And I had some very different phases.

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Particularly the summer of 2020.

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I spent my entire day watching endless hours of shows until I can eventually sleep again and repeat the process.

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So I would wake up around one to three Pm. And then I'd watch

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Anywhere between 8 to 12 episodes a day.

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And I would just do this to escape

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From the world everything that was

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Overwhelming to me. Try to feel temporary

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Peace and joy, and escape the

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Numbness I was feeling.

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It was not very help healthy, and it was definitely

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The darkest period of my life.

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I would isolate myself, and I would eat all my meals in my room, so I would never have to leave my room.

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But by the time it hit the spring of 21.

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I would be much more active and see more people. I was able to

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Go to dance in person, so I would drive myself there, which

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Was a very religious time for me, because I could

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Actually be by myself for the first time in over a year.

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And then I could go to dance and express myself in ways I couldn't do when I was home.

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Even though we're still masking socially distancing ourselves.

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I also was doing school online at that point, so I would wake up and stay under my covers and not pay attention

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while I logged onto Google classroom, and then.

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My cat would nap next to me for all of school, and then I went to my homework.

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Which there wasn't much at that point.

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So I would just quickly do it, and I would never care if it was

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Good or not. I never learned anything.

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And I would repeat that schedule every single day.

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[When you think of the COVID-19 pandemic, what is the first thing that comes to mind?] When I think of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first thing that comes to mind is the grocery stores and my mother's sanitation station.

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The grocery stores were

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Completely empty and

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There was never any toilet paper, hand sanitizer, or water bottles by me.

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But there's always soap, which I thought was very symbolic of the pandemic as a whole, and

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How there was a lot of misinformation.

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And not a lot of self-accountability.

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For the greater good of everyone's health.

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I also remember, even though I couldn't go to the grocery store most times, because my sibling was extremely immunocompromised.

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My mother would come back from grocery shopping or when she'd get groceries delivered. Everything had to be sanitized before it could come into the house. So her mother had a table set up in our garage

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Where everything would be wiped down with colorox wipes before brought inside, so I would have to bring the groceries inside, since I have the best immune system out of my own family.

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And now I have a

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very deep hatred for the smell of all bleach wipes, and they make me slightly nauseous because of that.

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What did I miss most while I was on lockdown? I missed my friends the most. I was very isolated, and I was

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In a very bad state of mental health.

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I miss seeing them every morning in the commons of our school, and I miss our talks, even the mundane ones about homework, or about

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If someone's parents made them frustrated.

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I went almost two straight years without being in person, because

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My sibling was high risk, and some of my

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friends parents worked in the healthcare

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Industry, so it was too risky for any of us to meet.

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So I couldn't see them until my senior graduation. So I

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went a long time without being able to see them, and I really missed them.

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Looking back, do you think there's any positive aspects of the pandemic either for you personally or for society as a whole?

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For me, I was able to discover who I was and who I wanted to be in a judgment-free and safe space.

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I was at a point in the adolescent development where I was really trying to figure out who I was.

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And my belief system and really.

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separating myself from my parents' identity into my own identity.

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And being able

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To do that in the comfort of my own room, which

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Never really was invaded as a space,

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Was really helpful, and I

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was able to see so many perspectives, social movements, and different histories through social media that was never able to access beforehand.

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And I was able to develop my core beliefs during that time.

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So that was really a positive aspect for me.

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I also was able to re-educate myself a lot and deconstruct a lot of

the prejudice by parents raised me with.

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As far as society is concerned, I think it was a wake-up call for the mental health crisis and for

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The normalcy of talking about mental health.

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Pre-pandemic, I think a lot of people in the older generations did not take it as seriously considered a bit

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to taboo to talk about in public, or even discuss,

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Really nationwide on the news.

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But during the pandemic you would hear frequent conversations about the mental health crisis, Particularly among the youth.

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And it became commonplace for people across all generations to discuss this and

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Think about how it came to be, and possible solutions. Pandemic, then

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Translated to more people talking about mental health in normal way.

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And it being taken more seriously. And I've noticed amongst my relatives.

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That the ones who used to not take it seriously and just make jokes about it.

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Now take it very seriously.

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And even in my neighbors I noticed the ones who used to

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See it as a bit of a joke or a way to

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"weak", or an excuse

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See it as a serious issue now, and want to figure out how to

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Stop the crisis.