

I first learned of COVID-19 in February of 2020, and my previous college roommate was the one to tell me. We were both just getting ready for the day, and he happened to check the news on his smartphone. Out of the blue we learned of a new potential danger to ourselves and our anyone around us. Over the next few weeks, we kept tabs on the news to learn about where the virus was, and where it could be. Then there were the scary parts about it spreading quickly. Just within a month, it had spread all the way to America, and was now a direct threat to safety and security. Class was optional, an announcement was made for online instruction, and we started to transition to leaving campus. Through the whole process I felt an err of caution towards people I didn't know. To me, I was not worried about my own health and safety, I was worried about the health and safety of my family and friends. Most of my concern was to my eldest relatives, grandparents and aunts and uncles, and my parents too. Thankfully no one in my family has contracted the virus to this day, so I consider my family a bit lucky. Once I was settled back at home with my family, I didn't leave the house and surrounding area for weeks at a time. The longest I stayed at home was 5 weeks, followed by a remote fishing trip, and then I applied to a job(and accepted). During these extensive weeks I attended online classes. The transition to online instruction was difficult but not impossible and is not something I am looking forward to experiencing again. When I wasn't struggling with college, I only had a few things to do. I could play with the family cat and dog, play online games, do activities or work outside, and practice music. Thankfully I didn't have to be inside 24/7 due to living in the country with no neighbors. I would have gone insane being locked indoors. But at the same time, it was difficult to have enough effort to do more than exist some days. During this whole experience, I was in a committed long term relationship. It ended poorly because the stress of not seeing me caused my partner to end the relationship. I dealt with it with the help of my parents and some friends, and thankfully made it out with a new perspective and new thoughts. Past the last adventure I had a new challenge ahead of me; working at a factory during a pandemic. Immediately there were a few struggles. It was difficult to breathe with the masks and hot environment. It was difficult to socialize and even communicate with lots of noise and the inability to see each other's mouths. Even more so, we had to be separate at all times, unless we had to communicate for work purposes or to do our job effectively. Often workers would be quarantined after testing positive or when exposed to some one who tested positive, so about 1-2 people a week had to be gone. That was the scary part, seeing people from all over working in relatively close quarters and not knowing if you were safe. Lastly, my return to campus was an adventure. From the get-go, I was concerned for my personal safety, along with the safety of my roommates and friends. Both online and in-person classes went smoothly, even if my grades are lower than last fall. Difficulty is and was expected, so nothing too surprising. Surprisingly, many students take the pandemic and recommendations seriously, so safety is easy to maintain. Even now, with classes returning to all online, I still have hope and a positive outlook on the current situation.