

## **Transcript of Interview with Kelsey McIntyre by Lawson Miller**

**Interviewee:** Kelsey McIntyre

**Interviewer:** Lawson Miller

**Date:** 08/23/2020

**Location (Interviewee):** Walnut Creek, California

**Location (Interviewer):** Tooele, Utah

**Transcriber:** Lawson Miller

**Abstract:** Kelsey McIntyre lives in Walnut Creek, California. She discusses how the pandemic caused her to lose both of her jobs but says she is grateful that her state and local government responded the way that they did, or things could be much worse. Kelsey feels that she has grown closer with her family who are in various places across the United States, and that the increasing prevalence of technology such as Zoom makes it possible to communicate with them. Kelsey talks about the impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ community by the cancellation of Pride Month events and the LGBTQ+ community being at increased risk for exposure by those who are most vulnerable. Kelsey talks about how her partner works in news and she relies on them to get updates about what is happening, as well as checking the news on her iPhone. She also talks about how she has learned to establish boundaries with her partner and that being together frequently can be both good and bad. Kelsey believes that masks will be mandated indoors a year from now, at least where she lives, and is optimistic that people in the LGBTQ+ community are actively participating in preventative measures.

**Lawson Miller 0:02**

Alright, what is your name?

**Kelsey McIntyre 0:05**

Kelsey McIntyre.

**Lawson Miller 0:07**

Alright, Kelsey, and where do you live?

**Kelsey McIntyre 0:09**

I live in Walnut Creek, California.

**Lawson Miller 0:12**

Okay, and how old are you?

**Kelsey McIntyre 0:14**

29.

**Lawson Miller 0:16**

How do you identify in relation...

**Kelsey McIntyre 0:19**

Queer.

**Lawson Miller 0:20**

Oh okay, thank you. And when did you first learn about COVID-19?

**Kelsey McIntyre 0:27**

I first - I work in the medical field. So I first learned about it at work. And then my partner works in news. So I got kind of the pre-announcement off the record.

**Lawson Miller 0:43**

What were your thoughts about it?

**Kelsey McIntyre 0:46**

At first, I was a little worried about it just because it would affect my job directly. And then of course, a lot of questions of how bad would this be? How long would this last? Are there going to be... Is everybody going to need to be tested? All of that, but mostly it was for how is this going to directly affect me for what I do at work?

**Lawson Miller 1:10**

What has concerned you most about the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Kelsey McIntyre 1:15**

That it's lasted so long and that its effects are felt, regardless of demographic, location, you know, political affiliation; it's everywhere, and it's continuing, the damages are continuing to last. And there's no progress really yet on the front of prevention and treatment.

**Lawson Miller 1:44**

What unique issues do you think the LGBTQ+ community has faced as a result of the pandemic, if any?

**Kelsey McIntyre 1:51**

I think there's two effects that this community has faced. One, of course being Pride Month in June. That was - it was a big change this year, because of COVID, all of the pride events, you know, became virtual. And with the anniversary of pride being this year, the 50th anniversary of the pride events, it was it was rough to have to go through that online. So having to move everything online would be one effect. And then the other one would be, I think that our demographic is especially, I think, at risk of exposure,

and just because of location, and we rely heavily on community. So I think this demographic has probably faced a lot of damages this year.

**Lawson Miller 2:47**

Okay. And what's your perspective on the way that the people within the LGBTQ community have responded to the pandemic?

**Kelsey McIntyre 2:55**

I think that most people are pretty - at least I'm hopeful, I'm optimistic [laughs] that people have been, you know, adhering to the shelter at home measures and I think that a lot of people are capitalizing on the new forms of community, including, you know, virtual meetings and all of that, at least where I live in California, it's- it's pretty strictly adhered to. So I'm optimistic that the LGBTQ community nationwide is also actively participating in preventative measures.

**Lawson Miller 3:34**

How have the people around you reacted to the pandemic?

**Kelsey McIntyre 3:38**

Pretty similar to this location. In the Bay Area where I live, it's been we have had pretty strict shelter in place orders since the beginning. So people around me are staying inside only going out if necessary, kind of relying on or at least people that are of the older generation they're relying on younger people around them to help them with grocery shopping and running errands and all of that. We're all social distancing, no one's really gathering and if so it's outside and socially distance, everyone's wearing masks. It's mandated to wear masks outside no matter where you are, or whether you enter a building or not. So, here everybody's definitely being cautious.

**Lawson Miller 4:29**

In what ways do you feel that COVID-19 has impacted your mental health, if at all?

**Kelsey McIntyre 3:35**

I have felt a lot more anxiety since the beginning of the pandemic, it could be a result of- kind of a combination of things, including less interaction with humans [laughs], losing my job as a result, 'cause the physical therapy clinic where I work closed, and then a lot of the uncertainty of "how long this would last? Would I find more work?" Of course, you know, the financial aspect of this. Yeah, a lot, a lot more anxiety for sure.

**Lawson Miller 5:09**

Have you gotten sick at all during the pandemic?

**Kelsey McIntyre 5:11**

I actually was sick at the beginning [laughs]. Th- it was a COVID concern. I tested negative but I had some complications with my test results in the test process so- but I tested negative.

**Lawson Miller 5:28**

Do you know, like, what month that was in?

**Kelsey McIntyre 5:29**

March.

**Lawson Miller 5:31**

Okay.

**Kelsey McIntyre 5:32**

I also was sick in January, and they were pretty similar.

**Lawson Miller 5:37**

Has the pandemic impacted the jobs or employment status of people that you know?

**Kelsey McIntyre 5:43**

Yes, it affected me personally. Two of my jobs that I was working closed indefinitely, so I lost both of my jobs. And then everyone around me that is still employed is working from home, unless they are on the front lines. So in the medical field working in the hospitals or at grocery stores.

**Lawson Miller 6:06**

How do you cope with the pandemic on a day-to-day basis?

**Kelsey McIntyre 6:09**

I try to follow a schedule and structure in my day to at least establish a sense of normalcy. So I try to eat at consistent hours, try to maintain a good sleep schedule. I'll play a lot with my dog, making sure - focusing on school and all of that and just trying to keep as normal a lifestyle as possible, trying to go on walks, all of that.

**Lawson Miller 6:41**

In what ways has COVID-19 affected your relationships with your friends, family or significant other, if at all?

**Kelsey McIntyre 6:49**

I believe it definitely strengthened my relationship with my family. I have family in many different locations across the country. So we've been able to connect a lot through the development of Zoom, at least how common it has become. And definitely with my partner, we've been able to spend a lot more

time together, which can be good and bad. We learned how to kind of create boundaries and hold space for each other, both separately and together. But I can't say that it's affected my friendships at all.

**Lawson Miller 7:30**

Okay. What have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic?

**Kelsey McIntyre 7:35**

My partner [laughs]. My partner works in news, so I'm very lucky to have information relayed to me immediately and face to face, but I also use the news app on my phone and iPhone, apple iPhone.

**Lawson Miller 7:54**

What do you think are important issues that the media may or may not be covering?

**Kelsey McIntyre 7:59**

The specific demographics that are especially affected by COVID. Here there was a local news story about communities of color and low-income communities that are affected by COVID. But that's really it. And I haven't seen too much done nationally. And that was the only demographic that was mentioned.

**Lawson Miller 8:23**

How do you feel about how your local and state government has responded to the pandemic?

**Kelsey McIntyre 8:29**

In the bay area where I live, we were one of the first to establish a stay at home order. And while that affected, you know, my job and my community and my life, really, I'm proud that that was how they chose to react, and I affirm their choice. I think it was a really smart decision and considering what happened in the weeks and months to follow, I think we were a little ahead of the game. And I think that if we had done otherwise, or if they had done otherwise, we would be in a lot worse trouble than we are in right now.

**Lawson Miller 9:09**

How do you feel about how the federal government has responded to the pandemic?

**Kelsey McIntyre 9:13**

I don't think that there has been much response, at least from what I have observed. I am not satisfied with how the federal government reacted to this. I am grateful for the CARES [Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security] Act and for the financial decisions that were made, but I have a lot of problems with the follow up of that. As well as, you know, local resources to assist the local governments. I wish there had been a little bit more of that.

**Lawson Miller 9:50**

How do you compare the pandemic with some of the other major events of your lifetime?

**Kelsey McIntyre 9:55**

This was hands down unlike anything I had ever experienced, and I, you know, still very vividly remember the events of 9/11 and swine flu and all of that. And this is in a league of its own, where everything shut down. I've never really experienced that before, on such a personal level.

**Lawson Miller 10:20**

What ways do you think that the issues faced by the LGBTQ+ people have been altered or even exacerbated by the pandemic, if at all?

**Kelsey McIntyre 10:30**

I think a big part of our community, like I mentioned earlier, was connection and especially in communities or for individuals whose direct communities don't always affirm or support them. I think a big part of mental health in our community is that sense of connection and I think that has been affected by COVID. And I think the LGBTQ community that's our number one thing is that connection has been affected, and that could affect the mental health of individuals.

**Lawson Miller 11:06**

Do you - how do you... In what ways do you feel like the pandemic has maybe changed your perspective or the perspective of people that, you know?

**Kelsey McIntyre 11:16**

Perspective with regards to what?

**Lawson Miller 11:19**

In regards to, you know, just the social, their social lives or their perspective about the political climate, just really anything generally?

**Kelsey McIntyre 11:32**

I think a lot of people around me have, at least from what I have observed, there is a sense of knowing what matters most people are really, you know, learning to not take their health for granted and capitalizing on the opportunity to connect with others as much as possible in whatever way possible. And I think that outlook of health first is really a positive take from the situation.

**Lawson Miller 12:11**

Okay. And during the pandemic, what - was there a moment when maybe you realized it might be something more serious? How is your personal perspective changed since the beginning?

**Kelsey McIntyre 12:28**

When I noticed that the, you know, the news calls it "the second wave" happened so quickly, that was a moment where I was a little, you know, worried about the projection of this disease, because it wasn't expected to hit until much later more towards you know, winter. So the fact that it had hit so soon, it's- it's worrisome because in some ways it follows the predictions that this diseases is a lot worse than originally thought. Yeah.

**Lawson Miller 13:05**

Where do you envision yourself being a year from now? Or how do you envision things being a year from now?

**Kelsey McIntyre 13:12**

I actually was just talking to my partner about this. I think the use of masks at least indoors will probably still at least be mandated here where I live, maybe not so much in other places in the country, but definitely here. I personally, am going to be back to work this week. So [laughs] hopefully, I'll have returned to some sense of normalcy with, you know, finances and work schedule and all of that. But I definitely think like continuing to see people exercising outside. Hopefully I'll continue to see that this time next year and that sense of again, health first, hopefully will still be as prevalent next year as it is right now.

**Lawson Miller 14:02**

Alright Kelsey, well thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

**Kelsey McIntyre 14:05**

Thank you so much.