

In This Together

The fear that struck the community and everyone around is tangible. The fear can be seen in all the grocery stores as shelves empty out of all essentials. It feels like there is no safe place. The phones ring as if a cry for help at my job, a community health center. We do our best to care for the community. Answering all sustention's as best as we can trying to give the community the best guidance we can. Our doctors and providers seem tired. The countless patients needing oxygen keep appearing and the calls no one wishes keep coming through. "I would like to speak to Dr so and so my ... just died." We do our best to try and be there for whoever needs all along hoping we will not get sick and pass on this deadly virus to our loved ones. The fear and uncertainty can be felt everywhere. The intense stress, so deep in the subconscious that no one could sleep. It has become a new reality. You go on your phone to distract your wandering mind and find that you are not the only one still awake at 3:00 in the morning tossing and turning with no hope of falling asleep. The day then starts again. In my life it consists of going to school online where no one has a clear idea of what they are doing. I know that my mental health will suffer if I do not keep somewhat of a routine and know that I need to put more time into self-care to keep on going. I grab a mask and go for a bike ride or run, making sure to get at least a half hour of fresh air every day. With the uncertainty of this virus everything is upside down. Our work shifts are staggered as much as possible, making sure two of the same people do not work together more than one day in an attempt to make sure we will have coverage if someone gets sick. This is in early March when there wasn't that much data about the Virus and everyone was comparing it to the flu. With someone who was immunocompromised in our household we took extra precautions. Living with an immunocompromised individual and working daily with

COVID positive patients we came to a conclusion that it would be safest for me to temporarily move out and find a new place for the time being. You would not think that this was the case but going to work every day gave me a sense of security and a sense of purpose. In a new apartment and unfamiliar surrounding being able to be of help to the community was keeping me going. I felt a that I was needed and that although still scared with the information we had we were able to be a anchor to the community. This experience although we are still living in it has shown me that we can make a bigger difference than we think we can. By taking the extra step to put on a mask and do things that may not necessarily be convenient to us but it can protect the public as a whole.