

Transcript of Interview with Jackie Fiora by David Fiora

Interviewee: Jackie Fiora

Interviewer: David Fiora

Date: 10/01/2020

Location (Interviewee): Cincinnati, Ohio

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Transcriber: Lily Crigler

Abstract: Jackie Fiora has been a life long resident of Cincinnati, Ohio. As a licensed school nurse, Jackie shared her thoughts in this interview about the difficulties of maintain a safe school space during the pandemic. She also discusses her experience of living through the COVID-19 Pandemic and how it has affected her daily life. Having a nursing degree Jackie Fiora provides insight into the challenges that have arisen during this health crisis. Her background in both schools and healthcare has given her a front line view of how the Covid-19 has played out in Southwest Ohio.

[beginning of audio file 1, 11:18 minutes]

David Fiora 0:01

Hello, my name is David Fiora. I'm a student from the University of Cincinnati. Today is October 1, 2020 in the evening, we are located in Cincinnati, Ohio, and I'm interviewing my mother:

Jackie Fiora 0:17

Jackie Fiora.

David Fiora 0:20

What type of job do you have?

Jackie Fiora 0:24

I am a school nurse.

David Fiora 0:28

When did you first learn of COVID-19?

Jackie Fiora 0:32

It was pretty early on in 2020, I would say in January. I heard about a virus, it was in China, didn't really seem like it was relevant to our lives in the United States.

David Fiora 0:52

Would you have a specific month that you would say you first learned about it?

Jackie Fiora 0:58

January.

David Fiora 0:59

Okay. How have your thoughts changed since then about the virus?

Jackie Fiora 1:05

It's really impacted everyone's lives. It's- it's seems like the only thing you hear about.

David Fiora 1:14

And what aspects of the pandemic have most concerned you?

Jackie Fiora 1:21

Lots of- lots of things, the economy, things we can do, our daily lives, te government, just everything.

David Fiora 1:37

Yeah, has COVID-19 affected your job?

Jackie Fiora 1:42

It has because in school, we have to do things to help prevent the spread of the virus. So we're talking about students and staff wearing a mask. And keeping the social distancing, which is something we've never had to worry about before, we have to make sure there's better cleaning of the school. So it's really impacted what we do. We see if there's been any cases of COVID amongst our community, and if there is, we have to do contact tracing and find out who they were in close contact to. So it really does affect what we do at school.

David Fiora 2:35

What do you think people do not understand about going to school during the pandemic?

Jackie Fiora 2:47

I would say most people do not realize the effort it takes for children to attend class in person, and to prevent any spread of the virus if someone happens to have the virus and not show any symptoms.

David Fiora 3:08

How have students been affected by this pandemic? Have you noticed any difference in them from...

Jackie Fiora 3:19

Well, for the last part of the school year, last- in 2020, it typically ends in May or June, the students were learning remotely, they weren't coming to school. And that has really affected the ability for children to get together in their friendships and the community of the school. Graduations weren't held, or if they were, it was in a very much different format. It just has really affected the ability for people to be together and coming to school has really kind of normalized the schooling process, but it's still very different with having the mask and the social distancing.

David Fiora 4:12

Yeah. What concerns do you have about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment and the- in the economy more broadly?

Jackie Fiora 4:24

As far as my job, I'm not so much worried because school nurses are needed to help with contact tracing in the schools and helping to ensure children are safe and healthy. As far as the general economy, there's different sectors that are greatly affected, for example, the entertainment industry. There are no concerts, games, athletic events, parades, all those things in the community where people serve one another, for example, restaurants, bars, any of those industries are- have been shut down, or their hours are much more limited. And it's greatly affected the economy. Unemployment is up, and more and more people are seeking unemployment benefits.

David Fiora 5:34

Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the employment of people you know?

Jackie Fiora 5:40

I don't know anybody, personally, that has lost a job. But there's many people I know have. People maybe through school or friends have friends that may be have lost hours working at a job or just completely have lost their job altogether.

David Fiora 6:12

I'd like to move on to questions about family and household. How has COVID-19 affected you and your family's day to day activities?

Jackie Fiora 6:24

Day to day activities are pretty much the same. It's when we go out into the public, go out into the community that it's much different. For example, if you run to the store, you have to have a mask if you go into the store. It's affected, maybe going over to neighbors, keeping that social distancing. But as far as my family, our family has managed just about as normal as possible.

David Fiora 7:00

Has the outbreak affected how you associate and communicate with your friends and family?

Jackie Fiora 7:07

Yes, a lot. I simply didn't meet with friends, especially people, if I didn't know if they were social distancing. It's really important that to avoid this to prevent the spread of the disease, that you keep the social distancing, and wear mask. And early on, I don't think the scientists really knew that much about the virus. So people really stayed within their family unit. As time has gone on, I have felt a little more comfortable meeting with friends and family, but it's pretty limited basis.

David Fiora 7:54

What have you done for recreation during the pandemic, as a result of normal recreational activities being suspended?

Jackie Fiora 8:07

We've done more outdoor activities like hiking or just taking walks. The simple pleasures that sometimes maybe in the past have been overlooked. So it's kind of getting back to doing things around your home or in the park, that kind of activities.

David Fiora 8:37

How has the COVID-19 outbreak affected your social communities that you belong to?

Jackie Fiora 8:47

Well, for example, with my knitting group, instead of meeting on a weekly basis, we just met through Zoom, just over the computer. And that was certainly not the same, but at least I got the opportunity to interact, saying hello and seeing people's- seeing them and their projects. It just wasn't in person.

David Fiora 9:22

Yeah. How are the people around you responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Jackie Fiora 9:31

Some people I know have been a little more carefree as far as going out and about. Other people I know have been really keeping isolated, so as not to be exposed to the virus, so there's a big range.

David Fiora 10:00

So some of the bigger movements in public health during the pandemic have been these- the, the ideas of self-isolation and flattening the curve. Have you seen these two ideas emerge in the community during the pandemic? And how have you and your family responded to these requests and those around you to self-isolate and flatten the curve?

Jackie Fiora 10:32

We certainly have listened to the scientists and what the public health experts have recommended. So when they said to start wearing masks, we started wearing masks. And when they said to avoid large gatherings, that's when we stopped going to church. And we didn't go to concerts or to the movie theater. So we, we listened to what we were hearing; we tried to listen to the facts.

David Fiora 11:10

How has your relationship with the church changed since the start of the pandemic?

[end of audio file 1]

[beginning of audio file 2, 17:54 minutes]

Jackie Fiora 0:01

Well, as far as church, we have tried to watch online a few times, it certainly isn't the same. And we'd like to go back, and we've even talked about it. We're just really watching to see how the infection rate or the cases of COVID are before we go back.

David Fiora 0:28

What has your experience been in responding to sickness during the pandemic, being a school nurse?

Jackie Fiora 0:48

We err on the side of caution. So there's two categories of symptoms, there's category one, which is the more severe symptoms of COVID, for example, coughing, difficulty of breathing, any kind of respiratory difficulty. And then there are category two symptoms, which are fever, headache, loss of taste or smell, body aches. So if a student has one or two of those symptoms, depending upon the category, then we're very proactive of telling them they cannot come to school, and then they must go get a COVID test or see their doctor to see if there's an alternative diagnosis as to what's going on with the student.

David Fiora 1:48

In what ways do you think COVID-19 is affecting people's mental health and their physical health?

Jackie Fiora 1:58

Well during the pandemic, with having to have so many different areas of the economy shut down and the recommendations to avoid social gatherings, to avoid large crowds, it's really led to an increase in mental health concerns, especially anxiety and depression.

David Fiora 2:29

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

Jackie Fiora 2:36

While I listen to different news outlets, like ABC, CBS. I listen to CNN, I go to NPR; I try to really see a variety of different news outlets.

David Fiora 2:55

Have these changed at all, during the course of the pandemic?

Jackie Fiora 3:00

What do you mean, what has changed?

David Fiora 3:01

Have the sources of news that you, uh, get information from, have these changed during the pandemic?

Jackie Fiora 3:14

Not really, because they're the ones I normally listen to or watch.

David Fiora 3:21

What do you think are the important issues that the media are- is or is not covering, related to the pandemic?

Jackie Fiora 3:32

Well, unfortunately, COVID-19 pandemic has been politicized. And so I think that turns a lot of people off. And when people are turned off, meaning they don't want to hear it, they don't want to see it, then they don't get the information they really need, like what they need to do what they need to not do in order not to get the virus. So it's unfortunate, but because it's been politicized, a lot of people are just tuning out. I would rather be informed, so I continue to look up information and talk with medical experts at school, who are in our community, to get the latest on what is true and not true with COVID.

David Fiora 4:38

The pandemic has been very political in nature. One of the bigger points of contention has been masks and the wearing of masks and public. Why do you think that is the case with some people?

Jackie Fiora 4:57

There's a lot of people who have, I believe, wanted to downplay the COVID pandemic because it involves shutting down industries, closing, limiting some of the business, and because of that, it affects the economy. And then the economy is, of course, very important. People want to be employed, and the stock market needs to do well. And when the economy is not doing well, and people are unemployed, it reflects badly on the, the White House. So unfortunately, that's the direction it went. And with that means you have some people who did not want to wear masks or promote the mask because then it would mean that this is a much more serious virus than initially thought of.

David Fiora 6:06

Why do you think some people have gone after or attempted to discredit figures such as Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Amy Acton from Ohio who have been spokespeople of sorts in the effort to curb the pandemic?

Jackie Fiora 6:29

Because of the economy. These are the people who I believe, have not wanted to really go the direction of this being a very big threat, or people who believe that it's affecting the economy and the bottom line. And so you just have two different thoughts. You have people who are really trying to get out the facts, and then you have people who are questioning, and I just would like to see people go towards the facts; I think that's how we'll get out of the pandemic is by listening to the medical- medical experts and the scientists. Everybody wants the economy to do well, and everybody wants unemployment to go down, and everything go back to business. But if the pandemic is causing much sickness and dying, then you can't have the economy going well, you have to take care of the pandemic first.

David Fiora 7:41

How have leaders in Ohio, in Hamilton County, responded to the outbreak?

Jackie Fiora 7:52

I think they've responded very well. I think Governor Dewine, even though he's Republican and the President is Republican, they've kind of disagreed a little bit, but I think Governor Dewine

has taken the lead in trying to combat the virus but also to help the jobs and the businesses out there, so... And I think Hamilton County has done a good job of trying to inform residents and do what they need to do.

David Fiora 8:29

What do you think of President Trump's response to the COVID-19 outbreak?

Jackie Fiora 8:36

Well, I think he's been on the side where they believe the virus is not as big of a threat as reported. And so he has not taken it as seriously as I would like. But in the end, I think as long as people can listen to the scientists and the doctors and get the facts, and people can protect themselves, that's what's most important. I'd like to really focus on the medical versus the political.

David Fiora 9:21

Do you have any thoughts on how, on how local, state, or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently from each other?

Jackie Fiora 9:33

I don't think so. I think again, you just have some people who are for the mask and the social distancing and those kinds of precautions, and you have the people who are wanting this to just wrap up and go away and get back to normal.

David Fiora 9:59

Has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends in your community?

Jackie Fiora 10:09

Well, I think it shows that people are what matters. It's not about politics, it's not about money. It's not about what you have in life, it's about the people in your life. So it doesn't matter if you're Republican or Democrat or independent. It doesn't matter if you are rich, or you're poor. In the end, it matters, the people in your life and who you have. Because I would like to say, in the end, we're all human and that's what matters. We're all human, and we all want to be with family and friends. And hopefully, everyone can come together to overcome this terrible virus, and we'll see what's more alike in each other than what's different.

David Fiora 11:17

What do you think will be the good outcomes of this pandemic? If you think there are any.

Jackie Fiora 11:28

Well, besides what I just mentioned about people, coming together with their families, and valuing their families, and friendship. I think in the end, people are going to pay more attention to public health, maybe increase the money or resources in public health. I think it will bring more attention to vaccines and prevention of diseases.

David Fiora 12:06

How does this pandemic compare to other big events that have happened in your life?

Jackie Fiora 12:13

Well, there certainly hasn't been a pandemic like this in my life. It really has really defined what 2020 has all been about. It seems like everything kind of goes back to COVID virus.

David Fiora 12:35

Would there be any comparable events to the pandemic? Or...

Jackie Fiora 12:43

There probably are. I mean, when I think about big things in my life, big events, things I can sit back and say, I remember when 9/11, of course, is an event that I don't think anyone can ever forget. Everybody remembers where and when they were when that happened. I remember when the Challenger shuttle, space shuttle exploded. You know, there's just certain things that happen, and this isn't been like a one day event, but it certainly is a time. I guess if I'm thinking of course, I was not alive, but like the Great Depression, maybe people will step back and say, that was like the Great Depression.

David Fiora 13:45

What do you hope life is like in a year?

Jackie Fiora 13:49

I'd like to say I hope we're not wearing masks and social distancing isn't a prop- is an issue. And we don't have to worry about quarantine and contact tracing. But I think in a year, it's going to be better. I think there will be a vaccine out. Hopefully, high risk individuals can get. Hopefully there might be better medicine that can help with the virus. And hopefully some restrictions on getting together will relax and businesses and the economy will be better.

David Fiora 14:38

What do you miss the most that is no longer- either you can no longer do it during the pandemic or is gone in a sense, compared to the pre-pandemic world?

Jackie Fiora 14:58

Well, I'd like to think that all the things I can't do right now will come back. For example, I know some movie theaters have opened up, but I certainly don't feel comfortable going to a movie theater. I can't really think of anything because I'm just hoping at this point, everything will come back to what it was like.

David Fiora 15:27

Did you have any travel plans canceled or changed as a result of the COVID pandemic?

Jackie Fiora 15:35

We didn't have any plans for any trips before the pandemic. But certainly, when we did start to make plans, we chose something that would not be such a- like a trip where there would be a lot of people. So we chose the like, a cabin in a park, to sit, you know, where you're really just isolated yourself, your family, and then limited contact with others.

David Fiora 16:13

Right. And knowing what you know, now, what do you think individuals and the government need to keep in mind for the future?

Jackie Fiora 16:25

I think people just have to remember, let's work together to solve this. I think it's going to take lots of people, lots of opinions, lots of research and money to try to overcome this. And we have to help everyone, young and old, rich and poor.

David Fiora 16:51

Is there anything else you would like to add before we wrap up this interview?

Jackie Fiora 16:59

I think the one thing that I've heard from more people than anything is "I just want 2020 to be over." That's something I've heard many different people say, different people I know- from people I know to different people I don't know, is they just want 2020 to be over. And I think if we can slowly start to see some progress with this virus, and we move to 2021. Hopefully at that point, we'll- we'll have the- the vaccine and the infection rates will go down.

David Fiora 17:45

All right. Thank you for doing this interview.

Jackie Fiora 17:49

Thank you.