

Transcript of interview with Lily Dougherty and Suhani Rathi

Interviewer: Lily Daugherty

Interviewee: Suhani Rathi

Date: 09/23/2021

Location (Interviewer): Unknown

Location (Interviewee): Unknown

Transcriber: Howard Clayberger

Abstract: Two University students discuss their personal experiences during the pandemic, as well as the effects on their family and social lives. Frustrations with the Arizona government's response to the pandemic are expressed. The specific experience of Asian Americans during a time of increased discrimination is also briefly discussed.

Lily Daugherty (0:00)

Hi, my name is Lily Daugherty, and I'm here with Suhani Rathi. And I'm interviewing her for the COVID archive project. So Suhani, can you give your consent and state the date and time?

Suhani Rathi (0:12)

I give my consent and today is Wednesday, September 22 of 2021 and it is 5:12pm.

Lily Daugherty (0:21)

Okay, the first question is what has been the most diffi - difficult part of COVID?

Suhani Rathi (0:26)

I feel like the most difficult part of COVID was just adjusting to these new normals, such as wearing masks wherever you're - whenever you're leaving your house, making sure to social distance switching from in-person to online school, and also just the idea of being way more cautious now that you - now that this pandemic was around. It was also very difficult seeing how COVID was being handled better in some states compared to others. Personally, I was very frustrated with how Arizona handled the pandemic, because they were one of the last states to truly take action towards the pandemic, even though they had one of the first cases in the United States, as well as in the peak - in its peak, Arizona got rid of lockdown and mask mandates causing them to become one of the st - one of the most highest states with COVID contraction rates.

Lily Daugherty (1:20)

Okay, how has COVID impacted your personal life?

Suhani Rathi (1:24)

I personally contracted COVID Back in January, so it definitely impacted me greatly. Going through quarantine for two weeks is very difficult because I become used to seeing my parents all the time, just because we're all in the house together since we usually only left to go to the grocery store. And luckily, no one around me contracted COVID-19. But it was also a little confusing how I personally got COVID-19, because I would only go to the grocery store most of the time. But I am still very grateful that no one around me did get COVID. And another aspect of my life which was impacted was like my friendships with people. I felt as if once the pandemic started and you stopped seeing people every day, you start becoming more distant with them, especially if you weren't too close with them to start with. And it definitely made me see, like, who I wasn't really truly friends with. And then, on the other hand, some of my relationships with people also got stronger during the pandemic, because I was just talking to them all day every day, because that's all - the only form of contact I had with anyone. So it definitely showed kind of both sides of that during the start of the pandemic. And personally also switching to online school was diff - was difficult for me because I was so used to just having the resources available for me at school. And now those resources were taken away and you're just kind of sitting in front of a laptop. So that also impacted me greatly. But. yeah.

Suhani Rathi (3:00)

Hi, my name is Suhani Rathi and I'm interviewing Lily Daugherty for the COVID-19 archive project. Lily, could you please state the date and time? And do you give consent to be a part of this COVID-19 archive project?

Lily Daugherty (3:14)

I give my consent and today is Wednesday, September 22 at 5:15pm.

Suhani Rathi (3:19)

Okay, Lilly, how has COVID impacted your family?

Lily Daugherty (3:24)

Well, when COVID first - first appeared in America, the scientists were really adamant about if

you are immunocompromised, you are at more risk. So my sister and her husband both have type one diabetes. And that obviously makes them more susceptible to contracting COVID. And also my parents are older so they are also quote-unquote immunocompromised. So we were really adamant about protecting my parents and my siblings' health. So we were strict about not seeing any friends or any family that didn't live with us. And we basically only went to the grocery store to get the necessities. And my dad, he has a small business. It was hit pretty hard during COVID like everyone else who had a small business. He had to deal with his employees getting COVID, not having enough employees, and jobs not wanting to hire-hire him because everything was virtual. And my mom, she's a teacher, and she had to learn how to teach on Zoom. So yeah.

Suhani Rathi (4:35)

Okay. And then the next question I have is how is your experience of the pandemic changed from the beginning to the present?

Lily Daugherty (4:42)

So in the beginning, like I said, my parents are really strict about the lockdown, and we had to stay in the house and not see anyone. So that was pretty challenging. And it was also hard to be bombarded with the news every day because you want to be informed, but you would see, like the number of deaths and how hospitals were running out of ventilators. And basically just the lack of resources, misinformation, and like the politicizing of the virus. So that was pretty hard on my mental health, as well as obviously everyone else's. And it's just exhausting at some point. And it was also stressful to be an Asian American during COVID and hear about the instances of hate towards especially Chinese people. But, now that I'm vaccinated and that I'm in college, I really don't feel as worried as I did a year ago, now that we have more information.

Suhani Rathi (5:45)

Thank you so much, Lily.

Lily Daugherty (5:47)

You're welcome.