

Interview Conducted December 13th, 2020
Questions Posed in Writing by Jackson Crilley
Answers Provided in Writing by Jessica Sweeney

Can you provide some insight into your experiences with dating/sexuality during the pandemic?

Before the Covid-19 pandemic I was labeling myself as straight and had never been in a romantic relationship with someone. Throughout the pandemic I experienced the process of questioning my sexuality, realizing that I was attracted to women, eventually coming to terms with being bisexual, coming out to my family, and meeting my now girlfriend. I've found that the pandemic, specifically quarantining, allowed me the time to sit and reflect on my sexuality without the other usually stressors of life. During that unprecedented time where the world was put on pause, I was able to allow myself to process those confusing thoughts and emotions that I had previously repressed or brushed off. My dating experience during the pandemic was not anything completely out of the ordinary. I met my girlfriend through Bumble where we matched and began talking. We had our first date in a park after knowing we were both negative for Covid. After that we began seeing each other regularly.

During the period of time you were active on dating apps during the pandemic, were there any differences you noticed between the apps during/before the pandemic?

Other than conversation starters, and new features in apps such as Tinder adding a new video chat feature and Bumble adding preferred date type tags to add to profiles (i.e socially distanced, socially distanced with masks), I did not notice many differences between dating apps.

Do you think the pandemic in any way led to the discovery of your sexuality?

My time spent in quarantine provided me with the space and platform that led to the discovery of my sexuality. Growing up I always referred to myself as being straight yet a small part of me never felt at home with that label. Like many people during the pandemic, I downloaded the app TikTok which definitely amplified my questioning. There were so many queer creators coming up on the app talking about their experiences, sharing relationship content, etc. and I found myself relating to these creators. I would see relationships between two women on the app and found myself wanting that. The app truly helped me solidify that I was not straight.

In your opinion, what was the most difficult thing about starting a new relationship during the pandemic?

The most difficult aspect about starting a relationship for me has been not being able to go out very often. My girlfriend and I often spend lots of time at her house, especially because she cannot visit my dorm which is a challenge in and of itself. We do go out sometimes, but there is always a risk so we try to limit it. This will become more difficult over winter break where I am not being tested every week while living at home. Our contact will certainly be more limited than it is now.

If you could give one piece of advice to anyone based off of any of your experiences with dating/exploring sexuality during a pandemic, what would it be?

I would tell people to reflect on themselves and what they want. Growing up the thought of being bisexual crossed my mind but was always something I would brush off. I never allowed myself the space to explore my sexuality so if people can utilize this time to do that, I encourage it.