

## **Mental Health Effects of COVID-19**

DISCLAIMER: This item may have been submitted in response to a school assignment prompt. See Linked Data.

COVID-19 was an experience that presented the ideal conditions that would challenge our mental health. The fear of the unknown, fear of losing loved ones, fear of missing out on our precious years of life as well as not knowing when we'll see our close family and friends. We are separated from society unable to see our loved ones, schools are closed, many people lost their jobs or were unable to work to prevent the spread of this horrifying disease. As we're locked into our homes, we confine ourselves in our own minds which can often be our worst enemies at times for people like me. We need to be occupied and be around loved ones in order to stray away from negativity. During these times being surrounded by close family and friends was a luxury we couldn't afford because of the virus and ultimately many people like myself picked up hobbies to distract ourselves from the dreadful events occurring all over the world.

During my summer break, I began learning to paint and would spend about a couple hours a day painting with my friends over Zoom which would either sometimes turn out to be a competition between us of who would do the best or we would just freely paint while listening to some calming music and keeping each other company. Although I am not very artistic or good at acrylic painting there was something very therapeutic about it. My entire focus and attention was solely on doing my best to recreate the painting from the tutorial I was watching on YouTube or trying to win the friendly competition with my friends and this helped me steer away from pondering about what's been going on in the world and was very stress-relieving. In a way my COVID-19 experience taught me a lot about my mental health and helped me find ways to make the best of the situation and not take anything for granted. Now a couple months into quarantine I still paint from time to time although not as much because the semester started and being bombarded with assignments and tests but I do make time for it if I find that I need to release my stress.