

Interviewee: Taylor Schneider

Interviewer: Bryson Wilkins

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Abstract:

Taylor Schneider lives in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, and currently works in sales and marketing. She discusses that she did not think that the virus was a big deal initially until everything started to shut down. She talks about her job opportunity and how it was rescinded because of the virus and how job searching was difficult because no one was hiring. She discusses how her communication with her friends and family was changing since the beginning of the pandemic with the use of FaceTime and Zoom. She goes on about how the mental toll of being on lockdown and staying at home affects her and the ways in which she passes time during the time.

Bryson Wilkins 0:01

This is an oral history for the Wisconsin COVID-19 archive project. The date is Wednesday, December 1st 2021. The number of confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19 in the United States are 48 and a half million confirmed cases, and 780,000 deaths. And here in Wisconsin, there were 880,000 confirmed cases and 9,000 deaths. And the current statistics on the US population that is vaccinated is 75% of people that are age five and up, have gotten at least one shot and then it is 59% in Wisconsin that has gotten one shot. And can I ask what your name is? And do you mind sharing some demographic information for this study?

Taylor Schneider 0:51

Yeah, my name is Taylor and I am a white female, and I am 23 years old.

BW 0:59

And what things do you do typically on a day to day basis?

TS 1:06

So, I work full time I work in sales and marketing. And so, during the day I am at my job, or I'm, you know, running errands, going to the store, things like that.

BW 1:18

And then, where do you live? And what's it like to live there?

TS 1:22

I live in Chippewa Falls, and like living in Chippewa Falls. I like the Eau Claire area a lot. So yeah, it's a great area.

BW 1:30

And when you first learned about COVID-19, you know, what were your first thoughts about it when you first found out that it was going around?

TS 1:39

Initially, I wasn't too concerned about it at the time, I think I was 21, 22 and so people weren't making a very big deal about it especially for our age demographic. But then I can actually remember the specific day that everything shut down, and I was supposed to go to a Wild hockey game, and everything closed down. And it was like a switch flicked, and everything was closed so. Definitely, I think went from like zero to 100. Really quick.

BW 2:13

And how have your thoughts changed since that day about, you know, the seriousness of COVID-19?

TS 2:23

It's definitely gone up and down. I think like the seriousness of it. I think initially, we were all really freaked out from it, and really kind of scared of what was going to happen and not sure what the info what look what the right info was, or, you know, what the best thing to do was. And so, I think, as we've learned more about the virus, and as things have progressed, the vaccine is now here. I've definitely, I guess, not been as worried about it and have become vaccinated myself. And so, it's become less of an issue with my, my day to day life.

BW 3:03

And you said that you were employed, doing marketing. And so, can you describe what, you know, the process was like to get the job, especially during, you know, the whole pandemic. during that timeframe?

TS 3:23

Yeah. So actually, when everything shut down, I was graduating from UW Eau Claire, I had, had an internship, my whole senior year, was going to be offered a position at that company. And then once COVID hit, they actually rescinded the offer, they had to end my internship. And so, things got really real, real quickly for me, and no one was hiring, I moved back home with my parents. It was it was quite a tumultuous time for me in my life. And, you know, thinking that everything is planned out, you have a set path that you're going to go on, and that it totally

flipped on its head. I always lived by the motto though, that everything happens for a reason. And so, then I ended up in August getting a job in marketing and sales. And then throughout that time, you know, the precautions were still in place. So, we were wearing masks. If you felt sick at all, you weren't coming to work. So, and then now at my new job. Masks aren't required. It's just it's more so back to normal. I mean, even today, though, I was meeting with clients and was wearing masks. So, it just kind of depends on, on day to day basis on, on what people are comfortable with and kind of meeting them at their at their needs.

BW 4:43

And, you know, trying to find you know, this job and I'm sure you're probably looking for other jobs as well. In your field, you know, how, how was that difficult during COVID? Or how's it like not difficult if it wasn't?

TS 4:58

Oh, it was it was very difficult. No one was hiring especially. I graduated in May. And it was I probably July or so I finally started even being able to interview places and everything was, was virtual, of course. But yeah, definitely very difficult. People were being laid off who's hiring, you know. And I was fortunate enough that I could live with my parents, and they were okay to take on the expenses. My dad's a teacher. And so, he obviously was still being paid. But yeah, so it was, it was not an easy time. It did get better, though, especially over this past year, it seemed like there were not enough people to fill the jobs doesn't necessarily mean that it was a good job market, right. Like it was not necessarily roles that I wanted to do. And were in my field that I was applying for. But way, way better than the previous year.

BW 6:00

And how has the COVID-19 You know, break when it first started? How did it affect how you communicated with friends and family? And then how has it changed since then?

TS 6:15

Yeah, it completely changed how I communicate with people I at UW-Eau Claire. I was in a sorority, I lived in a sorority house, there were 10 of us that live together. So, I was used to living with nine other women, being surrounded by people constantly like that was just my day to day life. I was going to class, I had my internship, I was in my sorority just constantly surrounded by people. And then to switch from that to only my like, immediate nuclear family was very difficult for me. And I was not at all prepared for that. And what that even like, meant, I guess, and it was a hard time to is my senior year of college my last semester, there really was no closure to anything, I got to still text my friends, you don't FaceTime them see them somewhat, but I don't even see them, I guess but, but get to communicate with them. But it was just kind of like a whole chapter of life had closed and ended without really me getting a vote in it or getting to be a part of it. So that was really difficult. Since then, um, kind of how it how it's, as people have gotten more comfortable and things like that I've definitely gotten in contact with more people. Even like the holidays are a great example last year still for the holidays. We weren't

getting together and did like a virtual zoom thing for the holidays to see my accident family. And now this year, people are getting together. People are just overall more, more comfortable with Corona and, and being together and having that like, yeah, that personal interaction.

BW 7:52

Now, do you feel that the vaccine has made you feel safer? Or how do you think you feel about going out into like public, you know, pack places, being vaccinated?

TS 8:10

I definitely feel I don't know if safer is the word. I feel like it was a good decision for myself personally, just with my mom has a lot of health issues. And so, I definitely feel better being around her. But it didn't necessarily super impact me going out and things like that, especially because you can still get COVID. And so I still think it's important, like if you have people who are like immune compromised things like that, that you shouldn't be sick and being around them. But yeah, so it's definitely it has I guess it hasn't super impacted my decisions of what I was doing previously to be in vaccine to now being vaccinated.

BW 9:00

Have you or any of your family members gotten COVID-19?

TS 9:05

I have not which I do not know how I haven't gotten it. Um, and my family members have not either my boyfriend has and that was how I'm surprised I didn't get it. Um, but yeah, boyfriend and his family but none of my immediate family no has gotten it.

BW 9:24

And um what were your you know, what was your reaction when you learned that your boyfriend first got Coronavirus?

TS 9:36

Um, I was more so worried about we had just been at my parent's house and like I mentioned previously, my mom has a lot of health issues. So that's where my mind went initially in making sure that they were okay this was at the point to that the vaccine had not come out yet. So, no one was vaccinated or anything like that. So yeah, definitely He was worried about that. We also had a wedding we were supposed to attend and about a month. And so, and then my main concern became, I was working at the time, and I was not getting any symptoms. I had three negative tests, and I had to quarantine for even longer than he did, because I never gotten me the symptoms. So that was, yeah, a big concern of mine was the impact on my work. Luckily, I got to work remote, because they didn't want you know, obviously, they don't want you to come in at that time. Um, but yeah, so those Yeah, those were definitely my main concerns.

BW 10:34

Then, um, you mentioned you're in quarantine. You know, what types of things did you and your boyfriend do during quarantine, that may have been different than, you know, not being in quarantine?

TS 10:47

Yeah, we did the taste test challenge, because he had lost all of his sense of like, he couldn't taste anything. You couldn't smell anything. So, I put like a bunch of different drinks in a box. And then he had to try and guess what the different drinks were, so I guess to like, things like that. I mean, we were getting food delivered. We're not going out. You know, I mean, I've never been quarantined up until that point. So wasn't Yeah, it was, uh, it was it was gotten really boring, I guess, to just sitting at home. But luckily, I was I was working at least to, to kind of have some distraction. But I do not sit still very well. So that was an interesting time.

BW 11:32

Then, in what ways do you think that COVID-19 is affected, affecting people's mental or physical health?

TS 11:43

I think it affects people in a lot of different ways. Like I mentioned before, my mom with her health problems, that definitely isolated her a lot, too. And then my, my younger brother was really concerned about it, too. And so, they still even now are pretty isolated compared to other people. And they are very concerned. I mean, rightfully so it's their decision. But, yeah, it's definitely impacted people and I think, having to stay at home, or like I mentioned to with, with college and things suddenly, for me, that was a really hard time for me mentally, just having to switch all the sudden to this completely different way of living and operating and going outside with a mask on and just all these changes. And really, the uncertainty of it all, too, was more so what messed with me then than the actual what was happening? It was just what's going to happen was always what I was worried about. So yeah, I think it definitely has affected a lot of people.

BW 12:46

Now, do you think you'll still have like a graduation party type deal? Or do you think it's kind of too late now?

TS 12:54

I think at this point, it's gotten a little bit too late. It's been, what, a year and a half since I've graduated. So, I think I think we might have missed that train slightly now. But yeah, I mean, my

parent, my family still celebrated me and, and, you know, acknowledged the achievement. But yeah, I think I think that ship sailed.

BW 13:15

Um, so you mentioned you got a vaccine? Do your family members also have the vaccine?

TS 13:23

Yep. So, my parents both are vaccinated. And my boyfriend's vaccinated, a lot of my extended family is also vaccinated.

BW 13:36

And then, have you or anyone, you know, had questions or concerns about the vaccine?

TS 13:42

I think definitely, people had a lot of just uncertainties about it. And I think the hard thing, especially in today's age, is there's so much information being thrown at you. And it's really hard to decipher what's the truth and what's not. And just with so many social media, the news just, there's so much and there's so much readily available for you to look up. It's and there's really no fat chat, like, how do you know what's true? How do you not know, you know, so I definitely think there was a lot of uncertainty around it. And I just thought end of the day, people need to do what's, what's best for them what they think what they're comfortable with, if you're comfortable with not getting the vaccine, great if you're comfortable with the vaccine. Great. Yeah. And that's, that's kind of where I sit on it.

BW 14:30

And what vaccine did you get and what was your experience, like, getting it? And then did you have any side effects from the vaccine?

TS 14:42

Yeah, I got the Pfizer vaccine. And honestly, getting it was a very, like, streamlined process. They got me in I think I was in and out in less than, like, 10 minutes. I know you're supposed to sit there but um, I the first shot did not even have any sort of Reaction if anything I had a headache, but I went to the dentist previously. So, I think that that was like attributed to the dentist and not the actual shot. Yeah, I had no I had no reaction to that. And then the second shot I got two weeks later. And again Yeah, yeah, no really reaction to that.

BW 15:17

Now did you have to travel a ways to get the vaccine or?

TS 15:23

no, no, I got it. My family's originally from Durand as my parents still are. So, I got it done there, which is about half an hour, 45 minutes away from, from Eau Claire, so definitely not too far.

BW 15:37

Then you mentioned the news and social media, you know, playing impact on what people think about, you know, the vaccine and Coronavirus, and what have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic.

TS 15:55

Definitely social media and the news to less than new. So like now more so than when it was we were really in the thick of it. We were definitely watching it while I was personally definitely watching it more, then. But now it's just more so become social media. And yeah, seeing updates through there.

BW 16:18

And do you have any like platforms in particular that you used that you found out information from?

TS 16:27

Yeah, a lot of like the ones I just frequent the most are Facebook and Twitter and Instagram. Again, though, like I was saying previously, the, with so much information, it's hard to decipher what's the truth and what's not. And yeah, and it definitely was hard on those sites to try and decipher what people's what was opinion versus fact or, you know, things like that.

BW 16:54

Then what do you think are important issues that, you know, the media, you know, has been covering about the Coronavirus, or maybe like, hasn't been covering as much as like you'd like to see.

TS 17:12

I'm not sure. I mean, I guess too, it's been, I haven't been watching like the news as much recently. But like, for example, so my mom, she, she's in the hospital right now. And she has had to sit in the emergency room for over a day to try to get a bed. And I don't know if that's attributed to COVID patients. I don't know what that is exactly. attributed to. But if it is, I definitely think that that should be something that's more like people are more aware, because I definitely wasn't aware of that, that it was still, if that's the case, still so bad in our area.

BW 17:53

And speaking of our area, do you know, um, you know, how are local leaders have like responded to the outbreak and like, you know, if you think they did a good job or a bad job on responding to it, or what are your thoughts about that?

TS 18:17

Yeah, I think from, from what I've seen, is just that they have been following CDC guidelines. I think that's for like, the whole state of Wisconsin too. And like different counties that people are in, has really just been following those guidelines and, and trying to enforce those as best as they can. So yeah, I don't I don't know if it's was bad or good. Or either way, I think that was just what was supposed to happen, I guess, or what they did what they were neat they needed to do. And yeah, they just enforced those guidelines.

BW 18:50

Is there anything maybe that you'd wanted them to do differently during the initial part of COVID? Or do you think they you know, did you know, the right thing right away?

TS 19:07

Um, I think right away, because there was just really not a whole lot of information on what was going on. They did the best the best that they could with the circumstances given to them. I think too, there was not a whole lot of especially for our local leaders, really at choice in the matter for a lot of things. So I think that yeah, they did the best day they could in that situation.

BW 19:35

And then has your COVID experience transformed how you think about your friends and family?

TS 19:47

Um, I don't think but the COVID experience has, it's definitely made me appreciate like, seeing people more and that face to face interaction. I love meeting new people getting out there and I am, I'm in sales. So obviously I like that. Um, but yeah, I think I think it's more so just made me reflect on like, especially, I guess, working and like thinking about the fact that like, we all would just show up to work sick. And that was like the expectation. And I think like, I like that that's kind of we moved away from that now. And like, you don't have to work through being sick. And I think things like that are just healthier as a society to think about relevant of COVID or whatnot. I think just with any view of the stomach flu, why are you coming to work, you know, so I think like positive changes, like that have definitely happened. I think also, the shift to working remote, and not having to be, you know, always in the office all the time, is also a really positive shift. Because some people don't like that. I personally, I like going to the office, I like getting out of my house and doing something every day. But it is nice to have that option. And so, I think that that COVID has definitely opened people up to that, that option a lot more.

BW 21:06

And, you know, knowing what, you know, now, um, what do you think individuals and, you know, communities around Wisconsin can keep in mind for the future? You know, after hopefully this COVID-19 virus, you know, passes through.

TS 21:28

Yeah, like I was saying in the previous question, I think that I'm just kind of making that switch to, I don't know, if it's a more healthier way of living, I don't think that's quite the right way to put it. But just having that more conscious mind about your health and, and being around people and not wanting to spam you. I don't want the flu. I don't want anything else from anyone, let alone COVID. So, um, I think that that's a good takeaway from all of this is to really just be more conscientious about your health and, and respecting people's wishes to if they are comfortable wearing a mask, then that's cool with me, you know? So I think yeah, I think that that's a positive direction that we should keep rolling in and the working from home to I think that that's something that has at least been a silver lining to all of this. Is that that shift?

BW 22:20

And then in also speaking of shifts, have you seen yourself maybe ordering more online than you typically do?

TS 22:29

Yeah, for sure. Especially during that first little bit, I was ridiculously ordering things online, because I was so bored during the day. But yeah, definitely have shifted to that more to, and we got more into into the, like UberEATS, DoorDash, things like that, especially during the art quarantine time. So that's, um, those are like, apps I've gotten more used to and more comfortable with now than I had been previously. I don't think I'd ever use a delivery app before. COVID. So,

BW 23:04

Yeah, what was your experience like with these, you know, delivery apps, you know, was it a good experience? Did you have a bad experience one time or?

TS 23:14

Um, yeah, there was one time that it was a very bad experience. And I was starving at 9:45 at night and had to drive into Eau Claire to get my food because no one would pick it up. Um, but other than that, I've had positive as positive experiences with it.

BW 23:31

When you're talking about quarantine, you know, what? What, like shows would you watch or books would you read?

TS 23:43

Um, I don't know. I remember from way back then. I have over this like, period, though, like, read or I guess technically listen to some of them. The complete Harry Potter series, and then the complete Percy Jackson series. I'd rather like read or had the audiobook of the different chronicles of them. And I did binge the entirety of Game of Thrones. That was really good. But yeah.

BW 24:13

And then you mentioned your boyfriend, going from maybe his, his house to your house and like seeing the family dynamics around, you know, COVID you know, did that, you know, change your viewpoints maybe at all. Seeing how one family maybe reacted different than, you know, maybe your family reacted?

TS 24:47

Yeah. To be honest, like they my parents, his parents reacted completely differently to it could not be more different with it. But yeah, it was I mean, that's, that's been a majority of my life is that, you know, everything has been so polarized one way or the other. And, you know, things tend to, they always seem to line up with political beliefs and things like that. And I always like to sit somewhere in the middle of things, I want to be educated on the topic. And not just from one point of view or the other. I want to see both sides of the story so I can make my decision for myself. I don't believe if because I identify with a certain political party or not, that I should just like, blindly agree with that, because that is what everyone else was doing. I like to find out the facts for myself. Make my own opinion on it. And, and yeah, so I mean, the, the two different parents and families is a similar situation, situation where I sit back, I listen. And we can have conversations about it. That's what I think is the important thing is that it there's open dialogue on it, and it's not just my way or the highway, and that people are willing to have those conversations, I think that extends beyond COVID. That that extends to pretty much any aspect of life is to be able to have those open conversations.

BW 26:12

Alright, well, thank you very much, Taylor. I appreciate your time doing this with me. And, do you know, do you have anything else that you'd like to add that I didn't get to?

TS 26:25

Nope I don't think so.

BW 26:26

Alright, well thank you very much.