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HSCI 325-21

First off, I want to state that this is a weird topic for us to reflect on right now as this pandemic is still alive and ongoing. We have not yet seen what will happen as most people start going back to work and becoming more social with our loved ones and friends. This pandemic has limited many of us who have experienced it from seeing those who are closest to us. It has forced us to either FaceTime or go and visit family from a distance, such as waving from the end of the driveway. I know for me it has been a slightly different experience living in New Hampshire with a small population. It has still limited me, however, as I can no longer go to visit my great grandmother who is living in a retirement house with many other elders. This is the hardest part for many of us because we truly don't know how long we have to wait to see them nor do we know if we can wait this length of time due to their old age. Another part that has impacted me in terms of seeing my loved ones is that I'm no longer able to visit my sister, brother-in-law, niece, and nephew. As an uncle, this has really upset me because the kids are very young, ages 3 and 1, and I know the importance of starting to build a strong bond at this young age.

On top of missing out on that time with my loved ones, this pandemic is affecting the routine of everyday life even more. All the schools have been shut down, there are no live events, such as sports or late night shows, and all the stores are closed. Personally, this has left me with a lot of free time that should be spent with friends, finding something new or creative to focus on. I am a person who visits the gym everyday, and not being able to do so has made me focus on how to truly understand what I am doing at the gym when I lift and the science behind it rather than just completing my normal lift. I have found myself asking more questions about everything because I now have this time to figure out the answers. The thought of this quarantine

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might go down in the history books as a major negative, but there are also some positives to take away from it. For example, it has allowed many of us to figure out a new and healthy lifestyle that will better us even more after the COVID virus has gone away.

I think some of the weirdest changes that I have seen in New Hampshire is that the once friendly faces and people are now distant and covered. In my state, it has become mandatory for all residents to wear face masks, which has brought a new “normal” look to everyday life. Before, face masks were seen as different, but now you stand out if you don’t have a face mask. Prior to the breakout of this illness, people were very willing to help out and be social, often leading to a great conversation with a person you may never see again. Now, the people of my state will look at you weird or go out of their way completely to avoid you when you are in public. In my neighborhood, this is most evident as it is mostly made up of elders. Many will no longer leave their house whereas it used to be a community that would hold monthly meetings on how to improve the area. The biggest social aspect that I think is different is the fear that you see in everyone, especially the shoppers. There are various items that can no longer be found on a daily shopping trip, such as toilet paper, meat products, and home gym equipment because they either aren’t restocked or they sell out in a matter of minutes.

Every day, we would talk about the impact COVID-19 could have on the world. At first, a couple of my teachers were excited for this as the death rate of the disease is very low, making it seem like the perfect dream for a public health professional to study. As time went on, however, it started to worry some kids about their own personal health, and by the end of the discussions, we were trying to figure out if we were going to come back after spring break as many schools had already closed. The next question was if we would come back the following

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year, and as of today when I'm writing this paper, we don't know. It has now been two months of "nonessential" businesses being closed and all major sports have been shut down.

As I was leaving campus, our professors couldn't tell us whether or not we were going home for the rest of the school year because no one knew the exact answer to this question. Each day almost felt like a new month or new year. Unfortunately, the way the illness was spreading was something no one ever saw before, so another major question was if sending us home was the safest thing to do since we almost had our own little bubble on campus. If we went home, we'd be populating the infected area with more bodies that could contract and spread the illness. In the end, they felt like sending us home was the best choice because if our campus had one person who contracted the illness, it was thought that it would be likely for everyone else to get it. This idea was still an uncertainty due to having no information about how the virus spread or how long it could live on surfaces.

When Covid-19 broke out, I wasn't on campus much longer than anyone else, but I was the last to move out. As this was happening, I was able to see the first of how public areas would be treated. The workers on campus were disinfecting everything and the people who were left on campus were unsure of what they could and could not touch. You would see people go out of their way to not touch stuff that you don't normally think about avoiding, such as railings, elevator buttons, and even public bathrooms if possible.

If there was one positive thing about the whole Covid-19 break, it was the way it has forced people to appreciate the time you get with others, how to educate yourself more, and how to be more productive. I say this because, not only did it limit the social in-person contact, but it has slowed the use of social media since there is barely any news to post about other than the

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virus. Throughout this event, I have learned how to educate myself more about the body and what will help me get the results that I am looking for in a workout. I have also learned that time is not unlimited, so the time I have with friends or family I should not take for granted.

The most difficult part of this for me was finding a new daily routine. I have become used to having work, basketball, and the gym, as well as my meals throughout the day. Now, I have learned how to make every second count and have found myself away from my phone more. I am still able to get my workout in, but have to get creative with it as there are no longer available gyms to provide equipment. Originally, I think that another difficult part was creativeness, but overtime, it became a strong point. At first, it felt weird going out of my comfort zone to do new things or old activities in a new way, but when this is all said and done I feel like I will have discovered many things that I'll bring with me outside of quarantine.

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