

Transcript of Interview with Garima Sehgal by Ryan Freeman

Interviewee: Garima Sehgal

Interviewer: Ryan Freeman

Date: 09/27/2021

Location (Interviewee): Northwestern University

Location (Interviewer): Northwestern University

Transcriber: Holly Barnard

Abstract:

Two Northeastern University first-year students discuss the impact of the pandemic on their lives. They address impacts on mental health, applying to college, local restrictions, and global responses.

Ryan Freeman 00:01

Hi there. My name is Ryan Freeman. And today I will begin asking the following questions – before, Do I have your consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 archive project? Interviewee, please state your name, the date and time.

Garima Sehgal 00:18

Hello, my name is Garima Sehgal. It is September 27 2021 10:30pm. Yes, you have my consent to ask these questions.

Ryan Freeman 00:27

Thank you. Starting off with the first question today. How has the pandemic affected your life and those the people you know. More specifically, how has the pandemic affected your mental health? Did you feel a major change or not too much?

Garima Sehgal 00:43

The pandemic has definitely skyrocketed anxiety and other mental health cases around the world. This is due to the unexplainable spread of an unknown virus that could not be traced in history before. Therefore, scientists and healthcare workers could not provide the public with a proper cure and cases began to rise. Also, fear, terror, chaos increased as well. Personally, my family and I have become more conscious about our diet, water intake and hygiene, as it has all become a very good cure for our immune system to fight against this virus. And nowadays, I practice an increased amount of healthy habits to prevent any possibility of receiving the virus. So overall, my mental health has definitely improved due to this

Ryan Freeman 01:29

That's great. On to a second question, what's a new skill you learned during the pandemic?

Garima Sehgal 01:34

During the pandemic, I actually grew a liking for cooking after constantly craving pasta and big vegetables. I took the initiative to learn how to cook, I read the recipes drove, to the grocery store, and bought ingredients necessary for these dishes. This skill helped to kill time during the long days, especially when it was cold out. And later I took a liking for baking various pastries.

Ryan Freeman 01:57

Wow, maybe one day I'll be lucky enough to try one of those. On to our third question, what are two things you took for granted to the pandemic that you now have a greater appreciation for?

Garima Sehgal 02:08

Prior to the pandemic, I definitely took freedom and socializing for granted. We were free to walk close to our friends and family and for longer periods of time. The current situation holds isolation from nonimmediate family and closed access, closed seedings and stores and buildings, and many regulations. Now that the social aspect of life is more typical, I have a greater appreciation for it. Without socialization humans would become mentally unwell as we are social beings that interact to survive.

Ryan Freeman 02:39

On to our final question today, what changes did you observe in your community? Were there strict measures taken or was it very relaxed?

Garima Sehgal 02:50

There were strict measures taken for sure. For example, my high school required students to learn remotely until the CDC allowed schools to give students the option to stay online or join in person like a hybrid system. The remote learning system lasted for half my senior year in high school until the hybrid system was allowed and introduced at the beginning of the pandemic masks were enforced to wear outdoors and indoors. And also, we needed to maintain at least six feet from one another. As the pandemic gradually progressed to spring or summer, mass relations loosened as vaccinations were being administered more and more all over my state of New York. However, my gym, shopping mall, and other indoor facilities all required facemask as fresh air was not available indoors.

Ryan Freeman 03:37

Thank you very much.

Garima Sehgal 03:39

Hello, my name is Garima Sehgal and before I begin asking the following questions, do I have your consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 archive project? Interviewee, please state your name, the date and time?

Ryan Freeman 03:53

Hello, my name is Ryan Freeman it is September 27, 2021 at 10:39pm, and yes, you have my consent to ask these questions.

Garima Sehgal 04:06

How did the pandemic affect your college application and decision process?

Ryan Freeman 04:10

Well, I live in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, so I was unable to visit any of the universities I was considering applying to because of the border closure. I struggled deciding where to apply because I was practically going blind into it. I was only able to determine where to apply based on my own research and opinions from others. Although virtual tours were

innovative, it did not offer the same experience as campus tours do. I ended up applying to more schools than I would have needed to because of my lack of knowledge. When I had come to a decision, I practically waited until the last minute because I did not have a concrete ranking system of schools I applied to. I felt it was necessary to attend all of the admitted student orientations before I can make a solidified decision. When I finally settled on Northeastern I was still hesitant, but I was relieved once I started welcoming. Although I'm happy with my decision, the COVID pandemic made it really difficult for me to be confident about my college decision process.

Garima Sehgal 05:09

Yes, definitely. Has society become more educated and innovative from this pandemic, like we have seen from past pandemics.

Ryan Freeman 05:13

I certainly hope so, as they say crisis sparks action and results. I believe the COVID-19 pandemic has positively influenced society to become more educated, altruistic, and innovative. There have been improvements in communication to the public regarding transmission, quarantine restrictions, and knowledge about the COVID-19 vaccines. This public health emergency has inspired innovation as well. The COVID-19 vaccine is one example of the improved invasion. Inoculation was once an opposed radical practice, but is now effectively developed and implemented. I have also witnessed a more altruistic society because of the growth and fundraising strategies, as well as the frontline workers who have been recognized for their benevolent efforts.

Garima Sehgal 06:06

What restrictions have been implemented in your community? And will some of these regulations continue to be implemented?

Ryan Freeman 06:13

The restrictions implemented in my community were relatively easy compared to other major cities. I did not live in downtown Vancouver, but my neighborhood is only 15 minutes outside in a suburb. There were no wholesale quarantines or curfews. The most severe restriction was the limit of social gatherings inside. I had classes in person, and I was still able to compete in athletics. I believe regulations will continue to be implemented in my community, like vaccine cards, however, I think masks will become optional.

Garima Sehgal 06:45

Finally, how do you feel about national and global responses to the pandemic?

Ryan Freeman 06:50

Well, there were numerous responses to the COVID pandemic. First off, China introduced the strong arm method called cordon sanitaire, this wholesale quarantine by cordoning off with soldiers and policemen, all geographical areas and community is rather frightening because it demonstrates a lack of development from the plague years. This response differs from the norms of public health, however, this method this method was still implemented by the Chinese government. The problem with this method is that it arrives too late and it causes people to be uncooperative with authorities. Threat of a lockdown results in people taking flight, only to

spread the epidemic worse. Although China slowly improved by changing course, I thought the Canadian government was diligent in collecting data for tracing and records, producing evidence and eliciting the cooperation of the public.

Garima Sehgal 07:39

Great, thank you.