

Julia Jensen  
HST 580  
14 February 2021

### Weekly Journal

This week felt more personal than previous weeks, even though past weeks have involved sharing personal stories to the archive. When designing a collection, I did base it on my personal experience, as I am a (soon to be ex-) employee of Target and have been extremely frustrated by how Covid is being handled. While we are provided masks if needed and we have one person on rotation cleaning the store, we have a new policy where we aren't able to ask customers to fix their masks if they take them off. This is because one person was asked to pull their mask up, and they proceeded to destroy a display in response. I'm frustrated both with customers, who treat us employees like we don't deserve the same protection we are providing them, and the company, whose response is to not anger the customers, rather than to protect the employees. Almost every single day I have multiple customers come up to me, pulling their mask down to ask me a question, and I cannot bring myself to stay quiet. I risk getting in trouble with my supervisors by asking the customer to fix their mask, but the alternative is to risk my own health by allowing a customer to remove their mask while in close contact with me.

I am lucky enough that I found a new job that I start next week that is in a distanced office setting, but many of my coworkers rely on this job as their sole source of income and have not been able to find a job that pays as well as Target. Customers treat us like we're invisible unless they need something and lose their temper so quickly when we ask them to follow policies. Nobody deserves to be treated that way, but there are millions of people living in that reality as employees of Target, Walmart, grocery stores, and restaurants. We've all seen the videos making the rounds on social media, but those not working in these places would be shocked at how often that type of behavior is a daily occurrence.

All that being said, I think the experience of my coworkers and others in similar positions are very important to document. While their experience is still similar to what some would consider "back to normal," as they are leaving their house to go to work every day, the reality is much different than normal. It is a privilege to be able to work from home, even if it does get lonely and frustrating, as those working from home are protected from situations like I've explained. This is why I think a collection about those working in public is important, since these "regular" jobs have been stressful and frightening during this time, both because of exposure and because of aggressive customers. I have so many coworkers who have already had Covid-19, and I myself have been screamed at by countless customers because they didn't want to follow procedures that the state and the company created.