

# **Transcript of Interview with Nicholas Zakrzewski by Sarah Phelps**

**Interviewee:** Nicholas Zakrzewski

**Interviewer:** Sarah Phelps

**Date:** 04/24/2021

**Location (Interviewee):** Eau Claire, Wisconsin

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**Transcribed by:** Sarah Phelps and Bryan Paintiff

**Abstract:** Nic Zakrzewski is from Eau Claire, WI and is a UW Eau Claire student. He also works part time as student custodian at the university. In this interview, he discusses the topics of mental health and his difficulties maintaining family and friend relationships. He also discusses how the transition to online classes has affected his day to day activities. The role of local and federal government in his pandemic experience is also touched upon.

**Sarah Phelps 00:01**

The date is April 24, and the time is 247. The total US Coronavirus cases are 31,795,248. The total Wisconsin cases is 594,283. In Wisconsin is 31.7% fully vaccinated and 43.9% Half vaccinated. Could you please state your name?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 00:28**

My name is Nic Zakrzewski.

**Sarah Phelps 00:30**

Could you give me your race and your gender?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 00:34**

I am white and I am male.

**Sarah Phelps 00:37**

Okay, how old are you?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 00:39**

I am 22 years old.

**Sarah Phelps 00:40**

Great. Um, so what are the primary things that you do on a day to day basis like work and school and extracurricular things?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 00:51

Typically during the week, I work at the University for roughly four hours and followed by coming home and working on schoolwork and attending classes as they come up. Pretty much just staying home most of the time.

**Sarah Phelps** 01:12

Okay. What is your job?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 01:14

I am a student custodian.

**Sarah Phelps** 01:16

Okay. How long have you been doing that?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 01:19

Roughly three years.

**Sarah Phelps** 01:21

Okay. Where do you live?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 01:24

I live in Eau Claire.

**Sarah Phelps** 01:26

Okay, so not on campus.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 01:28

Correct.

**Sarah Phelps** 01:28

Okay. Do you live near the campus or far away from campus?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 01:31

Yes. I live about three blocks from campus.

**Sarah Phelps** 01:36

Okay. What is it like to live there?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 01:41

It's fine. I don't know.

**Sarah Phelps 01:43**

Yeah. Okay.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 01:44**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 01:46**

So you like, like the location?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 01:48**

Yeah, it's really nice, because I can just walk, walk the campus walked in school. So

**Sarah Phelps 01:54**

When you first learned about COVID, what were your thoughts?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 01:57**

Um, I was really scared,

**Sarah Phelps 01:59**

really?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 02:00**

And yeah, I was I was panicking. Because my girlfriend at the time I remember. We were supposed to go to a play. And I was like, I don't know we shouldn't go because like, you know, what, if this thing gets really bad, we don't know enough information about it yet. So I really didn't want to go. She really wanted to so we went anyway. To find out once we were there that it was canceled. Yep. So we just got some food. And she showed me to her town and then we left.

**Sarah Phelps 02:31**

Oh, wait. So What month was this in?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 02:33**

This was back in March

**Sarah Phelps 02:34**

back in March. Okay, so what did you think about it in like, January, like when it was starting? Like overseas?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 02:41

I didn't really think much of it. I was like, oh, we'll probably be fine.

**Sarah Phelps** 02:44

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 02:44

It's it's there's always diseases popping up in other countries in the US is mostly fine. So

**Sarah Phelps** 02:51

where were you wrong?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 02:52

Yep.

**Sarah Phelps** 02:53

So what issues have concerned you the most about COVID since then?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 02:57

Just how rapidly it spreads. I guess. I'm like, I'm really scared that like, I would get it and spread it to like my grandparents or someone and that would affect them. Yeah, just like how scary it is that people who contract it, like can spread it and like affect other people, even if it doesn't affect them. That's really scary.

**Sarah Phelps** 03:21

So have you had to limit contact with your family?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 03:23

Oh, yeah, for sure. I haven't seen my family and like we see each other every so often now? Because we've been vaccinated.

**Sarah Phelps** 03:31

Yay, great.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 03:33

But yeah, we when I first started, I didn't see my parents for probably like three months. So yeah, it was pretty crazy.

**Sarah Phelps** 03:42

Yeah. Do you think that affected like your relationship with them?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 03:45

Um, a little bit, Yeah, we definitely. I would say we're not as close as we used to be. But that's also part of just because I'm not living at home anymore. I'm a full adult now.

**Sarah Phelps** 04:02

So now that everyone's vaccinated, do you plan to see them more often?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 04:05

I think so. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps** 04:06

yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 04:06

Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps** 04:07

that's good. Let's backpedal to your job.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 04:11

Sure.

**Sarah Phelps** 04:12

So how has COVID affected your your job?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 04:15

Um, well, as a custodian, I have to go around the dorm building that I work in, and I have to sand like sanitize surfaces and stuff a lot more now. Because of COVID. And so it's just been a lot of like, wiping down tables and wiping down door handles and the staircases. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps** 04:40

is that in inclusion to your normal tasks? Or is that like, what is that the only thing that you do?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 04:46

Um, that is a part of like my normal tasks, but we definitely do it a lot more than we used to. Because before it was just for like wiping down messes and getting dust off and things but now it's like disinfecting everything.

**Sarah Phelps** 04:58

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 04:59

And I know the university has like hired more people specifically for disinfecting, like tables and stuff. So I'll see some people sometimes in the building just going on and wiping things. And so that's been good.

**Sarah Phelps** 05:11

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 05:12

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 05:12

So have you, you say you only work like four hours at a time? Do you work? Like longer? Or would you normally work the same amount?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 05:19

Um, I think the normal amount of hours was 25 last year for students. But now that's been cut down to 20, 20 hours a week. So yeah, I work roughly four hours a day. Four and a half, and then less on Fridays, but yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 05:41

Has it changed your employment status at all?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 05:44

Um, I don't think so. I, when it first started, I wasn't working at all for like the first two months of COVID. I think, well, no, it was longer than that. It was, I didn't work at all. And then, during the towards the end of summer, I was able to come back and start working again.

**Sarah Phelps** 06:03

So you were like, laid off? Or did you just like choose to not?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 06:06

Um, I wasn't that I was laid off. It was like, there was like, Yeah, we're not having student workers right now. but you still have your job, but it's but just can't work.

**Sarah Phelps** 06:19

Really?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 06:19

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 06:19

Do you know why that was just because they didn't want?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 06:22

I think it was just because they weren't really sure yet. Like, the scope of everything. And so they just want to get everything figured out first, before they had students like back on campus working.

**Sarah Phelps** 06:34

Was this when people were getting moved out of campus? Like, classes were shutting down?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 06:40

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 06:41

So like, economically, it probably made sense.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 06:43

Yeah, for sure.

**Sarah Phelps** 06:45

Dang. That kind of sucks. Um, so how is the pandemic affected other people's employment? You know,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 06:55

while I know a lot of people have been like, laid off a lot of people who lost their jobs permanently, had to find new things. A lot of people were like, put on, I don't remember the term...

**Sarah Phelps** 07:09

Like, like, leave?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 07:10

like leave. Yeah, they still had it.

**Sarah Phelps** 07:13

Oh, furlough.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 07:14

Yeah, furlough. That's the word. And, or, like, some people still got paid, even though they weren't working, or a lot of people moved to like, work at home. So, yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 07:26**

So people at like, at the University working with you is that generally what happened? Do you not like know, a lot of other people that also got laid off?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 07:34**

I know. I know. In the custodial staff, there was a lot of people that like, were told to like leave because they could only have so many people working at a time. And I think that was a financial thing.

**Sarah Phelps 07:50**

Are there certain amount of people that work for each like dorm building? Or is it for the entire like staff?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 07:55**

Um, typically, it's one custodian per dorm building.

**Sarah Phelps 07:59**

Really?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 08:00**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 08:01**

That seems like not a lot.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 08:02**

Yeah, some some of the bigger ones like towers have a few or like a governor's I think had two at one time. But yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 08:16**

So how has COVID affected you and your families daily activities? We talked about that a little bit like with your your mom and dad. So how did was your parents employment affected at all?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 08:28**

Um, yeah, my mom is a music teacher,

**Sarah Phelps 08:31**

nice



**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 08:32

at Longfellow Elementary. And she's had to she's had to adapt to like teaching online and like putting videos online for her students. My stepdad is retired, so he hasn't really been affected too much other than having extra time for his hobbies and stuff. So um,

**Sarah Phelps** 08:53

what about your dad and your stepmom?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 08:54

My dad and my stepmom. Um, well, my dad is also a custodian. So he was on leave for a while but then he had to come back and so yeah, it's just similar to me like being extra cau cautious when when working in stuff. My stepmom was retired but then she started working at a store Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 08:55

Did you find the you have to be more cautious when you come home to try and not spread things from your work?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 09:29

Yes. At first before like all of us were vaccinated, I would see your occasionally like my mom, because she lives in Eau Claire. So we would like wear masks when we saw each other and like we would always be like outside whenever she like, wanted to bring me some food or like some goodies or something. And we were always really careful. Yeah, it was really sad that like we couldn't like hug or like, be near each other. For the longest time, yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 10:03

So you have roommates? Yes.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 10:05

Yes. I have two roommates

**Sarah Phelps** 10:07

two roommates. Do you worry about how they're doing like with their job and bringing things back to the house?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 10:14

A little bit. Yeah. One of my roommates doesn't work right now. But the other one does. And I know that because they work at UPS, which is, you know, they're shipping boxes and packages out, like everywhere. So obviously, they have to have some pretty big precautions in place. So I'm not too worried about that. But yeah,

**Sarah Phelps** 10:37

yeah. Do you have to limit like friend contact at all?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 10:41

Um, yeah, for sure. We have like a select couple of people that, like, my friends will invite over every so often. But like, for the most part, I think we definitely like I try to restrict, like, who I'm hanging out with.

**Sarah Phelps** 10:58

And you trust the people that your your roommates have over?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 11:00

Yeah, yeah, I think so.

**Sarah Phelps** 11:02

They vet everyone about, like, cleanliness or anything.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 11:05

Yeah. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 11:06

So when you go over to hang out with other friends, do you do that very often?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 11:10

Um, I, for the longest time no, I wouldn't, I would just like my my best friend, Sam, we would, we would just hang out online, like play video games together. But more recently, because of like, the vaccine, and the numbers have been getting better. So we've hung out twice, two or three times now in person and being really safe with that. But yeah, it's been it's been hard because I haven't been able to see like any my friends. And like hanging out for like, a year so.

**Sarah Phelps** 11:46

do you worry about who your friends hang out with? And like, the travel?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 11:48

Um, yes, I definitely do. Because my friend Sam is definitely more more conservative, and he doesn't have really any interest in getting the vaccine. And he like, goes to the skate park a lot. And just hanging out with random people. doesn't like to wear a mask a lot. But like, I've known him for like most of my life, and he's been a really cool guy. Really good friend. So it's not like I want to just end the friendship or anything. But that's been kind of difficult because we kind of butt heads when it comes to that.

**Sarah Phelps** 12:27

Yeah. Do you talk about politics within like how the government has handled things

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 12:31

we definitely did. More so when Trump was in office, because he was a Trump supporter, and I was not. But yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 12:41

So how do you think that the government handled it when Trump was in office? How do you feel?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 12:45

Um, well, when it first started, I think Trump did kind of the bare minimum. And he didn't really care about anything. I think that was the fireplace.

**Sarah Phelps** 12:56

Oh, okay.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 12:57

I have never heard that sound.

**Sarah Phelps** 13:00

Okay. Okay, continue.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 13:03

Um, yeah, I don't think um, I think Trump definitely could have done more. And I think he was much more focused on like, the media aspect of it. Like he wanted to look good, but he didn't want to do anything about it.

**Sarah Phelps** 13:15

Do you remember like what you wanted him to do more of?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 13:17

Um, I remember one thing specifically, I think it was the USPS wanted to send like everyone masks. And like everyone in the United States, they wanted to send everyone like five masks. And he like, shut that down.

**Sarah Phelps** 13:33

Really?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 13:34

Yeah. And it was like, wow, that seems like really not good thing to do. Because masks are have been known to help with this. And I'm not sure why you'd want to shut that down when obviously, that's going to help bring more jobs. So yeah, but now that now that Biden is in office, I think it's definitely getting better. With with what the government's doing.

**Sarah Phelps** 13:57

And do you think anything has, like changed locally at all? Or like, how do you feel about how well Eau Claire has been handling it specifically,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 14:03

I think, Eau Claire has been doing pretty good. As far as I know, because we get weekly updates from the university as far as like, numbers and stuff, our stuff has been staying pretty steady, has'nt increased mcuh. So that's, that's good. I remember, um, I guess. I kind of wish that they were doing more as far as like enforcing the laws that were put into place and like the restrictions, because I remember I went to a restaurant with my friend during COVID, which obviously probably wasn't very smart. But I went anyway, because I wanted I wanted wings. You know, I wanted wings and cheese curds. And so we went to dooleys. And we

**Sarah Phelps** 14:48

Is that a bar?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 14:48

that is a Yeah, it's a it's an Irish pub on Water Street and I ordered some wings and we were sitting down on the second floor. And I remember it started to kind of fill up with people and I'm like, I'm not really feeling safe right now, because they were supposed to be operating at like 25% capacity. And they were clearly not like it was almost full. Almost every table up on the second floor was taken. And I was like, this doesn't really feel safe. Because no one was wearing masks. And everyone was just talking really loudly and shouting and having a good time. And I'm like, so I just I was like, Hey, can I get the check? This isn't safe. I told the waiter. How, like, this is not good. And, and then we just left.

**Sarah Phelps** 15:34

Yeah, how do they how do the waiter respond?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 15:36

He was like, Ah, I don't really know. And then he was like, I can go talk to the like the manager for you. And I'm like, that's fine. Just give me the check. I'm gonna leave.

**Sarah Phelps** 15:44

Yeah,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 15:45  
because I don't like this. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps** 15:47  
that's good that you that you left though? So do you notice a lot of other bars still staying open?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 15:52  
Oh, yeah. Yeah. Like most of the bars on Water Street are like, no restrictions, just partying. And like, I know, like the pickle has been like shut down a couple of times, because of like, not following restrictions and stuff. But like, they say they say they are and like they're Oh, yeah, get a free mask or whatever. I don't I've never been there. But not my kind of place.

**Sarah Phelps** 16:14  
Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 16:16  
But yeah, it's just it's kind of sad.

**Sarah Phelps** 16:18  
Yeah. Do you notice a lot of other like parties happening?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 16:21  
Oh, yeah. For sure. Yeah. Like whenever I'm out walking around. I'll see like people like outside in like, huge groups just partying just playing like beer darts, or like, just having a good time. And I'm like, that's not that's not good.

**Sarah Phelps** 16:36  
No masks right?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 16:37  
No masks. No, not, not six feet apart this for sure.

**Sarah Phelps** 16:41  
Yeah

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 16:41  
they might have started off that way. But then as more people come, you know, they fill in the circle and just so breeding ground for COVID.

**Sarah Phelps** 16:48

Yeah. And that will probably affect you at University of everyone. Because we can assume that. Since you live so close to the campus. Those people are college students.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 16:56

Oh, yeah, for sure.

**Sarah Phelps** 16:57

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 16:58

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 16:58

That must be really frustrating.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 17:00

It's very frustrating and very scary.

**Sarah Phelps** 17:02

Yeah. Um, you talked about how some of your friends are more conservative, have you buttheads politically a little bit? Like, what do you think your primary sources of news are? And do you think they're, like different for your friends?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 17:17

Um, yeah, I definitely think my friends follow like, the more conservative news like Fox, and like, stuff like that. And I'm obviously more liberal, I would say, and I get most of my news from like Twitter, just from whatever's trending. And so I just kind of keep it that way. So it's kind of like unbiased, I would say, more so than just like getting it directly from like, following news people, because I don't I don't follow like specific news people. I just go on what's whatever's trending And then I look at everything. So I get the kind of the whole.

**Sarah Phelps** 17:52

Yeah, so it's like, where do you see? What's the primary one that you think would trend the most for you that you will see?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 18:00

I'm not sure cuz it kind of depends on what's happening. And who's covering at first and that's kind of what pops up.

**Sarah Phelps** 18:06

So it's just like news, like news organizations like, like CNN or like Time Magazine, things like that, as we mean.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 18:13

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 18:16

So, before the pandemic, where did you get most your news then?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 18:21

Still Twitter. Pretty much. That's the main place I went to get all of my news and just to see what's going on in the world. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps** 18:29

Would you say that's the trend with a lot of your friends that they don't really like the news.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 18:31

Well, I know. My my friend Sam, he doesn't they don't have like TV. So they don't watch like the news. But he I'm sure he goes to like news sites and just to see, or like he, I guess he probably gets most of his information from like Facebook.

**Sarah Phelps** 18:54

Oh, yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 18:56

I think so. Because he's, he's always on Facebook. And yeah, just not the best place I think for for news.

**Sarah Phelps** 19:03

Yeah. Why not?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 19:04

Because there's been a lot of controversy about just like, questionable sources on Facebook and questionable motives behind certain news organizations and leaning different ways and stuff like that. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 19:24

Do you think Facebook does a good job of like handling like fake news sources?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 19:28

I think they do an okay job. I think there could be more done. But there's always going to be those crazy people out there that are just sharing propaganda.

**Sarah Phelps 19:40**

Do you think there's like certain things in media is like not showing you?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 19:46**

I think maybe on Facebook, they're kind of restricting more. So what's going on but like on Twitter, it's mostly like, people will, they'll see something and if it's trying to be hidden by A different, like people, they're going to, like, screenshot it, and they're going to share it and that they're going to try and spread what's going on. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 20:09**

like what types of topics?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 20:12**

I would say that like, anytime there's like a shooting, or like police violence or anything like that, like there's been a lot, a lot of that recently. And that's just totally being like, shared and openly like, like, Hey, this is happening, we need to do something about this, which I think is really good.

**Sarah Phelps 20:31**

Do you think you're seeing those things more now because you have time? Because you're just like at home more often?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 20:36**

Um, yeah, I'm definitely like on Twitter more like seeing what's going on, because I don't have anything to do really, kind of just sitting around waiting for things to not get back to normal. But you know, it's kind of mellow out, I guess.

**Sarah Phelps 20:50**

Do you see a lot of information like about COVID? On Twitter? Like, I know, on Facebook, sometimes they have those pop ups about like, Oh, this is what the CDC says,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 20:58**

yeah, um, I think not as much. But definitely, anytime there's like a big event. Like, I got a notification from Twitter the other day that like, most Americans are not eligible to get the vaccine. And that was like a thing that was like, sent straight to me from Twitter. And I thought that was really good. And they they're, like, offering links about different like, information on COVID, which is good. And I've seen that too on Facebook, of like, popping up like, Oh, this is like the numbers right now. If you need to get



vaccinated. Here's the information for that. Which is good. I think that's they're doing a good job with that.

**Sarah Phelps** 21:37

So do you trust a lot of the information about COVID that you're seeing?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 21:40

Um, I think so. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 21:42

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 21:43

Anything that's from like the CDC, I trust more so than, like, directly from like news people. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 21:49

So you don't doubt a lot of what the media says about, like, rates of the virus or things like that?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 21:53

No I don't think so.

**Sarah Phelps** 21:55

Yeah, that's good. Have you known anybody that's gotten sick?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 21:59

Um, yes. My aunt

**Sarah Phelps** 22:01

really

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 22:02

has gotten COVID Um, let's see what else my my stepdads brother has gotten it. No one in my immediate family.

**Sarah Phelps** 22:13

That's good.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 22:15

I think my brother's girlfriend had it. So I know people that have have had it. But I haven't been around anyone that has which is good.

**Sarah Phelps** 22:27

So you haven't had to, like, respond to them being sick as often? Like, you don't have to quarantine?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 22:32

Right. I haven't. I haven't had a quarantine. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 22:36

You know, how they like handled it?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 22:38

Um, I think pretty well. Um, I'm not sure exactly. I haven't really asked my family too much about their situations. But yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 22:52

Is your family pretty Like liberal when it comes to the virus

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 22:56

when it comes to the virus? Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 22:57

Yeah. So they believe what they're hearing on the news and stuff?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 23:00

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 23:01

Do you know any people that had to change their opinions because of people they know getting COVID?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 23:10

Can you rephrase the question?

**Sarah Phelps** 23:12

Like, because some of your family members have gotten sick. Were they more like conservative leaning? And do you think the virus has affected them personally, that would make them change how they view it?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 23:22

I don't think so.

**Sarah Phelps 23:23**

Yeah,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 23:23**

yeah. They've stayed with their, what they've been thinking.

**Sarah Phelps 23:28**

Are they taking it more seriously than maybe they were before?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 23:32**

I think so. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 23:33**

Are you taking it more seriously now that you know, people that have gotten it?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 23:37**

Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 23:37**

yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 23:38**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 23:38**

Okay. Self isolation. And flattening the curve have been two ideas that have been really big. So how have your like family and friends had to deal with that with like, self isolation?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 23:51**

Um, well, I know, I try to, like, stay home as much as possible. A lot of my friends are always asking like, Hey, let's go bowling. And I'm like, Hey, there's a pandemic.

**Sarah Phelps 24:04**

Yeah,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 24:04**

lets not how about and like, they'll send me videos of them like bowling and like, they won't be wearing masks. And they'll just be to have a good time. I'm like, maybe like a year Maybe. Maybe then. But

**Sarah Phelps 24:16**

So they just go without you.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 24:18**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 24:19**

Wow.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 24:20**

I don't know. I it's, it's not good. But I can't do anything to stop them. Like I can. I can say hey, guys, it's not good. But they're still going to do it.

**Sarah Phelps 24:28**

Yeah. So even if you like sent them like a news articles, they probably wouldn't listen to you.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 24:31**

Oh yeah. Yeah. Because they'd be like, Oh, well, that's just, you know, the that's just fake news.

**Sarah Phelps 24:43**

So you've had the vaccine.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 24:44**

Yup

**Sarah Phelps 24:45**

Have you roommates had the vaccine.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 24:46**

Yes, we are now all now. I've had at least one shot of the vaccine, I think. Yep. My one of my roommates has has had two and the other one has gotten the first one now. I had the the one that only requires one

**Sarah Phelps 25:00**

Johnson Johnson

**Sarah Phelps 25:01**

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 25:01**

Yeah, so I've got the Johnson Johnson, which I just found out today is actually being they stopped the pause.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 25:04**

Because it was paused for a while.

**Sarah Phelps 25:10**

Do you know why it was paused?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 25:11**

Yeah. Cuz they there was like, six cases, I think of like women who were getting like blood clots. So they just have issued like a warning like, hey, very, very rare chance of like women under 50 getting them a blood clot. But now that they've they've resumed using that one today. So, yeah, so that's good.

**Sarah Phelps 25:34**

So it doesn't worry you that that's the one that you got?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 25:37**

Not really,

**Sarah Phelps 25:37**

yeah. Do you know any other people that have gotten the Johnson and Johnson?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 25:41**

Yes, my ex got it. And as far as I know, she's been fine with it. Um, I It's been almost a month now. Since I've gotten it, which is it's, I feel fine. So I'm not really worried about that.

**Sarah Phelps 25:54**

Yeah. So you didn't have any, like side effects or anything?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 25:56**

No.

**Sarah Phelps 25:57**

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 25:57**

No, just sides. sore arm the next two days after it was I was fine.

**Sarah Phelps 26:02**

Yeah. do you know which one your parents got?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 26:05

Um, I don't know. I know, it wasn't the Johnson Johnson one, though.

**Sarah Phelps** 26:11

Only Pfizer? I guess.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 26:12

Yeah. It's either the Pfizer, Mandarina. So

**Sarah Phelps** 26:17

do you think the pause of the Johnson and Johnson has made people who are already less likely to get the vaccine even more so?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 26:25

Oh, yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 26:26

I Yes. Because when I asked my friend Sam to get the vaccine he, one of the first things he said was, oh, well, they they put them put a hold on that other one. So. So that means that must mean that the other ones are are not good, either.

**Sarah Phelps** 26:26

Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps** 26:41

Wow. Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 26:42

And I was like, that's totally not the truth. And like, that was so it's such a rare thing. Also, it's for women. That got it. You should still get the vaccine anyway.

**Sarah Phelps** 26:53

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 26:54

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 26:55

Yeah. So do you think that the media, like even more conservative media's are gonna latch on to that?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 27:01**

Oh, yeah, for sure. They'll attack it in any way they can, honestly.

**Sarah Phelps 27:05**

Yeah. So what was your experience getting access to the vaccine? Since you are working? When did you get yours?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 27:12**

Um, yes. So because I was working at the university, I was able to get the vaccine about a month earlier than the other students at the college.

**Sarah Phelps 27:22**

Really?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 27:22**

Yep. Yeah, because most of the students got it now in April. And I got it back in March. So that was really good. The university made it made it really clear about sending us emails about hey, it's available, sign up for it. And so I did that as soon as possible. And I was able to get vaccinated pretty quickly, which is good.

**Sarah Phelps 27:46**

And you didn't want one with two shots, since you only got Johnsonand Johnson?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 27:49**

Yeah, I had the opportunity to get the one with two shots. But then I got an email pretty quick after that one that said, Oh, this one's only one, one shot. And I did some research and found that was is pretty much they're both like, really effective. And I decided to get the one shot just because it was as easier. And it was also on campus that I can get that shot. versus how I've had to drive to someplace else to get the other one. So

**Sarah Phelps 28:23**

So you think it's easy for you to access as other people?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 28:26**

Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 28:26**

yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 28:27

Yep. And now with the the vaccine clinic on campus is accepting walk ins. So it's definitely much more accessible than it was, which is really good.

**Sarah Phelps** 28:35

Yeah. Have you found that the I don't know what word I'm saying. I'm sorry. Like, campus hasn't changed, like the environment of campus. Now that there's vaccines and there's antigen tests going on?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 28:49

Yeah, I think so. I think it's a little more relaxed than it was. Like, I'll see more people hanging out together, outside. Obviously, more, more and more parties are happening outside as well. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 29:07

Do you think it's a good thing?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 29:08

Um, I think it's a good thing that people are getting vaccinated. I don't think it's a good thing that people are still hanging out. While it's still happening though. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 29:16

Yeah. So do you have in person classes?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 29:20

Um, I have one in person class.

**Sarah Phelps** 29:23

Just one,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 29:23

just one on Mondays.

**Sarah Phelps** 29:25

Does it do you go, like multiple times a week? Or is it like an every other?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 29:29

No, it's just like, once a week on Mondays. I'm like, three 330 to 615. So it's a pretty big chunk of time, just in there with like, 15 other people. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps** 29:40



So how does in person class work during a pandemic?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 29:43

Um, well, we have to sit like six feet apart. We can't like hand anything in. On paper. It's all electronic. There's a period of a period of time where my laptop had broken. And I had to go to class anyway, and just like write things down in a notebook. And there was one time when my professor had to give a quiz. And it's online. And it was when my laptop was broken. And she was like, Oh, just write it down on a piece of paper, and then turn it into me. And I'm like, That's kind of weird, because we're not supposed to do that.

**Sarah Phelps** 30:20

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 30:20

So I just didn't.

**Sarah Phelps** 30:21

So you just didn't, didn't turn in.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 30:23

And I was also partially because I hadn't done the reading for that. But I just didn't turn it in. And then my professor was like, Hey, I didn't get that thing from you. I was like, Yeah, I didn't do it. So she's like, Okay, I'll just mark you down for that, then.

**Sarah Phelps** 30:42

So you got to zero on it?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 30:43

Zero on that, I got an incomplete.

**Sarah Phelps** 30:45

Wooooow

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 30:46

But I'm doing okay in the class, I'm pretty confident.

**Sarah Phelps** 30:49

So you couldn't just like do it late?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 30:51

No. Because it's like, it was like a check in like to make sure we're doing the readings,

**Sarah Phelps 30:55**

which you didn't,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 30:56**

which I didn't it for that day.

**Sarah Phelps 30:57**

Okay.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 30:58**

I tend to what

**Sarah Phelps 30:59**

do you think she should have let you have since your laptop was broken? Either let you take the class at home? Or do your quiz the next day? Since you're not supposed to hand in papers?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 31:09**

I think she should have been more aware of that. But I think it's fair for to ask like for, because I had to have that reading done. And I didn't. So I think that's fair.

**Sarah Phelps 31:19**

Yeah. That's fair. Do you find that schools a lot different? Because of the pandemic? Just in general?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 31:25**

Yes definitely. It's been very interesting, very difficult and very anxiety filled, trying to, like, balance class, being online all the time. And, and being home all the time doing homework and, and trying to figure out, okay, I have to do class, and then I can relax a little bit. And then I have to do homework, versus like, just going to class, don't not even worry about it. Like doing homework on campus, I usually do homework in the library. And I come home and it's like, Okay, it's time to relax. Whereas like, now, it's like, there's no set time like to relax or to do homework. It's all mixed together. And that's been really, really hard to get used to.

**Sarah Phelps 32:04**

Yeah, so you like the separation of this is my home time? And this is my school time.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 32:10**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 32:11**

So how do you balance like the focus of doing your work at home?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 32:15**

I have found that like writing things down and making a plan for every day has been really useful. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 32:25**

So would you say it's been one of the biggest challenges for balancing schools like having to do things at home? Would you would you prefer a normal like in person semester?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 32:34**

Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 32:34**

yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 32:35**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 32:36**

that's interesting.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 32:37**

It's been, it's been interesting, because this is, I'm going to be graduating in May. And it's, this has been very interesting in trying to figure out how to do this, um, the past two semesters, though, I've done a lot better. Um, because of like, I've had to be more attentive in class and had to kind of pick up the slack that has been happening, and, and I had to just, like, really kick it into high gear, and I've my grades have not suffered because of that, actually, which I found this has been good. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 33:09**

So other than, like, the self motivation, like, how do you deal with just doing online? Like, what do you not like about online classes?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 33:18**

um, I don't like the fact that we have to, like, attend classes online, like I, it's, it's really hard when a professor expects us to attend class, and we have to make sure that we have like a good Wi Fi signal. And we have to rely on it. And we have to, like, we're supposed to be attentive the whole time when we're just supposed to, like watching a screen. And it's, it's really hard to maintain focus, when like, there's a lot of distractions going on.

**Sarah Phelps 33:51**

So there's a lot of home distractions.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 33:54**

Yeah, I would say there's, like, there's a lot of distractions, and also like temptations, like with, because most of the time in my classes, like we don't have to have our cameras turned on. So I can easily just like, look at my phone and, and play games, or like, I'll do other things like I'll do other homework for classes. And I know a lot of other students are doing the same thing. I did a project very similar to this one. And I interviewed students and that has been the trend definitely of students are very distracted and and doing other things for classes, because they know that, oh, this has been recorded. I can always watch the lecture later. Even if they don't do that. It's like the temptation is there to like, do other things because the teacher isn't there with you, making sure that you're paying attention or making sure that you're engaged. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 34:44**

yeah. And you said that your laptop broke. Do you think it's harder for students that have financial adversity?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 34:50**

Oh, yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 34:51**

To be attentive in like online classes?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 34:53**

Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Um, it's. It was interesting, because last year when this first started students that were like having financial struggle could apply for a grant from the university, which I did, because I was I wasn't working at the time, and I had found it hard to pay for rent, and hard to pay for, like groceries. And you could apply for like, if you needed to buy a laptop, you could apply for money from from the university. And so you could you could get a laptop, which was really good. But for students that can't have a job right now or are like, like immune compromised, and can't like go out at all, I think it's really hard for them.

**Sarah Phelps 35:41**

Yeah, so there's no, are there library resources now that are available?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 35:45**

Um, as far as I know, there was, we got sent another like, like Grant thing through the university. That was called like, a month ago, I want to say something like that. Which is really nice. But now, not that I know, nothing that you can apply for. Yeah

**Sarah Phelps** 36:09

Is that are the campus things still open? Like all the buildings?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 36:12

Um, yes, but limitedly. I think, um, I haven't been to the library, but I think it is open. I used to, like, for group projects, we used to get like the little side like, rooms to like, do projects and things, but I don't know if they're open or not? I don't think so.

**Sarah Phelps** 36:31

You don't think so?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 36:32

Yeah, cuz their

**Sarah Phelps** 36:32

So is that why you haven't, like utilize the library to help you focus?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 36:35

Um, yes, that and also, it's like, anytime I would need to, like do homework or anything, I would have to walk to the library. I'm not already on campus because of classes. So I find it easier to just stay here at home and do do things. And then also, like, if I have class, I could, I would have to, like, find a quiet place. And not like because like, obviously, in the library you can't like attend class there. Because you have to be talking or like, let's have headphones in at least I guess. And it would be harder to like, attend class. I would usually like be on the fifth floor library, which is like the quietest one like you're not supposed to talk at all up there. So obviously I couldn't, like attend class up there or anything. So yeah, it's been, I just haven't gone to the library at all. As far as other buildings. Most I want to say most of the ones on lower campus are just open. I know the food pantry is still open, because I go to that every week, which has been really nice. That's been helping. I know a lot more students have been using that because of the pandemic, which has been a good resource. The dorm buildings I know are more restrictive with like, having guests over. But things are definitely getting more relaxed now because of the vaccines and things are getting better.

**Sarah Phelps** 37:59

How do you think your mental health has been because of the virus? This can go all the way back to even March.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 38:06

Yeah, um, it's definitely been affected. It's been really hard trying to cope with all of this. And really difficult at times, because it's been so scary. And like, I've had nights where I'm worrying about like, Oh, what if my grandparents get it? And they die?

**Sarah Phelps 38:25**

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 38:26**

And I don't, I don't get to say goodbye to them. Like, that's really scary.

**Sarah Phelps 38:29**

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 38:30**

Or like my parents even, you know, my dad is he has like asthma, and he's, like overweight, and he's so he's in that high risk category. And just the fact that I haven't been able to see him in a long time is really scary.

**Sarah Phelps 38:45**

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 38:45**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 38:46**

Do you think that goes for other people in your friend group? Or do you think maybe they're a little more lacks, because

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 38:52**

I think they're a little more lacks definitely. Because they think it's just not a big deal.

**Sarah Phelps 38:56**

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 38:57**

And that's really scary.

**Sarah Phelps 38:58**

Is that frustrating?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 38:59

Yes.

**Sarah Phelps** 39:00

Yeah. What about your physical health?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 39:04

Yeah, I have definitely put on some weight in the pandemic, because I haven't been going out as much. It's been a little better now because, you know, it's, it's starting to warm up. I can go for walks now. That's been really fun. But yeah, definitely has impacted just because I'm home more. I don't have anything to do. So I just sit here and munch on snacks. And, and, you know, I don't do a lot. I know, work has definitely helped me because I'm always running around at work and walking up flights of stairs, which has been good. It's helped me maintain my physical health and, and things as far as getting sick at all. I've gotten sick one time in the past year. Not COVID Because I got tested, but it's um, yeah, it's been okay.

**Sarah Phelps** 39:59

Yeah,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 39:59

I definitely I think the wearing a mask everywhere has helped help that. Because I've been wearing a mask. I haven't been getting sick as much as I would have, I think.

**Sarah Phelps** 40:08

Yeah,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 40:09

so that's

**Sarah Phelps** 40:09

not touching your face and stuff,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 40:11

right.

**Sarah Phelps** 40:11

Do you have any other like recreational activities that have been like stunted? Because of COVID?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 40:17

Um, yeah, I used to, like ride my bike a lot more. And I don't do that as much now, just because I don't want to go out and like, have an interaction with someone. It's not super common when riding a bike, I guess. But it's still affected, you know? affected me because I don't want to go out. Yeah

**Sarah Phelps 40:39**

Would you wear a mask if you like rode a bike?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 40:41**

Um, yeah, I think so.

**Sarah Phelps 40:47**

Does that deter you from wanting to do it just because it can be kind of uncomfortable?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 40:51**

Yeah, Yeah, I think so. I've definitely had, I've gone to my bike a few times. And there were times when I didn't wear my mask and there were times when I did. And it hasn't been a huge deterrent, I guess. But it's just kind of finding the motivation to like, go on a bike ride has been hard just because I could I could go on a bike ride, or I could just stay inside. And I could watch Netflix for three hours. That'd be that'd be really nice, too. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 41:17**

Is that what the majority of your like home time consists of when you're not doing homework?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 41:21**

Um, yeah, it's been a lot of like, staying at home, sitting in bed, sitting at my desk watching Netflix. I've gotten back into reading books, which has been really nice. So that's been a positive I guess of having a lot of time. But yeah, just playing video games and and doing things online. Yeah

**Sarah Phelps 41:43**

What kind of games you play?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 41:45**

Well, I have Nintendo Switch. So I've been playing a lot, a lot of Mario Kart, a lot of Super Smash Bros. I play with my brothers every once in a while, which has been really nice. We've, we have like game nights, some weekends. So that's been a good way to like, keep in touch with them without actually going to see them. So that's been really nice.

**Sarah Phelps 42:07**

And do they live far away?



**Nicholas Zakrzewski 42:08**

Um, yeah, one lives down by Madison. So obviously, I can't like go see him. And then one lives in Chippewa Falls. So

**Sarah Phelps 42:15**

So not

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 42:16**

so not not as far away but not close enough to like, to go and see. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 42:22**

Has your relationship with your siblings been impacted?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 42:25**

Um, yeah, definitely. Because I, we used to, like, go and see my older brother, Ben. And we'd go, like, see, because he's got three little girls now, three daughters, and we used to, like, go and hang out with them. And we just haven't because it's been so scary. And like, we don't want to risk anything. We don't want to spread anything. So

**Sarah Phelps 42:49**

do you think the information of like not knowing who COVID can affect affects that too?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 42:54**

Yeah, I think so. I think that, like, combined with the idea of, you can have COVID, and you don't even know it. Like you'd be asymptomatic and you could spread it without you even having any symptoms. That's really scary. And that's affected it for sure.

**Sarah Phelps 43:11**

What has been the biggest challenge for you since COVID started?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 43:15**

Um, I think just trying to maintain like, a steady schedule and like, life has been really hard because every day is just, you wake up, go to work, come back and do the same thing every day. But like, it's so hard to balance what's going on because I don't have that. Of like, Okay, I go to work, I go to class, I come back and I relax. It's not that it's I go to work, I come back, I relax and I do homework and I do class and it's all jumbled together. And it's really hard to maintain everything.

**Sarah Phelps 44:01**

Hard to motivate to do all those things.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 44:03**

Definitely. Yeah. It's sometimes I wake up and I just don't want to do anything for the day. And it's really hard to get out of bed sometimes.

**Sarah Phelps 44:10**

Yeah,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 44:10**

yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 44:11**

Do you have things that you try and look forward to? Like on weekends? Or like, holidays or anything?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 44:16**

Yeah, yeah, I think I'm like looking forward to the weekend and getting to sleep in and relax and just do whatever I want and not have to worry about like class or work has is really nice. It's a good way to like, help me maintain my my mental health and keep keep things happy and, and stuff.

**Sarah Phelps 44:38**

I know you had a birthday recently. How did you deal with that versus how you dealt with it last year? Because it has been a year

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 44:46**

yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 44:46**

since it started so your birthday fell in the quarantine?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 44:49**

Yeah, this is this was my second birthday in quarantine. So it's been really interesting. I turned 21 Last year, so I didn't get to like go out to the bar with friends. and celebrate or anything. And that was, I didn't really care too much. But a lot of people were like, Oh, wow, it must have been really weird to turn 21 during a pandemic, and it was for a little bit. And this year, it was, it was still fun. Like, you know, I hung out with my girlfriend. Which is you.

**Sarah Phelps 45:19**

Yes.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 45:21**

And, like my roommates, and we just had a good time. But yeah, it was, it's, it's been difficult because like, usually for my birthday, we'll like go out to like a restaurant and celebrate. But I haven't, like done that in a long time,

**Sarah Phelps 45:40**  
in a long time.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 45:40**  
So

**Sarah Phelps 45:41**  
what did you do last year for your birthday?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 45:43**  
Last year, it was very similar. I just stayed home. And we played games with my roommates, and kind of just stayed home and like, celebrated here.

**Sarah Phelps 45:58**  
Where are you most excited to go? When you feel it's safe? To do so?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 46:02**  
That's a good question. I haven't really thought about it, honestly. Um I think like being able to just go back to like, restaurants and like the movies, and like, just places with other people, and not having to worry about COVID or like spreading something that can possibly kill someone. I think that'll be a burden lifted, for sure. And it'll be great to get back to doing that. Not that I would, you know, go to the movies a lot, but it's definitely something I've missed. Because I haven't gone in such a long time.

**Sarah Phelps 46:48**  
It's just an option.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 46:49**  
Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 46:49**  
You want to have

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 46:50**  
Yeah, definitely having those those options of like, doing that or like even just seeing my friends and hanging out with like them and like other people. I think it'll be really fun. But yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 47:07**

Do you find that you're more hyper aware of safety regulations when you? Like, if your friends pitch you to like, go to a bowling alley? Like, are you like, oh, do they have this? And this? And this?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 47:17**

Um, I think so. Yeah. I'm like, I've been to a few restaurants since the pandemic. And I always make sure like, we go to someplace that has regulations set in place, like, Oh, we're set we're seated and you know, far enough away from other people. And like, all the people are all the waiters. And waitresses are like wearing masks. And like, everything is safe and sanitize. And I'm like, you know, look that up online and make sure places are good. Yeah, definitely is, has made me more aware. It's also very scary, like anytime I go to the store, and I see people that aren't following those regulations, and you just see people like, like, we were in target the other day, and we saw a family without masks on. And it's like, wow, those people just don't care. And that's really scary. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 48:11**

Do you think that awareness will go away once like, if like, the government was like, Okay, we don't have mask mandate, we don't have these things in place. Do you think that awareness would just go away?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 48:23**

I think part of it will. I think a lot of people will just be like, Oh, we're back to normal now. Like, we don't have to wear masks. But I think definitely it'll start to be more of the norm to start wearing a mask once if you're like sick. Because I know like, in Japan, I think and is a lot of people wear masks there if they're, if they have any symptoms, or if they're starting to feel sick or anything. It's really common for them to wear masks. I think it'll start to be kind of similar here, just because we've gotten used to it. And it's like, oh, this is the norm now.

**Sarah Phelps 48:54**

Would you would you take that option to wear masks?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 48:57**

I think so. Yeah, I definitely would just to help not spread things. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 49:02**

yeah. Are there benefits to wearing a mask other than sickness for you?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 49:06**

Um, I mean, I guess I mean, I've got some pretty cool masks. Helps me look pretty cool. Sometimes. Um, there have been a few times when I've gotten things like shouted at me because I'm wearing a mask.

**Sarah Phelps 49:20**

Really?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 49:21**

Yeah. Um, there have been a few times where I've been walking to work and some people just lean out the window and just yell at me and like

**Sarah Phelps 49:26**

really,

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 49:27**

like yelling obscenities because I'm wearing a mask and like they're clearly not Yeah. Which is just crazy.

**Sarah Phelps 49:33**

How often does that happen?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 49:34**

That's happened twice now I think

**Sarah Phelps 49:35**

really?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 49:36**

Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 49:36**

Like how long ago are like, since the since March since lockdown.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 49:41**

Um, what happened? Probably once, maybe two months ago. And once maybe month and a half ago. So pretty close together. Yeah. But more recently, yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 49:55**

Why do you think they would do that at all?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 49:58**

Because probably Just because they're like anti maskers, and people that don't believe in any of this stuff that's going on and don't care, and think anyone that is trying to like stop stuff, or like trying to be safe is

being really stupid. And they're like, Oh, you're dumb. So I'm gonna yell at you and and curse you for for like doing that.

**Sarah Phelps 50:22**

Does that discourage you from wearing a mask?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 50:24**

No, definitely not. It makes me want to wear a mask more.

**Sarah Phelps 50:27**

Yeah.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 50:27**

Because I'm like, why? No, I'm being safe right now. And you're not so? Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 50:32**

that's good. Has your experience with COVID transformed how you think about your family? Or your friends?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 50:40**

Um, what do you mean, think about,

**Sarah Phelps 50:43**

like, how you think about interactions with your family? Or like, with your friends, like going out in groups?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 50:49**

Um, yeah, I haven't really gone out as a group with my friends or my family, like really at all. I've had a few times where we'd go over to my family for dinner. Or like, we went in, we celebrated. What was it? I guess my birthday. We went and celebrated that with my family at their house, but besides that, I haven't really, I went to my friend's house a couple times, like I mentioned, to hang out. But we haven't really gone anywhere together. Other than like, I mean, me and my friend, Sam, we would go for a walk sometimes in Eau Claire. But we would never really like go anywhere. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 51:34**

What about just in the community?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 51:38**

What do you mean?

**Sarah Phelps 51:39**

like, how do you think about Eau Claire, and how its dealt with the pandemic, and like how your experiences have related to that?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 51:46**

um, I think the community is doing pretty well. It's obviously kind of split with people that are like trying to be safe, and people that don't care. And they're going to do whatever they want anyways. And it's definitely helped to show what kind of people exist in the world. And like, what kind of people exist, even in our like, community think it's, oh, it's not a big deal. Like, we don't have any, like crazy people here. But then you see what's going on, It's like, wow, there's a lot more people in the world that are like, against things. And like, COVID, and like wearing a mask, and like people that don't care about other people. And it's like, Wow, that's crazy.

**Sarah Phelps 52:26**

Yeah. So you think it's really divided?

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 52:28**

I think so. Yeah.

**Sarah Phelps 52:29**

Yeah. Knowing what you know, now, and what do you think about individuals or communities, or like what the government needs to keep in mind for the future.

**Nicholas Zakrzewski 52:39**

Um, I think it's important to keep in mind that, like, what has happened, and like what we need to do in the future, so this doesn't happen again. I think it's important to remember to wear a mask, if you're feeling sick, and not to leave your house, if you're feeling sick, like, obviously, if you need to. But if you don't need to, if you don't need to go somewhere, then don't, at least during a pandemic, or you know, what it's important to remember how this has like affected us and how this has been spread out so much more than it has needed to be like, if we would have shut down the US completely for like, a month or two, when this first started, we would be fine. Like there are countries that are doing much better than the US because they did that they followed protocols. People listened to the government and they followed the their ideas that the CDC is like put out in the reports and they've they've followed everything and they're, they're like, just completely fine. No one's wearing a mask, like in other countries, and they're like out partying because they don't have like their borders are closed, so they don't have to worry about COVID coming in, or like people that do come in obviously have to quarantine for two weeks before they do anything. So yeah, I think if we would have done that in the first place, it would have been much better and a lot less people would have died. Yeah,

**Sarah Phelps 54:03**

yeah. Well, I think that will wrap it up. Thank you for answering all of my questions. You did. You did great. You'd wonderful

**Nicholas Zakrzewski** 54:13

thank you.

**Sarah Phelps** 54:15

And that will be it.