

# Transcript of Interview with Janet Pope by Constance Carothers

**Interviewee:** Janet Pope

**Interviewer:** Constance Carothers

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**Abstract:** Janet Pope is a mother and an educational assistant at a daycare who lives and works in Eau Claire County. During this interview, Janet discusses what it is like to work in a daycare facility during the COVID-19 pandemic and all the changes that took place in order to make it as safe as possible to bring large numbers of children back into the facility. She also discusses the changes in the atmosphere of the daycare and how the pandemic has changed the closeness the staff used to have before the pandemic. She also talks about changes in her family with the pandemic and how it has affected both her life and her daughters.

**Constance Carothers (CC):** Okay.

**Janet Pope (JP):** So official [laughs].

**CC:** It is currently 2:05PM on November 28, 2020. As of today, there have been a total of 13.2 million COVID cases in the United States and 265[K] COVID related deaths within the United States and 400-no, yeah-400K cases in Wisconsin, and 300 and 44-444 cases. Oh my gosh, I cannot talk.

**JP:** [laughs] It's all right.

**CC:** 344-444 thousand deaths in Wisconsin, that took a minute.

**JP:** [laughs]

**CC:** So, would you be able to state your name? And do you mind sharing demographic information—information for the study such as race, ethn—ethnicity, age and gender?

**JP:** Yeah, for sure. So, Janet Pope, and a guess, I would consider myself Hispanic. I don't know how more in depth you'd like for me to go into that or—

**CC:** I think that's good. That's fine. Do you mind stating age and gender as well?

**JP:** Yeah. Um, God. Okay. So, I think I'm 35 [laughs] and then female.

**CC:** So, then the next question is, what are the primary things you do on a day-to-day basis like your job, extracurricular activities?

**JP:** So, it's pretty basic routine. So, job—like, what would I do as a job?

**CC:** Yeah, basically.

**JP:** Okay. So basically, my title is educational assistant, is what it's called. But basically, I just work in a daycare for wraparound care for children, four to five years of age. And then extracurricular activities, I pretty regularly go to the gym after work. And then that's basically it.

**CC:** Okay. Would you be able to state where you live and what it's like to live there?

**JP:** Yeah, I live in— like city? I live in Altoona, Wisconsin. It's super close to Eau Claire. I mean, I would still— we are still considered Eau Claire County. So, um, and I really love where I live. It's pretty slow paced, family oriented, neighbor-oriented neighborhood. Yeah.

**CC:** Okay, um, when you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts and have your thoughts changed any since then?

**JP:** Yeah. When I first heard about it, I was scared. Um, I was super terrified. I was scared for my kids. I was scared for family. I was basically crying all the time, because of things that I heard on the news. And, um, and then things were getting shut down. And I was so consumed with watching the news and the, you know, Governor. Um, so yeah, I was really terrified. And I was just thinking, worst case scenario, I guess you could say.

**CC:** I feel like a lot of people felt that way.

**JP:** Now—yeah, yeah, it was, it was g—I was thinking, oh, my gosh, we have to get a playground set put in our backyard, because we're not able to go to the playgrounds. And so it was just kind of like brainstorming ideas on how to keep our kids entertained at home. Bought a lot of puzzles. Which is, I think it's a common thing. Um, but now, honestly, I feel like, we've—it seems like we've been at this for quite some time, and I just feel a little more lax on—on things. I—I'm not as scared at all, or really that much concerned or, um, you know, I'm not too hardcore on—on wearing the mask. If I—if I'm given the opportunity on not wearing one, I take it. So, yeah, so I'm not—I'm not too concerned. I mean, it's—it's—I acknowledge that it is out there, but it's not anywhere close to what I first felt when I first found out about it.

**CC:** I think a lot of people had it where it was the huge terror at the beginning. It's depleted.

**JP:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yep.

**CC:** Okay, kind of playing into that, what issues have most concerns you about the COVID-19 pandemic?

**JP:** Um, I guess one of the issues for me is the different opinions by different people from—anyone from, you know, working in healthcare to anyone working in—er, you know, involved in politics. Um, so I think that's one big issue for me is not—all the different facts or opinions that are out there. And so, it's kind of hard to filter or really believe, you know, what is true and what is not. So that's kind of been an issue for me regarding COVID. Um, yeah, you know, and even employers, different rules that—or policies that they have. That's also kind of been really confusing. So, um, yeah, I guess that's just basically the—, you know, information really is what's the big issue for me is what's, you know, what, what is real? And what is not?

**CC:** Yeah, I feel like a lot of people have been having that being like, one of their main concerns, what to believe

**JP:** Yeah. Oh, yes.

**CC:** Um, going back to your job—has COVID-19 affected it in any way? And in what ways has it?

**JP:** Yeah, for sure. I mean, I feel like, I feel—again, it goes back to the different opinions and it's like, you, you have a policy set by, you know, people higher up and—and yet, it's not really followed through, and certain staff are not following through with it, you know, the children or parents, families, and it's just the not really knowing the answers.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** The questions, you know, from—that we get from families. And a lot of the times as staff were just like, 'we don't know,' or 'maybe,' and it just makes it really hard to, I don't know, be on the same page, I guess? Um, it's been pretty stressful in the sense that, like, you know, if you have COVID cases at work, it seems like things are shutting down, and people are getting shifted here and there and working with children that they don't really know. And then really just the concern for their health, it's like, well, how is it that this person is quarantine, but yet I'm not? And I know, I was in close contact, you know, and it's just, I think that's—COVID has definitely—definitely impacted work for sure.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** Yeah. And then I mean, when this whole thing went down, just—I think a lot of the staff members kind of felt a little taken advantage of too, because some were able to stay home, while others were told to come to work. And some were able to use certain benefits, while other staff members were not quite able to use those benefits. So, it's just, it's kind of been all over the place. It's—I think it's put a damper on staff relationship. We're not as—we're not—we're not working as—as one as we used to. It's kind of like, we're just kind of looking out for on another—you know, for ourselves. And it's, I don't know. It's kind of weird.

**CC:** Yeah. I can see where that would come from.

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** What am I looking for? So, because you work with children, what is it like working with them during the pandemic? Do they do any—do the children do anything to like, help prevent spread—like precaution wise? I don't-

**JP:** I mean— so when I went back in the summer COVID was obviously still around. Um, we weren't wearing masks. It wasn't mandated at that time. But like, the cleaning protocols were a little more enhanced. So, at that point, it seemed like everything was going great. We actually didn't even have any cases really, um, you know, with the children or staff it was—it was, it was going really good. Um, then they mandated the—the face coverings, and I'm gonna—I'm gonna plug in my phone because it's gonna die.

**CC:** It's all good.

**JP:** Give me a second. I'm gonna grab the—like really cool, fast charger. Hopefully this stays up—oh yeah, good. Okay, yeah. So, um, I was a little concerned when it was mandated for the face coverings and I thought, oh boy, I don't think these kids are gonna do really good with it and—but surprisingly they did awesome. They were excited. So, the mask wearing— I didn't really see a problem with it with the kids, it seemed like they adapted so well to it. So, um, and they—I don't know, I just felt like they adapted to every change that we had made at the center, surprisingly. And I was—we talked about this all the time, like, how shocked we are that they just kind of went with the flow and are able to follow the new rules. And, you know, I mean, we've always done the, you know, the sanitizing the, you know, the washing the sanitizing, the handwashing, we've always—that's nothing new to them. So, but I am—surprisingly I think they've adapted well. I mean, as far as I mean, they're probably—I mean, they're still kind of—they're not really doing that great of handwashing. You know, that's, I mean, that's expected at that age, I guess. So that's not a surprise to me. Um, but with the—with the mask wearing that I am surprised that they're able to—to keep that on all day.

**CC:** Yeah. You said they were like four and five?

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** That's defiantly an age where it wouldn't seem to be—like they would want to do that.

**JP:** No, no. no, not at all. But yeah, they—like I said, we're all in shock that they're able—they're—they have it—they've accepted it, so.

**CC:** Is there anything else you want to add to that question?

**JP:** Like with how well I think they're doing with it, or how they're handling—

**CC:** Precautions your work has taken, that sort of thing. How the kids are handling it?

**JP:** Yeah, I mean, I think the kids are handling just fine. Yeah, no— nothing really. To that one.

**CC:** Okay, um, what concerns do you have with—about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment and the economy more broadly?

**JP:** Um, I guess I'm just concerned with—because we are part of the university and we do have students. That's what I'm concerned—the constant of hiring new students. And it's like—it's like—I mean, there's just so many new faces. And—and if we're trying to be safe, I guess I just have a hard time understand—I mean, I understand why we need to hire because we're short, you know, staffed. But at the same time, we're bringing in so many new people, and so we're just constantly being exposed to—to all kinds of stuff. So yeah, that's—I don't—I'm concerned about that. And then, I guess, in the—on the long run, I mean, I'm—I guess I am concerned for the economy. I don't—not—not that I don't want to say I don't care at all for health and safety of people. But I also don't want to diminish, like the importance of businesses, and how much they do bring into our community. You know, I mean, from providing jobs and, you know, so it's from—from business standpoint, that—I'm concerned about that, especially for small business, because they can't—there's no way that they're, you know, able to handle something like this, and you know, being forced to lay off people and so, but I mean, the big oil companies are doing great [laughs]. You know, with all the services that they can provide, you know. But I—yeah, from the long run, I guess, I don't know, I just I hope that you know, we're able to come back. Yeah.

**CC:** Yeah. I feel like a lot of people will have the same opinion with the small businesses, especially considering so many have had to close down during the pandemic.

**JP:** Oh, yeah. I mean, not just for a month, some have to close down per— you know, permanently. Wow, that stinks. That's, you know, unfortunate, all the jobs that they had to—you know, all those people that had—that had the job, so.

**CC:** Yeah. Um, steering a little bit away from jobs. How has COVID-19 affected you and your family's day-to-day activities?

**JP:** Um, you know, what's—surprisingly, it's brought us closer. Um, we were able to take time so we got a dog [laughs].

And I hear this a lot, you know, a lot of people get—you know, had gotten animals. And because of getting the dog, the dog has actually brought us closer together. Because we're spending more time with one another. We had to be a little more creative, or think outside the box as far as like, spend—you know, what to do, and, you know, spending time like outside the home. So, we've been taking advantage—a lot of like hiking, visiting the trails, taking the dog on walks. I think we've were a little more active. Um, let's see, we—it kind of seems like we might be—we might have scaled back on—on spending. So, you know, because we're all—our thought of having a good time would be, you know, taking the kids to Action City [trampoline park], you know, or going out to eat.

And so, now that like—not that not to say we can't do those things, it's just not the same. But we've definitely—I feel like we've, you know, had gotten—we—we've gotten closer over COVID. There—there are a few times where it's like, oh, my gosh, you're still here. But I mean, that's rare—that's honestly, that's rare. It's it definitely feels more like we've—we've gotten closer as a family, so.

**CC:** That's good to hear. I've heard of a lot of families were the exact opposite happened, so.

**JP:** Yeah, I know. And I've been—I mean, I thought like that would—that would make sense. You know, I mean, I've heard of people getting divorced. It's like, oh, boy, you know, I mean—and I know, I don't want to say that COVID-19 was the cause of that, because you just don't know what goes on behind closed doors. But yeah, it's—it's tough out there.

**CC:** Um, so, with the activities that you and your family have been doing, how have you been managing them? Like, the family time and like, the away time sort of thing?

**JP:** Um, yeah, so I guess—so my husband stays home with the girls. And that's also been kind of nice, because with the school closings, it's kind of been unpredictable and we—you know, they're—you know, Jules [her daughter] is four then Bella's [her daughter]—you know, they're all young. So, for the most part, um, so he has actually—he's able to manage that time well, because he—he's free for the most part and then so with me because I do work my—I usually use like the weekend to you know, 'yeah, let's go on a hike' or you know, let's—you know, take the dog here or there so it's been pretty good. They've respected—like my time because I do work. So that's—that's always—that's nice that you know, my husband does that.

**CC:** Yeah, that's good to hear.

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** Has COVID-19 affected how you associate and communicate with friends/family at all? And if so, what ways?

**JP:** Yeah, because it—unfortunately, it has turned political. And so, it does make it super hard. Um, you know, even—I mean, just anywhere—any—with any person in general. It's—you have to be mindful. Well, I'm—I try to be mindful of things that I say because I don't want to offend anybody or, you know, I don't know if that person has had someone close to them get sick or even worse passed away. So, um, but it's like the thing to talk about right now. So, it's like— it has made it super challenging. Because it's almost like you either agree with it, or you don't. And if you don't agree with it, then you're on this side of the political party. And if you do agree with it, then you're on this side of the political party.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** So, then—I don't know, it just—it does make it challenging. Luckily, for me, most of my family are pretty much in the same—we all kind of have the same opinion. Um, but there are a few people that in the family that I definitely don't try to bring up anything-

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** -related to COVID. Um, just kind of general—general stuff. But yeah, it's—it's—yeah, it's made it challenging at times. But for the most part, it's all good.

**CC:** Anything else to add to that question?

**JP:** No.

**CC:** You kind of already touched on this, but what have you and your family done for recreation during the COVID-19—COVID-19? Besides like, the hikes and that stuff.

**JP:** Um, so we like movie nights, we're pretty like—you know, hey, this—this day, we will be watching movie and if it doesn't work out for this day, or plan B is this day, you know, because again, I work so. So, that's always been nice. We look forward to movie nights, which we never used to do. And then, because we're—because now we're spending so much time at home, we get so lost in our electronics. So, we try to say, you know, let's play a game or read a book. My husband's Grandpa, he passed away, but he wrote a book. So that's something that he likes to do sometimes is read, you know, his—his book to the girls. Um, so just—just little things like that to like—because what we're thinking is one day, these girls are gonna look back. And they're gonna say, remember that time when COVID hit and all the things that we did so—and we want to make, like, memories, positive memories for them. So we just try to do little things here and there. So we'll see if it works.

**CC:** All just depends.

**JP:** Yup.

**CC:** How is COVID-19—how is the COVID-19 outbreak affected your community? So like, community can include school, you kind of already talked about job, church if you attend.

**JP:** Yeah, um, you know, with the girls' school—luckily, they go to private school, right. So, they have a little more say, and you know, how they're going to do things. So luckily for them, they did go full time, you know, Monday through Friday. So, it hasn't really affected too much. Although there was, um—I think it was last week where they did have to close for two weeks, but that's because they were—staffing was low, which is understandable. I mean, aren't—at the University of you know, at the daycare, it's low, but because we have those students coming in, we've been able to stay open. So, school wise, they're doing pretty good. It—I feel bad even talking about that, because it's like other families are not—you know, like the Eau Claire School District, they—you know, they only go two days a week or four days a week, or, you know, so I—even—even with stuff like that, I try not to bring that up because I don't want to like feel like I'm rubbing it in their face or anything. But, um, so, yeah, and then I guess just, I don't know, I kinda— it's—it just makes me feel so sad to see like, the Walmarts and the Targets and the Menards, you know, just I mean, business is great. You know, like, it's booming and then you—it's like, all these other little small businesses are like, kind of, it seems like they're struggling you know, I don't know. But I—and it kind of like— it's made me—made me feel a little, I don't know—like, I'm starting to, like, you know, let's go to this small business or let's check this place out. Because it's like—like, why do we keep giving our money to these[laughs]—you know, big, you know, companies it's like, ah—like they, you know, even in a pandemic, they're still just, you know, doing great. And I don't know. So it's kind of made me think a little bit like that. Um, I don't know. It's kind of just an odd feeling being out there. It's a—it's just—it's not normal. It's not right. It's—like I said, even with the mask wearing, you have certain businesses saying yes, and, you know, following and some not so. I don't know. It's just doesn't—it just doesn't feel right.

**CC:** Yeah. That's understandable. Um, so kind of with the community, how have those around you been responding to the pandemic?

**JP:** Uh, I guess it just depends on—I mean, if you go out into, like, the country, you know, it just seems like the— So, my mom lives—my mother-in-law lives in Whitehall [, Wisconsin]. And it's just, you know, just small community, and it just seems like they're not—they're not experiencing what, like, we are here in the city are experiencing this little—, you know, what I mean, like, in the city, it's a little more like, everyone's got their mask, everyone is following the, you know, whatever rules that the business may have, um, and it's like, there's a sanitizer, there's this and that, but when I go visit my mother-in-law, it just seems like, more—you know, people are just relaxed. And, you know, there were—the mask wearing is not as, you know, they're not really doing the mask wearing. And so, it's like, I don't know, it's, um, you know, I feel like, as a community here, everyone's for the most part, I feel like following what we're told we need to be doing though, I will say, two weekends ago, I was at the mall. And all of a sudden, like, I just kept seeing, you know, people not wearing a mask, you know, and it was like one person, then it was a couple, and then it was another couple—and it was just like—so I'm wondering if people are starting to not follow with the mask wearing. Um, so I am seeing more of that. So, again, it's like we're doing so good, all following the same plan. And then after election, it seemed like anyway, I don't know, it could have been coincidence.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** All of a sudden, I started seeing, you know, more and more people not wearing their mask. So, I hope that doesn't turn into this, like, you know, stare down [laughs] in the checkout lane. You know, so, I don't know.

**CC:** Yeah. With the election, especially—like a might have been a coincidence, but it does seem that has played quite a role in the pandemic.

**JP:** Oh, yeah, for sure. Mm hmm.

**CC:** Okay, so throughout this entire pandemic, so—oh, my gosh, can't talk—self-isolation and social distancing have been pretty key terms. What have—what has been your—you and your family's response to the request for self-isolation and social distance?

**JP:** I mean, for the most part, I feel like we've done—I mean, even though like our opinions are, one way, you know, if someone is telling us to do something, we're—we'll for the most part, do

it. So as a family, I guess, we— you know, if we're— we're at the grocery store and, you know, you're—it says six feet apart, we're gonna stay six feet apart, you know, they say wear a mask, we're gonna wear the mask, um, as far as like, gatherings at home, because that—obviously the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) is— you know, does recommend not to have visitors now, or if you do stay six feet and wear the mask, we don't do those things.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** So, in our home, we're a little more relaxed on the, you know, recommendations from CDC, but out in public, we definitely do follow it.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** Um, so— and I mean, yeah, all our family does so.

**CC:** I think most families have probably been doing that. And others have been more to the thing.

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** But yeah. Um where is that—with like communication and that sort of thing has COVID-19 changed your relationships with family, friends, or anyone in your community?

**JP:** My neighbors for sure, you know. Basically—you know, I've noticed, like certain— certain neighbors will have people over, but it is so obvious that they'll have 'em stay. You know they'll be outside, and then you know they'll have their chairs 6 feet apart and then—so I—I definitely notice with neighbors, and if you know, if I see a bunch of cars and that's what they'll do, which is—which is fine. We don't—we don't do that, but that's you know you—you can kind of tell which—you know how, what their thoughts on it just based on that. So, um and—and we don't really see them quite often either. It's like our neighbors, we're next door, you know. So that's definitely changed. As far as family members, not—not really. There isn't really anybody that's taken like you know, no six— 'we need to stay 6 feet.' No, 'I went here so I can't come over.' No—you know so we like—which is I don't know, I—I've enjoyed it because I do—when— when this first started though, we were, like I said, we were scared

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** -and we were like no—nobody come over to our house, nobody, you know, and so, I—I felt a little—I felt jealous because I would hear my mother-in-law have, you know, a Sunday barbecue and my family is there and we're here like taking this thing serious. So that was hurtful to hear in the beginning. But now we're—we're those people. You know, but—but I haven't heard like anyone—any family members like say anything like that to us like “oh my gosh, you had a barbecue. You know you're not supposed to do that.” So, for—you know, for the most part. Like I said, we're all pretty much on the same page, so.

**CC:** Yeah, I feel like—like we all want to keep each other safe, but because-

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** -it's been going on for so long it's like you miss your family.

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** You wanna go see them. Like you miss life before pretty much

**JP:** Right, right. Yeah.

**CC:** And then you mentioned relationships have kind of changed within your job somewhat too then.

**JP:** Yeah, with like certain staff members and you know all the—it's interesting because we were all—we all have different opinions as it is, but with the COVID-19 it's—it's really, um, really—people have been super passionate about it, I guess you could say in a nice way. So yeah, and so, it—it makes it hard to like, talk to them about, you know, the news or like, oh, you know a vaccine. I mean even talking about a vaccine it's like, you know, “well, how do you feel about it? Well, how do you feel?” You know, and it's like, I don't know. Just—you just have to be mindful talking to certain staff members 'cause you don't—you don't want to come off as you don't care or you don't care for their safety or their health. But yeah, it's—it's kind of been—it's kind of been strange at work for sure, so.

**CC:** Yeah, I bet. Have you or anybody you— have you or anybody you know gotten sick during the COVID-19 outbreak?

**JP:** Yeah, for sure. So, a lot of our family members have gotten—not immediate, but like uncles and my brother-in-law, my brother-in-law's girlfriend, just—have gotten it. Some had—had pretty mild symptoms, and some had, you know, some had to be hospitalized.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** And it's—you know it's not—not what you like—you know when you hear hospitalized you think 'oh my gosh,' you know, like 'that's terrible' but it—it could be just simple as like they just—because they have Parkinson's disease, you know, they just want to make sure that, you know, they keep a close eye on him or whatever.

**CC:** Monitor them.

**JP:** Yeah, so no one pass—passing away, but definitely have gotten it.

**CC:** Yeah. Within your immediate family, have there been any scares with it at all of anyone getting it?

**JP:** No, thank God.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** So, not yet anyway.

**CC:** Uh, okay. What have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic? And have they changed at all since the beginning of it?

**JP:** Yeah, for sure, so I would constantly get alerts from our local—it's like WEAU (local Eau Claire news station)—I mean that was my main—because it was—it was local and it was the governor, so that was always my—like, okay, I got an alert, I'm going to watch the live stream at 2:00 PM so I was always on top of—on top of things. People would ask me like “hey, did you know—what information did you find out?” Because I was just, like I said, so consumed in—in what, you know, what was going to happen? When was it going to happen? So, um, yeah, so my

local news was—was my primary source of, you know, getting my information and then I—in the background I will have, you know, the cable news but I—I always relied on the WEAU. But—and it has changed. Now I don't watch the cable news because it's just—it's just—it has gotten to be so—I—I just feel like the hypocrisy has—I mean it's crazy and I mean, it just seems like across the board all—there—there wasn't really a—a different opinion, cables unit news network—it seemed like they were all on the same page except for like maybe one, but even that I don't even watch that so. Yeah, now I just still—I just rely on my local WEAU and even then, I don't even—I don't really watch the—the live streams anymore. I just kinda get the snippet later 'cause it's just like—it's just too much.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** Like, you know, so yeah, but.

**CC:** I know—I know several people who kind of stopped watching the news 'cause they don't wanna hear it.

**JP:** Yeah, yeah.

**CC:** Especially when it's all kind of sad.

**JP:** Oh yeah, and even on like, you know Facebook, I—I started to like, you know, I don't want to see this. It's not relevant to me. I don't want to see this, it's not relevant to me. So now I just see pictures, you know. But yeah, I would get my news from there too. And I was just like, well I don't see any of it so.

**CC:** You kind of touched on this one already, but what do you think are important issues that the media may not or is not covering?

**JP:** Um, I mean, I guess—important issues? I don't know. It's kind of like I've always said this is, like why is the news always covering, like all this bad information, but like that's really how they get viewership. I don't know. It's like, I mean—and it's not just COVID, but everything before COVID. It just seemed like it was bad, bad, bad, bad. And I always—I would always think like why don't you guys report positive stuff like animal being saved or, you know, I don't know it just yeah so. I don't know what—I really don't know what I would like for them to report honestly, may—maybe just kind of a balance.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** I don't know. But like I said it just feels like it's biased and they all have the same opinion so it's—and they all, you know, are trying to please a certain demographic of people anyway, so it's like—I don't know. I really can't rely on anything when I watch the news, except for whatever is local.

**CC:** Yeah, a lot of people have been wanting to see, like happier stuff in the news and it doesn't help that that's not really what's there.

**JP:** Yeah, I know.

**CC:** Um, how have munic—municipal leaders and government officials in your community responded to the outbreak?

**JP:** I mean, I think for the most part they all kind of had just followed through with whatever Tony Evers has, you know, said. I mean, I know with our local health department—I don't know what her name is, but I think it's like Ga—her last name starts with G, but I mean for the most part she just kind of it—it seemed like she was, you know, just doing what she's told, I guess. Um, I—I don't know. I feel like a lot of the things going on now is in line with what the governor wants us to do, so I don't—I don't know. I don't feel like they're doing—I don't feel like they're overstepping their boundaries, I guess is what I'm trying to say. I don't think that they're like, you know, telling us we can't have lives and like-

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** -you know, I think they're just kind of reporting like hey, you know this is what is recommended or what we're being told, so we want to just give you guys that information.

**CC:** Yeah. So, like they're doing [inaudible] basically.

**JP:** Yeah, yeah, I don't—I mean, I think they're doing an—an—as much as they can because I know that like there are certain things that they wish that they probably could or would want to do, but they can't because then someone will take them to court or like, they know that they don't have that authority to do to—do that so, um, yeah, for sure. I think they're—they're doing as much as they can.

**CC:** Yeah. Outside of your community, what are your thoughts on how the state or federal leaders have been responding to the crisis?

**JP:** Again, it's—just depends on which way you swing, because you know, if you're from this political or that political party, you're wearing a mask or you're not or you're saying you know, it's—the flu is—is just as worse, you know. And why are we not reporting those numbers or people are dying more from other diseases, why are we not reporting that number? Or, you know, so it's just—sorry I keep readjusting my phone [laughs]

**CC:** It's all good.

**JP:** So, I—again I think—this is what I feel like. I feel like my parents are in a divorce, okay, and I'm in the middle. And they're trying to pull me to one side and the other one is trying to pull me to their side. And that's—that's how I feel like I'm—it's a constant pull, you know, between my mom and my dad. And it's like who do I believe? Who do I trust? Who do—who is right? And who is wrong? So, as far as like, leaders, I mean, I don't know. I think they're also in the same boat, like they could only do as much as they could because again each state has their own rules and policies. I mean, that's what—that's how our country was, like, founded, you know we're not, you know—like the president doesn't tell us what to do and then we all do it like we're all—you know, we all have our own—each state is so different.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** Yeah, so. Um again, I think their hands are just as tied too with what they can and can't do, so.

**CC:** Yeah. Divorce is definitely a good way of—I can't get the correct like English word.

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** English language term is for it, but —definitely feel like a lot of people in the same boat.

**JP:** Yeah, yeah [laughs].

**CC:** Um, do you have anything else to add, to that at all?

**JP:** Um, no. I think either way, if, you know, a person like on a federal level or higher—like I said, is as high as you can go. I'm not quite sure, but I feel like they're damned if they do, and they're damn it they don't. You know what I mean?

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** So. We'll just leave it at that, I guess [laughs].

**CC:** Okay. Okay, has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends and community, and if so, in what ways?

**JP:** Yeah, I guess—I guess a good example would be how much people truly rely on the government. I guess certain family members—because of COVID and their willingness to be like “oh yeah, if the government tells me to do this, I'm gonna do it. Or if the government tells me to do this or not to do that, I won't do it,” you know, and it's like, I guess, you know, that—I guess that was surprising. Because I—it was almost like they felt like they couldn't have an opinion, or they couldn't have, you know, like a solution maybe? Because of the—their heavy reliance in the government.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** Or they're heavy, like trust in them. I mean, people in government are humans, they make mistakes too, you know, and that's—then that's all right so. I guess that's the only thing that was kind of like, a little surprising to me was their just a willingness to be like, “oh yeah, if the government is going to tell me to do this, I wanna do it or”—it's like I don't know. I'm a little more cautious, I guess. You know or I'd like to do a little bit—at least a little bit of research.

**CC:** That's understandable.

**JP:** Yeah, so, but just—yeah.

**CC:** Then I just have one more question, knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals, communities or governments need to keep in mind for the future?

**JP:** I think what— what's gotten me so confused is how businesses, you know, some are following what CDC is recommending and some are not. Or like, I mean the importance of this six feet and mask wearing and yet, um, just the different spin that—that businesses will—will use that. So, I guess for me what I would like for them to know is, I don't know, again it—it crosses that whole line of like you're the government, you can't tell me what to do kind of thing, so it's—it's so tricky. But it's like we all just—we need to be on the same page. I mean—and I—yeah—and it's yeah—I mean my girls go to private school and they're not on the same page as other schools too. So, I, you know, that's confusing for—I'm sure, for families.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** So, I—I don't know. I mean, I was going to say for everyone, you know, businesses to kind of have like this—that same you know, protocol as far as like quarantine, you know, certain staff members. But it just seems like no matter what, it's not—I don't know 'cause then you're overstepping that—that, like you know, being free, you know, kind of. Um? So, I don't know if—that was a tricky one.

**CC:** Yeah.

**JP:** It's super tricky. I don't know.

**CC:** Okay then. Thank you for taking the time to do this with me.

**JP:** Yeah.

**CC:** It was greatly appreciated.

**JP:** Yeah, and I hope you still like me by the time we get to work [laughs].

**CC:** I'm gonna stop the recording.