

# Transcript Interview with Haley Thomas by Aiden Ball

**Interviewee:** Haley Thomas

**Interviewer:** Aiden Ball

**Date:** 05/03/2022

**Location (Interviewee):** Tempe, Arizona. 85282.

**Location (Interviewer):** Richmond, Virginia.

**Abstract:** In this interview, Haley Thomas discusses the difficulties she faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and how they affected her.

**Aiden Ball 00:01**

So, Haley, state, the date and time and location of the interview.

**Haley Thomas 00:07**

Okay. So, it is 2:04pm where I am. And it's in Tempe, Arizona, um 85282.

**Aiden Ball 00:23**

Alright. So, when you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts about it, um, and have your thoughts changed since then?

**Haley Thomas 00:34**

Um, well, when I first learned about it, I only saw stuff coming out from China. So, that was kind of nerve-racking at the beginning. And I thought it was a lot deadlier because I kept on seeing videos people falling down in the streets. And so it just thought it was gonna happen in the U.S. And then later, I learned it wasn't as deadly but like, there's more precautions being taken and all that stuff. But it did ease it a bit, knowing that quite a few people I know, like, could get sick and survive it. I just thought was a lot deadlier at the beginning I thought was going to be like the next Black Plague, kind of thing. [laughs] But that was at the very beginning. But then once I learned more about it, I became less scared. And I generally, I don't really go out very much anyway, because I'm in school. So, it didn't really change that much outside of going to certain places for fun, which kind of did a number on my mental health.

**Aiden Ball 01:54**

Okay, uh, so has the COVID-19 outbreak affected you how you associate and communicate with friends and family and in what ways?

**Haley Thomas 02:06**

Um, for communication, I would say it's about the same. I don't really have a large social circle. So, it didn't really impact me that much outside of just not being able to go to church for a while, which did kind of suck because I prefer the in-person to on online. It just felt a lot better to do in person once I dealt with you in person again.

**Aiden Ball 02:38**

Okay, and what were the biggest challenges that you faced during the COVID-19 outbreak?

**Haley Thomas 02:44**

The biggest challenges were probably just my mental health overall. I had trouble balancing school, and then all the restrictions happening. Because, I felt trapped. And, I didn't like feeling trapped. And I guess that was the biggest thing for me. I, in fact, I think I had a mental breakdown at least one time. And my husband had to help me through it. [laughs]

**Aiden Ball 03:24**

Okay, and how did people around you respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Haley Thomas 03:32**

I think my other family members took it a bit more seriously than I did. I was more just like, well, as long as I'm just washing my hands or whatever, I'm fine. I didn't really care as much about the mask thing because I didn't really go as many places to begin with. And I'd avoid going places just because I didn't like wearing masks anyway. Whereas my mom was a lot more strict about it because at the time, when it happened, we were taking care of my elderly grandmother and she was high risk.

**Aiden Ball 04:12**

Alright, is there a specific pandemic related memory that stands out to you at all? And if so, could you share it?

**Haley Thomas 04:21**

One memory I have is, this is during one of my breakdowns, but I ended up just, crying a lot. [laughs] I was kind of sad about not feeling like I could go anywhere outside of like where we lived and going to work, which was taking care of my grandma. And so I felt like I had no life outside of that because the restrictions and so, in order to help with the lockdown pressure, my husband, he,

to make it feel like I could go places, we went and got some fast food through the drive-thru and then ate in the parking lot across from where our apartment was. Inside the car and make it feel like we could do something at least outside where we were. And that helped me feel a lot better.

**Aiden Ball** 05:20

Alright, and last question, knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals, communities, or governments need to keep in mind for the future?

**Haley Thomas** 05:29

I think they need to be aware of the mental toll lockdowns take. Because even if, um, they're implemented, I think they need to be careful with extending them for as long as they did at times. Because they were just so difficult mentally on some people that had already bad, like they already had mental issues beforehand. And then feeling like they couldn't do as much or go as many places. And then for me on top of it with having autism, it was hard to communicate as effectively with masks, which is another reason I didn't really like wearing those because I felt like people couldn't understand me as well, and I couldn't understand others. I remember having to ask people multiple times what they were saying, because it sounded muffled and that bothered me. And I get a lot of information from seeing people's mouths and not being able to see that was kind of annoying. [laughs] Yeah, I guess it's just overall mental issues because even if it's like, even if they think it's like good for like other health reasons, like I think it also, I think the mental health was kind of downplayed. And so, that bothered me. That was my biggest thing. Okay, and that's all I have.

**Aiden Ball** 07:08

Yes. Is there anything else you want to add to that? Or?

**Haley Thomas** 07:11

Um, no, not really. That's pretty much it.

**Aiden Ball** 07:16

Perfect. Thank you so much, Haley.

**Haley Thomas** 07:18

Oh, You're welcome.