

## Transcript of Interview with Kasie Meyers by Jack Halls

**Jack Halls 00:02**

This is Jack Hall's the date is May 12. And it is for 1pm. Can I get you to say your name?

**Kasie Meyers 00:10**

My name is Casey Myers.

**Jack Halls 00:13**

Do you mind sharing some demographic information? Your race, ethnicity, age and gender?

**Kasie Meyers 00:18**

Yeah, so I am white. I live in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I'm 32 years old, and female.

**Jack Halls 00:32**

What are the primary things that you do on a day to day basis? Like what's your job, extra curricular activities.

**Kasie Meyers 00:39**

So my son Taylor right now is a registered nurse. I'm currently enrolled for my master's program to be a family nurse practitioner. I've worked strictly weekends right now 12 hour overnight shifts, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And then Monday through Friday, I with my six and four year old and we play outside as much as we can right now and go hiking a bit.

**Jack Halls 01:15**

And when you first learned about the pandemic, what were your thoughts? And have they changed since then?

**Kasie Meyers 01:22**

Yeah, so when I first started hearing about it, um, my first intuition about it was that it seemed a bit crazy to me. Um, I typically work in cardiac units, and sometimes intensive care. So we I was handling fresh post op cardiac surgeries. And within about two to three weeks of hearing about the COVID. We started taking as many precautions as we did the first standpoint, from the hospital's point of view, just kind of panic. They thought we were going to be running out of PPE. So we are taking very, very, I would say cautious actions to not another that PPE I started working Li and COVID rollout and COVID Positive units. At this point still so for the past six weeks, I have been dealing with the COVID rollout and COVID positive patients that are more stable once we would call so not on ventilation or not intubated at that point. We started only being allowed to wear mask without getting a new one. They were asking us to wear the same mask or at least three days, unless it was heavily soiled or ripped at that point. Which it becomes very not comfortable to do that. We did that for about a month. And then now we're able to wear a mask every single day. Where a new one.

**Kasie Meyers 03:30**

So getting back to the question. Exactly. I thought it was very outrageous. When the first steps that we started taking for about a month. We we saw nothing happen within the hospitals.

**Kasie Meyers 03:50**

A lot of people over the panic were coming in asking for COVID rollout COVID testing right away. And we were kind of wondering when this was gonna go be keep on telling us that the height and the peak is going to be this is going to be this Well, we haven't seen that peak yet. They keep on pushing out for about two weeks from the hospital standpoints. I have seen very stable patients just needing a little bit of oxygen, but we are monitoring them due to how fast we have seen COVID progress in a person. So I'm in still right now I'm still kind of waiting for the very bad to come from it, I guess. And if that answers the question or if I can,

**Jack Halls 04:51**

I'm sure we'll get into it a lot more through this. So what issues have you most concerned? Right now about COVID-19

**Kasie Meyers 05:02**

Right now, um, you know going to work and then you know, the safety of my kids primarily from my education, and what I see, it's mostly affecting the person's have lessened immunity. So their bodies are persons might risk or persons not allowed or not able to fight off viruses as well as a healthy person. So right now, it's personally impacting, you know, like, I don't want to affect my parents, or I don't want to affect my kids, because I'm a single parent. So my parents help out a lot with childcare. So, personally, you know, like go to work in my own clothes, I get to work, I go into a locker room, I put on from head to toe, a hair protectant, surgical scrubs, and I wear shoes that do not leave the hospital. We don't bring anything into the units at all. Anything that is personally mine, when I get off of the unit, I wipe it down with a bleach wipe. And then I go into a contained area, I take off everything that I want into the unit, and then I shower at work. And then it's a designated area as well, that after I'm all cleaned and shower, I put on everything that I brought from home that never even went into the COVID unit. So, so, and then again, you know, dependent on how I feel when I get home, I shower again, right when I get home without touching my babies or anything. So

**Jack Halls 07:02**

what other ways has it affected your job?

**Kasie Meyers 07:05**

Um, so at first, it's kind of scary. At first, I didn't know if well, as far as when we first heard about it. They were asking me I'm a 36 hour week position, they wanted me or they were only going to have my position if I agreed to work 48 hours. So this is at the very beginning of the COVID. So they are again preparing for you know it to be way worse than it is at this point. So they want me to do a summer position working 40 hours a week. So I would work for 12 hour shifts a week, or 12 hours just normally turn into 13 hours with report. So first, I thought he was going to have to work like every single day basically. Um, and then I would say it probably took about a month's time to realize that they didn't need that overstaffing so now we're getting to the point now where I'm working my 36 hours a week.

But it's gone back and forth to where I thought I was gonna lose my job. Because my personal hospital is very much so overstaffed. So we're some positions have added into an optional furlough and into they're giving up one shift a week or they're giving up their whole position and doing PTO paid time off or they're cutting the unemployment a furlough. Every shift I would say, then I will work and most typically, weekends in the medical field are the area where we need most people and most help. Every weekend for the past month, I would say is were very much so overstaffed. So now, I'm back to the point of just this past weekend. I was like, am I gonna have my full time position? You know? Sure. So,

**Jack Halls 09:31**

um, and what other ways has it affected the employment of other people that you know? So,

**Kasie Meyers 09:38**

um, it's it's definitely different. Everywhere you go, what you do, um, I have a lot of friends that are nurses. Um, most of them have opted into furloughing one shift a week, which means if they have the three shifts a week They are only working two shifts a week. And it's their choice to take PTO for that 12 hour shift. Or if they take the furlough for that shift, they can collect unemployment for those hours. I have known, probably a handful of people that have lost their position completely. They had, they were called, I would say they were given a 24 hour notice. And they said you are off the schedule until further notice. And they're collecting unemployment. And I know those people have been in that position for at least a month. And then I also know some nurses in different facilities that they have also prepared themselves for the rush of COVID to come through. And just to make sure they have that staffing, if for when we need it. And there has been, well, you got bonus programs within different facilities saying, you know, so if a nurse is in a full time position, so that means 36 hours a week, they have designated an eight week period, to where they'll work a shift or two extra. So not only are they getting the bonus of however many hours are working for that specific program, but they're also going to be getting paid the bonus amount for working overtime within that. Now, again, if they're not needed, they can get called off for that timeframe. But those facilities are preparing for the so called rash of the COVID patients that they're saying that we're going to be anticipating

**Jack Halls 12:10**

how has COVID-19 affected you and your family in your day to day activities outside of work?

**Kasie Meyers 12:16**

Yeah, so I mean, at first, it was a huge, huge I guess something to get used to, you know, when, as a single parent, I, I have a very, very strict schedule. So Monday through Friday, I know that my one child was going to be in school, I'm also in school, so it really affected us just because I have them in school on so many activities. Um, so at first, it was very challenging to get used to the schedule changes, then, you know, just giving them something to do within that realm. Now, since what the weather's getting nice out, I don't think it has impacted us as much as how busy we're staying as a family but I'm not so being as strict as I should. And with following along with the itineraries as far as the school that they're giving us and I'm more giving them like let's go hiking and let's learn to ride a bike better or, you know, we've been doing tons of landscaping and just spending more time as a family and it's very much so enjoyable now but we're making the best of the situation. Um, so we're steering away from the education aspect of it, but so keeping it a low part in their lives because I know that the kids need that.

Um, as of right now, from a standpoint, I've had my kids and swimming lessons and soccer and T ball, usually within the summer and I don't think that's going to be happening. But I'm giving them different things to look forward to right now.

**Jack Halls 14:11**

And how has it affected how you associate and how you communicate with friends?

**Kasie Meyers 14:17**

Yeah, um, association it was tough because you know, when we do get our free time that we can spend with friends. First, I think it said it seemed like we were more complaining because we weren't able to get that interaction. But most definitely been FaceTiming more. We've been having a lot more conversations with family with friends. So I think that really is impactful on the relationships that you know, we hold close, you know, as families. I have a brother, sister in law On a nephew that live in Arizona, and I haven't seen them forever, and I was going down to visit them a lot

**Jack Halls 15:13**

what are some of the other big challenges that you faced during the outbreaks?

**Kasie Meyers 15:20**

I think a huge challenge is, you know, the daycare, the important education and structure that I know kids need, as a single parent, working full time and continuing education, that's tough grocery shopping. That is a huge as something huge, thankful, I'm very, very thankful for the online shopping and the pickup, because I have no idea how I would be buying food right now I have no idea. I kind of have to, that's like, my biggest struggle, I think, is the food, I have to kind of plan out three or four days in advance what I'm going to need in three or four days, because the online booking, or online shopping is so booked out in advance. And I have always had to make sure that I have food here. Um, but I think now because of the timeframe, how long I've had to accommodate everything changing. I think we're doing okay, now. And it's kind of confusing and sad and kind of funny to be hearing from a six year olds mouth. When can we go do this again? When is the virus going to be gone? You know. So I think that was kind of weird. They kind of did educate them before school got out why they weren't coming back to school, or when they didn't know when they are coming back? So it's kind of weird. And he just said that, to me today, when when's the virus is going to be done. So you can go to the stuff again?

**Jack Halls 17:10**

Yeah, how are other people around you responding to the pandemic? Um,

**Kasie Meyers 17:15**

so, I think my older people, which they have the concern to do so because I'm seeing as far as this stampede in the hospital that you know, the 60 Plus persons, they are more concerned, and taking more precautions, which they, they in their right mind, should I you know, especially I don't know what else they have going on. My friends, so I'm 32 years old. I have a bunch of friends at this point, saying that it's too much now, you know, not so much, you know, if the restaurants and the bars aren't open. But the events and the restrictions and you know, going fishing, you know how many people you can have in a boat, or, you know, a lot of the summer events that are being canceled that I think get people

through the year because you know, that's when people can get out and assassin is during these summer months. But I think a little bit of frustration is coming now. And then as far as medical professionals, I would say the majority of them believe that, you know, we need to start getting back to our normal life. I believe that a lot of people think that, you know, the PPE talk and running out of PPE here and all the precautions that we're taking or preparing ourselves for the COVID patients to come through, like crazy in which they anticipated. We're not getting that. So at what point can we start exposing ourselves to each other? Because we know COVID isn't going anywhere. You know, it's going to be around for a while. So I think everybody is kind of done with everybody been overwhelmed for the most part. But I do believe that the allergy of the population have you know, more of a concern.

**Jack Halls 19:43**

Have you seen people around you change their opinions since the beginning of the pandemic. So now?

**Kasie Meyers 19:50**

Yeah, um, there are still people that are highly opinionated, too. You know, not leaving the house, religiously wearing the mask wherever you go. The heightened awareness of how serious this viruses I have definitely seen a heightened precaution or awareness at the beginning of it. And now those same person saying, well, when is this going to stop? Or, you know, when can we start exposing ourselves and the continuing of the cancelling of events, I think people are just wanting to get back to, you know, summer living and enjoying themselves again. Um, so, there is no question was that changing? The view is right. Um, yeah, so, I, and then I still also know people that I mean, I have neighbors, I have specific neighbors that will not even still come out of their house. You know, and aren't exactly of the elderly population. Um, but I see more people wanting to socialize. I mean, even in the yards, I see a lot more people out now than I did at the beginning. So a lot of changing of views towards that, yes.

**Jack Halls 21:26**

How has it changed your relationships with family, friends and community?

**Kasie Meyers 21:32**

I'm changing on my relationships. So I have voiced my opinion. And I would say social media accounts and you know, just day to day opinions of what I feel about what we're doing with the virus, what we continued need to do, you know, the good hygiene. And, you know, not the immediate reopening of everything. I've expressed my opinion on political views on it. So respectfully, I keep a very open mind to everybody thinking differently. Um, there's been a lot of talk about, you know, what's happening in the hospitals and people's personal opinions, what's happening is cause some frustration within relationships. Um, however, I'm the opposite end of it. As far as immediate family goes, my parents, my brother, you know, immediate family, I think it has brought a lot of together time. So that is positive. It's just, it's just a simple stuff. You know, like me, personally, I have been decluttering, making my life a lot more simple. And just knowing that being together is the only thing that matters. And it's, it's opened my mind a lot to my relationships. And then, you know, there's the handful of friends that, you know, I make sure to check in all the time. So, it has opened my eyes to a lot of relationships, and then it's brought in a lot of relationships closer as well.

**Jack Halls 23:29**

In what ways do you think that COVID-19 has been affecting people's mental health?

**Kasie Meyers 23:35**

So I think at the very beginning, is pretty bad. You know, I, I've, I've felt those days, where as a parent, I have just thought, I'm like, What am I gonna do, you know, like, it's, there's a lot more added stress and a lot of changing situations and schedules very fast, and we just had to adapt to them. Um, I try to be very aware of what I need to do as my own self. So, um, I think people are now getting to it that you need to get out you need to be active. I mean, I run every other day. And I counted over 15 either persons or group of people being on on locks, you know, so people that are aware what they have to do for the mental health and to keep healthy, they're doing it. I've also been told by emergency room staff that you know, we're seeing the continued increase persons come in with alcohol and drug withdrawals and I haven't really been personally involved in any situations, to say have those persons you know, in medical facilities increased at this time, but I would imagine various so that, you know, people aren't doing well, you know, they're not getting into their follow up physicians and not allowing them to know if there's any changes, and they don't have that access right now. So I think that's kind of scary as well.

**Jack Halls 25:23**

What have been your main sources of news throughout the pandemic?

**Kasie Meyers 25:28**

So, where am I turning to? Your News? Yeah, so I'm as busy as I am, I actually tried to avoid news as much as possible. Um, I think within the weeks of, you know, experiencing COVID, and being a part of it, three out of my seven days of life, and, you know, working with it one on one, you can show the patients I said, Okay, I just started educating myself on what people are seeing in the news, and, you know, like, what studies are coming out, you know, about this COVID right now. So, I had turned on ABC a couple times, and the only thing that does for me is, I think it focuses on the very, very negative of COVID. Um, I haven't seen much positivity, and then I started following Fox and CNN. Um, and again, I think they're coming from it of a more political standpoint, and how it's affecting the world right now. And then I just started following WVU resources and kind of really how it's affecting us locally. From the medical standpoint, in a medical student, I actually turned to an A, which is America's American Nursing Association, who, um, and then an IBC, for more study is about how the viruses is being looked at from a standpoint that viruses that have been studied for, you know, over 100 years. And how it, how it correlates with how it's spreading medications that are used to treat and so that so I'm focusing more now on the medical research that's going into it, and when and how if they can get a vaccination, that would be therapeutic and effective.

**Jack Halls 27:38**

And you're in school currently. Yeah. Has the way that you are attending school changed at all?

**Kasie Meyers 27:46**

Yeah, yeah. So um, I was going to start, so I am through Chamberlain College of Nursing. Through my masters, I was going to start clinical rotation, so practice hours for me to complete my, you know, to graduate next May. So within this time, I was going to be starting my clinical rotation. And I was going

to be attempting to do it every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. So the week after the COVID crisis, er, has started all clinical hours and rotations were cancelled indefinitely. prisons that were graduating, this may obviously, you know, got that free time. At this standpoint right now. I should be graduating next May with my FNP. And they don't know if they're going to be pushing us out another semester, because we're going to be missing so much, so many clinical hours. And 640 clinical hours are required of us, and I haven't even started them yet. So the clinical aspect is of that and then as far as education. I have a class every eight weeks. And we have at least two pretty large assignments every week that are due the last so I'm going now into my second eight week class and stuck COVID has started. Basically all assignment due dates are pushed aside at this point. I'm the only assignment due dates that we have our midterm and our final so we have to do it by this date. And that's it. Our other assignments that we typically have, if they're done and due by the eight weeks. It is said that we are getting credit for those assignments just because of everything that we're dealing with either at home or if you know our job circumstances are changing. So They are allowing us a little bit a lot more free time, and they're very being more forgiving, I guess, for assignments.

**Jack Halls 30:15**

And how have you, how do you think municipal leaders and government officials in your community have responded to the outbreak? You think they've done a good job?

**Kasie Meyers 30:25**

Yeah, um, so I think within the area, they're handling it quite very well, um, you know, ours, the health officials, and, you know, thanks to social media and the video, you know, casting that we're doing, I think that's pretty cool right now. Because, you know, it seems as of every other day, they're giving us updates. Exactly what our local community is looking at. Um, so I think that aspect, they're doing pretty good. Um, I haven't necessarily heard a lot about, you know, the reopening if we're going to have phase one, phase two, phase three, I'm looking more updates from the educational standpoint for my kids, and then if the events are going to be canceled or not. So I think they're doing okay, I think the should make it more known exactly what our plan is, you know, after May 26. From that standpoint, so I think we're doing okay, right now,

**Jack Halls 31:43**

what about at the federal level?

**Kasie Meyers 31:47**

Um, you know, it's kind of, I think, exhausting. Mentally. Again, I think I check in, at the end of every week, I think the federal level, it gets more political and argument have more, as in so talking about the virus itself, and how it's affecting everybody. I feel like the federal level is more looking at laws and the lawsuits that I've been hearing about, and I, from my standpoint, it it looks like a big fight to me, instead of doing or dealing specifically to the virus, what are we doing for the virus? What benefits are we having? Opening up at the beginning of May opening up at the end of May? You know, and how are we going to help the people keep the hygiene keep the distance you know, so I feel like they could do a better job with just educating what we can do. Personally and individually and more, you know, get out go for a run kind of dealing with that instead of the argument is standpoint that I feel that is going on right now.

**Jack Halls 33:27**

Has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends and community in any ways?

**Kasie Meyers 33:35**

Specifically, like to the to COVID or relation to

**Jack Halls 33:39**

vote this whole experience to the quarantine?

**Kasie Meyers 33:44**

Yeah, and you're asking how that changed?

**Jack Halls 33:47**

Yes, it has it changed how you think about family friends community?

**Kasie Meyers 33:51**

Yeah. Um, you know, the first thing that came to my mind was, you know, if family and friends have different opinions about the situation, I had just asked everybody to keep a very open mind about everything that they feel if they see and in placing an opposing view, to you know, ask me a question, see what I'm seeing or ask, ask what I'm seeing in the hospital and what they can do to better protect themselves or, you know, just ask even if we have opposing views as far as my age and where I'm at with my relationships with my friends and family. It's kind of scary at times, you know, especially working in the hospital I've you know, I'm trying my best to make them feel important.

**Kasie Meyers 34:55**

Yep. And carry on relationships. If not build on them more. I mean, my mom is one of the most important people in my lives. And I try to make that specific time for her know that that relationship is important. And again, it's just a small thing of being present in each other's lives.

**Jack Halls 35:18**

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

**Kasie Meyers 35:28**

So, again, I think with what we need to do in the future, it's more about educating about preventative actions, I think, um, I think we're really focusing a lot on the numbers of COVID. And, you know, the more we test, the more numbers are gonna come about. So we're gonna see that. But I just wish that the local community, again, would take more initiative of saying, we have to keep in mind the well being our persons. And it seems like to me since you know, more, everything has been shut down. There's been a lot of bad stuff going on in this community. And I think we need to focus on the mental health, preventative measures and just keep a more positive approach. And I guess, from what they display to the communities that focus 100% Or not communicate the numbers of COVID right away, but how



we're progressing and how we're getting better in our community. So we can talk about the positivity and you know, the negative things that are happening.

**Jack Halls 37:10**

And is there anything else that you'd like to add? No, I don't think so. Think about it. Yeah, that was fantastic. Thank you so much for participating in this. I'm going to end the recording here, and then I can stay on just for a minute and explain where you can find the project. Awesome. All right. Thanks.