

## **Transcript of Interview with Emily Tyler by Max Harpring**

**Interviewee:** Emily Tyler

**Interviewer(s):** Max Harpring

**Date:** 10/17/2020

**Location (Interviewee):** Cincinnati, Ohio

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**Transcriber:** Max Harpring

**Abstract:** This interview was recorded as part of The Covid 19 Oral History Project, a project of the IUPUI Arts and Humanities Institute associated with The Journal of a Plague Year: A Covid 19 Archive. This interview was conducted through the University of Cincinnati in partial fulfillment of credit for HIST3158 under the supervision of Dr. Rebecca S. Wingo.

### **Max Harpring**

We are recording. My name is Max Harpring and I am joined here by Emily Tyler. Today's date is October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The time is 4:30 PM. We are in Cincinnati OH. Can I answer any questions?

### **Emily Tyler**

Nope.

### **Max Harpring**

What is the date and time?

### **Emily Tyler**

It's October 17th and about 4:30 in the afternoon.

### **Max Harpring**

What is your name, and what are the primary things you do on a day-to-day basis (for example, your job, your extracurricular activities, etc.)?

### **Emily Tyler**

I'm Emily and I'm a registered nurse at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in the Cardiac ICU. My typical day varies depending on if I'm working or not. I work three twelve-hour night shifts a week at the hospital. If I didn't work the night before I try to get up by ten and walk my dog, Stevie. We usually walk around the square for twenty to thirty minutes. When we get back, I'll make myself a nice little breakfast and then start getting ready for the gym. My workouts tend to last an hour and a half to two hours. I'd like to say I have a hobby I do after that, but I'll usually just come home and watch TV and hang out with the "Stevens." I usually read a book before I go to bed. When I work it's a completely different story. I leave for work at around 6:30 PM and get there by 7. There I spend 12 straight hours taking care of little babies trying their hardest to die on me (ha ha ha). By the time I get home it's like 8:30 already and I'll take Stevie on a morning walk. Then I pass out for a few hours, walk around and do my daily routine like a zombie, then right back to work. I love working only three days a week, but those days back to back to back are a grind.

**Max Harpring**

Where do you live, and what is it like to live there?

**Emily Tyler**

Well, I was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, but work brought me here to Cincinnati. I did live in Rookwood, but rent was crazy expensive, and my roommate moved so now I live in Mount Lookout. I love it here. Everyone here is in their twenties or thirties and have dogs. Stevie gets to meet plenty of friends on our walks. There a bunch of bars within walking distance and MLTs is my fav. It's a good area and the drive in to work is only like fifteen minutes.

**Max Harpring**

When you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts about it? How have your thoughts changed since then?

**Emily Tyler**

It was a truly surreal couple of days when all the news first started coming in. It didn't feel real and I had never experienced anything like this. Naturally, my first thoughts were ones of caution. This was a deadly virus that the world had never seen and as someone who's part of the first responders, I had to conduct myself in a prepared manner. My thoughts haven't changed much, I expected that this would not be over with quickly and figured there were enough idiots in the US to make it worse for all of us.

**Max Harpring**

What issues have most concerned you about the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Emily Tyler**

Well for one, I was worried about my family. My Nana, dad, and mom all have pre-existing conditions. I was terrified to visit them because I didn't want to be responsible for transmitting it to them. I am also concerned about the terrible way the US and Trump handled it. The fact that we have the highest death count in the world is an embarrassment and a tragedy. I keep getting worried that it's going to get bad again with all the dumb people not socially distancing and masking.

**Max Harpring**

Has COVID-19 affected your job? In what ways?

**Emily Tyler**

Well with working at a hospital, my job security was at an all-time high. It didn't affect the day to day much because babies and kiddos and really at risk for Covid. It did change the fact that we had to get our temperature checked before each shift and wear masks and eye protection. It was actually kind of nice because they gave us bench weeks, which were pretty much weeks where we were paid to stay home from work in order to decrease the spread among employees. We've had a decent amount of employees test positive so that kind of worries me, but the majority of them picked it up outside of work.

**Max Harpring**

Has COVID-19 changed your employment status? In what ways?

**Emily Tyler**

No! Like I said before my job security is at an all time high. One of the perks of working in healthcare I guess.

**Max Harpring**

What concerns do you have about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment and the economy more broadly?

**Emily Tyler**

I don't have any concerns about my employment, except if I get Covid because I can't afford to take two weeks off work right now. To be honest, I'm not worried about the economy. I hate when people bring it up as their big argument against protective measures from the virus. I'm more worried about the spread of the virus than money. I do feel bad for the business owners going bankrupt because of the pandemic though.

**Max Harpring**

Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the employment of people you know? In what ways?

**Emily Tyler**

All of my friends are nurses, so it hasn't affected them either. My dad had to work from home, but he's an introvert so he's just loving life right now.

**Max Harpring**

How has COVID-19 affected you and/or your family's day-to-day activities?

**Emily Tyler**

Well I'll tell you one thing. It definitely cut into my social life. Not hanging out with my friends for the first few months was awful and the zoom parties just weren't the same. I did have the chance to focus on reading and try my hand at home workouts. I bought a bunch of resistance bands and dumbbells online and really ended up enjoying working out from home. I could exercise whenever I wanted and I didn't have to worry about other people judging me at the gym because I was all by myself. Weekends went by a lot more slower and I saved money by not going out. I probably spent the same amount of money as I would've though because of my newly found Amazon addiction.

**Max Harpring**

How are you managing day-to-day activities in your household?

**Emily Tyler**

The same as I did before Covid. Nothing's changed between me and Stevie. She did get to go on more walks because I'm around the house a lot more.

**Max Harpring**

Has the COVID-19 outbreak affected how you associate and communicate with friends and family? In what ways?

**Emily Tyler**

It really changed things for me. I couldn't hang out with my gal pals because as a Nurse, I had to be responsible about the virus. Lockdown sucked for my social life. I faceted my family more than I did before. Me and my friends did have one zoom party where we drank, which was fun. But it just wasn't the same.

**Max Harpring**

What have been the biggest challenges that you have faced during the COVID-19 outbreak?

**Emily Tyler**

The biggest challenge for me was to just stay motivated and productive when I wasn't at work. I wasn't showering as much at first because I didn't care how I looked if I wasn't going to be seeing anyone. After the first couple weeks it got better though because I got into a good routine and had adjusted to my new lifestyle. Working out helped me so much.

**Max Harpring**

What have you, your family, and friends done for recreation during COVID-19 (feel free to include details about shows, games, books, etc.)?

**Emily Tyler**

Well, like I said, faceted more and zoom parties. I've done a lot of binging shows on Netflix and definitely hopped on the Tiger King bandwagon. I worked out more. I don't know what else to say. It wasn't very eventful. My family back in Kentucky played a lot of board games. Sadly, Stevie wouldn't play any games with me.

**Max Harpring**

How has the COVID-19 outbreak affected your community? Examples include school, club, church, job, etc.

**Emily Tyler**

Well, it definitely changed the restaurant and bar scene, like with Mount Lookout square it was so quiet and not busy at all compared how it used to be. Made for quieter weekends. Everybody had to use Doordash and carry their food out. It was cool that you could get alcohol to go though.

**Max Harpring**

What about school or work?

**Emily Tyler**

Well I already graduated so I don't know much about the school situation, but I'm so glad I didn't have to do any of those Zoom classes. That looks miserable. I hated online classes. And as far as work goes, it didn't affect me but I saw many people having to make the transition to working at home, which many people seemed to like more actually. I can't tell you how many people I talked to that say they just roll out of bed and hop on the zoom call. Must be nice.

**Max Harpring**

How are people around you responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Emily Tyler**

Well I've definitely seen both sides of the spectrum. There's plenty people who think this virus is a conspiracy or don't think it's a big deal. These are the people I do not choose to associate with. If they are this selfish when a global pandemic is happening, I really do not need to be friends with people like that. I think it's most important for everyone to do their part in stopping the spread of this thing. Your parties can wait. I appreciate the people who don't complain about wearing masks and socially distance as much as possible. Even though the lockdowns are over, we're far from being done with this virus.

**Max Harpring**

Have you seen the people around you change their opinions, day-to-day activities, or relationships in response to the pandemic?

**Emily Tyler**

I think a lot of people have changed their minds during this pandemic. I mean, new information comes out every day so I think it's important for people to stay educated and up to date with that information. It's hard finding good sources though because people always try to make it a political issue. Recently I've seen a lot of people who used to take the virus seriously, stop caring. This worries me. Just because the death rates aren't crazy high doesn't mean that they don't have a chance of spiking again if people are irresponsible.

**Max Harpring**

"Self isolation" and "flattening the curve" have been two key ideas that have emerged during the pandemic. How have you, your family, friends, and community responded to requests to "self isolate" and "flatten the curve"?

**Emily Tyler**

Well, I think I already covered this, but you know, just with the zoom calls and staying home instead of going out. I feel like the people I'm close with all take it seriously so I'm really proud of the people I call friends. I picked a good crowd.

**Max Harpring**

Has COVID-19 changed your relationships with family, friends, and community? In what ways?

**Emily Tyler**

Nope, not really. Just made me realize some of the people I associate with aren't that great of people.

**Max Harpring**

Have you or anybody you know gotten sick during the COVID-19 outbreak? What has been your experience in responding to the sickness?

**Emily Tyler**

I only know a few nurses at work who got it. I don't know anyone personally who is elderly or at risk that got it. The nurses that got it had relatively mild symptoms, and honestly the worst part of it seemed to be having to take two week off of work to quarantine. I can't afford that so I'm extra cautious when I'm out in public. I'll always be wearing one of the way too many masks I've bought over the last few months.

**Max Harpring**

In what ways do you think that COVID-19 is affecting people's mental and/or physical health?

**Emily Tyler**

I'm most worried about the kids. I think it's right for them to not go back to school when looking out for the population as a whole, but I can't imagine being that young and having to stay home for school. That's got to be terrible for those little ones. They can't even grasp the magnitude of the situation so it must be so frustrating and depressing for them. I'm glad I'm at a point in my life where I'm situated and have a career. For physical health, I'm sure many are gaining weight from all the inactivity and staying at home. The Quarantine fifteen is real.

**Max Harpring**

What have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic?

**Emily Tyler**

I try to mostly get my information from reliable sources. It's pretty hard to nowadays. The daily updates they send us through our hospital email are very informative and I base most of my beliefs off of that. I'll listen to NPR here and there, but lately it's just been about politics so I don't listen as much.

**Max Harpring**

Have your news sources changed during the course of the pandemic?

**Emily Tyler**

The biggest thing for me was deleting Twitter. I used to get a lot of my news from there, but I gave up on wading through the crap everyone spewed on there. I've been trying to get away from social media recently and look for other sources. I don't really watch any of the mainstream news, but I'll occasionally watch one of those Snapchat daily show stories to see what people are saying about certain issues.

**Max Harpring**

What do you think are important issues that the media may be or is not covering?

**Emily Tyler**

I think the media is focusing too much on scandals of the two presidents and it really needs to keep focusing on Covid policy. With the election coming up people are getting distracted that we are still in the middle of a pandemic.

**Max Harpring**

How have municipal leaders and government officials in your community responded to the outbreak?

**Emily Tyler**

I think Governor Dewine did a really good job of dealing with the pandemic when it was at its worst. The lockdowns sucked but it was essential in flattening the curve and making sure the hospitals didn't get overrun. As a healthcare worker, I really appreciated all of the mandates because I felt that he was looking after me. We always had the necessary PPE we needed so I really can't complain.

**Max Harpring**

Do you have any thoughts on how local, state, or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently?

**Emily Tyler**

Well obviously some states handled it better than others. I think a lot of the Red states need to take it more seriously, especially Florida. I feel like Trump and his administration really mishandled dealing with the virus and cost many people their life. I don't get why he won't wear a mask and still holds rallies with no social distancing.

**Max Harpring**

Has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends, and community? In what ways?

**Emily Tyler**

It really enforced the feelings I have for my friends. They are so kind and caring and it was really shown during these crazy times. I think overall my community handled it well, apart from a few people being idiots and not taking it seriously.

**Max Harpring**

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

**Emily Tyler**

All I have to add is that people need to act with more empathy in the future and really look out for their neighbors. People need to listen to science and take viruses seriously so this doesn't happen again.

**Max Harpring**

Alright, that's all the questions I have. Thank you for doing this for me!