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In Sickness and in Health in South Texas: Narratives of COVID's Impact

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On the Frontline

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On the Frontline

COVID was a stressful and overall emotional time for me, and everyone else. I'd like to touch on this topic of emotional wellness because I remember it being a stressful time for me. I actually really enjoyed not having to go to school or work, but the same cannot be said for frontline workers. My mother is a respiratory therapist, so she was not able to stay home and protect herself from COVID. She was right there in the battlefield, so to speak, treating COVID patients in the hospital. She would tell me about the horrible effects of covid she was seeing and how even the hospital was an unsafe setting because it was so overcrowded with COVID patients. They had to put patients in rooms that were not well ventilated because all of the ventilated rooms were filled. She would tell me about how her coworkers were getting infected from having to work on the frontline and in unsafe conditions. Therefore, I grew extremely stressed for my mother. At the time, we didn't know much about the virus, so there was a lot of panic. I definitely panicked. I felt helpless. I remember not handling stress very well. I would sit in my room all day, doing nothing that benefited my mental health. It's only been 2 years, but I feel like I have changed a lot since then. I used to allow stress to consume me. I didn't do anything to relieve the stress. Now, whenever I'm feeling stressed and helpless, I turn to God and exercise. That has helped tremendously. Stress is still an ongoing battle for me, and it's caused by different things now, but I can better manage it, or at least try to manage it. I believe that I've changed for the better since then due to that life experience and due to reaching my mid-twenties/maturing. Going through the low of quarantine has made me realize that I never want to reach that dark place again, so now, I'm doing something about it. Knowing how to manage stress is an important tool to have as a student and healthcare provider, so I'm glad that I'm better at it. It's crazy to look back at what the world was experiencing not too long ago. We've won some, and we've lost some. My mother, luckily, didn't end up getting COVID from being at work. One thing I want to add is that when you're going through something, it's easy to get caught up in the moment. What's difficult is looking at the bigger picture and understanding that bad things don't always last. That mentality has helped me get through a lot. I keep reminding myself, "You have survived 100% of your bad days. You're stronger than you think."