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Mental Health and COVID-19 at Whittier

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Oral Histories

From notes taken during the interview.

Questions:

- How has the quarantine affected your overall mental health?
- Do you feel like you have gained any negative traits since the beginnings of the pandemic?
- Have you been using substances like drugs and alcohol to cope?
- If you needed help with your mental health did you receive it?
- How did the change from physical classroom to online learning effect the way you saw your schoolwork?

Senior Latino Male:

The lockdowns did not have much of an effect on my overall mental health due to a bad outlook on the world at the time. The social, environmental, and political climate of the world had already given me an overall negative outlook on the current state of the world. This coupled with the lack of going to a physical setting at school and lack of social interactions led me to be more impatient and frustrated with my current situation. Overall, this has negatively affected my performance at school because I began to be more apathetic towards my performance. Not only this but the volatile job market brings my outlook on the future down due to the uncertainty of gaining a job. It made me more prone to drinking and smoking more than I previously would.

Senior White Male:

Luckily, I graduated early and did not have to deal with online school because I saw what my friends had to go through during that time, and it did not seem like a good time. My feelings on lockdown varied due to not having a responsibility that I had to commit to, but I think that it affected my social life in a negative way. During the quarantine I feel like I began to become more anxious in social situations. One of the most negative impacts quarantine has had on my life is a lack of social stimulation. It's caused me to have anxiety in social situations that I hadn't previously felt. I began to drink and smoke more during this time due to a lack of things to do and places to go.

Senior Latina Female:

The lack of social interaction and loss of routine negatively impacted me due to my feelings of loss and grieving of my pre-COVID-19 life. That led to me feeling depressed and anxious over my life changing in such a short amount of time. Not being able to hit certain milestones like graduation, birthdays, and family life also made my feelings of depression and anxiety worse. My ability to cope with the virus varied due to more of a reliance on substances while also trying to involve myself in communities, and work that I had not previously had time to involve myself with. I normally relied upon my loved ones much more but due to my inability to see them due

to my safety concerns I had to find new ways to cope. I was lucky to have a therapist that I have been seeing for a long time, so I was able to gain the psychological help that I needed during the quarantine. Unfortunately, the lack of physical spaces of learning led me to care less about schoolwork due to a lack of focus. Since my life was on hold, I began to feel more aggressive and impatient. I was more prone to lash out and seeing people not taking the quarantine seriously made these feelings worse. I just really could not wait for things to return to normal.