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Oral History #2: Anonymous senior male

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Give us some context about your physical and mental health and your home situation before quarantine, what was your starting point? Then trace the story of your mental health experience with covid and quarantine from the beginning of the pandemic to now. How has covid affected your physical and mental health since then?

“I went home for christmas break so that's where I was for the whole semester. Um... I was mostly pretty mentally happy before the quarantine. Initially I didn't really pay that much attention to it. I don't wanna... make it like I didn't care but I just didn't think it would be this big of a deal. Once I realized we weren't going to come back you know it kind of set in for me. Summer was pretty rough. I think just not being around my friends that long and also it being like your summer was wasted was extremely rough. I was definitely very depressed. Not in a dark way but mostly just really bored. I don't really get out that much, I don't exercise as much as I used to. I guess that's depression. [laughs]”

Then describe the story of your relationship with whittier as an institution since then in terms of mental health, have the administration, your professors, and the counseling center made things easier? Harder?

“I haven’t used any of the counseling services. I don’t really talk to anyone with the school about my mental health but... uh have they made things easier? I guess the professors have made things a lot easier, one of my professors is being super lenient right now. But when we were still taking 4 classes it was definitely harder to stay on top of shit.”

Describe your substance use before and during quarantine if you feel comfortable doing so.

“I definitely drink more than I used to. Before the quarantine I didn't drink very much at all. I got drunk with my friends ever once in a while but I was never one to like, drink it with dinner. But now, I drink like every night. I’m definitely not an alcoholic or anything, but it's definitely like a difference you notice.”

How has covid affected your ability to engage with classwork, classmates, and professors?

“It’s honestly made class a lot easier, I feel like maybe it makes it harder to... engage without being there with people. But it’s... I don’t know, it's definitely harder to pay attention when you have a computer right in front of you.”

This testimony from a male senior student who chose to remain anonymous supplements and reinforces Amanda’s testimony. The student also mentions loneliness and his mind is quickly drawn to lack of contact with his friends. He

does not mention noticeable mental illness other than some obvious depression.

Although he does not describe all of the same experiences as Amanda, he describes most of the same conditions. This suggests to me that many students experience similar mental health effects, but react in different ways depending on their previous mental health state.