

## Blog #1 – Engrossed in the Media

Whenever I see “breaking news” flash across the TV screen, the key message always seems to be “WE’RE ALL GOING TO DIE.”

I start paying attention when NPR reports on it.

But when NPR talks about something over, and over and over again, I become concerned.

At first, the virus was mentioned once or twice. When it came to the United States, it started building traction.

For some reason, I thought it wouldn’t come to Michigan. Or if it did, it wouldn’t impact that many people. Just another breaking news headline, not an NPR opening statement.

Michigan State University converted to online classes March 11, 2020.

My roommate panicked immediately. We spent the morning cleaning every surface of our apartment. I went to work that afternoon.

It echoed.

Everywhere.

The TV screen, the radio the murmurs at work. Everyone was talking about the virus. There was an uneasy, unsteady tension in the newsroom.

I sat down to record the news. Most of the stories were about the virus.

This many people have tested positive in the United States; This many people have died; This is what happened to China; This is what could happen to America.

I felt physically ill. I wanted to pass out, hysterically laugh and sob uncontrollably at the same time.

My head started to hurt; the walls started to close in; my throat was sore.

Did I have the coronavirus?

Was I dying?

Was the headline true? Were we all going to die?

It took four hours to do four newscasts. It usually takes half that.

I had to stop every few takes because I became too emotional to talk.

A quick text to my mom helped calm me down. She said everything was going to be all right, and we're going to figure this out together.

No one says that in news. They never say, "everything is going to be all right," because that's a promise a news organization can't make. We report the facts, and the facts are that this many people died.

After seven years in news, I thought I was immune. Shootings, stabbings, sexual assaults: It didn't really bother me. Yes, they're all horrific, and it's devastating that these things happen, but I never started crying at work because of a headline I read.

I called my mom on my walk home, and tears brimmed. She said she'd been listening to NPR all day and understood why I was upset. They wouldn't stop talking about it.

After a few deep breaths, I was able to form an audible, complete sentence.

We figured out a plan. She explained how to be cautious and next steps I should take.

Washing hands with soap and water for twenty seconds; Cleaning door handles; Not getting close to others.

I'm all right now. I'm at home with my family. We're healthy and safe, and I'm beyond grateful.

Updating the COVID-19 live blog on WKAR's website has become one of my main tasks. Now that I have a better grip on the situation, I'm appreciative of the press releases I receive from the governor, so I can stay informed.

I'm looking forward to the day when I see "breaking news" flash across the TV screen, and the key message says, "WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE OK."

## Blog #2 – Coping at Home

Ready, set, sprint and slide across the wood floors in fuzzy socks.

And time to walk around. Now time to turn around, and walk the other way.

I think I've walked every path in my neighborhood.

Hiking has become an even stronger passion of mine.

I'm actually grateful for homework.

I know, who would've thought? Grateful for homework?

Staying busy and staying sane during the COVID-19 quarantine has been a memorable experience that I hope to never relive.

Luckily, I'm home with my family, and we're all safe and healthy. I feel like I can't complain too much, because I haven't lost anyone close to me.

But it's hard.

When the weather's bad, I stay inside all day.

If I have a to-do list filled with assignments and work obligations, it becomes overwhelming, so I stay inside all day to finish everything.

That can be tough, but I've been trying to make a point of going outside each day.

I also try to connect with each family member every day.

My mom and I chat; my dad and I watch behind-the-scenes film videos; and my sister and I have started playing videogames together.

Each day, we compare quarantine outfits. My current go-to is an oversized T-shirt and joggers. My mom's has been the classic gray sweatshirt and gray sweatpants – or a "groutift." I think my sister has worn her boyfriend's sweatshirt every day since we were ordered to stay home.

She misses him immensely. Most days she Facetimes him, and he participates in family conversation.

A couple of my friends and I have started a thread of things we see on our walks that might make each other smile. My most recent find was a little turtle.

It's not the same as being in East Lansing and finishing my classes in person or seeing my friends every day.

We're making the best out of this situation. Now, it's time to get up and walk around my house again.

Ready, set, sprint and slide.