

Analytical Paper

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In the year 2020, I had a very stressful time coping with my new life. Before the COVID pandemic hit, I was on track with my life. I had been active in my community college making good grades and immersing myself in my college experience. I was part of my swim team and I competed in the state championships. I was in love with my sport, my education, and my life. After I finished my swim season, I got accepted into Sacramento States Deaf studies program and I was excited to meet new friends, move out and learn how to navigate the Deaf community. In March, when the pandemic hit, I had signed a lease that was close to my college. I was hopeful that in the fall classes would be open again and I would be able to continue my positive college experience. I was wrong. While I got assigned an amazing roommate, I felt isolated. Growing up in a close-knit family, being away and unable to visit them was difficult for me. I struggled with my mental health and was unable to talk about this taboo subject with my family. I watched as my once straight A's declined to failing every class. I was unable to keep up and felt dread as I had to tell my parents that I was failing college. My mom and dad had no clue about my failing grades, because they had always trusted me when it came to my education. I found myself falling out of love with school and everything around me. Online lectures and monotonous assignments, filming American Sign Language in my single room was the furthest thing I thought my college experience was going to be. I pictured my major as one of communicating with my peers and making new friends. Instead, I was learning a language by myself a struggling to understand. My relationship with my family felt further from me than ever. I grew up as the one everyone depended on, and now I felt that I was the disappointment.

I made the decision with my partner to make a life change. I was unable to get myself back to a mentally healthy state. I wanted to change my life and find something that would

rejuvenate my passions. I signed a lease in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I did not tell my family of this change because I was afraid of the judgment and repercussions of my decision. I planned my travel, and lined up a new job which was never done for me before. While my family had been supportive of me my whole life, I was given everything. My parents got me my first job and held my hand through every decision. They had access to my bank accounts, and they were in charge of my every schedule. This relationship with my parents as I got older grew more toxic as I was becoming my own self. I tried to become more of an individual, but my parents were helping my rent and threatened my living situation whenever I tried to create space. I felt trapped and unable to break from my controlling parents. When I eventually told them my plan a month before my move, my life flipped upside down. I had to drop out of Sac State at the end of my spring semester in order to work multiple jobs to pay my rent. I was removed from family group chats, and the locks on my parents' house were changed. I was unwelcome and I was fired from my job. My parents' reaction was bold and unexpected. I knew that they were going to be upset, but I was blindsided by my reaction. My relationship with my parents changed forever. They felt that I was untrustworthy, and unable to live on my own.

My partner's parents and my parents met for lunch to meet and talk about the move. I felt betrayed when my dad was talking about how irresponsible and unfit for my partner I was. I felt that I was unable to speak and could not defend myself. My parents had held my hand my whole life, they had made me feel that I was a newborn baby and unable to make any decisions for myself, and they were right. I had never done anything without their help. My partner's parents assured my parents that I was in good hands with their son, and that, having known me for many years, they knew that I would be okay, and I would be able to live on my own.

When I left, my parents did not talk to me for six months. My mental health was on a downward slope, and I did not feel that I was capable of living on my own. After six months, I felt confidence in both my romantic relationship and me. I never had to ask my parents for help while I was on my own and I regained my passion for education. I worked many little jobs while in Colorado and found a new passion in helping people. I moved back to Sacramento with my partner's family and got reaccepted into Sacramento State. I have since changed my major and I am paying for everything in my life on my own. My relationship with my parents has since improved, but I feel they still struggle with my individuality.

In the ABC-X model, I can use this tool to understand the crisis that happened and learn to cope with my experience. The "A" or the stressor event would be the COVID-19 pandemic and switch to online learning which in turn made me feel isolated. The other stressful events in my situation include moving to Colorado, my struggle with my mental health, and the deterioration of my parents and I's relationship. With all of these factors, my family structure was falling apart. I was part of a traditional family. As the depended-on sibling, moving away meant new roles for not only me, but for my siblings as well. This completely altered this dimension for everyone involved. Psychologically, I struggled with my mental health as well as identity conflict. During the pandemic, I was depressed and anxious. I was unable to cope using my typical strategies as my sport and was unsure how to create new ones. With this, I was also unable to communicate my struggles with my family due to the taboo of my family beliefs on mental health. Identity conflict was a range of emotions that I was unable to identify and manage. I craved validation and acceptance from my parents, but also wanted independence outside of their expectations. My declining grades did not make my psychological dimension better because it conflicted with something that I had never experienced with myself before this

time. My values include a strong desire for personal growth, but this clashed with my parents expectations of dependency and control. They believed that rushing me through school could get me to where I needed to be, but I was not making that decision on my own. While their mindset was in good faith; I was unable to complete their task because of my declining mental health. My decision to move to Colorado and find a new path was something I needed in order to feel grounded in myself again.

The expectations in my family culture were high and strict. I felt that my academic path was failing and the norms in my family were being changed. The taboo that surrounded my mental health were not positive to this stress either. Historically, my family had a pattern of close involvement and control over all of my decision. During the pandemic, this was only heightened because we were in isolation together for six months. This dynamic is what ultimately allowed me to make the decision to break the cycle despite the backlash I might have received from my parents. I was also wanting to change my economic dimension. My financial independence was important to me because I wanted to be able to pay for my own activities and vacations without my parents controlling every aspect of my life. The move to Colorado forced me to apply for jobs and interview in order to pay rent and other necessary things. I had to buy my own car, and secure a car payment. I had never had a credit card, so I learned how to refinance my car after raising my credit. While this was stressful financially for me while I was on my own I had my partners support and it ultimately contributed to my personal growth. The transition to adulthood is a critical development stage. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this development stage and made this transition difficult. I was unable to self-identify being in isolation with my family and was also unable to achieve true independence. Even when I moved out, my parents had expectations of family dinner and cooking for my family. I was not learning how to live without

them, so this developmental stage in my experience was in limbo for years. The community that I created for myself through this stressful time is what I have to credit for my coping. My partner was supportive of me and my decision, moving with me, and helped me cope with the growing pains of independence, which he had already experienced. His family, as well, allowed for a safe space to talk about my family and also became more of my family. I was able to talk to them and share how and why I was hurting. They truly treated me like family. In Colorado, I was forced to create my own community and support systems. In the town of Colorado Springs, there are many military families. While they have a different situation, lots of people related to missing their families and living on their own was difficult. We created a support system within the community because many of us had left our families back home for various reasons. This allowed me to feel connected and safe because many of us were going through the same growing pains.

The “B” in the ABC-X model defined as, family resources changed dramatically throughout this time. I began with supportive parents who had always helped with my decisions and finances. I also had a community of athletes that I felt comfortable with and had that resource to cope with my stress. My roommate was also a resource through COVID-19, and we found comfort in each other when we were both moving out for the first time. These resources, however, became less effective when my move to Colorado came about. My family was no longer supportive of me when I moved and the taboo surrounding mental health made me feel more isolated. The “C” in the model, family perception, played a crucial role in this crisis. My perception was I felt isolated, controlled and unsupported which turned into my mental health and academic performance declining. My parents on the other hand felt betrayed and they felt my decision to move to another state was irresponsible and they retaliated by cutting off all

support and communication. The “X” in the model depicts the crisis. There are many different crises in this situation such as dropping out of college, the deterioration of my relationship with my parents, and financial instability which forced me to become independent very quickly. Using the CMFS and ABC-X model, I am able to breakdown the situation and cope with it. Looking back on the situation, while it was stressful, it ultimately got me to where I am today and I was able to rebuild myself and my life without my parents help, and ultimately, I am able to have a relationship with them now that I know myself and I have a plan for success.

The Bronson story that I have chosen to relate to is Boxes, featuring Uma. Uma is an Indian woman who grew up in a traditional Indian household. She explains in her story the challenges she faces while gaining her own independence in America away from her home country of India. Her deep-rooted traditional morals have her struggling at some points in her life, but she ultimately gains her independence and is able to create a stable life for herself and her family. She demonstrates that her resilience to her want of independence and personal growth can be achievable despite the family adversity she faces. I chose to relate my story to this because I feel that Uma demonstrates what a strong-willed woman she is. Uma struggles financially and in her relationships. Her parents are wanting her to be married off, which is a traditional Indian practice, but she goes against their wishes and marries for love. She moves to the states and has children with her chosen husband. Her traditional values still run deep as she begins her new life as a home maker. Feeling unsatisfied, Uma decided to get her education and gain knowledge for herself. Her family and husband ultimately do not like this decision, but despite their opinion, she pushed through anyway and created an amazing life for herself and her children.

Uma and I have similar stories in that we both struggle with family dynamics in our relationships. I feel that we both want to make our families proud, but our families see our path as straightforward and concrete, while we see our path as free-flowing and exploratory. We both crave individuality and ultimately see that as a priority, while our families see themselves and the future generations as the priority. While both of these are important, I think that Uma and I can both relate to the fact that independence is also part of familial support. Setting a good example for future generations to see. Resilience is also a common theme for our stories. While my resilience lies in personal identity and Uma's in personal conflicts, we both share that coping with these challenges despite adversity from our families.

Umas story and my story do differ in many ways. Uma's family is more traditional than mine, while my story is a modern twist on hers. Her story pertains to more communal support and collective decision making while my story focuses more on my individuality and personal growth. We also both coped with our stress in different ways. For a short time, Uma lived with her husband and her mother which raised conflict in different ways. Uma still held on to her traditional values in this way and reached for unity and mutual support. In my story, I made the decision to move to Colorado and peruse my own personal growth outside of my parents' opinions.

Reflecting using this analytical paper, I am able to to understand my coping strategies and stressful experiences. I have gained insight into my family dynamics and how I can better cope and communicate with my family in these situations. Through this writing experience, the ABC-X model has taught me that there are many dimensions in that I am not taking into consideration my family. Their perception of the situation was a betrayal, and I did not think about my situation like that. The model allowed me to dissect the situation and see it as a whole rather than just my

own experiences. The pandemic, resources, perception, and coping strategies of the event allowed me to understand not only my own experiences, but also my family's. When going through this situation, I was driven into only thinking about myself rather than also thinking about how this would affect my three younger siblings. When facing a situation similar to this, I have learned to take all perceptions of the situation into consideration.

This paper also helped me to understand the importance of my external factors in crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone in the world. There were societal constrictions that were placed on the entire world that affected everyone and their ability to cope with stressful situations. My financial independence was important to me, and it significantly affected my family's stress levels and coping mechanisms. While I was going through emerging adulthood, my family members were also going through developmental stages that were new to us. It forced us to reshape our relationships and interactions while also adapting to new circumstances. The pandemic significantly challenged our family roles and interactions for months. Our entire community was affected, we all felt isolated and unable to communicate, which I should have taken into consideration as well. Our support system immediately became each other, which financially we were comfortable with, but emotionally did not know how to navigate.

My personal growth journey is something I reflected on as well. The adversity with my parents and community was something that I struggled with for months after moving back. Using the model, I took many different steps in trying to find my independence. I realize now that when facing adversity, my need for independence was driven by my dependency on my parents. My decision to move to Colorado was a significant step toward my personal growth and I sought out new opportunities. I explored an environment I had never explored and forced myself to learn new skills and build a life outside of the one my parents built for me. When moving back, I had

to continue to be independent outside of my family and coming back to Sacramento State, I have used the skills I learned in Colorado to create a supportive community for myself. Creating new boundaries with my parents was difficult, but through this experience I have learned to trust myself and my decision making because I am now confident in my ability to build a life for myself.

Using this model, I have also learned to respect differences, and how to emotionally regulate. When making contact with my parents after six months of living on my own, I stood strong in telling them all I had achieved. They seemed upset and did not want to accept the fact that I had succeeded in my journey. I had told them about the new love for working with people and how I planned on moving back to California to achieve that dream. They offered their insight and I listened to what they had to say. We planned for me to move back home to continue my studies. I learned from this experience because for the first time in my life, I felt like we were communicating effectively. I have been known to want to make impulsive decisions and then ultimately being brought back down to being talked at by my parents. I learned in my experience in Colorado that I was in charge of my own life, and while impulsiveness is not necessarily healthy, it is because I was unable to regulate my own emotions. When I contacted my parents, I was able to set realistic expectations for them. I had been talking to a counselor about a plan to change my major, and graduate within a year and a half. My parents seemed happy with my decision to continue my education and offered to pay. I stood strong and told them that I appreciate their support, but a roof over my head was all that I need. I have since been paying for my education and I am focused on finishing my degree to better myself and gain more independence. My ability to emotionally regulate and set boundaries has been helpful in my personal growth journey and I will continue to practice this. Using the model has helped me

break this down to see a situation for what it truly is instead of making impulsive decisions. Even though my parents have wanted nothing but the best for me, our differences in how that path looks is different. I have learned through this paper that our differences and perspectives are not black and white. My family does want what's best for me even if our paths are not parallel.

Self-reflection and identity exploration is the final takeaway in this paper. This stressful experience in my life prompted me to grow in myself. With my family dynamic changing, and completely altering my life in the move has ultimately made me the person I am today. I spent a lot of time in Colorado reflecting on my past and planning for my future. In my past, I never reflected on my past or my decisions because they were all made for me by my family. I was able to reflect on the relationships I had back in California. I was able to understand what happened in my academic journey that pushed me to the edge. In Colorado, I was able to make all of my own decisions which came with a lot of growing pains. I made mistakes and learned from them. Financially, I struggle to understand all that it took to live on my own. I look back now, and I am able to appreciate my experience regardless of the stress it caused me. I was able to learn new coping mechanisms and I was able to explore myself. My mental health was at the forefront of this exploration and now I am able to seek professional help as well as lean on my community that I built for myself. I am proud of the person I have become, and I am continuing to grow in my individuality. My family was important to me then and now. What I have learned from this experience is love is also not all or nothing. Setting boundaries with family and others can help someone grow. Seeking yourself in others is not how you find happiness. I found myself going to school, doing sports, and working a job I did not like was all for my family's approval and support. When I moved away from my family, I was able to truly understand what I wanted to do and how I could take steps to achieve it myself. I want to continue to grow and educate myself

and I want to help people as well. I have learned that my individuality is not only important for me, but also the people around me I am able to set an example to my younger sibling. An example of independence and resilience. I want to be someone they look up to for support as an open person and not someone they want to gain approval from. All in all, using the CMFS model and the ABC-X model, I am able to understand my situations in all the contexts and break down my stressors in a healthy way.

References

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