

My name is [REDACTED] and during 2020, my husband and I had a [REDACTED]yo daughter and a [REDACTED]yo son, self-employed business from home, and contracted to a business in a neighbouring town – across the border in [REDACTED]

Having each state make up the rules of restrictions was difficult to navigate being so close to the [REDACTED] border. Being in a rural area, we didn't really see any COVID-19 until the following year, but had been subject to the lockdown restrictions anyway.

Future pandemics would do better to be managed federally, and would do better to encourage people to keep active and eat healthy, to support a strong immune system response to any illness contracted. Keeping inside and apart from one another, while it looks good in theory, is detrimental to ones health and wellbeing. Healthy bodies have much to thank a healthy mind for. People should be allowed to have ownership of their health decisions, and keep that relationship between them and their doctor, a sacred and trusted one. Mandates, while not technically making vaccines compulsory, in reality DID make vaccines compulsory for many people forced to choose between unemployment or vaccine. This is not ok.

My mother had an adverse reaction to a vaccine, having it on a Thursday, and not waking up on Sunday morning. She remained in a coma until the Monday, and then was in hospital for most of the year. Trying to visit her during restrictions was a nightmare, and added to my declining mental health, and was not healthy or helpful to my mother's recovery as she is quite anxious about hospitals and doctors, to then be missing out on seeing her children and grandchildren was awful.

Daily updates on covid case numbers and deaths was not useful as we have never had a daily update on flu cases or deaths 'normally' so these numbers had no reference point, and just caused fear to flourish. People seemed to be quite panicked about contracting covid, believing it was a death sentence, and that they would have to go to a hospital immediately – this of course was not the case.

Mental health of myself and my family dramatically reduced as we were unable to visit with family or friends, and became hermit-like. I found it difficult to know what day of the week it was because I no longer had my compass and weekly reset of church on Sunday, to ground me, ready for the week. I felt lonely and lost without the usual social contact and interaction with my friends and family who I would normally see multiple times per week.

Our daughter began kindergarten, but was then 'kinder-at-home' for majority of the year, missing out on many learnings about community and building up relationships with her peers. She is still finding it difficult to get the hang of going to school without interruptions, because it is only this last year, 2023, that has been a normal school year without lockdowns (last year was almost normal, but we had [REDACTED] which interrupted schooling for the last part of the year).

The fact that the covid vaccines have neither prevented contracting the virus, nor passing on the virus, has negatively impacted people's trust in vaccines that do work. People I speak with are much more suspicious of health advice generally, and especially of vaccines. The covid response in mandating vaccines, has done a great disservice to community preventative health in this area.

I am sick of all things relating to covid, it makes me feel physically ill to think about what we have lived through and been forced to endure. Government should do better.