

Covid-19 Pandemic

At first, I was told not to worry about this virus. Doctors repeated that the younger population has nothing to fear because the only one's at risk were those over the age of 50 or those who had weak immune systems for various reasons. However, something changed and younger people began getting sick. It seemed as though things were going to get worse before they got better. As a Bay Area native, specifically living in San Mateo County, a shelter in place order was put out. I still remember that day as if it were yesterday. I was standing around with my coworkers at Family Dental and our boss started talking about filing for unemployment because they were going to close down. I began to panic knowing I lived paycheck to paycheck and unsure what unemployment meant or even how much I would get paid. Within an hour they let us go home and the first thing I did was pick up my sisters and go to Costco wholesale. My father is in his late 60s and my mother in her 50s which worried me. On top of them being on the older side, they both were not in the best health especially my mom who had just had a surgery a week or so before the shelter in place for a benign tumor in her knee. I remember how stressed and anxious I felt, everything happening all at once and at a fast pace. It may sound silly that my first thought was to go to Costco but all I could think about was getting water, food and anything else we would need. In all honesty, I did not know what shelter in place or quarantine truly meant. If we would be locked inside for weeks or months or if stores would close so I panicked just how everyone else did. I went to three grocery stores, filled up my car with gas and rushed home to check on my mother. A few weeks past with no work, no money with stress and boredom getting the best of me. My work reached out to ask who would like to work when we have emergency patients come in which was permissible my the state because it was categorized as essential to take patients out of pain so we can avoid them going to hospitals or doctors offices. Immediately I said yes. I was desperate, broke, and my mental health was at an all time low. I needed to get out of the house. However, after a few days of working wearing the same N95 mask and only 1 surgical mask over it, exposing myself at an all time high started scaring me. I was not just working but working inside people's mouths. I received my unemployment and as I would report the hours I worked, they removed a huge chunk out of my checks. It didn't make sense to me. Exposing myself at a high risk of getting coronavirus all while getting paid less or the same as my unemployment if I had just stayed home. I told my office manager how I felt and haven't returned since a couple weeks ago. This virus is getting much worse and my health as well as my family's health is important to me. When I return to work it will be because it is safe to do so and when the shelter in place is removed. Until then, I will just continue to learn new recipes, deep clean the house, taking up new challenges/ skills and making the best out of this situation.

Sincerely,
Ammunah Othman