

# 04-20-2020 Lindsey Bird, age 34 Ashland Rural Health Clinic Receptionist

## 1. When did you first hear about the Coronavirus?

I think it was around mid-January I started seeing articles about the World Health Organization and the concern over in China.

## 2. What was your reaction then?

I brushed it off as another “foreign outbreak.” Around that time, I was trying to advocate people to stop worrying about Covid and to get their flu shots. In February, certain news outlets and our own government spread a lot of misinformation and made it seem like it wasn’t as big of a deal when they knew better.

## 3. Do you have children in the home or extended family?

Thank goodness it’s just me and my fiancé.

## 4. When did the virus first become "real" to you? Or, when did it first affect your life?

It first became real and I knew the COVID-19 strain of the coronavirus was much more dangerous than the common flu when everything was literally cancelled overnight in early March. I don’t know how Americans aren’t understanding the serious nature of this pandemic when they even canceled sports.

## 5. What things changed right away? How did you feel when the schools closed?

It seemed like everything changed right around my birthday in March which was also Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Matt and I had 6<sup>th</sup> row tickets see some of our favorite Canadian comedians perform live in Kansas City and it was so disappointing but understandable when that was cancelled. I also had an appointment to get my hair dyed in brilliant rainbow colors which was also cancelled. Everything we had prepared for my birthday was cancelled, but I was still able to travel to Garden City and see my grandmother, my mom, and my aunts before things got bad in Kansas. That Friday was the last time I’ve traveled out of the county. When the schools closed, I was a little surprised, but I thought it was the right thing to do.

## 6. What things changed so slowly you weren't aware of it at the time?

Hair growth. Matt and I haven’t had a hair cut in weeks, but I haven’t really noticed how long his hair is getting or how bad my roots are showing. Everything else seems to be happening so fast and I’m just trying to remain well-informed and keep up.

## 7. What is your job/business situation right now?

I’m very fortunate and thankful I have a job right now. I work with some amazing people at the Hospital who are risking a lot to care for members of our community.

## 8. When do you think life will get back to normal and why at that time?

Honestly, I don’t think things will ever go back to the old “normal” “and I don’t think it should. This pandemic is showing how poorly America has provided for “essential workers” and how wealth is a priority over human lives to a lot of people. I think the reality is, we are also going to need to prepare for COVID-19 to come back seasonally as well, so it’s difficult to predict the future.

## 9. What things do you think will temporarily change in a "new normal" and what things do you think will change long term in the "new normal"?

If people can just all unify in efforts to stay home, eliminate social gatherings, and take coronavirus exposure a little more seriously, that can be considered a temporary new normal. The longer people don’t take necessary precautions, the longer this will play out. As far as long-term changes, I think people will discover the convenience of online meetings, visits, and continued education so I think that we will see more people and businesses utilizing digital means of



communication over meeting physically. I also hope that, after so many people have lost their jobs, America will finally start to understand how important affordable health insurance is without it being tied to employment.

**10. What is your reaction now?**

I've always been a homebody and a computer nerd, so I don't have to change my life too much right now in order to do my part to stop the spread of COVID-19. However, it's easy for me to stress out over irresponsible actions of others. I feel like I'm in a group project and I'm the only kid interested in doing the homework. One thing that keeps my spirits lifted is that I have reminded myself that the Renaissance came after the bubonic plague; perhaps if we use this time to continue efforts to uplift our essential workers and work toward progressive change, we, as a nation may come out of this better than we were when it all started.