

These two individuals will share their Covid-19 experience and what they learned during their two weeks of illness and care. They will explain their individual perspectives from the patient and from the caregiver.

I have already experienced having COVID-19. I was getting ready to fly and visit my family the next week, and then I was diagnosed with COVID-19, so really I was stuck at home. That was very emotional for me because I hadn't seen my family in 1 year. I ended up canceling my trip. Actually it hadn't been a full year, closer to 8 months. But, I'm very close with my nephew so that was a long time. Anyways, it was very emotional! So, I was sick for 2 weeks and really it felt personal to me in some areas.

Hmm...how did I get sick again? I had been working all night and day, and when I got home in the afternoon, I realized that I was feeling kind of funny- just not normal. I didn't really know why. One of our roommates left to go to see friends, and I was asking my other roommate if they smelled something too. They said they would burn some incense to get rid of the smell. But, at that time, I didn't realize that I couldn't smell anything.

So I just felt scared inside because I wasn't feeling well. That night my workplace let me know that the boss was sick. I got nervous thinking I needed to take a test. The next day I started letting people know that it's possible that I have COVID-19 and that I may have exposed the people I was around as well.

Another day went by and I was feeling worse, so I decided to take a test. That confirmed that I did have COVID-19. This test was an in-home test, but one of my bosses told me they wanted me to go to CVS for a formal test. So, I go to CVS and it's closed. I felt so frustrated, and I still wasn't feeling good. Really, I was feeling awful. So, I decided to go to urgent care. I sat there and waited around for an hour, until finally I was overwhelmed and left.

That's when I decided to contact my doctor. I already had an appointment set up with them, not for a COVID-19 test, but to make sure I was in good health for my travels. So, I contacted them to say I had taken a home test for COVID-19, and that it came back positive. So, I needed to come in for an official test, as proof for my job.

They understood and said that I should come in for the test, and that I would need to wear a mask. So, I went there, took the test, and it was confirmed that I did have COVID-19. I let my boss know as well.

I was trying to think of what we could do. My son was staying downstairs and I told him that he would have to get out of the basement. He could move upstairs to the guest room. I told him to get whatever he was going to need from downstairs, gather it up, and move it upstairs. I was feeling pretty anxious and just needed to calm down. So I decided to ask Ash, what do you need? She said she was doing okay.

Just by looking at her, I could see she was pale. We both were discussing and agreed that we would leave things on the stairs as a neutral space. I came up with a list of things that were needed and headed to the store. I went shopping and brought everything back home. We both put on gloves and a mask kept our distance from each other. In trying to communicate, we decided to video call each other, through FaceTime. Well actually, it was a Facebook Videocall.

I don't have an iPhone.

The next day Ash realized there were some other things that she needed. So, I gave up my time to make lists and went to the store three times. I noticed that Ash was sleeping so I made some food and gave it to her. But, she said she couldn't taste anything. She was complaining over and over about it. And I just was nodding along with it. I told her to just give it to me, and to keep going for 2 weeks. After that time I was still testing negative. I really had to follow the rules to stay safe. Wow, it was tough!

Every 2 or 3 days, I'll have different symptoms. First I was feeling very dizzy and had vertigo. I had a runny nose. I would drink a lot of tea. Then every 2 to 3 days different symptoms would show up.

First it was the headaches and dizziness, then runny nose, then loss of taste and smell, and then my stomach was bothering me.

And you were very tired!

Yes! You're right!

You were exhausted! You were sleeping a lot! I would bring you water and tea. I bought a teapot too, and many options of flavors of tea so it was always ready.

Jc never got sick. Mike never got sick. Her son never got sick. That made me feel very relieved that I didn't spread it to them.

Oh yes, that's funny! I was nearing my 14 days being done, and I decided to take another COVID-19 test. My bosses said that I needed to get back to work. At that time we had 4 managers, 2 that had already been exposed to COVID-19, and 2 that hadn't been exposed. They told me that I needed to go work with them that had already been exposed. But I didn't want to get sick again. I definitely felt more paranoid that time since COVID-19 was still so new to us. They told me that if I took a test and proved that I was negative, I have to come back to work. So I said fine, and took another test. It said that I was still positive! But, I was feeling better!

And then you discussed it with a nurse.

Yes! Right! So I went to my work and talked with one woman who was very nice and sweet. I can't remember her name, but she interpreted for me. I asked questions to the nurse at my group home where I worked. The nurse said that you can test COVID-19 positive for up to 3 months. I was shocked! But they said yes, it's true. I replied with how interesting that was, and asked if I could still spread COVID-19 if I was positive. The nurse said that the most spreading of COVID-19 is in the first 14 days. After that timeframe, you typically can't spread it anymore. But she said if symptoms show up again, you need to stay home again too, so that was something new to learn!

After 14 days I was finally able to go outside again. That next day I went back to work again. And wow was I still fatigued! Just exhausted! Really, I remember feeling fatigued like that for about a month before feeling my normal energy again.

No! For a long time, no. I couldn't taste anything!

For about 6 months?

No, for longer than that! Trying to think here.

Around 10 months? In the fall time?

Yes, around that! That's how long it took to go back to normal again. But, then I got COVID-19 again. But, it wasn't as severe! It was super short. I did still feel sick, but the first time I felt so horrible for 2 weeks. And the second time, it wasn't so bad. I could taste and smell fine. It's a little bit funny, do you remember? I couldn't taste or smell for about 10 months, and then I specifically remember being able to, and then I couldn't, and it would go back and forth.

But really when Ash was going through COVID-19, she would just lay there. I would go and check on her every half hour or hour to make sure she had suddenly gotten worse. I was just monitoring her. Some days I had no work, so it was lucky that I could stay and help her through this process.

I would text her, and she would text me back after she woke up. We would use Facebook video again to talk. I would ask her how she's feeling, and we would chat for a bit. Sometimes she would say she couldn't come upstairs so she would stand at the bottom of the stairs and I would stand at the top so we could talk. I would go make something, or go to the store, or whatever was needed.

The first few days, I was feeling really scared and worried about her and her health. I couldn't reach out and touch her, or try to encourage her to get better. It was so hard to just sit and watch her like that. I took care of the dogs for her too for those 2 weeks.

When she was finally improving and getting healthier, I was encouraging her to eat as much as she could, but to be careful. Some days it was good and other days it wasn't.

Really the bottom line came down to: your taste can be gone for a long time- it's on a range really. The same goes for your smell as well. Another important thing is that you get whatever medicines that you need, and that you take them as much as possible. It's also not a good idea to be alone that whole time. You need someone there for support and to provide the positives in the situation, giving them encouragement- it's really important! Something else to expect is that the person will be upset, angry, frustrated, having that feeling of 'why me?', whatever emotion. And you just need to ignore it. Allow that person to vent, and let it pass for now. After she was healthy again, I told her all of these situations and she was shocked! She said she didn't mean to do that! But I told her that it was okay and not to worry about it!

When I was sick, my head was so fuzzy. All I could think about was my pain, feeling tired, and thinking of all of the feelings inside of my body. So when she told me about those situations, I just said, "what? I really said that?" because I couldn't remember.

One thing that I am thankful for is that Jc was there to help and support me. All of my family lives on the East Coast, so I'm all alone here. The first day that I got sick with COVID-19, I was thinking about how I was going to get food, or drinks, or anything else that I needed? I didn't want to bother anyone. I just was going to keep to myself and figure out a way myself. But she

was ready to help me! She went to the store for me. She brought me many fruits and vegetables to help my body heal. So, I was very thankful for her helping me for those 2 weeks. Wow!

Really, looking back on her experience, it impacted me because I thought about taking care of myself. And if I got sick with COVID-19, I would be prepared. I realized that I would need someone for support too, and I could plan ahead. So, whatever happens, I knew I would be ready! Then I had all of that information already, because I saw her experience.

I was not prepared! She just took over the caretaker role and moved forward with me.

Thank you to them for being vulnerable and open to share an honest story about their experience. Hopefully, you learned some tips and have a better awareness of the Covid-19 impacts. As are reminder, the Covid-19 impacts can vary greatly, some are minimal and others more significant. It's important to monitor your health, get tested and take concerns seriously. If you need help, ask a trusted friend or family member. Additionally, if you are asked to help do what you can to support them. For more information check out covid.kisasl.com