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Impressions of lockdown: impact of everyday life, relationships, health, the community.

"From March 2020, ie when lockdown started, life completely changed and became slightly surreal.

At first it was difficult to remember that I was virtually incarcerated in my own home but realised that outside the home lurked an insidious, invisible stalker. It was imperative to keep up with what was happening throughout the world via the news and coronavirus updates: this assured me that the lockdown measures were definitely required and I had no difficulty obeying the rules - in fact I think they should have been imposed sooner.

" "I am a widow and have lived by myself for several years. I have always felt happy, safe and secure in my own home and have good, but not interfering neighbours.

There are two sets of neighbours who are particularly concerned for my welfare and I try to reciprocate.

However, I do like to be as independent as possible and luckily have the benefit of weekly supermarket grocery deliveries and am, fingers crossed, healthy enough to do all my own housework and gardening.

I enjoy chatting to neighbours and passers by when i'm out in the garden - but always at a distance.

When I go for my afternoon walks I take care to maintain the 2metre rule whenever possible and almost everybody else seems to be keeping to this. However, on more popular routes, cyclists and joggers tend to come a little too close for safety." "I do miss being able to visit or entertain my friends and relatives. I especially missed being able to visit my sister who is 90, lives alone and has very limited mobility. Although, I can now go and enjoy a picnic in the garden with her, unfortunately I can no longer take her out for drives, or lunch or supermarket shopping - all of which she looks forward to.

I have good friends who I regularly keep in touch with either by phone or WhatsApp: likewise I have found that WhatsApp has been a godsend for keeping in touch with my 4 young grandchildren who all live many miles away. It still does not replace being able to actually see and hug them all." "When lockdown first started I was full of good intentions eg learn another language, take up sewing and read classic books. However, I'm afraid none of these have happened although I am reading more but certainly not all classics!

I have been walking more and am fortunate that there are several attractive walks in my area. I hope I'll continue these walks as I definitely feel fitter and enjoy noticing the beauty of the natural world which so often used to pass me by.

Fortunately no-one close to me has died recently but I have missed several birthday events. Again, i feel lucky to be connected to most people via the internet and we try to make the best of things.

As I said previously, I particularly miss being able to visit friends and relatives

but, strangely, don't miss going shopping as I now order all food to be delivered and don't really need new clothes when there is nowhere to go." "Physically - I think my health has improved: I walk more and I still have 2 small glasses of red wine each evening.

Mentally - I think having all this time on my hands makes me more inclined to daydream and lose track of time.

It has been a time for contemplation and planning the future."

" Unfortunately, the UK acted late and poorly and is now reporting the highest death-toll in Europe. The UK originally adopted a 'herd immunity' strategy (unlike many other European countries, who went on lockdown fairly quickly after Italy was rampaged by the disease and were warning governments to act immediately) where there was a total disregard for elderly and vulnerable individuals. Our government prioritised the economy and the middle classes and continues to show a total disregard for working people. Britons spend their Thursday evenings clapping for the NHS when they should instead be holding their government accountable.

I'm lucky because I have a nice roof over my head and a steady income. Although the constant negativity and inability to go outside or see my loved ones is causing me stress and anxiety, I don't have to worry about putting food on the table. I don't have to go out onto the 'front lines' without protective equipment. I'm not getting spat at by strangers for doing my job.

I'm finding it difficult to focus, be positive, to stick with a solid routine - so I can't imagine what it's like when you're looking after children or having to work in an unsafe environment, or grieving - which is the case for many.

I hope that the current situation makes people reflect on the type of world we want to live in. People talk about 'going back to normal' but how normal were our lives previously? I think this situation has expedited a place where we were already headed. " "I live with my husband. We recently moved into a new house and were looking forward to having a cosy sanctuary to come back to after work. We've now spent so much time here that it feels we've been here forever, and it doesn't feel like a sanctuary as much as it would have because we're here all time. We've try to separate out working and living spaces - but working in the same place at the same time can prove to be difficult sometimes, especially with online meetings etc.

But for the most part, our home feels like a home. We managed to furnish and decorate just before lockdown and it's set up how we want it. We're lucky to have much more space (including a garden) than in our previously flat, so things worked out well timing-wise. But even with the extra space, we do feel rather caged in at times and are experiencing cabin fever more and more as the

weeks go by, especially when the weather is bad.

We live in an urban environment but there are a lot of trees in our neighbourhood and we live close to the canals. It's eerie sometimes with how quiet it is, but on a nice day there are people pottering about in their gardens and out walking their dogs.

We recently had a social distancing street party which was lovely, as everyone was sat in their front gardens and somebody who lives opposite was playing live music. There's a real sense of community and we've gotten involved with leaflet drops etc. to make sure people in need are being supported and looked after if they need shopping or medicine or just a phone call for company.

For the most part, people take social distancing seriously when you run into each other on walks or runs or when you're out shopping, but some people have a total disregard for others. I have witnessed some appalling behaviour at Tesco and have also been brushed past aggressively on the narrow canals.

We live at the end of a terrace so only have one neighbour and our gardens are separated by high brick walls so we feel very safe. Everyone on our street respects social distancing. " "My husband and I have always been very close and we spend the majority of our time together, even pre-lockdown. Our relationship hasn't changed much but working together in the same space has been difficult at times. We can distract each other a lot which can get annoying, which can then cause bickering, which is something we didn't really do before.

We also used to have a very good balance between us in terms of house work, but that has shifted more and more the longer we stay in lockdown. My husband is on a small team of people, the majority of whom have been furloughed, and is taking on a lot more work than usual. Because of this, I'm taking on the brunt of the housework (of which there seems to be way more, I guess because we're home all the time). I already did all the cooking before, but now also make lunch every day for us both so life chores have just become more time consuming. However, my husband is supportive in many other ways and I feel we do a good job looking after each other. Both of our stress and anxiety levels are up but we manage to bring each other back down to earth.

My family has been good at keeping in touch during lockdown, and we even play weekly pub quizzes on Sunday's, which is something we never did before. I just worry about them a lot more than I did before. My parents are both in their sixties so I worry for their health. My Granny lives alone and is really feeling isolated so I worry for her. I'm scared that I won't be able to see them all for a very long time as they live abroad. Usually, I would have already booked flights home for my summer visit in June, but that won't be happening now which just makes me sad.

I've mostly been keeping up with friends via WhatsApp or FaceTime. Again, I probably talk more to some of them now than I did before. Most of them live abroad or down South so we don't see each other much usually either - but it's been nice to feel supported and to have people to talk to when you're not out busy doing other things like you normally would be." "Wake up, freshen up, have breakfast while I watch an episode of something, do some stretching, get ready, do a block of work in the morning, prepare and have lunch and do chores, do a block of work in the afternoon, make and have dinner, do chores, then evening activities like watching shows or films/reading/games/writing/gardening/going for a walk, stretching, shower, bed.

I used to get up very early (5:30 / 6) to get to my office for 7:30. I've been struggling to get up early the longer lockdown goes on for. I used to leave the house every day, either to work from my office or the library, to go to a café. It's weird having nowhere to go. I haven't gotten properly 'ready' in a long time. I don't spend time putting on makeup or anything, which is weird. I feel I'm less productive during my working hours than before lockdown because of distractions, and I'm finding it more difficult to challenge negative thoughts, so I don't get as much done, which then makes me feel bad, which is a bit of a vicious cycle. I definitely stay off social media and don't watch the news as much as I did before lockdown because in the first month or so of lockdown that was really getting me down. It's been a lot better in the last 2/3 weeks as I think we've adjusted to the new situation and I finally got a desk and desk chair and having a comfortable place to work has made a huge difference rather than working from the settee/dining table/bed and then switching round every few hours.

I started knitting which has been nice. I'm spending a of time looking at screens so I wanted to do something that didn't involve technology. I also follow stretching videos twice a day now, which I didn't before, because I've noticed my back has started hurting a lot, probably because I'm sitting down so much and not doing as much exercise (I used to go swimming, which I can't do anymore). I also volunteer for a food bank on Friday's, which has been great. I think (or I hope) I will keep up all of these things once lockdown is over. " "I usually see myself as very confident and capable. I get on with things. But I am a worrier and can get quite anxious at times. I think the general state of the world has amplified my anxiety and I catch myself feeling and thinking very negatively, about things in general but also about myself. I think I've had quite a few crises in confidence over the last few months.

I've also realised that I'm quite an introverted person. My husband and I were already home bodies and as much as we enjoyed going out for dinner or the movies or whatever, we aren't missing it that much. Most of my close friends live far away, so I never really did much socialising on a frequent basis.

I also realise how much I depend on talking through my anxieties or concerns. I

used to talk to my office pals or meet a work friend for coffee and inevitably talk about work or ask for advice on something. I miss this a lot. As much as I can talk to my husband, it's not the same as talking to somebody who's in the same boat as you when it comes to work.

I've also been very conscious of my weight during lockdown. Weight is always something I've struggled with and have taken lockdown as an opportunity to be really conscious of eating healthily and I've managed to lose some weight which I'm really proud of because I tend to be an emotional eater. I knew I wouldn't be able to exercise as much (I absolutely hate running so that wasn't an option for me haha), so have focused on eating well and walking a lot.

I hope I manage to chill out a bit more and not worry so much about things. I get angry at how unjust things are and just really hope people take something away from this situation and move towards a more positive society.

I think I'll look back at lockdown and be a bit disappointed in myself but at the same time, this is an unprecedented situation and everyone has handled it differently and it is what it is at the end of the day. "

"In very basic terms, I personally feel that this whole experience has been a wake up call to all of us globally. We all have been living our lives on 'hamster wheels' & for some of us in excess, selfishly, and at a ridiculously fast pace. The C19 pandemic feels like overnight everything changed, our ability to be with our loved ones and families, and to live our lives freely and independently. Our lives became very small, lonely and isolating, and full of fear, and sadly far too many lost their lives, without their loved ones around them. The life I have lived, grown and experienced for the past 50 years, has gone, I appreciate that sounds extreme, but how we lived, socialised and interacted has to change, and it is up to us to create positive change.

The impending recession really does scare me, how it is going to affect families, communities and livelihoods is quite overwhelming. Not one sector is safe from the devastation of C19. & on top of that is how the recession will affect people's mental health. Education is another concern of mine, what is its future, and what will it look like.

I personally went through so many feelings of guilt as we started to begin lock down. I felt we were all in some way responsible for this pandemic, through our lack of respect for the world we live in. I would also say that with tragedy and disaster brings hope and kindness, and I do believe I/we will never forget all those who have lost their lives. But we have also shown how much we can support and love one another, not just in our communities/country, but globally.

I feel that I have been on an emotional roller coaster for the past 9+ weeks, at the beginning, some days I could not stop crying, I struggled with concentration, and difficulty sleeping. I have always been a very creative individual, but since lock down, I have struggled with 'creative paralysis' and have been unable to focus on any of my creative outlets, and that included listening to music and reading. With each week, I have got stronger, and practice daily baby steps. I work hard at building routine into each day, and that includes dressing up when I am working from home, and dressing down in the evenings. Gardening, walking, photography, yoga and cooking have really helped me over the past weeks. Photography is my way of recording the beauty of C19 lock down, capturing nature outside.

With regards to daily communication/technology. I have been amazed how companies have adapted to working digitally. Within 24 hours, I was fully set-up and working from home. This transition has not made me feel cut off from my employer/service/team but fully supported.

My family is scattered around the country, so we are not in each others lives on a daily basis. But C19 has kept us all close, and we are in regular contact. My biggest worry is for my parents, not being able to see them is hard, and as they are in their 80s, health is a worry.

The thought of stepping back into what was my old world where I would commute to the city on a daily basis, and love the energy and buzz that a city provided, at the moment makes me feel anxious. I cannot imagine using heavily congested public transport. For now, I have put those worries into a box for another day.

The one thing I know, and that I want to take from this whole experience, is that I do not want to revert back to the person that I was previously ie. I want to shed all of my less positive qualities, and to live the remainder of my life simply, at a slower pace, and to take the time to appreciate what I have, rather than trying to feel the need to achieve more." I live with my partner, and very lucky to have a spacious home, with a garden. For us, our home has been our sanctuary, and where we both feel safe. We have good and very kind neighbours, and we all look out for each other. Our neighbourhood has a strong community spirit, and that is demonstrated through how we are supporting each other, especially the elderly/vulnerable through daily acts of kindness. Our neighbourhood is very green, we have a traditional high street, large parks, and heritage trail walks, all of which have helped with providing us with daily exercise. Where we live makes me feel peaceful, happy and content. We also have two local farms, so we can shop locally, support local businesses, and eat healthily. With regards to social distancing, all of our community is very respectful, and we feel very safe when we do go outside. I have loved all of the creativity around us as well ie. window art; VE celebrations, clap for carers/ keyworkers Thursdays. "I have lived with my partner for 30 years, and we have

a very strong and loving relationship, so I feel supported and loved. Being in each others company all day, every day has felt good. Our emotions and how we have been feeling have changed on a daily basis, but like the saying goes...we know each other better than we know ourselves, and that has helped keep us both calm and supported.

I feel that I/we are totally committed to each other, but my fear is the lack of control over C19. It is an invisible enemy, and as much as we care, love and support each other, I am scared that I cannot fully protect my loved one.

My relationships with my wider family and friends, has stayed strong, throughout, we are regularly in contact, and looking out for one another. I have always been a letter writer, so that is something that i continue to do during lockdown." "Routine and structure has been really important to me during lockdown. A typical day starts with yoga, meditation and prayers. Shower and get dressed (I have avoided pj's throughout the day), and make the effort to dress up. A walk, followed by breakfast. Mid-week, I would work for 7 hrs, get changed, yoga, and cook. Play music and relax in the evenings. We have both worked hard to try and keep our routines similar to what we are both familiar with. I have always had creative interests, so have had more time to explore them. Painting (acrylics and water colours) is something I am teaching myself at the moment.

My partner and I have both turned 50 during lockdown, not how we had planned to celebrate our birthdays, but very special, and this was because of friends and family and how they all found ways to be a part of the celebrations from afar. At the moment, I cannot say that I have any regrets or FOMO moments. I have a sense of acceptance of our current situation, and health and wellbeing is the most important thing to me." The person I normally see myself as, and how I am during lockdown hasn't changed, I am optimistic, determined, and someone who wants to help others. C19 has made me fearful of the future and anxious, but I will not be beaten by these feelings. I wanted to remember myself as courageous and to turn fearful into fearless. I have two chronic health conditions, which I live with and manage on a day to day basis. I have always had the attitude that I will not be beaten by my illnesses, so balance medication with holistic practices. How I am in contact with my care teams has changed, but the support I get has not been affected.

"The pandemic is frightening and watching the death tolls rising has been heart breaking. It's easy to feel adrift and powerless as the tragedy unfolds. The lockdown came too late in my opinion, and this Brexit Cabinet have floundered in dogma and incompetence. Hopefully when it's over, there'll be a proper inquiry of what went so wrong and the truth will all come out. But there's been good too - I thought, back in the Before Times, we were a

divided country full of hate and fury, so seeing communities pulling together, especially in those panicked first few weeks, reaching out to support the most vulnerable and helping each other has been such a relief.

The daily walk is an opportunity to explore the back streets and hidden corners of our town and to smile at strangers and say ""strange times"" to each other. I run a holiday let which closed immediately and my husband is in IT so he has been kept on part time (on a third of his wage). Both our children have come back from University and are struggling to finish their courses online, especially my daughter who is in her final year. " "I feel so very lucky we live in this nice house with our garden and views. We have a saying (when any of us starts griping about our lockdown or what we miss) ""At least we don't live in a tiny flat with a toddler and no garden"" It sounds trite, but it is shorthand for think of others, count your blessings, it's not so bad. We haven't lived here long and I do miss the village life we had for 15 years, we don't know anyone round here. I'm at risk so don't go out much, the odd walk or grocery shop. I find shopping stressful and scary so the kids are doing most of it. By the looks on people's faces in the shops, I don't think I'm alone in how I feel.

Our house has never been so clean or organised! But as lockdown goes on it's getting harder to motivate ourselves to keep it that way.

The glorious weather has been surreal too." "We are a close family that gets on well and that's been such a blessing too. We have put on theme days and dressed up and talked honestly about our worries and given each other space. One day we had a full Christmas Day with tree, presents, decorations and a turkey dinner, because time is relative now. There are squabbles of course, but more laughter than tears.

It's been hard on my extended family - we are long distance carers for several relatives with physical and mental disabilities and those relatives have suffered ten-fold despite us fighting hard for them. This has dominated our whole lockdown experience.

" "I try to have a routine, get up early and do a couple of hours on laptop (news, messages to family and friends, Facebook, Youtube, Spotify), have breakfast then do some housework. Lunch then outside in garden or sat by window looking out if it's raining. Afternoon varies depending what family are doing, so maybe a walk or reading a book, or doing some craft art. Then I always spend a good couple of hours tending my house plants, making tea, washing up, then telly or Netflix or Iplayer or dvd. Bed nice and early. I've been ill with my wonky immune system since last October so am a long timer when it comes to staying in and keeping occupied.

We made a silly dance routine video for my sister's birthday.

I lost a friend last week and I can't travel down for her funeral.

I miss all my friends and family.

I'm struggling to write about this because the tears are welling up." I keep a brave face on for my family. Sometimes I need to be on my own to sift through my sad feelings and thoughts. I can't always share how I feel. I need to be positive to get us all through this.

Relaxed - I'm pleased the world has paused to think about how mad busy it had become, review it's priorities. I hope the world will be a better place as we emerge from lockdown. I live with my husband and two children in a leafy suburb. My street has quite a close community. It has been rewarding to feel closer to neighbours during lockdown. When I go out it feels like a dream - the airport has stopped the cars have stopped. Failure sitting in the sun in front gardens because neighbours are chatting. The ships are stressful - it hard to observe social distancing. I worry for my 79 year old mother who lives alone and is lonely. I feel closer to my family and children. We had little time together before lockdown what with work and school - often there was no energy left at the end of long days. We got the worst of each other. Our relationships have become more loving. I am lucky that my husband had been essentially furloughed and is able to take on most of the domestic duties while I work. I'm relieved not to feel a pressure to be sociable - I don't have to squeeze in social activities around work and family anymore. I have kept in touch with a small group of good friends by text, zoom etc. I am much less stressed my mental health has improved immensely. I am able to cook good food and tide my bike safely each day. "I have taken up cycling again and cycle each morning. I've started a healthy eating plan and lost some weight. I hope to continue these activities and cycle to work in the future. My son has had his birthday in lockdown - I felt sad not to host a party for him but his two best mates called over with gifts and said hello across the front garden. He met friends on his Xbox - he didn't seem bothered. I'm sad to miss weekends away camping and waking - I miss the sea. But being able to hear birds, be aware of the seasons, feel calm and unhurried are much more pleasurable than the trips we would usually have taken. " I realise I've been quite ill - anxious depressed over the past year despite appearing from the outside as someone who 'has it all' - successful job, house, great kids - I was exhausted. I'm so much happier and more relaxed since lockdown - my panic Attacks have stopped - I'm sleeping better. I want to remember lockdown as a time when I re-found myself, reestablished my values, remembered what's important to me rather than constantly striving for material security as I had before.

I'm frustrated and angry at the government's response above anything else. I find myself arguing out loud with the TV. Other than that, I feel quite lucky and privileged because I have a garden, books, games and takeaways I can afford. I don't have to choose between risking my life or having unpaid leave. I don't trust the government and I don't think we will ever know how much they have messed up, since they all cover each other and the media is of no help. "I live with my family: husband and two young kids. To be honest, it's been a

welcomed change. I have been able to slow down, no rushing to drop off at school, no rushing back before school closes, no running or getting taxis to all the activities that my kids used to do. We are enjoying time together, I really think I got to calm down and enjoy my kids a lot more, and so do they.

We live in a suburban area. The area is leafy with parks and well looked after. The nearest park is quite big, with a pond, tennis courts, bowling green, skateboarding area, a community hub, a playground and big green spaces. Our primary school is next to it. It's a great school, we moved to the area so we could be in the catchment area. We could walk (20min) but I don't see any reason to cross the big roundabouts. There are another two parks within walking distance. The train station is a 15-minute walk away, I haven't tried the new tram line yet because it was due to open during lockdown but it will be great to be so well connected. The shops, supermarkets and library are next to it and in the last year there have been numerous restaurants and bars opening. I used to visit the shops almost daily before lockdown, particularly to get myself a Costa! The Costa is probably the only thing I'm missing at the moment. My husband keeps joking it's quite middle class.

My neighbours are alright but I'm going to admit I haven't seen or spoken to any since lockdown. I've seen some pass by through the window. I feel safe because we have kept the distance and stayed indoors. I'm outgoing but I've come to realise I'm not a social butterfly and I like my network small."

"My relationships have probably improved. I was so stressed before all this that I kept snapping occasionally. I've taken the attitude of ""something has to give and it won't be my mental health"", so I'm very chilled at the moment. Somehow my husband has tuned in as well and that has helped. He spent the first few weeks cleaning and doing the gardening, I spent them finding groceries and playing computer games. I needed a break, I had a full week treated as a holiday. Then I started to pick up work and I feel quite renewed. My husband has up and downs, he struggles to adapt quickly, but we have kept a very respectful approach and left each other to deal with this as we needed. Part of me is surprised that we moulded to each other and the situation so quickly.

My relationship with the kids has definitely improved. I love them to bits but due to stress and tiredness, they often get the ""I cannot pay attention now"" way too often. Everything was ""tell me later"" or ""don't you see I'm doing something"", followed by so much guilt. Now I am working every day and spilling over the evenings and weekends... But I have more time with them. I find myself talking slowly and kindly, I find myself sitting with them for ten minutes instead of just saying I'm busy, asking them about their day or their dreams or what went well during the day. The kids are more affectionate, they keep saying they love us and constantly give us hugs. It's just amazing, I feel so full of joy. To be fair, they are playing all day and we put no pressure on anything, but even so, I think they are definitely happy. My daughter misses

school but I think she has come to terms with it, my son cannot care less about anything. As long as he had food and games, he cares for little else and giggles all the time. I really feel more full of love and also that my kids are happier. I do realize this is not how other people feel or at least how they say they feel in social media, there are families struggling and those still having to go to work don't have this luxury of pottering around. " "Oh my. My schedule is ""none"". I tried, for a week, to get up at 7:30, set kids homework, keep times for meals... It just wasn't working for me. I was doing most of the house chores, all homeschooling, cooking, my own work... I was so frustrated and angry! My husband had his own thing to worry about and sort but I felt that he was protecting his work space / time, whilst I was trying to juggle everything. So I decided to protect my own work space and time. So we both did. And nothing was getting done. I don't think we lasted a week before we decided to drop everything but the urgent stuff. Now he wakes up the kids at 8am, gives them breakfast and lust Cbeebies Bitesize learning for them. I get up between 9:30-10. I have a shower and a coffee and sit down with the laptop to do some work. He makes lunch for him and the kids, I rarely eat any or grab something quick. The kids tidy up or help with the cleaning, then they have screens. I usually organise a face chat for my daughter with one of her friends and they play virtually a couple of hours. They are LOUD. But it's great to hear them laugh and giggle in her bedroom. My son is probably playing Minecraft or something at the time. If I've gone to bed insanely late, I have a nap. My husband makes snacks for the kids half of the time. He has pretty much no work or very little, so I'm able to lock myself in the bedroom to do work or read. I make tea and tidy up whatever is left. We have tea, the kids get ready to bed and brush their teeth etc. My husband does bedtime and reads them a book whilst I reply some emails. We watch TV or play a computer game, then he goes to bed by 11:30 and I stay up a couple of hours, or three, or four... Usually doing work but sometimes just wasting time in Facebook or Google News. I go to be knackered and start all over next day. Occasionally, depending on the day, they go outside for a walk or Pokémon Go, or one of the kids has their dance lesson online and then I set that up. We get groceries every couple of days because it's impossible to get a bloody slot at the big supermarkets, so we are using the local co-op deliveries to get basic stuff, but you order up to 20 items and receive 10, so it's a bit of a gamble. I wash the shopping and put it away. I think that's all we've done so far! The first week we attempted rainbow drawing and homeschooling. All that has been dropped, it was too much stress and if there's something we don't need more of, is that. We'll catch up when I take holidays in August. They are doing a lot of reading, which is the only thing the school stressed they should do.

We had my son's 5th birthday during lockdown. I was so sad and worried at first. He had a birthday party last year but he had just started in that school and didn't know many kids in the area, we invited the whole class but he was quite shy. But this year it was different, he really started to understand what a birthday party was and kept talking about where the wanted it, who was going

to go, etc. He was really looking forward to it and I was gutted he couldn't have any. We baked a cake and I prepared a present-hunt through the house. The birthday card had the location of the first present, and each present had a note with a clue for the location of the next. He absolutely loved it! He didn't know if opening the presents or the little notes, the game took center stage and he was so excited up and down the house finding presents! It was great, we all loved it. The grandparents got him a little bouncy castle for the garden and we got him (them, really) a tablet so they could do the school work (ha! Never even tried after that!). We restrict it a bit (ok, they are ok it far more than the regulations and far more than other people admit), but to be honest, if any situation would deserve free play, relaxing of rules and general chilling out, it's this one. When things return to some level of normal, the new routines will take over, so screens will be more limited." "I was making an effort to be more fit before lockdown. I had started to do exercise and eat healthy... Well, that's that! You could confuse me for a cushion at the moment, with all the time I spent on a sofa or a bed. Mostly with my laptop, but still.

I have a chronic long term condition (IBD, Ulcerative Colitis) but luckily I'm keeping it under control with medication and a wellbeing plan. People with this condition have been told to shield and are in the vulnerable group, but only if they are on certain medication. I was put on that but I decided to attempt a more DIY route that is being researched in some universities, basically managing acute stress, low carb diets, sleep and very high count probiotics (the ones that need to be in the fridge). Thank the goddesses for that, I have recovered and gone into remission, and I have been without medication for a few weeks, no issue. So that is why it's so important for me to reduce stress and don't try to juggle everything. I was very ill a couple of years ago because of the flares triggered by stress, to the point that the doctors said I might had to have surgery to remove part of the bowels. It was horrible, the worst I've ever been and I hid it from everyone, colleagues, family, managers, friends... I was scared of being a failure and I wanted to build my CV to get a full time job, so I ended up working in 4-5 different part time jobs and I think I wasn't able to keep up. So yes, I think it's changed my attitude to work stress, I know I can go back to that very easily, it crept up within 2-3 months and all of a sudden I was in a serious condition. With the changes I made (as above) I went from a serious diagnosis to full remission and healed bowels in 6 months. My specialist was in shock at the colonoscopy, apparently it's quite rare but I knew I had a chance to control it if I could control my stress. So happy I did! Anyway, all this drifting to say that stress-management is very important to me. I am taking the days as they come. I work whenever I have the energy and around my kids. It does mean that I don't have such thing as a working day or working hour. I work weekends and evenings as well, but I am keeping a healthier balance, I work when I want, sleep when I need to. It's really helping me I went into lockdown with some mild symptoms for my IBD and I have none at the moment."

I feel that I am in an incredibly privileged position, I have space to work and exercise and be outdoors, and a supportive family and friends network for which I am entirely grateful. I completely recognise this is not the case for the vast majority of people and am very concerned about what I can do to help others. It is a dystopian world we are currently living in and I can't help but feel the absolute imperative for this to be a huge shake up of the system that continually oppresses the most vulnerable. I currently live with my dad and brother, but will be moving out in the next few weeks to a small flat with two friends. My home feels like a little nest that I have been hibernating in, my world has shrunk to the size of this home and in turn all of my preoccupations and future thinking have also been confined to this home-world! For example, whether the garden is tended to, how clean the table is, whether my cats and family are fed! I feel more safe now than I ever have in this community which previously - for various reasons - felt dangerous. I am more connected with my neighbours, we have shared food and offers of help and hello's across the garden fence. The back garden looks out onto a lovely little wood which is a great source of joy in the morning listening to the birds. My relationships have both experienced greater pressure and greater connectivity. Spending so much time together has certainly brought out bad and good sides in all of us, but the protectiveness I feel for my family has increased, the need to nourish and support them has gotten greater - I suppose an extension of the need to protect against the virus itself! On a wider scale I feel somewhat helpless that I cannot extend this concern (physically) to friends I know are in distress, to previous clients I supported as a carer, to another brother with a baby due, grandparents and friends worldwide. Working most of the time - behind my laptop, but punctuated with lots of yoga, coffees and reading, fussing over the veggies and plants and my cats! oh and also probably one too many drinks with family and the occasional video calls with friends! I normally see myself very much as a vehicle to try and do good in the world - I have derealization syndrome and to some extent that feels externalized as many of us share this sense of a 'surreal' world right now. I used to worry a lot about my health, pathologising lots of little idiosyncrasies and I suppose this external threat has taken a bit away from my internal threats! I am just focused on making sure I'm able to support my family and friends as much as I can throughout this.

"The pandemic has been a complete shock to everyone - the word we all hear and use is 'unprecedented' ! The situation has unfurled rapidly under enormous press and media publicity. At times I have felt anxious about how it will affect us all and my family and friends in particular. I understand the reasons for the lockdown and support the need for us to remain, as far as possible, in isolation. Routines are very different now. New routines have been established but are more flexible than those before lockdown (which I like). I home-school our son now completing his Maths and English work in the

mornings and play in the garden in the afternoons.

We have regular zoom meetings with our friend and families - interesting how much lack of body language interferes with our talks. It's much harder to keep conversation going on a virtual platform so we've adapted by playing games such as playing quizzes and bingo online to give us a focus. We've even tried to share a virtual curry!" "I live with my husband and young son. My home feels like a safe haven. We have spent much time in the garden planting seeds (we have never done this before) creating a vegetable/garden area for my son to nurture. The nurturing/growing side has seemed really important - to be doing something positive and good. I'm very aware of the lost educational time for my son and so think this pervades a lot of my thinking - I plan most activities with some element of learning in them for him. We've even carried out repairs and painted the shed and fence alongside our - explaining the importance of life skills when he has complained!!

My community feels safe, with everyone taking care to distance themselves and stay safe. Spring is here and so the trees that line our streets have been in full bloom and have connected us to nature and the seasons marking the passage of time. It's nice to feel this normal constant is still here. We are fortunate that we have meadows and wood near our home and we take daily walks as a family together which is lovely(something we never had time for before). We have found lots of great surprises such as a river beach, where we can throw stones as far as we can - we feel to a large extent like children exploring our neighbourhood with new eyes no longer limited by engulfing work schedules! We now know so much more about the area/environment in which we live - the lockdown has been very freeing in that sense!

However the strangeness has been the lockdown shuffle we have all performed like synchronised swimmers as we pin ourselves to walls or step behind trees to let others pass with a nod and exchange of glances as thanks and recognition- a shared understanding. It does however make me feel paranoid that everyone has the virus and I must shield my son ferociously (even though he's not in the high risk group) being a mum seems even more primal now.

Our road has been more community minded. We have spoken to new people and looked after those we felt most at risk. We have all adopted our 86 year old neighbour and regularly pop round to stand on her drive and talk to her and we take her food when we have over-ordered or when we have made something at home we can share. We have been cooking more as a family and trying new recipes, my husband has, in particular, enjoyed this. WE have watched Jamie Oliver's cooking show during the lockdown which has inspired us so much that we ordered one of his pans to help us be more chef like! " "My husband has moved into provider/hunter gatherer role taking on all of the shopping duties. He is trying to look after us and this seems the way he has identified as doing this best. He is also trying to shield me as much as possible as I have some respiratory problems. he sprays everything that comes into the house so my abiding memory will be the constant smell of bleach in the kitchen and on his hands. We now have a permanent bowl of warm water filled with bleach in the kitchen- even the post gets wiped!

I feel very looked after and cared for. He has also been doing all sorts of jobs around the house (those that have needed doing for the last 5 years!) which I think is giving him a sense of pride that he is doing what he can for his family! Likewise I have been painting the shed, fence and decking using the time to do big jobs we wouldn't normally have time too.

Our relationships seem stronger as we are both working to care for our son - he is the focus of our endeavour - family has become the number one focus.

Myself and my husband seem to have fewer big arguments although I do get irritated with his dreadful eating habits which seem more pronounced at the moment!!!. I do however feel proud of how he is looking after us and also very lucky to have such a good home with a garden. " "We don't have to get up at the crack of dawn (although my husband often does - to get some work done before myself and my son awake). I teach my son in the morning, we make lunch together and eat as a family (very nice!). At the end of lunch my son always gets down from the table to go and play with his toys whilst my husband and I have a coffee and chat - we have never had time to do this before! We talk about our worries with the coronavirus, our family's and our future a lot. We celebrated Mother's Day, Easter, my Mum's birthday and my husband's 50th birthday and our dear friend's 50th birthday. It was very frustrating not to be able to celebrate my friend's birthday as he had hired a big venue and band - and even more annoying they won't refund him. We feel his annoyance!

I did secretly like my husband's muted birthday- as a family we went for a long walk by the river on a gloriously sunny day, just the three of us, which felt really great. It was like we had stripped everything back to what really mattered to celebrate - just the three of us! NO big party! Now I feel guilty for writing that as it makes me sound like our other family wasn't as important- they definitely are but they just feel very distant and unreachable now despite our Zoom chats.

I do really miss going out to hear and dance to live music, see theatre shows and have meals at our local restaurants. I miss seeing my friends and family. Most of all I miss my freedom to jump in my car and head off wherever I feel! I have been drooling over travel shows on India, which whilst although an area I wasn't planning on going to, now I feel a sense of urgency to get out there. I worry about us having to cope with restrictions for a long time which may curtail any travel plans. I do however also have another side of me that doesn't want to go anywhere, doesn't want to leave this bubble we are in- it feels like I'm living in a suspended reality, a dream of sorts that I'm not yet quite ready to leave. I love having this time just to be, not rushing for work or the next appointment- something to bear in mind later.

We will definitely try and keep up with an evening walk together as a family once lockdown lifts- it has been so rewarding.)" "I feel quite healthy, in fact my husband and I both feel that as we are not eating out as much, having no takeaways and trying to cook healthier food for ourselves now we have the time. I have to confess to drinking more wine but I do generally feel calmer. My asthmatic cough has almost disappeared (it only re-appears when I'm on phone calls). I've no longer needed to take two different tablets I was taking regularly

before lockdown.

We feel healthier as a family as a result of our walks, not just physically but mentally too- more resilient. "

"Lockdown is expressed in wholly negative terms such as the truly horrendous number of people who have died in the UK and across the world, the effect isolation and fear is having on the mental health of the population, the significant increases in reports of domestic violence and the expected, the disproportionate impact on BAME communities and the abuse of political power. Whilst it is very important to report these things, there is little if any portrayal of the positive effects of Coronavirus and lockdown and generally for me lockdown has been a positive experience which coincided with the birth of my daughter. It has given me the luxury of an extended paternity leave and once this was over has enabled me to contribute much more to parenting and looking after our daughter than ever would be the case. It has also allowed us to form our family unit without interference.

The virus reached the UK around Feb, nearly two months after it was first reported in China . I distinctly remember watching the news with my partner at the reports of lock downs, soaring infection and deaths in Italy and Spain saying how they had ""really screwed it up"" . At the time the UK had small isolated numbers, the NHS were tracking the contacts of those who were presenting symptoms and all could be traced back to having been to an infected country - or being in contact with someone who hadn't. I felt reassured and I remember thinking at the time the government were handling it well. This was reinforced by articles I read about how the UK was one of the best prepared countries in the world for a pandemic. How very wrong I was and I regularly wince at the memory of thinking this. Then it was reported for the first time that an elderly man in Surrey contracted the virus and hadn't had contact with a known carrier. I started to seriously worry for the first time thinking no one including my family was safe. This felt like the first ripples of fear and of the tsunami that was about to hit us. 3 months later and the UK has one of the highest death rates in the world and more deaths than Italy or Spain, assuming deaths are counted in the same way

The UK went into full lock down on the evening of Friday 20th March. I remember sitting on the sofa next to my partner watching the PM, Boris Johnson make an address to the nation. It was strange watching him without his usual jokes and jocular nature which has carried the idiot to power. I remember thinking this is one of those moments you will remember forever. I think I felt some kind of relief as the previous weeks had been like a game of cat and mouse between the government and the population tightening the social distancing regulations.

My partner gave birth to our daughter a few days after lock down was announced and we all stayed in hospital for several days. It felt like we were cut off from the world, from the relentless media onslaught of limited facts and much speculation. But it was surreal - we were cut off but in a potential epicentre of infection. I walked the endless corridors of the hospital in search of decent coffee for my partner, squashing myself against the walls like a cat to ensure maximum social distance as most people didn't bother. Speaking to nurses there was almost a fatalistic attitude that they were going to get it anyway. PPE was just starting to become a major issue... I remember leaving the hospital that night and driving through utterly deserted streets to find a super market, feeling guilty that I was out and slightly fearful I would be stopped by the police.

" "We live in a prosperous and leafy part of Manchester close to the main high street which is normally busy, and particularly busy on a Saturday. Our house has a high wall at the front and an enclosed garden at the back so it has always felt like a safe sanctuary, and felt even more so during lock down. Our neighbors are mostly elderly and whilst friendly often seem to have too much time on their hands resulting in necessary dramas. Typical of the type of community, our street has celebrated the NHS going outside every Thursday and clapping and banging pots which I felt uncomfortable about doing. I almost feel a pressure to do this.

We brought our daughter home from hospital 10 days into full lock-down. On the day we left hospital our cat sitter informed us her family were asymptomatic which was the first time I really panicked. I was already worried about making sure everything was in place for when we got home. I then had to frantically contact neighbors to get them to buy bleach and gloves so I could bleach down all key services. Not a good start to a new life - and it really dawned on me again how serious Covid was.

For most of lock down the immediate area has been very quiet, characterized by orderly queuing outside the several super markets, by people keeping a good distance from each other as they walk around the park. But it has incensed me that as soon as people get past the super market queue they seem to forget we are in a pandemic and no social distancing is observed. I get it can be difficult in some stores, I understand people are tired of it - but it is almost like a dark comedy sketch. I wonder if certain personality types drive this behavior. I have also felt very angry when you walk past people who make no effort to get out of your way. This hasn't been very common. I wonder are they just completely unaware of the world around them, lost in their own thoughts or its a personality type. I wonder what they would be like if I spoke to them. I have felt generally safe but have had moments of genuine fear if the supermarket queue has taken too long and there a few too many people close by.

I have observed a huge increase in bike use in our local area, with many shiny new bikes being steered by novice cyclists. Ah the irony of protecting yourself whilst being on public transport when you are far more likely to be killed riding a bike badly when not wearing a helmet.

" It is difficult to identify changes in our relationship as a result of Covid-19 and lock down from the changes in our relationship from having a newborn baby which has been the overwhelming emotion. At times Covid-19 has almost been quite distant apart from stepping out of the door.

My family mostly live far away or we are not very close to them so the lack of contact has not really changed anything. I find it curious that with one side of the family there is a zoom call every Saturday at 3pm. They all live in different parts of the UK and in normal circumstances don't see each other that often. I think it may provide some relief from the boredom of lock down but I wonder if it is just being done as that is what you are supposed to do.

I think we are now getting a little frustrated as we are more comfortable with our daughter and want to go out and explore. We long to have brunch in our favorite cafe on a Saturday morning. I long not to have to wash my hands every hour. " "We do not have a wide social life and our family mostly live far away so it didn't feel like lock down prevented us from doing anything . I don't feel like I have particularly missed out on anything. It is maybe because of this that I observe almost a sense of entitlement in people that they can not do certain things. If anything lock down made it much easier for my partner and I to start our new life together without without feeling obliged to invite or host people at home.

I work in a small office in the centre of Manchester and get the tram everyday to and from work, which I don't enjoy at the best of times as it is very often crowded. I used to spend a large part of my day on the phone with external clients, in conference call meetings or with colleagues in our head office in London. This suddenly changed into video calls, in part as our conference telephone facility was suspended. I now see into the homes and personal spaces of my colleagues and clients, we see their family pass by the screen, we wear casual clothes. I think this has had an unintended very positive impact on relationships and I think this personalisation will have a positive effect on the world of work. What I hope for most is that draconian management practices around working from home and flexible working will finally be consigned to the office waste bin

I have an elderly aunt who lives on her own and far away from any other family members. We used to text occasionally but now we text most days which I have enjoyed. For me it started as a way of checking in with her and giving her support but now it has almost become part of my routine. " "I generally consider myself to be in good mental and physical health. I have had asthma since I was a child and take medication to control this. I have never let asthma

define me or dominate my life. I recognize there are times when it will spike particularly in the winter. I was initially very worried about the potential for my asthma to increase the chances of my catching Covid-19 but I religiously took my preventative medication, did research into asthma and Covid and was more reassured.

It is more difficult to reflect on my mental health and any change as a result of Covid-19. I was mostly filled with the overwhelming emotions of being a new father when I never thought that would happen. "

In some ways life seems more simple and less stressful. For example, there are no morning alarm clocks to alert us to get up and get on with our day, there is no workplace to drive to in rush hour traffic etc. I don't have to worry about how I present myself all the time, I don't need make-up indoors or nice clothing - only comfy ones. There is more time to rest, talk to my partner and be present with each other. We can take things at a slower pace. We are enjoying each others company more. Conversely, life now feels more stressful in different ways. Frequent repeated news reports/government announcements regarding covid feel very alarmist and anxiety inducing. Yet, I understand that they are actually inaccurate and don't reflect the actual situation. (Actual death figures are much higher than reported). I do wonder if the repeated warning adverts from the government is making some people feel de-sensitised and thus take risks with their health. (I know that strangers are congregating in public parks in protest and social distancing is less adhered to now that lockdown has eased). I feel these announcements and TV reports shouldn't be broadcast as frequently as they are - I heard 4 in 1 hour on the radio. Perhaps then, people with mental health problems would feel a little less anxious and be able to think about other positive things in their day, and those that have ignored warnings might start listening? My stress is also rising when I'm out in public. Life feels bizarre now. I have to "dance" around people in the street to ensure I stay 2 metres away from them and a supermarket trip takes half a day due to social distancing measures - that is very frustrating. I live with my partner. My home is my sanctuary. I am very fortunate to have a lovely garden and live in a leafy neighbourhood in the suburbs.. I love being here and can't think of anywhere else I would prefer to be. Our immediate neighbours are educated with good careers. They are well informed and understand the need for social distancing, which they practice. "My relationship with my partner has improved greatly since lockdown. We have always spent a lot of time together before, but now we are more present in one another's company. We laugh more together and work hard to ensure that each of us have our needs met, whether that be needing time alone to pursue a hobby or listen if one of us is anxious about something.

Before lockdown I was part of a family WhatsApp chat. My sister set this up. I have never felt comfortable being with all of my family at once and I couldn't

pinpoint why. Since lockdown we have all relied on the family chat app more. I noticed that whilst using the app that my sister was frequently very critical and rude towards me, but not to anyone else. I have had time to reflect and understand why I don't enjoy family gatherings - because of my sister's attitude towards me. I have since left the family chat and asked my sister not to treat me this way. This has been a very stressful experience for me as it means that I am more distant from my family now. "A typical day in lockdown has been pretty lazy and relaxed for me. I have slept in a lot. I have enjoyed being out in the garden more and enjoyed a few al fresco lunches with a bottle of wine. This is something I would never consider doing normally.

I have been doing more gardening, building jigsaws, decorating the house and research on the computer. I have done these activities before, I'm just doing them more frequently now.

Occasions? None. My friend has had her wedding cancelled. We were looking forward to that and I feel sad for her that she can't get married yet. I do miss socialising with friends greatly. "I have never been a high maintenance type of person, but I normally feel that I can go out in public with feeling self conscious. Now I feel a lot more weathered since lockdown. My eyebrows are scruffy and age me because I can't get them waxed. My hair needs cutting. I need dental treatment etc.

I have an autoimmune thyroid condition. Amazingly, since lockdown this has improved immensely. My recent blood tests show I have no thyroid antibodies - my body is not presently attacking itself. This is the first time in 3 1/2 years. I know I need less stress in my life now!"

"My life hasn't changed drastically. I work part time from home but I'm now not taking my two children to school/nursery, so it does feel a little repetitive on a daily basis, I don't like change in routine, it makes me unsettled. My sleeping has been affected, I feel I'm worried for my children's wellbeing and mental health under the circumstances, as they are young and don't really understand what is happening, just that they aren't allowed out to play/school or allowed to see/cuddle their friends and family.

We are told daily about COVID 19 and things which have been affected by this, I'm finding the conspiracy theories somewhat entertaining but generally don't tend to watch the news as I find it far too depressing and negative.

I'm somewhat worried about my parents and older family members. But my immediate family are all healthy, so I'm not too worried.

I miss being able to eat out, socialise with friends and see my parents.

I'm annoyed that several events and holidays have had to be cancelled or reorganised for next year. I haven't had a holiday in 2 years and was looking forward to some time away travelling with my family as well as sunning myself

with endless cocktails at a poolside bar. " I live with my husband and 2 daughters. My mother and father in-law live locally and we have seen them at a distance, but my kids miss hugging their grandparents. My home feels safe, I live in the suburbs of a city. It feels very empty whenever I go out (which isn't often). My local community has been very helpful towards each other and neighbours are coming together to help out which is nice. Including doing little jobs for each other/baking treats/doing shopping etc. "Things at home are sometimes tense as my husband usually works in London, does long hours, he is working from home full time, he becomes frustrated with the noise as isn't used to the kids screaming and running around (they're usually in bed when he gets home). Both my daughters are bored and want to see their friends. My eldest who is being homeschooled isn't enjoying that aspect and would rather play with her younger sister, which we have allowed as she is clearly stressed at the situation (who wouldn't be).

I miss my mother (who lives in Spain with my step father) I was supposed to visit her back in early April as she has health conditions & has been unwell. She has subsequently gotten better but I'm still worried about her health & want to see her (it's been over six months since I visited the last), we talk regularly via WhatsApp and video chat.

My kids miss their grandparents who live locally or would visit frequently. We see them at a distance but would usually have several family dinners/meals a month so are missing this aspect.

My marriage has not changed and feel loved and cared for, no aspect of that is any different. My kids are affectionate also and want lots of cuddles and kisses at the moment (which I feel is to be expected, due to the uncertainty of the situation). " "I have not been engaging in any activities during lockdown.

Usually I would socialise several times a month with local mums and also friends for dinner etc. My daughters and I usually go swimming and this has not happened, I am saddened and frustrated by this as it is something we all enjoy. We have managed to have more family time in the garden and have been out for walks together. We miss going shopping together and visiting family. As well as friends for my girls and playdates.

I have managed to start reading again which I enjoy and don't usually have time for. I have also had time to catch up on DIY jobs I've been meaning to do. The kids have managed to make endless lego models and hama beads which my husband and I have enjoyed with them.

We have had no birthdays or funerals so far during lockdown.

I am hoping to start learning fluent Spanish but have yet to start this. "

Emotionally I am drained, I am a psychotherapist and business is booming but it is stressful dealing with others emotions when everything is so heightened presently. I am a strong person and cope well with emotional stress although I have ongoing depression myself (taking medication, getting medication is challenging but the drs are quite accommodating and have sent scripts to the pharmacy locally so I don't need to go into the surgery) I am managing somewhat. Physically I am doing daily yoga, fasting and on a ketogenic diet, so I'm feeling remarkably fit and healthy.

