

# Coping with COVID-19

## AN ASPERGIRL AND HER FAMILY

by Courtney Weaver, Self Advocate

**Coping with COVID-19 has resulted in positive and not-so-positive changes for “the Weaver Crew,” my sisters Ashley and Serena, my mom Rebecca, dad John, and me.**



**I MISS PERSON-TO-PERSON INTERACTION** at work and in office spaces as well as activities like going to the movies and the gym. However, doing work from home, interspersed with walks when there are minimal people around, has added more structure to my and my roommate’s 24/7 home life. I am very concerned about my future as only essential businesses are currently open and one of my two jobs is scheduled to end in May. I continue in my other job and look for more work. Meanwhile, employment insurance and emergency benefits are viable options to successfully make it—hopefully.

Serena misses seeing me as we are living in different parts of Ottawa and are following the official guidelines of isolation. She had the final months of her undergraduate experience at Brock University cut short when classes and exams were moved online and all university rowing events and practices were cancelled. Given this change, there was no point remaining in St. Catharines so she moved back to Ottawa early. Her June convocation has been cancelled which disappointed her. She is also concerned about finding summer work due to the current limited job opportunities.

Ashley has been laid off from her job at Tim Horton’s and is praying every day for the pandemic to be over. She misses being able to see her friends and fiancé. However, she does not mind being in the house all the time. My parents ensure she gets out for some fresh air every couple of days with family walks. She is spending



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less time on the computer and iPad and is diversifying her at-home activities, such as doing puzzles and word searches.

Rebecca misses the office atmosphere of her job and the person-to-person interaction. However, she enjoys getting to decide when to work during the day and not having to dress formally, and is surprised at how well working from home is going. She loves being able to do workouts in the afternoon with Serena and the increased and relaxed family life she has, now that there is no travelling to and from work or other activities, such as volleyball and gym. She has also observed how hard-hit the world is by the pandemic and how everyone is stressed and overwhelmed with the change in their lives (getting laid off from work, for example) and routines. As such changes are always a struggle for people with ASD traits, Rebecca hopes that this will increase empathy for families of children on the spectrum not having school or therapy to go to.

Finally, John has been mixing time between the work office and home because he is critical staff. There is an increased demand from people wanting to know what the Canadian government department he works for is doing. He's noticed that his colleagues are getting better at understanding the new norms of working from home, including using video conferencing services such as Zoom and Web X. He has also noticed a decrease in gas prices and traffic and a communal increase in family time and walks. At home, he is also doing online exercise programs, or ones set by Serena, to stay fit. He loves the additional family time that is resulting from staying home more. Both he and Rebecca are doing several things to look after John's very elderly parents, including constant phone calls and grocery shopping.

Living and coping with the global effects of COVID-19 has mixed results. We all hope for more businesses to open and job and leisure opportunities to increase. However, it would not be good to lose the positive effects of the family bonding that has resulted from not having as full a personal schedule. Finally, important life and global lessons regarding personal hygiene, disease transmission, and how fast-paced society has become have to be taken into consideration going forward for personal betterment and for the world to be better equipped should something like this happen again. ■