The New Normal

My life as a college student in the age of the

CORONAVIRUS

By Samantha Brachman
It has been a **CRAZY** time!

The **HARDEST** thing about living through this pandemic has been feeling lonely 😞

While stuck at home from March to August, I missed:

- My family
- My friends
- Having a schedule
- Being at college
- Travelling
- Eating in restaurants
- Hugs
- Normal life!
I had to suddenly pack up my college dorm belongings, head home, and switch to all online classes!

Yes, this was **STRESSFUL**! 😖

Moving to a digital format really changed my college experience!:

- No more **social interaction**!
- Virtual **office hours**!
- Taking classes in my room with my family working from home!
- Yes, this was hard!
- Harder to stay on top of assignments!
The media played a large part in my virtual college experience!

I had to have virtual video calls with my classmates instead of meeting in person, virtual office hours, utilize E-mail to communicate with professors, and submit all of my work online!
Social media really helped connect me to my friends and family!

I had virtual video chat calls with my family from California to stay in touch!

Me and my college friends created group chats to stay connected with each other!

Through social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, I was able to see how others were coping with the pandemic which made me realize that my feelings were valid and that I was not alone!

I used the website Netflix Party to watch a Netflix show or movie with my family and friends. Having virtual movie nights together was fun and gave me a mental break away from school!

I also downloaded the app TikTok to see how teenagers around the globe were dealing with quarantine as well as create my own videos about my personal experience on the app!
I even celebrated my Dad's birthday virtually!

My family hosted a Zoom call where we got to chat and sing “Happy Birthday!!”. While it was not the same as in person, we still had a great time and loved that social media could bring us together.
My family also celebrated my brother’s 8th grade graduation virtually!

My relatives sent him e-cards through e-mail rather than hand him physical cards in person.

We also had a socially distant drive-by car parade that we live streamed so that my family could watch. It was not the birthday party that he was hoping for, but we made it work and still had a blast.
I definitely used social media a lot more during my quarantine experience stuck at home!

I started a bunch of new Netflix series and crossed a bunch of movies off of my bucketlist. This really helped me to cure my boredom!

An accurate depiction of me during quarantine!
I also started listening to podcasts and finding new musicians to listen to, which I had been wanting to do for years!

Another accurate depiction of me during quarantine!
I also started using social media to help me workout. I found lots of great workouts online since I had to workout at home!

I am grateful for social media since it helped me and others to stay healthy!
Social media also helped me follow the news about the pandemic. Watching the news channel on television, following news sources on Facebook, and reading news articles through Snapchat links really helped me to understand the virus and what was happening in the world!

MEDIA IS POWERFUL!
Despite the negatives, there were still lots of **positives**! of quarantine!

I got to take time for myself and learn more about myself!

I got to spend more time with my family!

I got to bake! My favorite thing to bake was chocolate chip cookies!

And I got to ride my bike more often!
While dealing with the pandemic and staying home for the past couple of months has been rough, this situation has taught me to be grateful for my health and for my family. I am grateful that social media has been able to help me stay updated on the news, stay connected with my friends and family, and keep me entertained.

STAY SAFE AND STAY POSITIVE