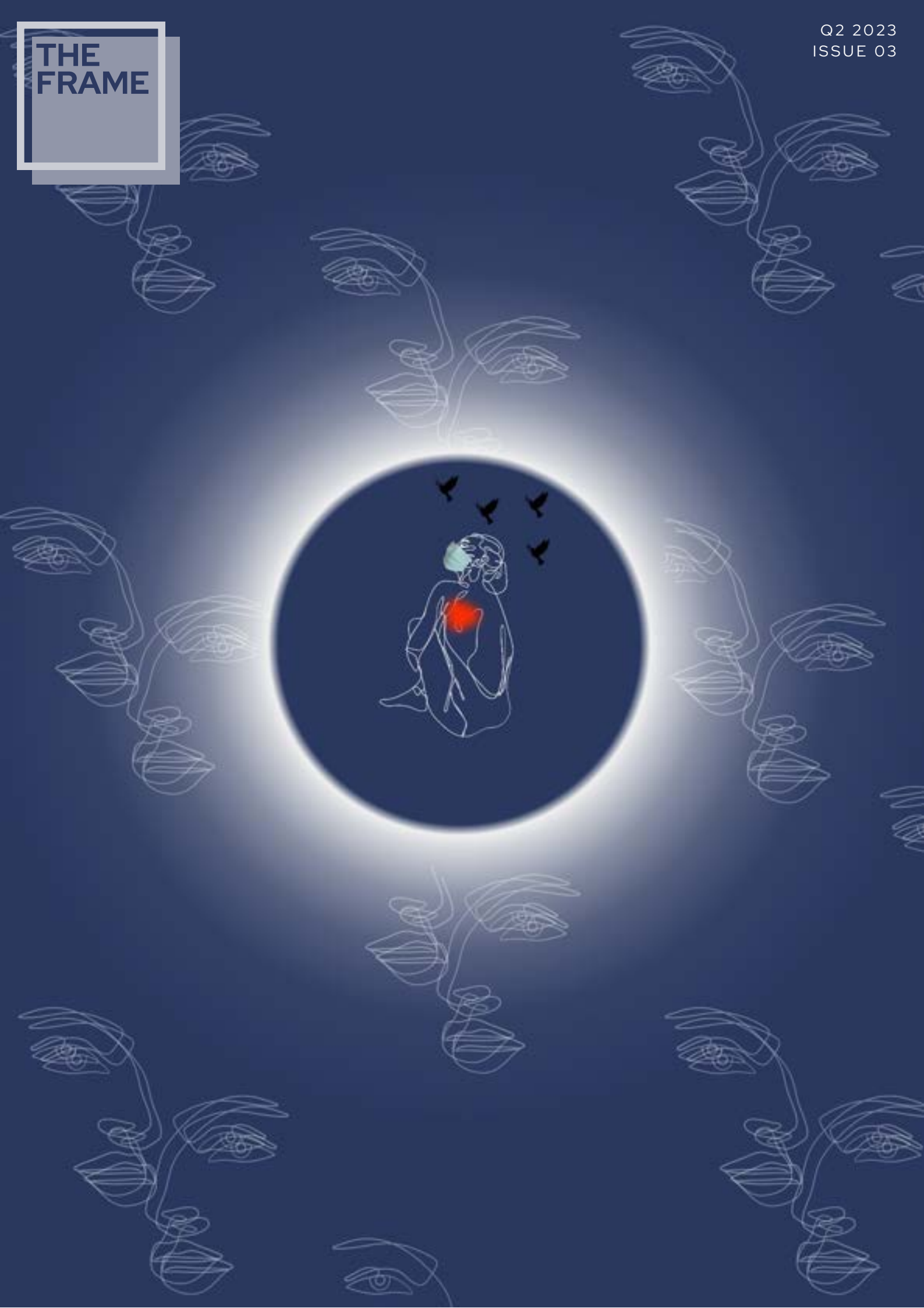


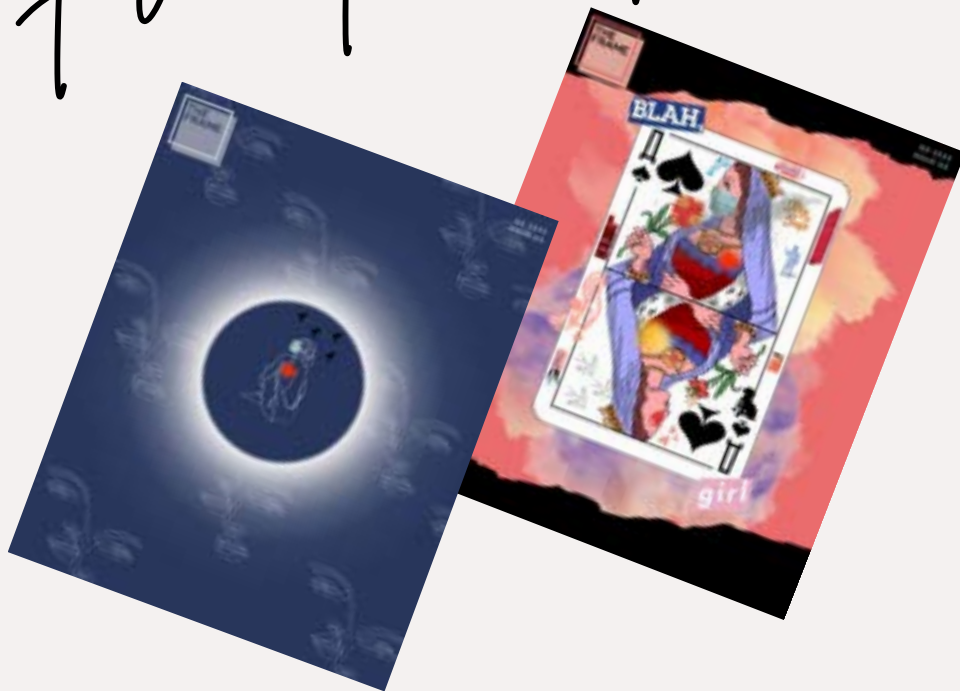
BLAH,



girl



From the artist...



The first piece I chose for this issue's cover (dark blue) was one I developed to represent the fear and isolation that I felt during COVID.

The second one is a bit more complex.. I've titled it "The Two Faces of COVID."

It reflects the very conflicting impacts the pandemic has had on my life and society, and the complex emotions that go with it. The top half is the negative: the fear, sickness, isolation, and worry. The bottom half though is more positive. COVID allowed me, and I'm sure many others, to pick up new hobbies/interests, spend time with their pets and loved ones, slow down life a little, and grow personally. For me, the pandemic wasn't a 100% negative influence on my life. In fact, as a chronically ill person, it made the world more accessible for a little while. The longer you look at the piece, the more details you notice, and I think that reflects COVID really well too.

Ashley Tripp

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ISSUE 03

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Letter From The Editor



THE
FRAME

Thank you for joining us for this third issue of 'The Frame'.

This has been by far the most arduous and difficult issue to put together. The pandemic, even in the best-case scenario, was a time of loss, uncertainty, and curtailed freedoms. That experience has been reflected in the work submitted over the last couple of months, and while the quality of writing and artworks have remained at its usual astonishingly high standard, the weight of the topic has made for some tough editorial work. In hindsight, it may have been a little early for this particular topic to be broached.

That uncertainty and difficulty during the pandemic was equally present in the work I did in my day job as a therapist. Left with no choice but to immediately move my practice online, I likely spoke to more people about their COVID experiences than most, and while it bought its undoubted challenges for me as a practitioner, I feel thankful for that forced change to my work. Ultimately it opened more doors than it closed, and the enforced changes made during that time have resulted in some fantastic therapeutic relationships, which geography would have otherwise made impossible.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome Chelsey to The Frame, and to sincerely thank her for her help compiling this issue. If her administrative skills weren't enough, she can write too, and her article '5,500 Miles' is exactly why I picked this theme for this issue - it's a deeply personal and moving account of love, loss and the helplessness I think we all felt to varying degrees during the period of the pandemic.

In addition to that, we've got some fantastic features this issue. Author James Lindsay shares a passage from his book about his experiences with psychosis and schizoaffective disorder, and our ever-growing art section is a gallery unto itself.

I look forward to seeing you for our next issue - one I've wanted to focus on since I came up with the concept of this magazine, and one which is deeply personal to me - Neurodiversity.

Until next time,

David L.
Editor, The Frame
(Combined-type ADHD)

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Nick Conn

Nick Conn, Founder of Help 4 Addiction, podcast host and author of 'The Thin White Line'

What do you do?

I'm the founder and CEO of Help4Addiction, the UK's largest addiction advisory service, and host of the 'CONNversations with Nick Conn' Podcast.

How did you end up doing it?

I worked as a policeman before leaving the force because of my cocaine addiction, and moved to Berlin where my encounters with the Albanian mafia became part of the inspiration for my book *'The Thin White Line.'*

When I began to look for help with my addiction, the only rehab I had ever heard of was The Priory, but I didn't have the £25,000 needed to go there so it wasn't an option for me. I wasn't getting the help I needed from local services, and I had absolutely no idea where to turn.

Eventually, a family friend guided me in the right direction and when I came out of rehab I began taking a closer look at rehabilitation centres – what their costs are, what they do, what therapies they use, who their service users are, and so on. What I began to form as a result of this research became my organisation Help4Addiction, which is now the UK's largest addiction advisory service.



How would you define an addict?

To me, an addict is someone who develops consequences through the using of their drug (et al) of choice. Many people will disagree with this, but an addict will not surface and look for help if every area of their life is going great.

What would you say is the most important aspect of recovery?

Abstinence, of course, but to me it's to be honest and open. If you keep honest, you're on the right tracks.

What was your experience during COVID?

As an organisation, it was the busiest we had ever been. Unfortunately, it negatively affected so many psychologically, particularly in recovery or with addiction issues.

How did COVID change your work?

Fortunately for us we were already set up to work remotely, but many day centres had shut, and we seemed to get a lot of those people coming to us looking for help.

How do you think COVID affected people's addiction and recovery?

I think what we saw was a real worsening of people's problems – people who might have been 'functional addicts' or those who might never have previously struggled, started to struggle. Secret drinkers started to get caught out at home.

Unfortunately those who were new to recovery, or even those who simply relied on the regularity or fellowship of their 12-step meetings, relapsed as a result of the isolation and loss of routine.

During COVID, online 12-step meetings moved online and seem to now be a semi-permanent fixture. Do they work as well?

Personally, I believe that working online is as effective as any other method, but it's also crucial that people have multiple avenues of support – whether local support or telephone numbers of people you can reach out to.

What's the mission of Help4Addiction?

We want to help change people's lives for the better. Our service is run by people in recovery themselves, and we've all walked those first frightening steps along the same paths as our service users.

Why do people relapse?

A lot of people don't realise that a relapse happens before you pick up a drink or drug. The first thing to go is your behaviours. If you are not keeping a check on your behaviours, a relapse will almost inevitably follow.

Are you ever recovere-d?

YES

Tell us a random fact about you?

I love music production – Recovery for me is about enjoying life, and finding new hobbies can be a great way to do exactly that.

Your favourite recovery saying/mantra?

The drink/drugs are not the problem, they are the solution.

What advice would you give to someone who thinks they have a problem?


Get honest and get help.

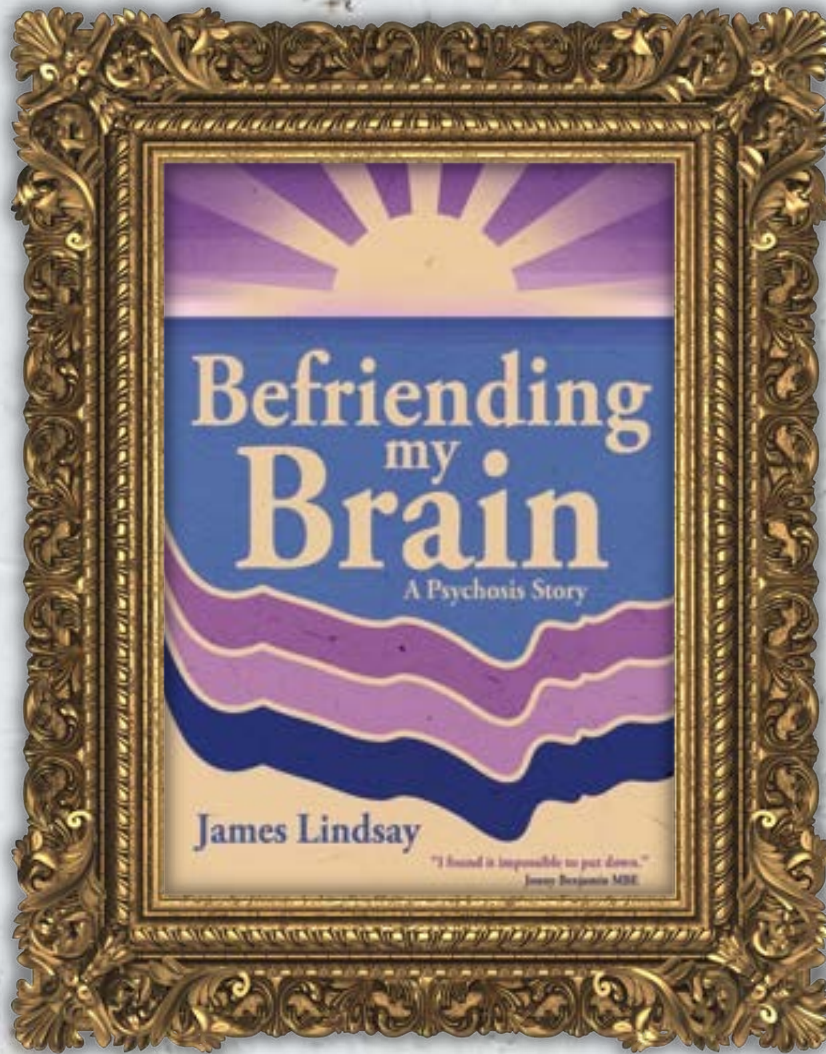


In addition to running Help4Addiction and hosting his podcast, Nick is a regular media presence and considered one of Britain's leading voices on addiction and recovery.

His book, 'The Thin White Line', is available on Amazon and his podcast 'CONversations with Nick Conn' can be found on YouTube and all podcast platforms and apps.

His service Help4Addiction can be found at www.help4addiction.co.uk

 @dadinrecovery



I am delighted to share with you a passage from my first book – Befriending My Brain: A Psychosis Story – which came out in March 2023.

Completed after four years of hard work, it's a memoir detailing my experiences with psychosis and schizoaffective disorder - about my ups and downs, as well as lessons from my recovery and advice I have gained along the way and I hope it can help people with (and without) mental health conditions of any variety.

The below passage is from chapter 5, where I am living in a psychiatric ward as a very confused and terrified person after being sectioned.

If you liked this preview, please consider getting the book (available on Amazon and Waterstones websites, both paperback and eBook/Kindle versions) if not for yourself then maybe for someone who would find support and comfort from reading it.

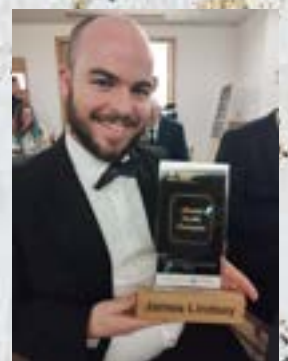
James Lindsay

Most of the time I got along fine with the other patients, but there were a few weird and unpleasant moments. One time, this older gentleman suddenly snapped at me out of nowhere and shouted right in my face, “F**k off, you c**t!” I could only come up with one potential reason as to why this happened: maybe I had invaded his personal space a little bit, and he didn’t like anyone getting too close to him. Apart from that, I don’t remember doing anything wrong, so I found it very surprising and obviously very rude of him. I didn’t take it personally, though, as it occurred to me that he was very mentally ill too, maybe more than I was.

Another patient really freaked me out with his creepy actions. He had this habit of pacing up and down in parts of the ward, but he often gave me an odd and angry look as he was doing this. At some points, he also seemed to start coming towards me in an aggressive-looking way. I decided to avoid him at all costs and, if I had to get close, I made sure one of the staff members was near me, just in case he attacked me or anything.

At this point, my delusions had not gone away, and I came to a very odd conclusion that the creepy pacing guy was my brother’s spirit in another person’s body. I even shared this with Mum and Dad during one of their early visits, but Mum confirmed, “No, that is not him, he is at home in our house.” I eventually believed this and stopped having delusions, due to getting more sleep and my medication taking effect. The tablets I was taking also started to give me some major side effects, mainly making me very sleepy and sedated, and also giving me more of an appetite. I think the other patients were going through something similar too. We were fed the standard three meals a day, but this often wasn’t enough. I remember a lot of us would regularly eat several slices of toast in the evenings after dinner and before bed – we were just constantly eating.

James is an author and mental health advocate from Hertfordshire, UK, His first book 'Befriending My Brain: A Psychosis Story' was published in 2023.



COVID-19

STORIES FROM THE WORLD



COVID-19: THE NUMBERS

(as of 10th April 2023)

684,996,888

CASES CONFIRMED WORLDWIDE

6,837,864

CONFIRMED DEATHS WORLDWIDE

TOP 5 COUNTRIES WITH CONFIRMED CASES OF
COVID-19

1. USA - 106,363,949

2. INDIA - 44,762,496

3. FRANCE - 39,850,030

4. GERMANY - 38,368,891

5. BRAZIL - 37,319,254

TOP 5 COUNTRIES WITH DEATHS FROM COVID-
19

1. USA - 1,156,899

2. BRAZIL - 700,556

3. INDIA - 530,979

4. RUSSIA - 397,604

5. MEXICO - 333,595



Exploring the Lifestyle Changes that Boosted Sales

Words By J.R. Petersson

The COVID-19 pandemic caused widespread disruption to businesses across the globe. Lockdowns, social distancing measures, and supply chain disruptions have made it challenging for many companies to continue operating as usual. However, some businesses were able to adapt to the changing landscape and even thrive during this time.

One of the most significant changes brought about by the pandemic was the acceleration of an already gradual shift to online shopping. With shops forced to close or operate at reduced capacity, consumers turned to online retailers to purchase goods. According to a report by Adobe Analytics, US online sales during the 2020 Christmas period grew by 32.2% compared to the previous year, while data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed online shopping reached a record high level of traffic during the COVID-19 epidemic, growing by 46.1% in 2020 compared to the former time. There were significant gains for companies like Amazon and Ocado, with Amazon's profit in the UK growing by 51% in 2020, and Ocado growing by 35%.

The Covid-19 pandemic was also a time which saw a huge spike in demand for delivery apps like DoorDash, Uber Eats, and Grubhub. The week ending March 22, 2020 saw a 20% increase in US food delivery sales compared to the same time last year, according to a report by Edison Trends. Home fitness companies were also able to capitalise on the pandemic's lifestyle changes. With gyms closed or operating at reduced capacity, many consumers turned to home workouts to stay active. Companies such as Peloton, NordicTrack, and Mirror saw a surge in demand for their workout equipment and virtual classes. Peloton reported a 232% increase in sales in the third quarter of 2020, while NordicTrack saw a 600% increase in sales during the same period.

With people spending enforced time at home, often without work to fill the day, DIY and home improvement became the focus of a long, hot summer for many. Kingfisher, which owns UK retailers B&Q and Screwfix, saw a 62% increase in deals in the six months leading up to August 2020, with online deals growing by a whopping 225%. The company's CEO attributed this growth to the fact that people were spending further time at home and investing in their living spaces. Similarly, home furnishing retailer Made.com saw a 63% increase in deals in 2020 compared to the former time - although they have since gone out of business.

However, not all businesses were able to adapt to the pandemic's lifestyle changes. Many stores that were unable to shift to online sales saw a decline in revenue, and some small businesses were forced to shut down permanently. Additionally, supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic made it challenging for some companies to source raw materials or finished products.

Now with the heights of the pandemic in our rear-view mirror, we are more able to assess the pandemic's long-term impact on consumer behaviour. Many consumers have become accustomed to the convenience of online shopping, food delivery and services which were not previously available online but find themselves now permanently so.

What is clear is how the pandemic has highlighted the importance of businesses being agile and able to quickly adapt to changing consumer behaviour and the broader economic climate. Companies that have been able to pivot quickly and meet changing customer needs have weathered the impact of the pandemic better. As Dr Nada Sanders, a supply chain management expert and professor at Northeastern University, notes, "The pandemic has just put more pressure on what was already a very fast-moving and disruptive landscape... companies that were agile and able to pivot quickly were able to do well, but those that weren't were hurt." Jeremy Gutsche, CEO of Trend Hunter, a research firm, added, "We're in a period of rapid change, and businesses that were once safe are now no longer safe." He also says that "The winners are the ones who can adapt the fastest."

It's obvious that the pandemic has hugely changed consumers' lifestyle and the way businesses function. Even after the pandemic, it's critical that businesses remain alert and flexible in their operations, focusing on the health and safety of their employees and customers. A sudden change in habits forced a new perspective on the relationships between businesses and consumers, especially highlighting the need for connection and community during times of increased isolation. As Dr James Doty, founder of the Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University, says, "The pandemic has made us realise just how much we need social connections for our well-being." He also adds that "Businesses that prioritize community and connection will be the ones that succeed in the future."

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a significant change in the way we think about business, consumption, and connection. As we navigate the aftermath of this frightening time, it's clear that businesses need to prioritise the values of their customers and build a more sustainable, flexible and equitable economy for the future. As Dr Sanders says, "The pandemic has accelerated the future, and we need to be ready for it."

ON THE RISE

The pandemic wasn't a disaster for everyone.

For some, it was an unexpected financial windfall.

Here we look at some of the beneficiaries of the global pandemic...





As people turned to online shopping during lockdowns, Amazon's net sales increased by 38% in 2020, reaching \$386 billion, and its net income more than doubled, reaching \$21.3 billion.

With more people cooking at home, the meal kit delivery company's revenue for the year 2020 increased by 111%, reaching €3.7 billion, and the company's stock price more than tripled.



As remote work and online meetings became the norm, Zoom's revenue increased by 355% in Q1 2020, reaching \$328.2 million, and the company's stock price more than doubled, reaching a market capitalization of over \$100 billion.

With demand for semiconductor chips increasing due to the shift to remote work and online activities, the Dutch semiconductor equipment supplier's revenue for 2020 increased by 18%, reaching €14 billion, and the company's stock price rose by more than 200%.



One of the leading companies to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, Moderna's revenue for 2020 was \$803.4 million, up from \$60.2 million in 2019, and the company's stock price soared by over 400%.

With remote work and digital transactions becoming more common, the electronic signature and digital transaction management company's revenue for 2020 increased by 57%, reaching \$1.4 billion.



An increased demand for household cleaning and personal hygiene products resulted in significant growth for Procter & Gamble during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the company's revenue increased by 7% to reach \$71 billion.

IN MEMORIAM

We said goodbye to some iconic brands and businesses during COVID-19

DEBENHAMS (UK)

The UK department store chain collapsed in December 2020 after 242 years in business. The company had been struggling for years due to the shift to online shopping, but the pandemic's impact on its business proved to be the final blow. Debenhams had a debt of £720m (\$936m) and reportedly lost £1.4bn (\$1.8bn) in the year before its collapse

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL (CANADA)

The Canadian circus company filed for bankruptcy in June 2020 due to the pandemic's impact on the entertainment industry. The company had to cancel all of its shows worldwide, leading to a loss of \$1 billion in revenue. Cirque du Soleil had a debt of \$900 million and reportedly laid off over 3,000 employees.

AVIANCA HOLDINGS (COLOMBIA)

The Colombian airline filed for bankruptcy in May 2020 due to the pandemic's impact on the travel industry. The company had been struggling for some time, but the pandemic's effect on air travel demand meant its end. Avianca had a debt of \$7.3 billion and reportedly had to lay off over 20,000 employees.

HERTZ GLOBAL HOLDINGS (US)

The US car rental company filed for bankruptcy in May 2020. The pandemic's effect on air travel and car rental left an unmanageable debt of \$19 billion and left 19,000 staff facing redundancy.

FLYBE (UK)

The UK-based regional airline collapsed in March 2020. Flybe had a debt of £106m (\$138m) and reportedly lost £20m (\$26m) in the year before its collapse.



Mental health Matters: Insights from India during COVID-19



By Esha Choudhary

Esha is writing in a secondary language.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected millions of lives all over the world, with India being one of the most badly affected countries. From the loss of lives, jobs, and isolation, to the overwhelming sense of uncertainty and fear, the pandemic has brought about tough challenges and has impacted mental health here in many ways.

In March 2020, the Indian government declared one of the tightest lockdowns in the world. For the citizens of India, the lockdowns had a huge impact on their health, way of life, and mental well-being. Healthcare services were severely disrupted as a result of movement restrictions, joblessness and socially restrictive policies. People with chronic health conditions could not get the care and treatment they needed, and many important surgeries had to be put off. Patients and their family members experienced unhealthy amounts of stress and anxiety as a result. Crucial medical supplies were in short supply because of substantial disruptions in the supply of important medications and equipment.

Food scarcity and fear have been two of the most severe problems. Due to the pandemic, there have been inconsistencies in the supply of goods and there are shortages and price hikes for basic food items, particularly within some of our most underprivileged communities that are already trying to make ends meet, and this has caused a lot of concern and fear. Further aggravating the situation is the panic buying and food hoarding that has resulted from the fear of acquiring the illness. This is a country with a huge disparity between the people with money and the people who live in poverty, and the Covid pandemic has brought to light how crucial it is to guarantee food security and create resilient food systems that can resist shocks and catastrophes.

The effects of the lockdowns on people's jobs were equally serious. There is a sizable casual labour force in India, where many people work in occupations with no social security benefits. Millions of jobs were lost because of the lockdowns and the collapse of numerous small businesses, and many migrant workers found themselves stuck far away from their homes with no way to sustain themselves. People were hopeless and helpless with no help from the government.

Domestic violence in India has increased as a result of the lockdowns' increased social isolation, and many people—especially women—have been forced to remain with violent partners. The frequency of suicides has also significantly increased, particularly among young people.

The pandemic has been a particularly difficult period for me as someone who has already battled mental health difficulties. I've experienced worry, despair, and sleeplessness more regularly, and I frequently felt powerless in the face of the pandemic's effects on my life.

The loss of social relationships has been one of the biggest obstacles I've encountered. I haven't been able to see my friends and family as often as I used to because of social distancing techniques. This has been tremendously challenging because I rely on social interaction, and I frequently feel lonely and cut off from the world around me.

The constant stream of news and information about COVID-19 has been another difficulty I have had to deal with. Even while it's crucial to keep informed, the constant barrage of depressing news has had a severe impact on my mental health. In these uncertain times, I have frequently battled to find hope and have experienced feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. I am twenty years old and at times life felt hazy, depressing, and pointless. What were going to happen to my aspirations, objectives, goals, and education? Do they still matter?

Many inequalities in Indian society have also been brought to light by the pandemic and lockdowns. Marginalized communities, such as low-income households, migrant laborers, and residents of slums were disproportionately affected, while those better off were largely unaffected. The poorer population encountered substantial obstacles when trying to get access to basic services like food and healthcare. In addition, putting social isolation measures into practice in congested living situations presented substantial difficulties.

I don't know where you're based in the world, but in India the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns had a profound impact on our citizens during a time when the country is already in a difficult political climate. It is crucial to make sure that people's health, livelihoods, and mental welfare remain at the forefront of policymaking as India navigates the next stage of the pandemic.

Sarah's Story:

The death of my husband during lockdown

When my husband Jack, who had Parkinson's Disease and COPD along with other illnesses, was admitted to hospital in August 2020, I was allowed to visit him for 3 days. Then due to the restrictions on indoor hospital visits, our sons and I weren't allowed to see him again until the day before he died. My sons were given 10 minutes each to say their goodbyes to him and I sat with Jack for 7 hours until he passed away at 4.20pm on Saturday 26 September, exactly 5 weeks since he was admitted to hospital.

His funeral was on 9 October. There was a limit of 20 people allowed to attend, and that included immediate family. Names and contact numbers had to be taken for track and trace purposes. There was also a time limit of 20 minutes in total, that was to enter the Crematorium have the service and leave. There was no singing allowed and masks to be worn throughout. We didn't have a gathering afterwards because there were very few places to hold it. And with the restrictions you could not mingle. As time went on, I realised I had 'lost' the ability to have a conversation with family and friends.

We scattered Jack's ashes on 14 March 2021 which would have been our 46th Wedding Anniversary. The family were there. The following year, my sister and I went back to Jack's final resting place on 14 March 2022 and tossed two roses into the river.

After Jack's death my sister Fiona arranged days out and days away, but all I wanted to do was to stay at home. I know she meant well, but I wasn't ready. We went for afternoon tea, to see '9 to 5' on stage, a trip to Oban etc. I did appreciate them and enjoyed them, but it was too soon.

I thought by January 2022 I was ready to "face" the world again, so I applied for voluntary work. It was a Helpline to support people who were grieving. I started the training which was going well until the third day, which was talking about bereavement... well I broke down trying to speak about Jack. I was offered counselling with Cruse Scotland, I accepted it, and it was the best thing.

I started my counselling sessions with their volunteer Ann in March 2022. The first session went really well and I felt better after speaking about what Jack was like as a person.

Sarah's Story:

The death of my husband during lockdown

The sessions have been a great help to me. I now feel I can go forward with my life. I was able to talk about Jack again and it made me feel much better. Still haven't fully come to terms with Jack's death. I am sure in time I will be able to cope better. We were always together, which probably is why I feel so lonely, even although I have a good family, especially my Grandchildren.

I've now had my sixth and final session with Ann. It went really well, and I am going to keep going forward with the help of family and friends. I know I will have a "wobble" or two along the way... especially on anniversaries.

Before COVID, I took Jack to his monthly Parkinson's Group. He enjoyed chatting to people. When COVID arrived, we no longer attend because of lockdown. The group met last month – March 2022 for the first time. My sister and I still go to make the teas/coffees.

I am going to Spain on holiday in June with my son Gordon and his family. I am looking forward to it very much. I love watching the kids having fun.

Since having counselling, I now have the confidence to talk to others again and have the strength to carry on. Jack will always have a big place in my heart and mind. And I will speak of him every day.



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This article was originally published in a modified form by Cruse Scotland, and is reproduced with their permission.

COVID-RELATED ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION: CAUSES AND COPING STRATEGIES

Words by P van der Meer

As someone who has worked in mental health services for a long time, and has struggled with my own anxiety and depression, I can relate to how difficult the COVID-19 pandemic has been on our mental health. Not only has it dominated my own client work in recent years, but the uncertainty and stress of the pandemic led me to seek my own therapy.

In this article, I will discuss the causes of COVID-related anxiety and depression and share some coping strategies have helped me and others manage these difficult emotions.

CAUSES

Fear of Getting Sick

It's understandable to feel anxious about contracting COVID-19, especially with news stories counting cases and deaths like sports scores, and public health recommendations to wear masks and practice social distancing.

Fear of getting sick can be incredibly intense for those struggling with anxiety or health-related worries. It's important to remember that these obsessive thoughts and behaviors aren't our fault and that you can learn to manage them.

Social Isolation

Even the most introverted among us have felt the sting of social distancing and limited gatherings, but for those who rely on social connections for emotional support, the isolation and loneliness has been especially painful. The lack of in-person communication and physical touch can make it feel like we're living in our little bubbles, disconnected from the world around us.

I know that being cut off from friends and family for long periods has led to feelings of sadness and disinterest in things I used to enjoy. Finding new ways to connect with others and maintain a sense of community has been a challenge. Remember, it's not just about whether or not you're going to have fun at a social event – social support and being around people is crucial to maintaining good mental health.

Financial Stress

Even the most introverted among us have felt the sting of social distancing and limited gatherings, but for those who rely on social connections for emotional support, the isolation and loneliness has been especially painful. The lack of in-person communication and physical touch can make it feel like we're living in our little bubbles, disconnected from the world around us.

I know that being cut off from friends and family for long periods has led to feelings of sadness and disinterest in things I used to enjoy. Finding new ways to connect with others and maintain a sense of community has been a challenge. Remember, it's not just about whether or not you're going to have fun at a social event – social support and being around people is crucial to maintaining good mental health.

Uncertainty

It's been over two years since the pandemic hit the world, but there is still so much uncertainty about the future. Will we ever go back to the way things were before COVID-19? When will it be safe to gather in large groups or travel without worry? These unanswered questions can leave us anxious and stressed, constantly wondering what the future holds.

You might find it hard to plan for the future when so much is up in the air. It can be challenging to make important decisions when we don't know what's around the corner. This uncertainty can be especially difficult for those of us who struggle with anxiety and depression, as it can make our symptoms even worse.

But it's essential to remember that we're not alone in these feelings. So many people are grappling with the same uncertainty and fear. By acknowledging and accepting our emotions, we can find ways to cope and move forward, even in uncertain times.

STRATEGIES

Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness has become a bit of a buzzword in recent times, and it tends to detract from what is a simple concept with wide-ranging benefits. Mindfulness involves staying present in the moment and accepting things as they are without judging or resisting them. By doing this, we can better observe our thoughts and feelings without getting caught up in them, which can help us feel calmer and grounded even when things feel overwhelming. This causes us to be less reactive, impulsive, or acting from a place of fear. Instead, successful mindfulness practice allows us to feel grounded and like we're growing, not in a constant state of panic.

Exercise

Even if you cannot hit the gym or run outside, there are still plenty of ways to get your heart pumping and boost your mood.

A quick yoga session or a short walk around the block can make a huge difference in how you feel. And if you're looking for more structured workouts, tons of online classes and home workout equipment are available to help you stay active and energized. Finances aren't even a barrier – YouTube has a multitude of free resources for those wishing to exercise inside, while walking and running is free for all.

Seek Professional Help

It's okay to admit you need help, especially during a challenging time. Seeking professional support is an essential step in managing your mental health and many therapists and counselors offer virtual sessions you can attend from the comfort of your home.

If you need help figuring out where to start, talk to your GP or look for mental health resources online. Remember, there's no shame in asking for help or wanting to talk about your feelings, and taking care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health.

Practice Self-Compassion

It's been a tough time for all of us, and it's not uncommon to feel anxious or depressed, regardless of a global pandemic. But the thing is, when we're feeling low, we tend to be extra hard on ourselves, and that only makes things worse.

You must treat yourself with kindness and understanding, just like you would do for a friend who was struggling.

You don't have to feel guilty for feeling anxious or depressed. It's okay not to be okay. Instead of beating yourself up, acknowledge those feelings and be gentle with yourself. You can remind yourself that it's normal to feel this way given the current circumstances, and that you're doing your best.

Remember, it's okay not to be okay – seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

CLASSROOM TO COVID

by G Morse

This is from my perspective a medical student whilst living in Chicago, Illinois, during the height of the pandemic and the following year thereafter:

Her wails reverberated off the Intensive Care Unit walls. A wife, whose husband, that was COVID positive (amongst a plethora of concomitant organ failure), was dying. He was in medical isolation which meant only physicians could enter his room. His wife was forced to watch her husband's last breaths through a glass window. That dreadful abyss from her body, past the thick glass, across the grimy linoleum floor, to his bed was far too vast. My heart ached. Actually, no – it broke in that moment. I managed to scrounge a lima bean-green colored chair, one that had a corner ripped away exposing a yellow foam with wooden arms that were worn raw, along with a box of stale tissues, for her. Her son propped her on the chair like a stiff doll as the medical team gave her space. Her husband left the world 7 minutes thereafter.

I moved to Chicago during the height of the pandemic, and that day was one of many that were to follow. I witnessed death, fear, sadness. I saw agitation and fear and rising violence. Psychiatric wards were overflowing with patients. The cause? Pure, horrid isolation.

I too felt that isolation. I was often depressed, hopeless. I would return home alone. I would study alone, eat alone, run errands in a city where everyone was shrouded in a mask, rigid to maintain a car's-length distance from you let alone speak to you. Social life was non-existent. In a way, the city was more quiet – yet tumultuous – than ever. It wasn't quiet, I thought one morning, it was tense.

I sustained myself on pure anxiety and grief. As many of those reading may know, with depression, one of the worst facets of it is knowing that you could be doing better, but that first step to try is the largest step you will ever take in your life. In the words of a most cherished psychiatrist I worked with, "I'd rather be physically ill than ill of the mind – that is pure torture."

The days turned into months as summer arrived. I attempted to make a few friends, gave a go at a half-hearted relationship, once or twice per month I would force myself to throw on crusty running shoes and occasionally joined a street-running group. I tried, I really did. For the most part, I reverted back to my introverted hopeless norm. There were times when, in my darkest most exhausted moments, I contemplated whether this was a life worth continuing. All I did, for the longest time, was work, sleep, and feel sad.

I no longer live in Chicago. I realized sunshine and nature were more important to me than I had originally anticipated, and the moment I was able to leave those LED-lit glowing corridors of the hospital for the final time, I sprinted for the exit. I don't think it's an over-exaggeration to suggest it was an experience which left me traumatized. I sometimes, in those quiet moments, still think about that woman at the window watching her husband take his final breaths.

I decided to prioritize me. I sought to find myself a tribe, a community of like-minded people who are also recovering from three years of chaos and uncertainty and demands on our time and personhood. Being a doctor or a nurse is trying at the best of times, but those weeks which became months which became years were like an active warzone. There are support groups like this all over the country. Like me, some have left the work having wanted to do nothing else all their lives.

I began to rebuild my life, even met someone, and very slowly began to feel like myself again. I spend a lot of time in nature now. It doesn't really even occur to me not to go breath fresh air and look at the sky, regardless of whether its sun, rain, or anything in between.

I think at this point it's pretty much accepted fact that COVID-19 had a significant impact on mental health, not least on the medical professionals and front-line workers of all sorts. According to the National Institutes of Health, numerous mental health symptoms have arisen following COVID infection including higher bouts of anxiety and depression, psychosis, seizures, suicidal ideations, and for many, impaired cognitive function (aka "brain fog"). For those like myself who have felt as though they'd been in that survivalist flight-or-fight mode for nearly three years now, you are not alone. Nor are we alone historically, a pandemic of this kind being long overdue, in fact. And another will likely follow in the not-too-distant future.

Clearly, the causation for rising mental illness following the COVID-19 insurgence is multifactorial. Yet, it does not take a formal psychologist to determine its origins, merely a basic understanding of our very social nature as a species, and then to factor in this extended period of isolation and uncertainty. It was a virus which infected all of us with fear, if not the virus itself – fear of becoming sick, fear of making others sick, fear of navigating a life working from home, fear of pressures to visit family or not during the holidays to "keep the COVID numbers low", and the personal (or, for some, mandated) decision to receive an experimental vaccine about which many, such as myself, felt a great deal of scepticism. Said another way, the lack of certainty combined with isolation was really bad news for human brains.

As I write this, my partner and I are talking about maybe having a baby, and even just the mention of the idea cast me back into a hospital room and I began to feel a rising tension. Long-COVID comes in many forms, I guess.

G Morse is a former medical student and nurse, who now lives in the North-West of America and works as a teaching assistant. She spends her spare time reading science-fiction, walking her dog Astro, and being active in local politics. She wishes to remain anonymous.



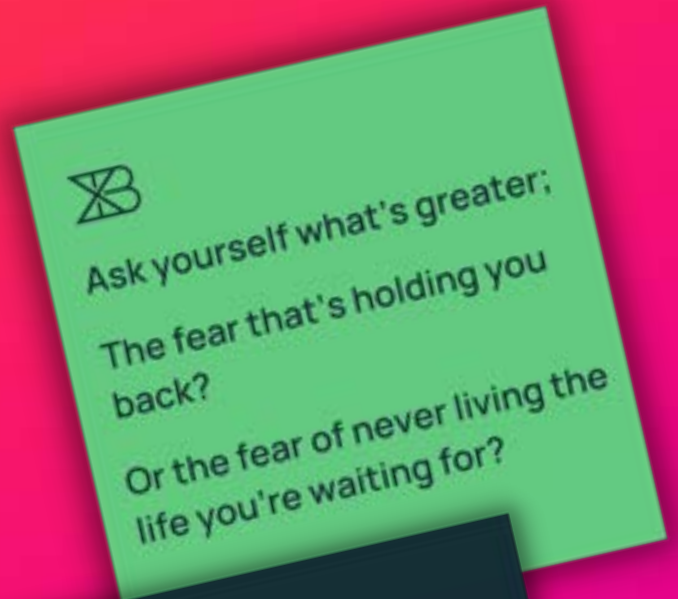


What We're Reading

Sports presenter and journalist Orla Chennaoui has long been a positive voice for mental health on her social channels, whether it's making cycling around her Amsterdam home look like the most relaxing and fun activity in the world, or speaking openly about her own experiences with anxiety and depression.

Earlier this year, Orla launched her new social channel Ten Times Braver, about mental health, about bravery, and about seizing the day. Ten Times Braver stands out from the crowd not only for its authenticity and digestibility, but because it's free of the kind of cynicism which plagues so much of social media.

Ten Times Braver is [@tentimesbraver](#) on Instagram.





My name is Arifah, in 2019 I finished my final year at University. That final year was so mentally, physically, and personally challenging that I found myself almost constantly saying I just want to be left alone, I just want to sleep, I need to rest, I need to heal my knee (which at the time was injured), and yet I continued. Daily life required me to continue, or so I felt.

Classes continued, life continued, the asks and requirements of me continued - and so I did. After University I took 7 months out to rest. 7 months of no institutional activity had me thinking I was resting. In reality, my heart and my mind was always uneasy, restless, grieving, worried, lost and wanting space. After seven months I finally found myself in a job! I did the thing everyone had spent the last 7 months of rest asking me about, "what job will you get?", "What will you do with that degree?". This work was nice, bright and full of funny and supportive people, who looked tired but in a fulfilled way. I liked that, I really liked it.



Three weeks in I start to really shine in training at work and then we hear as of tomorrow everyone must stay home and not come into the office. I'd heard casual conversations about this for a week or so and we had been making small preparations if it happened. But all a sudden - this was real. COVID-19 was announced, a virus influenza that we had no experience or data in with fatal affects spread globally and shutting down the nation. We were in lockdown. Count my blessings I think, I'm a fresh graduate, in a secure job, they've offered something called furlough for the next 6-8 months and I get paid to do... Nothing? This is amazing, I don't have any kids or a household to be responsible for, I can finally rest.



And rest I did. For the first time I felt apart, without a single person in the street or around me. I was finally alone - the thing I always wanted but feared, and I could go slow. I remember sleeping alot, it was difficult to get up, in the nights I grieved and rested and healed; in the days I smiled and built garden furniture, started an online facemask business and redecorated my house. I listened to podcasts on Covid and the vaccine creation processes and we thought through whether to get a vaccine or not until it was mandated. Slowly watching the world debate and despair and lock ourselves up.

I built a self care routine in lockdown and used my salary savings to get therapy and I exited lockdown a new person. Understanding who I was, what my boundaries and pace were, and how to be respectful of my needs and my body. I re-entered work a wiser person. My entire team had left, and I had to switch to a new job I hadn't applied for in the business and my new team was pulled together from all over the Southeast- they were fun, but this was a big change. The office I loved going to was closed to save money and I worked from home.



COVID is still here but we have so much more knowledge on it. As we all re-enter life, both a positive and energy shift has come out of the process of healing and a big scar too. Never before had everything and everyone had to stop that way. The affects so individual, but also so common.

For me, I now find myself tired in conversations in person. "In-person" is something we say now. I find myself most in tune with those hardest hit by the ongoing shaky climate. Upset, tired, angry, and yet hopeful for change and to be heard. At this point this text gets messy because that's what the experience is, and was. What happened? How has this affected me, I think? I feel it and experience it daily, but how do I write that down? How do I express this without painting a picture - it's complicated.

After years of hardship and being forced to stay in an unstable and difficult home environment, I'm growing in myself, finding my understanding and boundaries. How to work in this environment and to show up at my job and in relationships online. Everything seemed difficult in my physical space, but I found solace with the people I learned from and met online.

I had new friends, a new therapist, and a new online work team. If you'd have watched me from the street, I would have looked the same, but internally I had changed. My inner thoughts and feelings were challenged 4 times a week, my personal relationship with myself changed and as we stepped back out into the world, I had new standards and defined needs. I met tired, joyful, wise and authentic people after that and I found myself in rooms not afraid of taking up space. I finally found the world malleable after all of this disruption. Hope and gratitude birthed from me and I started to put out into the world everything I had found from my learnings in the past year - I started to dedicate my work to building safe spaces for others.

I have now just started in a new job - in inclusion and belonging. I stand with new friends, empowering and steadfast in all of our shared values and goals, whilst embracing their full messy and most human selves. I stand in this same space happy, joyful, and in-tune with myself. But still often from the safety of inside - I hardly go places, or travel, or leave the house. I need a big push to make me get out the house, to travel, to get to events and see friends in person. My previously busy and bustling life has moved completely to the reach of my fingertips.

My eyes hurt and strain and vertigo is often a reality. Forced screen breaks are a thing I have to remind myself of. Getting out for a walk once a month is a push sometimes, having to remember that driving isn't walking and spending time outside just because it's out the house is healthy and necessary. I'm human and lockdown and COVID changed me forever and managed to connect everyone from all corners of the world in unexpected ways. We hurt together, hugged together and healed together. Things will never be the same, but we stay connected in different and new ways. Social movements have tangible results now. Self-care, social justice and wellbeing are permanent standards now and talked about much more freely.

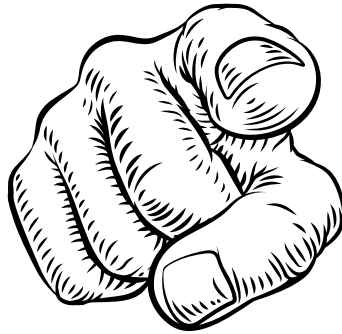
I'm still figuring out all the ways I've changed through lockdown and all of the opportunities that may be lost. My communities were hit hard by systematic racism, neglect, and underfunded care - I'm still grieving and witnessing the results of this, but I can also see the voices from within communities strengthen, grow, educate and amplify.

It's all in balance, but it's still all a lot. I'm often scared, but healing. I will never be the same and I am grateful for that.

Thank you for this space reader. Thank you for everything you also went through, I'm sorry and I'm impressed by you. Don't give up and always know that like me - you are enough. You are doing it so well. And we can do hard things. Let's keep going together.

It's gratitude and love, Arifah

Arifah is a student and hosts the 'A Phone Call to the World' Podcast
Instagram: @aphonecalltotheworld



WE NEED YOU

THIS FANZINE RELIES ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PEOPLE THAT READ IT, WHETHER IT'S IN THE FORM OF ART, POETRY, PHOTOGRAPHY, ESSAYS, ARTICLES OR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES - AS LONG AS IT'S MENTAL HEALTH RELATED, AND:

- AN ORIGINAL PIECE.
- IN ANY LANGUAGE, BUT INCLUDES AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE VERSION.
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- DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ANY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC.

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ALONG WITH

- THE NAME YOU'D LIKE USED AS AUTHOR.
- A SHORT PIECE OF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.
- ANY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS OR WEBSITES YOU'D LIKE ADDED TO YOUR BIO.

Rattle, Rattle



A short story by Taylor Boyle

I sighed as I pulled open the vanity drawer, don't get me wrong, I love routines, but starting and ending every day staring down a pill bottle isn't my idea of a good mirror moment. I heard Jennie come through the front door, "I brought breakfast!"

"In here," I replied. It was still hard to believe that, after two years of dating, Jennie had let the lease go on her studio and moved in with me.

"Hey, Babe. They didn't have bananas, the girl recommended the cookie butter french toast - she said it's even better than their bananas foster." Jennie said as she leaned in the doorway. I slammed the drawer as she came further into the en suite. "I got you a London Fog - the barista said it was like an Earl Gray latte."

"I know what a London Fog is," I blurted. Had she seen them? Sure, she knew about the chronic fatigue and the daily medicines, but she had never seen all of the pills before.

"Watcha doin'?"

"Hm?" I felt my face heat up.

Her brow furrowed. "Are you ready for breakfast, Maggie?"

"Uh, yeah."

Jennie looked me over before fixing me with a concerned stare. "Is everything alright?"

"Yeah, I was just grabbing my medicine."

"Alright."

I took a deep breath as I pulled the drawer open again and fished out three of the bottles. "I don't take them all." Jennie just stared at me, not moving. "I mean, some of them," I gestured into the drawer, "are, like just in case, you know?"

"Okay," she nodded, "any I should know about?"

I stiffened. "What do you mean?"

"Well, Mom always made sure that we knew where Landon's insulin was in case he needed it and she wasn't home and we knew the tricks to bring his sugar up if we had to. So, anything like that?"

"No, well, my inhaler is in my purse, but you knew that. These are all just maintenance medications."

"Okay." Jennie nodded and looked towards the door. "Don't want the breakfast to get cold," she said with an outstretched hand.

I followed her out to the kitchen, her hand in my right and my pills in my left. "I know it looks like a lot," I said as I helped her plate our breakfast, "but it -"

"It didn't look like a lot to me," Jennie said with a shrug.

I looked up at her in confusion. "What?"

"There were, what, ten bottles?"

"Uh, thirteen, but yeah that was pretty close."

"And you only take them because you need them, so..." she shrugged. "Does it feel like a lot to you?"

"Sometimes," I said around a bite of bacon. "I mean, I take my antidepressants every morning and a few vitamins. Then I have migraine medications and they just add up, you know?"

Jennie nodded, "Speaking of, you haven't seemed to have one in a while, not like you used to," she said as she rapped her knuckles off the table three times.

"Yeah, this new medicine seems to be working pretty well."

"I just take a multivitamin and Synthroid. They're both in my nightstand drawer, if you ever need them."

I set my fork down. "You really aren't bothered by it? I mean, a lot of people make comments about how many there are - even my pharmacist!"

"Maybe you need a new pharmacy?" Jennie offered. After a moment she just smiled. "I've seen you take your medicine before."

"Out of a travel case, but you haven't seen all of the bottles, I just thought," I took a deep breath, "I know some people find it off putting."

Jennie quirked her brow at me, and I could tell she was thinking something over. I felt my face heat up and readied myself for the questions. Why so many? What do they all do? Are you sure you need them? Have you tried alternatives? All of the things I'd heard throughout the years. I know she won't make the more hurtful comments, like only crazy people need that many medications or that it was all in my head.

She smiled at me. "Well, I didn't really think anything of it. How's the London Fog?"

I let go of the breath I was holding. "I-it's good. What do you think of the cookie butter french toast?"

"She was right, I think it's even better than the bananas foster."

"Me too," I said as I squeezed her hand.

Taylor Boyle has been writing stories for over a decade. Her favorite genres are mysteries and contemporary romances, but she'll read anything you put in front of her. When she isn't writing or reading, she can be found playing with her two cats, Macaroni and Clover, or going on a hike.

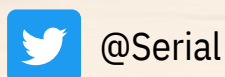
Instagram: @boil_taylor

Twitter: @Boil_Taylor



We Were Three is a powerful podcast that features the experiences of the Crawford family as they navigate the challenges of grief, loss, and the search for healing in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Produced by the team behind the groundbreaking true-crime podcast Serial, the podcast offers an intimate glimpse into the experiences of a family grappling with the devastating impact of the pandemic on their lives.

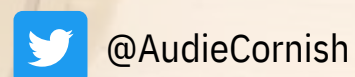
Hosted by Lisa Crawford, a mother of three who lost her husband Bob to cancer in 2016, the podcast offers a raw and honest portrayal of the family's journey through the pandemic. From the early days of the pandemic to the difficult process of lockdown and quarantine, the Crawford family shares their fears, their moments of sadness and despair, and the small moments of hope that keep them going.



'The Assignment with Audie Cornish' from CNN explores a wide range of topics through personal narratives, with each episode featuring a different guest sharing their unique experiences and perspectives on a particular subject.

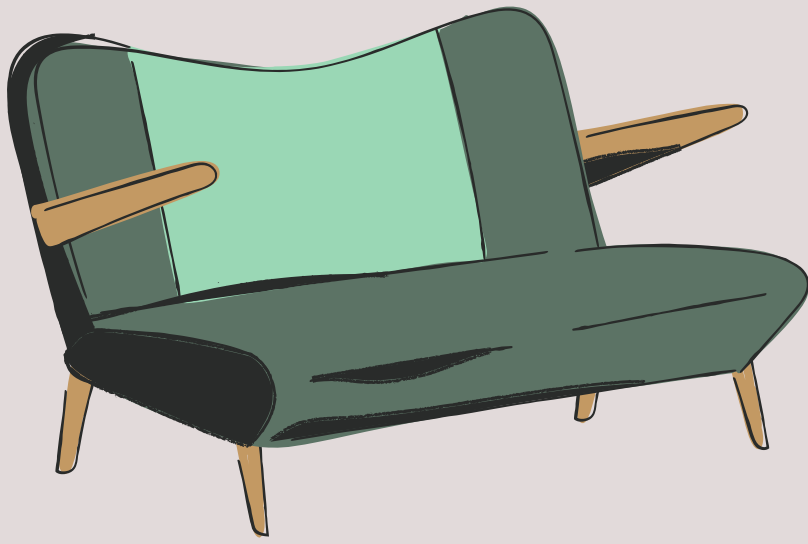
In January 12th's episode "The Long Arc of Long Covid" host Audie Cornish speaks with Dr. David Putrino, a physical therapist and researcher who is leading a study on Long Covid at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. Dr. Putrino describes some of the treatments and therapies being used to help Long Covid patients, including physical therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and medications such as anti-inflammatories and blood thinners. as well as having in-depth discussions with patients and researchers.

A must listen for anyone with experience or interest in the long-standing physical effects of the virus.



PICK OF THE PODS

THE BEST PODCASTS FOR YOUR EARS AND YOUR MINDS



From Couch to

Computer

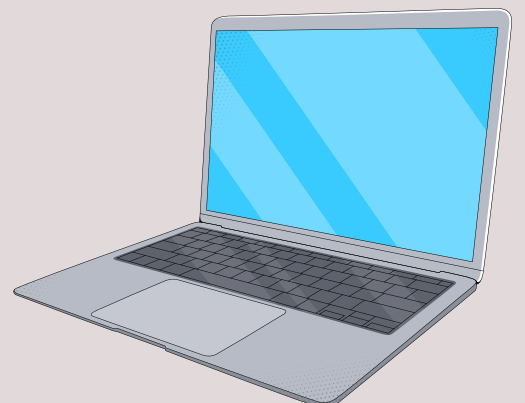
A Psychotherapist's Tale

Words by Dr Anjali Singhania

For those unaware, the COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on people's mental health globally. The lockdowns, social distancing, and isolation measures put in place to control the spread of the virus led to significant changes in the way psychotherapists such as myself delivered services, and forced us to adopt new ways of working to ensure clients continued to receive the support they need while trying to safe during a time of great uncertainty.

In amongst the difficulties of our own, those in the helping professions had to help clients navigate the emotional impact of the pandemic, whether it be grief, anxiety, depression, or simply the uncertainty and fear of contracting a potentially deadly virus. Some of us lost clients to COVID-19. We provided emotional support to clients who have lost loved ones to the virus, even when facing losses of our own, and to help those facing the loss of jobs or businesses due to the lockdown, while potentially facing similar issues ourselves. Like many in my profession, my first day of working online with clients was the first day I was forced to.

By far the most common issue we faced was a question of how to cope with the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the pandemic. Some – clients and therapists alike - struggled to deal with the stress of constantly changing lockdown regulations, the financial insecurity, and the fear of contracting the virus. We were required to think on our



feet and develop new techniques to help clients manage their anxiety and deliver them virtually, and when we finally emerged from the heightened state of the pandemic, our practices and methods were likely changed permanently.

The sudden switch to working online and its effects should not be underestimated. Many clients simply didn't want to work online or struggled for privacy. Some were reluctant to allow therapists an insight into their homes through the webcams hastily purchased online and set up in spare rooms and on kitchen tables. Clients lost a crucial element to the work, although this likely didn't reveal itself until later – the journey. No longer was there a time between home and their therapist's offices; instead, it was a click and a quick return to emails or their next meeting.

This shift to online therapy was a significant change for therapists who had not previously offered their services virtually such as myself. However, as lockdown measures continued (and in some parts of the world, lifted and subsequently returned) we began to discover some previously unconsidered benefits. I certainly met with people I suspect may not have begun therapy without the comforting barrier of a laptop screen. The convenience of online therapy also made it easier for people to schedule appointments and attend sessions, especially those who had busy schedules or lived in remote areas. It came with its challenges too, including technical issues, privacy concerns, the loss of body language and use of silence, and the difficulty of building a rapport with clients without physical interaction. I began more sessions than I would have liked by saying “can you hear me?”

I think its broadly true to say that most therapists, even now, aren't trained in online work despite its unique challenges, and I was certainly in that boat. It's a different skillset to establish a rapport with a client through online sessions, and I found a great loss in only seeing those I did meet from the shoulders up. I met one client who shook his knee almost uncontrollably when he felt anxious. I only discovered this during our 16th session when we met in-person for the first time.

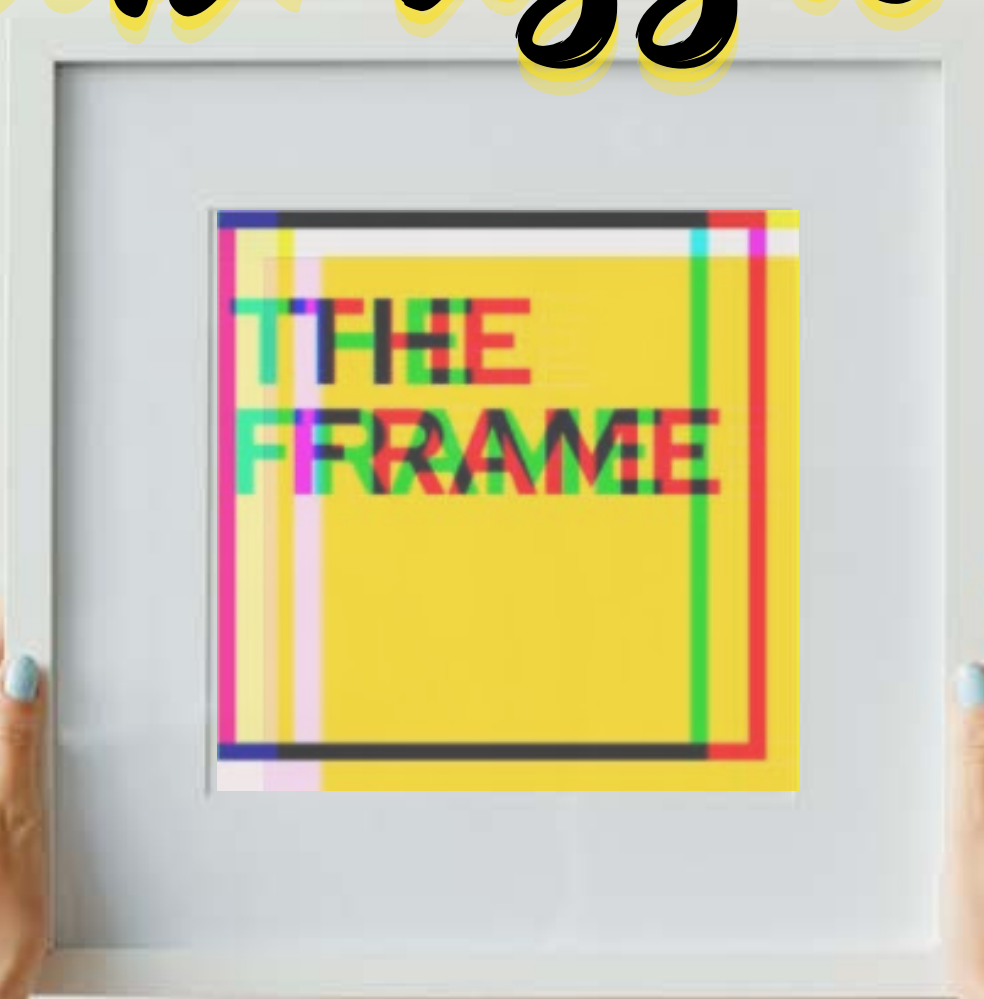
Dr Singhania is a mental health professional working in Pakistan, writing in English as a second language.

Psychotherapists had to find creative ways to overcome these challenges and ensure that the quality of therapy was not compromised, adapting our approaches to suit the virtual setting, such as using more visual aids and providing written resources to support clients outside of sessions. When a recent study was conducted to investigate the main difficulties therapists encountered when switching from in-person to online therapy, the findings spoke loud and clear to the issues we faced: patients' privacy, our own boundaries, and an ability to make an emotional with new clients.

What we now know is that the pandemic and lockdown measures had a huge impact on the mental health of people globally, leading to an increase in stress, anxiety, and depression. As the timeline of COVID-19 continued, it also became clear to me just how significant the mental health challenges faced by frontline workers were, from the stress of being higher risk of contracting the virus, to their own losses, to the enormity of the physical and emotional energy required to do their jobs. I began to see an uptick in enquiries from people in these professions looking for help, and that continues to this day. Several sociodemographic factors, including gender, age, occupation, site of employment, and department of employment, as well as psychological factors, including a lack of social support and self-efficacy, were linked to greater stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and insomnia in healthcare workers. Many therapists began offering support groups and workshops specifically designed for these individuals, providing a safe space to discuss their experiences and receive the support they needed.

So please forgive us, folks. Us therapists had to adapt quickly to the new realities of the pandemic and find ways to continue offering effective support to their clients. The shift to online therapy allowed therapists to reach more people and offer more accessible services, but also came with its challenges, and we're only human after all. We wouldn't have passed through them all perfectly. But perhaps it's been a forced change for the better. I now work remotely with a number of clients, and continue my in-person practice, and in the glacial paced world of psychotherapy, where slow change is a prerequisite, an involuntary nudge into modernisation might be just what we've needed.

Artist Submissions





KARLA

BYRNE



Karla says: I am a fourth-year photography student in Dublin, Ireland and for my final project, I am photographing my own mental health with the intention of confronting it rather than hiding it as I have for many years. I had intentions of working on this project a couple of years ago but quickly stopped as I did not feel ready for it. I felt that now is the time as mental health is nothing to be ashamed of. The project gives a sense of vulnerability due to my being naked in the photographs. I am exposing my own mental health in a literal and metaphorical sense. This work is the way many people have found out how I struggle with my mental health. I chose to use self-portraiture as I have full control of the photographs. It also leaves me confronting my own mental health every time I view them. The work has no title yet as I haven't been able to think of one at the moment.





KARLA BYRNE

INSTAGRAM: @DUCKYMOMO.65
WWW.KARLABYRNE.COM

ALMCHRE



INSTAGRAM
@SEAMINT_CANDLE



Alysson McKee emerging Canadian artist working in Edmonton, Alberta. Self-taught in painting and digital art, her passion is to use her talents and voice to empower and amplify messages of social inclusion, community and connectedness, as well as to reflect her lived experience with mental illness.

'DECAY'



'MY WORLD'



'IS THERE AN OUTSIDE'



BEN SAUSMAN

BEN IS A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ARTIST WHO FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON DICHOTOMY AND MENTAL HEALTH WITHIN HIS ART. THESE PIECES REPRESENT THE DICHOTOMY OF MIND DURING COVID; THE ISOLATION, DESPERATION AND THE DEPRESSION AND ITS IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH. THESE CONTRAST WITH PIECES REPRESENTING A DESIRE TO ESCAPE AND VENTURE INTO A FANTASY WORLD OF COLOUR AND LIFE - THOUGH NOT MENTALLY STABLE DUE TO COVID AND ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE ISSUES. PSYCHEDELIC DREAMS OF ESCAPING THE PRISON IT FELT LIKE.



NATURE DREAM (NERVE
DAMAGE)



NOSTALGIA NARCOTIC
DREAMING EVAPORATING



'PRETTY (OVERWHELMING)
BEAUTIFUL (INSANITY)

BEN SAUSMAN

INSTAGRAM: @BESAU_ART

FABRICE MILLET



DURING COVID, FABRICE DELIVERED FOOD TO PEOPLE IN NEED,
AND CREATED A PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF EMPTY CITIES

HIS ENTIRE PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION CAN BE VIEWED AT
WWW.FABRICEMILLETPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

INSTAGRAM: @2MMPRODUCTIONS

ART

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THIS PIECE IS CALLED "SAVE ME" THAT I MADE WITH ANALOGUE AND DIGITAL TECHNIQUES DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC WHEN WE WERE ALL TOLD TO SING HAPPY BIRTHDAY TWICE WHILST WASHING OUR HANDS. THIS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON ME AND TO BE HONEST I'M STILL IN THE HABIT OF DOING IT TO THIS DAY! THE IDEA THAT THE SIMPLE ACT OF WASHING YOUR HANDS TO "SAVE US" FROM THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC STRUCK A CHORD AND THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THIS LARGE TERRIBLE KILLING MONSTER THAT WAS SURROUNDING US ALL VS A SIMPLE ACT THAT EACH ONE OF US COULD CONTROL WAS ONE I WANTED TO CONVEY IN THIS ARTWORK.



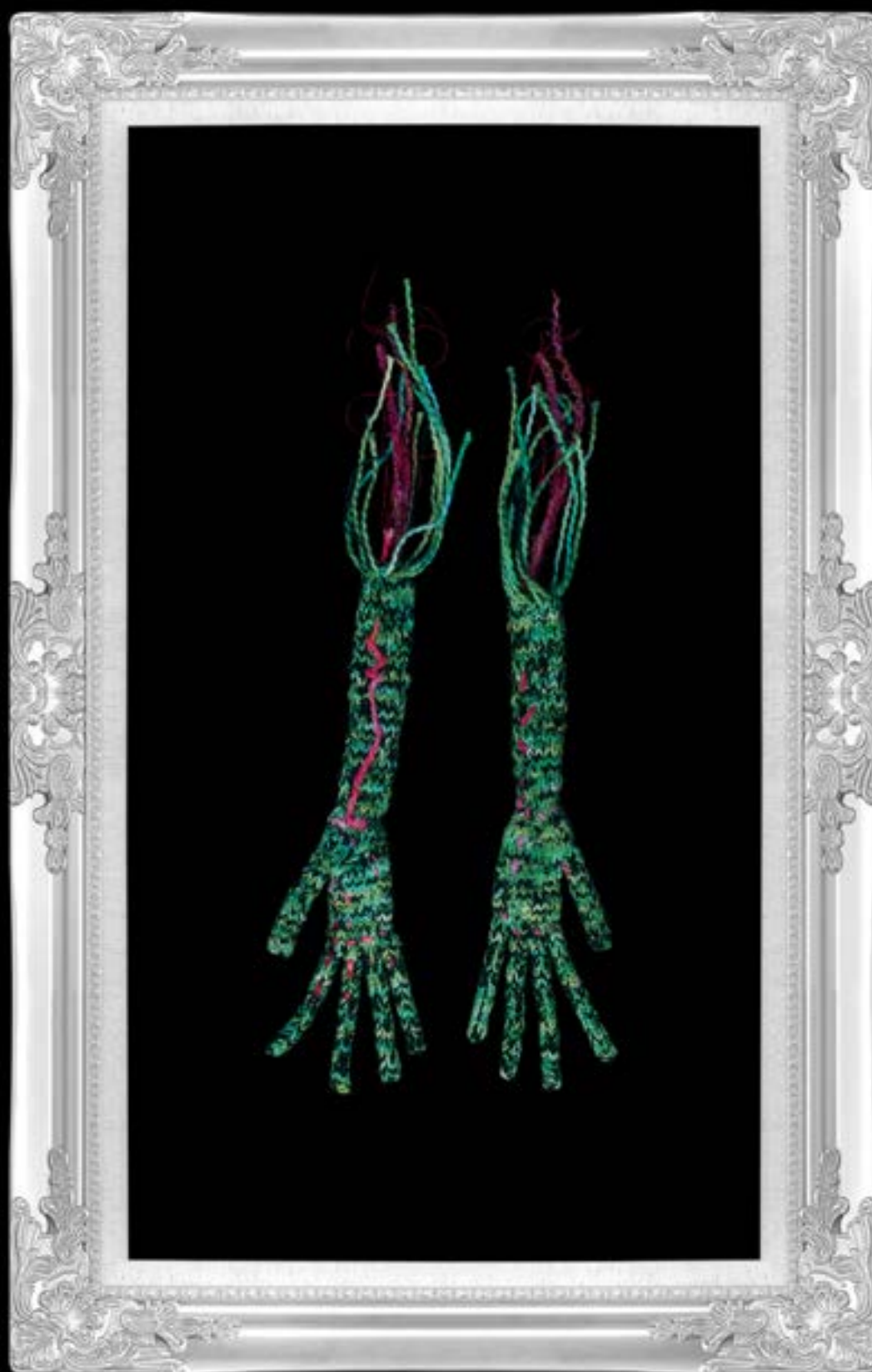
DESTRUKTIV ART IS JESS, A TEA-DRINKING METALHEAD GAMER GIRL WHO HAS LOVED MESSING ABOUT WITH PAPER FROM AS FAR BACK AS SHE CAN REMEMBER.

YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HER WORK ON HER INSTAGRAM PAGE, @DESTRUKTIVART.

PS - DESTRUKTIV ART WILL ALSO BE THE COVER ARTIST FOR OUR FOURTH ISSUE!



JENNA VAN BUEKENHOUT



'SELF PORTRAIT BY HANDS THAT PAY RENT'

It's difficult to find enough time to work on my art, so I started the first covid lockdown trying to see it as an opportunity. Instead, I found that I couldn't make any art. I spent two weeks in quarantine playing video games, and then several months returning to making through sewing, but I didn't make anything that felt meaningful for more than a year. Once I regained some sense of normalcy, my desire to make art returned bearing appreciation and an awareness of my routine, environment, and community.



WHY DON'T YOU SIMPLY (MOVE THE ROCK)

Jenna Van Buekenhout

@jenna_threads on instagram

jennathreads.wixsite.com/arts



'CASUALTY OF DOMESTIC SUPERCONDUCTIVITY (DETAIL)'



Victoria Johnson

Both of these images were taken at a place called “The Blueberry Farm” in June 2020 near Livingston, Texas. It was our first time ever picking blueberries. It was right at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and everyone’s sanity was on the line. It was great to get out and go do something different and I was happy to be able to bring my camera out and photograph it.

Victoria Johnson is 41 years old, a mom of two girls, and the owner of Skye Breese Photography. She is from Independence, Louisiana and has roots in upstate New York. She currently resides in the Livingston, Texas area.

Victoria is a monthly contributor to Native Hoop Magazine and has several other publishing credits. She has also had her work exhibited at a street photography showcase in San Antonio, and at a Fine Art Gallery in the Houston area. This is the second feature of her work in The Frame.

Instagram: @skyebreese83

TikTok: @skyebreese15

Twitter: @VJ16157349

RICHARD WELLS

I have struggled with depression since my early teens but I'm not very good at talking or verbally expressing my feelings, so I've always turned to art and photography to provide the language to do that.

Photography in particular became my preferred coping mechanism, it allowed me to switch off from negative thoughts, exercise, see new places and create a safe space to escape into.

The Covid I9 pandemic caused a significant disruption to my coping strategies though, lock-downs were imposed which restricted movements and being stuck in the same house for months on end was a major obstacle to my creativity.

I went into the pandemic with a long standing mental illness, trying to adapt my coping strategies to this strange new existence whilst managing the anxieties that the virus brought and juggling the pressures of work and childcare. It was a lethal cocktail and eventually I hit a severe episode

These photos were taken over the three years of the Covid I9 pandemic, and in some ways document my journey through the lock-downs.



'After The Storm'

this was taken in the summer of 2020, it was a period between lock-downs and we took a trip to the beach. It had been raining all day but then there was a break in the storm and out of the drizzle i spotted a lone figure walking his dog.

Richard Wells is a photographer based in North Yorkshire, England.

He studied Fine Art at Leeds Metropolitan university, England and switched his practice from painting and printing to concentrate solely on photography in 2012.

His work focuses on themes of identity, loneliness, alienation, disconnection and sanctuary.



'Adrift'

Spring 2022 - This image of birds resting on the water didn't come out as intended, its underexposed but i like it, the graininess of the image adds a nice atmosphere.



'Fortitude'

August 2022 - You could hardly tell there had been a pandemic by this point. people had given up on masks, social distancing and were resuming life as normal. this was a summers day but a sea fret had drifted in and people continued with their picnics in the mist. There's a surrealism and humour to this image but its also characteristic of the British mentality to not let the weather ruin your day.



'Derealisation'

June 2021 - I was really unwell at the point that this photo was taken, a week later I hit crisis point. At this stage I was experiencing severe anxiety and dissociating. I took a walk in the rain through the local fields to try and ground myself, i ended up drenched and covered in grass seeds and this is one of my favourite photo's from that walk.

Instagram - @richwellsphotography

Facebook - RDWellsPhotography

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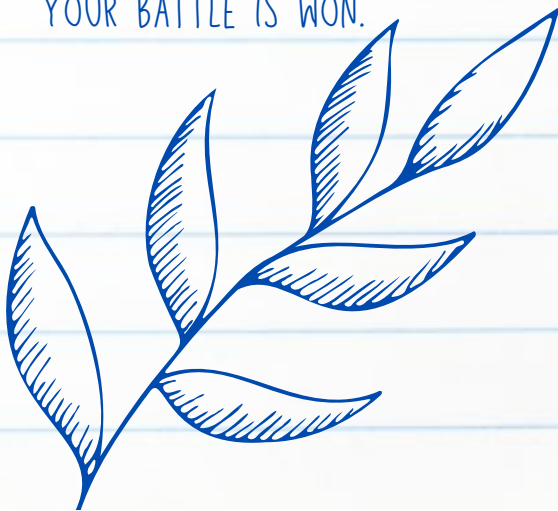
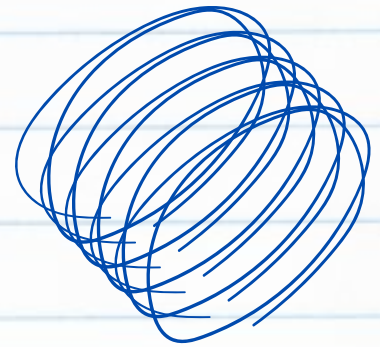
THE
FRAME

DRIFTWOOD

BY SUE WOOD

FLOATING AND SWIRLING, WISHING TO FLEE,
HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN AT SEA?
WASHED UPON SHORES, ABANDONED ON SANDS,
RELENTLESS TIDES AND DISTANT LANDS.
BATTERED BY STORMS IN DIFFERENT SEAS,
YOU CANNOT MOVE ON UNTIL, YOU BREAK FREE.
BATTLES AND TORMENTS HAVE SHAPED YOUR FORM,
ENDURING ALL, YOU AWAIT THE NEXT STORM.
LONGING FOR PEACE AND A TIME TO HIDE,
BUT STORMS AND DEMONS,
YOU MUST ABIDE.

HOPE AT LAST, A FRIENDLY SHORE,
THOUGH BESIEGED YOU MUST, EXPLORE.
LOWER YOUR GUARD AND FINALLY TRUST,
UNBURDEN YOUR MIND, A TIME TO ADJUST.
TAKE TENTATIVE STEPS ON YOUR FRAGILE EARTH,
LOSE ANGER, ANXIETY, SHAME AND LOW WORTH.
FEEL THE RELEASE OF THE CRUSHING WEIGHT,
YOU NOW CONTROL YOUR FUTURE FATE.
CALMING SEAS, BLUE SKIES AND SUN,
YOUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT,
YOUR BATTLE IS WON.



SUE WOOD HAS LIVED ON THE ISLE OF SKYE, SCOTLAND FOR OVER 25 YEARS AND LOVES THE PEACE, TRANQUILLITY AND PACE OF LIFE. I AM A RETIRED LECTURER WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS. I SPEND MOST OF MY TIME WRITING POETRY, PAINTING AND WORKING ON THE CROFT.

SUE HAS PUBLISHED TWO POETRY BOOKS: 'ISLE OF SKYE TIMELESS SHORES' AND 'ORAN UISGE WILDFLOWER MEADOW'. IN 2022, SHE PUBLISHED HER FIRST CHILDRENS BOOK 'MUDDY MOOS AND MIDGES'

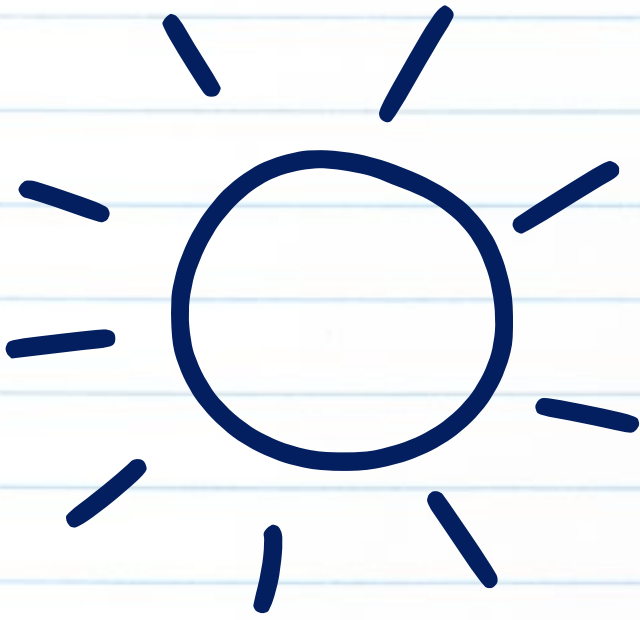
SUE CAN BE FOUND AT HER WEBSITE, WWW.SUEWOODSKYE.COM



@SUEWOODSKYE AND SKYE_MINDFULNESS

REMEMBERING THE NEW NORMAL

BY CHRISTIAN WARD



ELBOW-BUMP THE GINGER TOM
PAWING YOUR DUVET. WATCH HIM
DOUBLE UP AS THE SUN
ON THIS DREARY MARCH DAY.

KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE FROM YOUR
SHADOW. UNSNAG IT FROM COAT HOOKS,
CAR DOORS, BRAMBLES OR GORSE
IF NEEDED. WEAR GLOVES WHEN DOING SO.

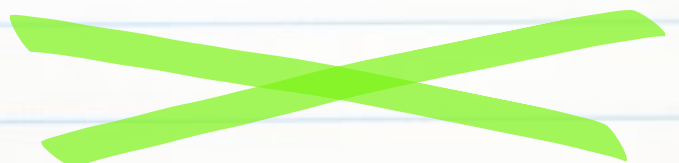
QUARANTINE YOUR HOBBIES AND VACUUM
SEAL ALL ESSENTIAL FRIENDSHIPS. IGNORE
THE POST IT NOTES MIGRATING LIKE BUTTERFLIES
DURING BOUTS OF LONELINESS.

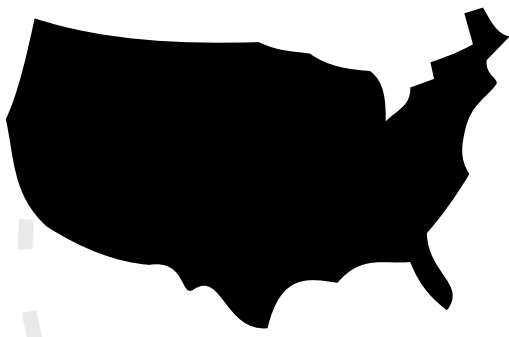
PRETEND TO BE SOMEONE ELSE
DURING VIDEO CALLS. IGNORE CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT THINGS GETTING BACK TO NORMAL,
FOOTBALL MATCHES, QUEUING IN SUPERMARKETS

OR HOW INSTANT COFFEE TRANSPORTS
YOU BACK TO SHEFFIELD. BE PARANOID
WHEN THE MAN FROM THE JOBCENTRE
CALLS EVERY SECOND WEDNESDAY

OF THE MONTH. THINK OF MAKING BOXER
SHORT FLAGS FOR SEMAPHORE MESSAGES.
NEVER DISCUSS YOUR PLANS ON THE PHONE
WHILE HE ASKS IF YOU'RE STILL ON THE LINE,
HAS SWORN HE'S SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE ELSE BEFORE.

CHRISTIAN WARD IS A UK-BASED
WRITER WHO HAS RECENTLY
APPEARED IN OPEN MINDS
QUARTERLY, DOUBLE SPEAK,
OBSESSED WITH PIPEWORK,
PRIMEVAL MONSTER, TIPTON POETRY
JOURNAL, AMAZINE AND RYE
WHISKEY REVIEW.





5,500 MILES

By Chelsey Randall-Wright

I have a small family and grew up in California (the only native there is, or will ever be) with only my parents around. Both had moved to Oakland in the late 1970s and early 1980s, my Mom from New York and my Dad from London. My family has a long history of moving around, so it should be no surprise I ended up making the opposite journey to my father, ending up in London. I only ever knew one grandparent, and while she lived on the other side of the country in New York, we were close. We'd see each other a few times a year and every summer my Grandma and I would go on holiday, just the two of us. She wasn't a perfect person by any means (who is), but she always tried her best with me. I'm an only child and so is both my mom and grandma, and I had the benefit of being far enough away that seeing her felt like something special, but also close enough that we did see each other somewhat regularly.

By the time I went to University, my grandmother had developed dementia and could no longer live on the other side of the country by herself. I was in my final year of my undergrad, living in the next city over, Berkeley, and trying to research and write a thesis. To make things worse,

my grandma's boyfriend of a few years passed unexpectedly, and the relationship that kept her on some sort of schedule was no longer there. My folks flew out to New York and brought her back to Oakland. We needed to put her in assisted living, but she was strong willed and stubborn in that way that happens when you develop memory issues and don't realise you need help. We managed to find a space for her in a nearby care home and my parents went back out to NY to settle her affairs, move her belongings, and sell the house. I temporarily moved partially back home to take care of the house and be closer to her, all while trying to finish my degree. Over the next couple of years we'd take turns going back and forth weekly, managing her medicine, taking her to appointments - all while she's losing more and more of her short-term memory and often seemingly resenting the help.



By 2020, her condition had progressed, and she is now living in a different assisted living facility in memory care. Now living in London, I'd only seen my grandma a couple of times in person, and as lockdown began at the end of March, my parents were no longer allowed to physically visit my grandma. COVID-19, as we know, became rampant in senior care facilities. The facility starts to set up video calls with family members, a completely foreign and terrifying concept to her. Initially my parents take these video calls, but the calls aren't easy and often she would end up confused or frustrated. Halfway around the world, I agree to start making these arranged calls late at night on Sundays. As the months go by, I watch as she becomes frailer and more confused on each call, sometimes unable to recognise me on the screen in front of her, sometimes believing I am my mother instead, or sometimes getting so frustrated at the nurses that we never really get a chance to say anything meaningful at all. While in some ways I am so thankful that these calls were even a possibility, the pain of watching from afar as she got progressively worse without even being able to give her a hug was a lot to take in.

As we got closer to the 2022 holiday season, I was getting ready to move flats for the first time in 5 years and it was expected that some lockdown restrictions were going to soon be lifted. I was feeling slightly more optimistic than I had in months, but the worry about my grandma was always there. A couple weeks before Christmas, I got the text I had been dreading - Grandma had fallen, needed immediate surgery and was unlikely to live much longer. They had to move her to a different facility as an emergency and she had to spend time in a hospital. She caught COVID during this process, which only further weakened her state and prevented my parents from being able to see her in person once again. One night the nurses found her unresponsive and

slightly blue, but instead of letting her go peacefully, decided to ignore her DNR (do not resuscitate order) and revive her. She spent another week pointlessly clinging to life, unable to speak or fully be aware of her surroundings. My parents did get to see her one last time, but by that time she could not acknowledge they were there. I'm an outsider to all this, living all of this through my phone, 5,500 miles away. I unable to help, unable to do anything at all - all I could do was wait for the call. It eventually came a few days before Christmas. I sat and cried. I felt hopeless. Not because she had passed (she was in her 90's and even before lockdown had a significantly reduced quality of life), but how. No one deserves the last few months of life that she had, and I can only imagine how scared and alone she really must've felt, unable to process what was going on around her, let alone the gravity of a global pandemic.

The holidays came and passed, and my family had to make the difficult decision to bury her in California, rather than in New York where she already had a plot with her parents. It wasn't her wishes, but again we had to make a decision on what was possible in a global pandemic. At the very beginning of 2021, I moved to the other side of London, while my parents got ready for her funeral. Again, my focus needed to be split. She'd only moved to California in her late 80's and had no friends there and so on her funeral day. The only attendees were my parents. I'd pre-prepared something for them to say on my behalf and tried desperately to call in so I could be part of the funeral too, even if from afar by video link. There was no cell phone service at the cemetery, so I sat, once again helpless and crying, feeling like my grandma deserved better - from me and from the world as a whole.

*In addition to her work with **The Frame**, Chelsey works as a programme co-ordinator for a large UK charity. Originally from Oakland, California, Chelsey now lives in North London with her cat Luna*

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GOT A STORY TO TELL?

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