

Participant 1

I: on record you give me permission to record you?

P1: Yes, it is okay with me

I: Who lives in the family/household?

P: Do you mean the people living in my house?

I: Yes.

P: I live in my house, Grandfather lives with us (Husband).

My two grandchildren. I worked, but I stopped, because the after-care fees are killing me financially. Grandfather is working seven days a week. M is my oldest grandson. I brought him up from birth, he is 12 years old now. My grand daughter I brought up since she was 6 months old. She is 6 years old already. We thought that she is ready to go back to her mom, but assessments showed that she has no relationship with her mother and that she can not go back yet. She sees me as her primary caregiver.

I: Can you share with me what you feel were some of the biggest changes that you had to deal with during the COVID-19 pandemic?

P: I think, work was a very bad experience for us. My husband was one of the people whom was laid off. He was retrenched. And Uhm.. Me and my family are people who can plan for longer periods than just today or tomorrow. So financially wise we were okay. But it was very difficult for the children. The isolation was the worst. They are used to go to school since she was one year old. They were so use to have friends, and that time they needed to stay home. So, grandmother (Participant) we lived in a two-bedroom house, and I needed to go and walk outside. Till this day my granddaughter will say "I think we need to go for a walk"

I: How did the adults care for the children needs during this time?

P: uhm... We needed to keep them busy. So I am usually the one taking care of the children, because my husband is working. But he got laid off, and everyone was at home. My husband found it very difficult. I baked cookies, I made clothes for dolls, we made up our own games and played it. We tried to do new things during this time.

I: Can you tell me how you and your family cared for the children in the household during the COVID-19 pandemic

The fact that my husband did not go to work, was very difficult for him. For me, I was use to be at home, and not working. Financially we were

able to survive, but we were okay. We were actually more fine during cove 19 time, that we are now. I don't know why. But we were very blessed to be able to say that we were actually okay. The moment when the levels got less restricting my husband was able to back to work again.

I: Please tell me how routines and responsibilities changed

P: We kept our routine as close to normal as possible. I felt that the children still need to be stimulated, they cannot just sleep a not do anything. So, I still tried to stimulate them, I gave them projects that they needed to do. The smaller one made drawings. I felt there was something needed to be physical, and therefore we went for walks outside.

I: How did you feel about all the changes in the caring of the children?

P: My granddaughter was fine. Her normal school was only till 12:00 anyway so she was used being at home. It was worse for M. He wanted to go to school, he missed his friends a lot. But my husband really tried, he often took M outside to go kick ball outside, or they worked on making their fishing gear for when they can go fishing again. I think we tried to the best of our abilities to keep them feel normal.

I: Who did you ask or go to for help and/or who offered help to you during the COVID-19 pandemic?

P: Do not have a mom or dad, actually I really don't have anyone. It was just me and my husband. We didn't really have anyone else. My husband parents are less privilege than we are, and they were not able to support us.

I: How did you keep in touch with extended family, friends, neighbours, church, or religious support?

P: Mainly telephonically. We had no contact with anyone.

I: How did your children understand COVID-19? (What did it mean to them? How did they make sense of it?)

P: I think they struggled, especially my granddaughter because at that stage she needed to go and visit her mom, but mom lived across a border, so mom was not able to come and pick her up. This resulted in her becoming fully dependant on grandma. Mom was not able to interact telephonically.

I: mom did not make any contact?

P: Near the end of Covid, she did ask if she can come and get her daughter for a visit. But by that time, the grand daughter did not want to see her mother. I got the feeling that the grand daughter did not see the need, for visiting her mother, she was scared too.

I: Who did your children speak to about their feelings during COVID?

P: They talked to me, and I think only me. Grandfather is always working. Grandpa is the “fun” grandpa. He plays with them, but grandma is the one who needs to deal with the heart matters.

I: One of the biggest things that changed for children, was when they had to school from home. Can you share how your child may have experienced this? (What was challenging? What did they enjoy about this? Were they able to keep up with the work?) Please motivate your answer.

P: Wearing face masks was something that did not like, and the physical or social distancing between friends. Especially the small ones. It influenced the way they wanted to play with friends. M was able to understand but still did not like it. I think it was a time of stress for them. You go to school, but you are not allowed to interact with one another.

I: How did you and the family cope with having to monitor and supervise the children’s schooling during this time? (What was challenging? What worked well? How did you have to adapt your household to accommodate schooling and working from home?)

P: We did not experience any difficulty regarding this. M experienced everything with drama, but this is possible because he is becoming a teenager now. As if the events were magnified. But M trusted me to help him with his school work. It would seem that he became worried quickly over other things and family issues. But I will always tell him, just be 12. I will sort out the rest.

I: Do you think your child missed out on anything during the COVID-19 pandemic? Can you please explain further? (Aspects such as not being able to play with friends; extramural/cultural activities, not being able to see extended family, such as grandparents and/or cousins could be included)

P: Interaction between friends. The feeling of being apart of something. “Place of belonging” was not there.

I: Were they able to keep in touch with their friends from school and how were they able to do so?

P: No. No contact was allowed. Grandparents tried to keep contact with parents, but taking into consideration the circumstances the parents didn't really tried to keep contact. The parents could not always afford airtime or data for calls. At that time M was still very angry at his parents for breaking up, and he therefore did not want to call them or contact them in any way.

I: Did the behaviour of the child or children change during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, please explain.

P: There was a definite difference. Mostly because they were so out of routine. The children did not feel that they belonged somewhere. They are in the house and they want to live with their grandparents, but they also had the urge to go outside. So yes. It was definitely influenced. Especially M. he was bored and irritated, because everyday was exactly the same. As I said we tried to do fun things, but one can only do that much.

I: Please describe your family's financial position during the COVID-19 pandemic.

P: The day the President announced lockdown, the work immediately retrenched their people. So, all the money my husband got, we divided into a few months, and we had a little savings account. We were able to survive. But we also saved on things such as money for petrol. So the monthly income was less, but we were able to manage it and lived very normal.

I: Please elaborate on how the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted your family's financial position (such as financial difficulties; how and where you coped and/or found support) and how these may have impacted the child/children and caring for them.

P: The overall living was very normal and I didn't think they knew we had less. But birthdays was very bad for them, we were not able to buy presents or invite friends for a party. But overall care stayed the same.

I: What did you struggle with in terms of resources

P: Example?

I: Petrol or food

P: I think going to the doctor for other reasons than Covid.

I: If there were difficulties, what were the main things that were lacking (such as enough food and necessities; technology for the children's learning or entertainment; resources that the children usually received at school such as school feeding)

P: Mostly missing out on friends, not having birthday parties. But we made sure to have Internet so we watched movies.

I: What were your worries or concerns about these difficulties, especially in relation to the children?

Medical help if we really needed it. I was also worried about the children when they went back to school. I worried if they are going to get sick.

I: How did the children feel about or cope with these difficulties

P: we tried to keep everything as normal as possible so that the children did not need to worry about anything.

1. Please describe the employment situation of yourself and the rest of your household during the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Please elaborate on changes, difficulties, or positive factors (such as loss of work, working from home, changes in working hours) and how these may have impacted the child/children and caring for them

Discussed above.