Communities for Immunity: Stories about COVID
The Peale, Baltimore | 2022

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)): Hello.

Michelle Fisher ([00:00](#)): Hello.

Speaker 1 ([00:02](#)): Thank you for taking this time for me. All right. Can you say who you are and tell me a little bit about yourself?

Michelle Fisher ([00:09](#)): My name is Michelle Fisher. I work for the University of Maryland Hospital. I've been there over 30 years. I'm a mother of one grown son.

Speaker 1 ([00:25](#)): What community do you live in?

Michelle Fisher ([00:27](#)): I live in the Darley Park community.

Speaker 1 ([00:30](#)): Thank you. How has COVID vaccination affected your community? Would you say positive or negative or...

Michelle Fisher ([00:37](#)): The vaccination?

Speaker 1 ([00:38](#)): Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michelle Fisher ([00:41](#)): I think it's been positive. I, myself, am fully vaccinated and boostered.

Speaker 1 ([00:49](#)): Great. That's good to hear positive. You'd be surprised how many people think negative. I guess this would make these important. People have so many different points of view of that.

Michelle Fisher ([00:58](#)): Well, I didn't think that way when COVID first hit. I was totally against it. But then my father passed from COVID and it changed my outlook on vaccinations.

Speaker 1 ([01:11](#)): Okay. Did you have COVID yourself?

Michelle Fisher ([01:15](#)): Never.

Speaker 1 ([01:16](#)): Never. Great. Okay. How has the vaccination changed the way people interact?

Michelle Fisher ([01:22](#)): Well, for me, it's made me less antsy or paranoid about being around people. And since I work in the hospital environment, it's made me feel safer going into work, because I never stopped working where most of my coworkers stopped working for that first year, and I was the only one still going in. And so it's given me a little boost of confidence with going in and being around patients and people. So I think it was definitely a positive move.

Speaker 1 ([02:05](#)): Great. What are the social components of the pandemic that no one really talks about?

Michelle Fisher ([02:14](#)): Well, the fact that it has changed people's lives so drastically, especially when it comes to being social. Whereas you used to hug people and greet people with a handshake or whatever, now it's pretty much just wave or some people do this elbow thing, which I'm not into.

Speaker 1 ([02:40](#)): Right.

Michelle Fisher ([02:42](#)): And people crave hugs and touch and actually being around people and COVID has isolated a lot of people. And there are a lot of people who have not even been outside of their homes yet, because they're so paranoid about this because it's so unknown and nobody knows what exactly it is, what's going on. You get so much different information all day long. So, I mean it's definitely screwed people up socially.

Speaker 1 ([03:17](#)): True. What positively have you seen come out of the pandemic in relating to the way people act towards each other?

Michelle Fisher ([03:28](#)): I think people care about each other a little more. Where people took life for granted, they don't take life for granted anymore and you sort of value your life and other people's lives a little more.

Speaker 1 ([03:46](#)): Hmm. That's good. What shifts have you seen or difference have you seen within yourself, if any?

Michelle Fisher ([03:55](#)): In myself?

Speaker 1 ([03:56](#)): Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michelle Fisher ([04:00](#)): Well, it's almost the same thing with like where I would not really worry about other people so much, now it's like I think about others a little more, I'm more in tune to picking up a phone and calling friends or family members to check on them. So yeah. And that's probably about the only way I've changed because otherwise not too much has changed about me. When it first hit though, I was very cautious.

Speaker 1 ([04:38](#)): Sure.

Michelle Fisher ([04:39](#)): I was the one wearing gloves and not touching nothing and all this stuff, wiping everything down all day, every day. But as time has gone on, and when I got vaccinated, I felt a little more confident and a little more at ease about everyday life and getting through everyday life. I wasn't as paranoid, I noticed I don't worry so much about wiping everything down and disinfecting everything. I mean, I'm still cautious, but not as cautious as I was.

Speaker 1 ([05:15](#)): During the time of isolation, what kind of sickness or did you see any death or mental health or things like that concerning people in your life?

Michelle Fisher ([05:27](#)): Well, definitely, like I said, I lost my father to COVID and it happened so quickly.

Speaker 1 ([05:35](#)): Yeah.

Michelle Fisher ([05:36](#)): I never thought just taking him to the hospital for what we thought was a stomach virus or a cold would lead to his death in about two weeks.

Speaker 1 ([05:49](#)): Yeah.

Michelle Fisher ([05:49](#)): So, that was devastating.

Speaker 1 ([05:53](#)): Sure.

Michelle Fisher ([05:56](#)): And I notice a lot of people mentally are screwed up due to this COVID stuff. I mean, when you're constantly losing people, people are constantly dying or getting sick, it's mentally challenging.

Speaker 1 ([06:14](#)): Absolutely.

Speaker 1 ([06:19](#)): All right. Is there anything else you'd just like to share concerning COVID or do you see us coming out of this or what would a time period would you think it would be?

Michelle Fisher ([06:33](#)): Let's say this, I pray we come out of it.

Speaker 1 ([06:37](#)): Yeah.

Michelle Fisher ([06:37](#)): I don't think we'll fully come out of it for at least another two or three years.

Speaker 1 ([06:45](#)): Everyone's starting to say that. Yeah.

Michelle Fisher ([06:46](#)): But at least it seems like things are slowly but surely getting back to some normalcy. But I think, I don't know, because it seems like as soon as one thing over another one starts, so I'm not sure if we'll ever fully be over it altogether.

Speaker 1 ([07:08](#)): Right.

Michelle Fisher ([07:09](#)): But, it's the new common cold now. So it's almost like you expect, you just wait for something else to happen. Me, myself, since it started, I take like 10 vitamins a day. I call it my COVID pack to sort of build up my immune system and keep me from getting sick.

Michelle Fisher ([07:36](#)): I also, if I feel my... Like I have allergies and you know, common cold, but I also, if I feel myself getting a little tickle in my throat or a little cough, I immediately start taking cough and cold medicine.

Speaker 1 ([07:51](#)): Yeah.

Michelle Fisher ([07:51](#)): So I pretty much try to knock it out in the beginning.

Speaker 1 ([07:59](#)): In the beginning. That's smart.

Michelle Fisher ([07:59](#)): And going back to your very first question, have I ever... I mean, not your very first question, your question of have I ever had COVID. I actually believe I did before we knew what it was, because that, say that November before it actually hit.

Speaker 1 ([08:14](#)): Yeah.

Michelle Fisher ([08:15](#)): I had gotten really sick. I was in here for a week sick and nobody even knew I was in here sick.

Speaker 1 ([08:21](#)): Right.

Michelle Fisher ([08:22](#)): But I was so weak I couldn't even get up out of the bed to go down to the bathroom. And when I finally was able to get up and go to the hospital, I went to urgent care and they didn't know what it was. They just said that people, they noticed a lot of people had been coming in with this same kind of symptoms or whatever and they just called it a viral infection. And then lo and behold, boom, there it is. So I believe I actually did have it, but they just didn't know what it was at the time.

Speaker 1 ([08:54](#)): So I can agree with you that I was the same way before they even talked about COVID before that. And I was so almost felt like being on a death bed.

Michelle Fisher ([09:05](#)): Right, right.

Speaker 1 ([09:06](#)): But then when you went, finally made it to the doctor, it was like, well, it was just a virus and then several months later they came out with this COVID business.

Michelle Fisher ([09:14](#)): Exactly. Because I-

Speaker 1 ([09:14](#)): So I can definitely relate.

Michelle Fisher ([09:15](#)): ... Had cold and flu before, but this stuff was definitely felt different.

Speaker 1 ([09:19](#)): I was the same way. So I agree with that.

Michelle Fisher ([09:23](#)): But I believe now I definitely am grateful for that I did get vaccinated and I try to keep up with whatever is the new, whatever's going on new. Whether it's a new booster shot or whatever. I try to keep up with that.

Speaker 1 ([09:40](#)): Yeah.

Michelle Fisher ([09:41](#)): And like I said, I take all these vitamins every day to combat it and take cold and flu medicine on the regular just to, if I did get something then at least it wouldn't be as severe.

Speaker 1 ([09:57](#)): I believe so.

Michelle Fisher ([09:57](#)): That's my thought process.

Speaker 1 ([09:57](#)): Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([10:02](#)): Well, I thank you so much for sharing with us. It really means a lot and it's going to make a difference to your people here.

Michelle Fisher ([10:07](#)): You're welcome.

Speaker 1 ([10:09](#)): So greatly appreciate you. Thank you.