

How the Pandemic Affected Me

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Editor's note: This op-ed was written by Christopher Johnson as part of our [Special Series on Managing Addiction during COVID-19](#). This Special Series is generously sponsored by the [Greater Boston Council on Alcoholism](#).



Hello, my name is Christopher Johnson. I wrote this letter to talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted my recovery. Before the pandemic, I was in recovery for 9 months. I was attending therapy regularly with a counselor I trusted, had just moved into a new apartment, and life was good. COVID-19 changed my life forever. I could no longer go to AA meetings or my therapy sessions, and even getting medical appointments was difficult. As time went on, it really affected me in a lot of ways. I have suffered from PTSD and depression for three years. Talking with my therapist once a week had helped me cope.

At first, they attempted to switch to online sessions with me, but that didn't last long. My therapist ended up leaving to pursue another job opportunity. The loss of my therapist was devastating. I started having some struggles with substances and started to drink again. I didn't know where to turn. I no longer had my therapist to talk to. Searching for a new therapist was difficult since there weren't many available appointments, and it takes some time for me to open up and feel comfortable. The lack of support and feeling of isolation really took a toll on me – especially as the lockdown continued, we were forced to wear masks everywhere, and we didn't know what the future would hold.

I ended up in the hospital because I was missing my dialysis appointments. I was in complete fear for my life. If it was not for the Recovery Center at [St. Francis House](#) [a Boston day shelter for people experiencing housing instability], I do not know what I would have done. They picked up the pieces that were taken from me and I am forever grateful to them for that. I am back in therapy and I go to outside AA meetings. It has taken some time to get used to all the things we had to change, but one day at a time I know things will be better. I know that because through this pandemic, I was blessed to not have lost any family members and I was able to stay COVID-free myself. I witnessed others going through so much during this time and gained perspective and gratitude for not having to experience these things myself.

As we gained a greater understanding of COVID, things started getting better. I am now seeing a therapist again and my outlook is brighter. We're almost there! So I want to say, if you're going through anything during this pandemic or struggling with addiction-related issues, there are people that you can talk to and there are people you can reach out to for help. Trust me, because this is what I had to do myself.

Thank you and have a blessed day.

— Christopher Johnson

Conflict of Interest Statement

Mr. Johnson has no conflicts of interest to disclose of personal, financial, or other benefits that could be seen as influencing the content of this editorial.

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