





Healing Reflection

**Story by: Stephanie Janssen, Student
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My name is Stephanie Janssen and Covid-19 messed up my life. I am a UWEC student; 5th year; Creative Writing and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies double major.

When COVID-19 officially hit campus in early March of 2020, I was a junior, and I was very happy. I had just booked my flight to England for an immersion trip about King Arthur in July and was excited to go to San Francisco in June for the Frameline Film Festival, which was all expenses paid except for food.

I was an intern with the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center and an Usher-in-Charge with Usher Corps, a part of Event Services on campus. I had many friends that I enjoyed interacting with in The Bridge, the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center physical space on the second floor of Davies. I attended PRIDE, our LGBTQ+ student org on campus, every week. I enjoyed going to my classes.

When I got those emails from administration that the campus was shutting down and that I needed to go home to finish out the semester, my world landed hard on its back. My trips were cancelled, and everything I was involved in on campus got put on hold. No PRIDE. No GSRC. No Bridge. No Usher Corps. No trips. No life. All of my classes turned to online formats, which I had never experienced before, where I had to be self-motivated and do so much on my own.

My grades plummeted, and I was lucky to have passed the classes. My mental health was at an all-time low. I barely had motivation for anything and realized how many little things I had taken for granted. Not to mention that it was almost impossible to get work done with my dog barking up a storm, whether it was outside barking at the neighbors or inside barking at people walking by or wanting to be playful. I love her very much, but she really got under my skin. It was a real problem when my mom was working from home downstairs in the living room, and my brother and I were doing classes from our rooms upstairs. My dad got lucky and was able to still go in and work.

Though my own experience was very hard, it was difficult hearing others' experiences. Students, whether high school or college, not getting proper graduation ceremonies. Frontline workers having to quarantine themselves away from their families. Hundreds of thousands of people were dying every day. So many people were losing their jobs. Things seemed pretty hopeless. I think what really turned things around for me was getting those connections back, starting a relationship, not having online classes.

I'm Stephanie Janssen, and I really appreciate life.

Artists:

August Carlson, Student
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Jane Mohler, Student
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

View all the pieces in the *Healing Reflections* [online gallery](#).