

Lizbeth Kleintop

2020-07-21

LIZABETH KLEINTOP: I've come to understand, with doing online teaching and as you create videos, and even other material, with the cost of creation, there's a shelf life of that course in essence. And the problem with that is, at least in business, so much changes that by - in another year, you want to update the course. Because of the cost, that's not being done. So it's going to have this impact on learning that's going to be a bit strange, because it won't be like I do a lecture every time, and basically the same stuff, as you're saying. But you add material to it as you go along because of new knowledge, new learning, new circumstances.

LIZ BRADBURY: All for all my trainings, because of the Supreme Court *Bostock* thing, everything has to be updated with regard [01:00] to that because I kind of - we actually thought that that wasn't going to come out that way, and so we were back-tracking a little bit on what the state was saying. And now I have to upgrade that. But then there's some HUD things that Trump has just done, which influenced some of those things, too. Although I think in the long run that's not going to fly, but we will see what happens with that. So okay, I have (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). Go ahead. Well let me say this first, and then we can talk about stuff. So I have to say this. With this

project, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center in the Trexler Library at Muhlenberg College will collaborate on forty years of public health experiences in the Lehigh LGBT - Lehigh Valley LGBT community, collecting and curating local LGBT health experiences, from HIV-AIDS to COVID-19. My name is Liz Bradbury, and I am here with Elizabeth Kleintop to talk about her experiences in the Lehigh Valley LGBT community during this time of COVID-19 pandemic [02:00] as a part of the Lehigh community LGBT Community Archives. Today is July - is Tuesday, July 21st, 2020. Thank you so much for your willingness to speak with us today. To start, can you please state your full name and spell it for me.

LK: My full name is Elizabeth Kay Kleintop. L-I-Z-A-B-E-T-H K-A-Y K-L-E-I-N-T-O-P.

LB: Will you please share your birthdate?

LK: Must I? Oh, no.

LB: You don't have to, you don't have to, and I've told three other people that they didn't have to.

LK: Oh, I really don't care.

LB: Okay.

LK: I'm sixty-four, November 6th, 1955. I'll be sixty-five in November.

LB: [03:00] Do you consent to this -- this is the consent portion. So do you consent to this interview today?

LK: Yes.

LB: Do you consent to having this interview being transcribed, digitized, and made publicly available online in searchable formats? Do - formats, dot dot dot.

LK: Yes. (Laughs)

LB: Do you consent to the LGBT Archive using your interview for educational purposes in other formats, including films, articles, websites, presentations, and other formats we may not even know about today?

LK: Absolutely. They can have a great time with it.

LB: Oh, cool, okay. And do you understand that you will have thirty days after the electronic delivery of the transcript to review your interview, identify any parts you'd like to delete, and/or withdraw your interview from the project?

LK: Yes, I do.

LB: I forgot to ask you what town you're in? Are you in Bethlehem?

LK: Bethlehem.

LB: Okay. [04:00] What is your zip code there?

LK: 18017.

LB: Okay, and the next question is, what is your age, and you already said you were sixty-four. How do you identify within the LGBT community?

LK: Transgender lesbian with preferred pronouns of she, her, and hers.

LB: Okay, great. And - So all of - I sent you this list of things that we can talk about. What we were just talking about, some interesting -- and this is part of it, some of the stuff about how classes are going to go because of your involvement at Moravian College, you're a dean at Moravian College. And so, you were talking about --

LK: -- I'm not the dean.

LB: Oh, so tell us about what your job is then.

LK: Yeah, I'm a member of the faculty and a director of assessment and accreditation in the economics and business department at Moravian College. [05:00] I teach largely in the graduate program in change management, human resources management, and sheesh, what's that called, analytics.

LB: Okay. Good, okay. And so we were just talking about online teaching and different kinds of ways of doing presentations, and you were talking about some new software, but finish what you were saying, because that was so interesting.

LK: About Mmmhmm?

LB: Yeah.

LK: I know that's kind of odd of a name, but that's the way they have it. Yeah, it's really software, it's in beta right now, and it's a software which is, you know, I got used to the

whole concept of the weather person on television pointing. But they're really pointing on a green screen, and they're overlaying the video of the maps and everything else. But this kind of brings that whole concept into play right on your laptop. [06:00] So you can take a PowerPoint presentation, for instance, and instead of kind of just talking over it, or maybe having your head show up in a corner if you're Zooming along, this software allows you to actually move yourself around the screen, make yourself bigger or smaller, have the presentation over your shoulder so you can, you know, point to it if you're off in the corner. So it tends to be a little more animated than you would have in a normal presentation, kind of thing. So you can record that, create it as an .mp4, for instance. Or you can actually push it right through Zoom, or other tools to get it out there in the world and record it. It's actually kind of cool that some of these new tools are showing up, just at the right time when we need it.

LB: Yeah. And I think you were talking too, about for faculty who are not going to be able to present [07:00] programs in person, which is likely, and you were saying it was likely for the next year, that that would probably be the case from now. I think so too.

LK: Yeah. Well we went - In March, all of a sudden, everything kind of shut down, of course with the COVID-19 pandemic. And it

was kind of an abrupt stop, everything must go up online. Now, I've been doing online work since the mid-1990s, so it wasn't a big issue for me as it is for some of my colleagues. But it looks, as I said to you before, was that, my guess is that we will still be doing it in Spring, we're not going to have a widely available vaccine until then. So yeah, we're going - really I'm developing in the work I've done this summer, almost redeveloping my course where it's fully online, from blended format, and it's a time consuming process. I have a course going on right now which is not as detailed, [08:00] because the students are working on a project, a capstone project, almost a thesis. So I don't have to do a lot in that sense. It still took me sixty hours of work, at least, in Canvas, our learning - our LMS, to get it all set and ready to go. So my fall classes are going to be even longer, although I've gotten a head start on some of that. And what you - the costs of putting all of that in place is very high. And so it doesn't get changed the way it should every time you offer your class in a normal format, lecture format, or in-person format, if you would. I mean I would change a lecture every semester because I'd learn something new, or something didn't work quite as well with the students, or we're headed in slightly new directions, but you can't do that as easily online, without discarding whole modules of work. [09:00] So it's going to be a really interesting change

in that way for the higher ed community too, because of the virus.

LB: Yeah, it's certainly true, I think too, and I know this when I'm doing trainings that if you're doing - if I'm doing is Zoom training, and I can't see the audience, I can't tell as well whether they're getting it, you know? Often you have to (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). Yeah, is that working okay for you?

LK: I usually - Well I've done one already with the nursing department, and I have another coming up next week with the nursing students to talk about the transgender community and healthcare issues. And it's much more difficult to tell if they're really, you know, paying attention out there in the world, or even have questions. I still get fewer questions that way, even if I try to stop. [10:00] And when I'm invited in, I'm invited in to talk, not so much really take over the whole class and teach it. Some things that help, I've noticed in classes that I've done, and Zoom supports this, is to do breakout groups so that you can come up with a -- you know, if you're doing training, and maybe doing something with implicit bias, and, I don't know, have everybody do an IAT beforehand, and then put them into small groups so they can talk about their IAT and their findings and what they think it could mean, and bring that back to the larger group. I think that helps somewhat. It also

allows you to pop in as the facilitator or instructor, with each group and see what they're doing too.

LB: Tell us what an IAT is.

LK: Pardon me? Oh, the, IAT is the [11:00]implicit -- it's an implicit bias test, specifically called, when Google decides to show up, Implicit Association Test is the formal name for it. And it's a fairly reliable and valid way of testing someone's internal mental biases. It's not really good at predicting how you're going to behave, but it works in larger groups, and it helps surface at least some things that you should pay attention to and reflect on.

LB: Yeah, well that's good. And it's a conversation, or, you know, a discussion started, certainly. [12:00]

LK: Oh, yes. In some cases it's a discussion ender.

LB: [laughs] I can understand that, I really can. So let's get back to the more specific COVID, although this stuff is really right on, because we're talking absolutely about how we're going to do what we've always been doing, how we're doing these things in this new way. And so many people thought -- many people thought, not me, and probably not you, but thought that we were going to be done with this by now. And there's no way that we're going to be done with this for a long time. So we have to talk about new ways of doing things. And a number of people are also talking about how it is going to be to integrate us all back

into human contact, and how (laughs) it's going to be tricky to do that, because I'm sort of getting used to not being around people. When I wake up in the morning, I think, "no, I don't have to go to work, I'm just here." [13:00] It's not like this whole process of doing that. I can - I work hard. I'm working harder than I have before, I think, but it's different.

LK: And we all have our Zoom shirts now, so, you know, we're good.

LB: So who's at home with you? Are you by yourself where you are, pretty much? Or you have other people there that you're seeing regularly, or what do you do? What's your deal?

LK: My cat, Sirius. Actually, my grandcat. He is my daughter's cat, and I keep telling her that, but somehow he lives here with me. But no people, just the neighbors.

LB: Okay, so it's you. And so --

LK: -- Just me.

LB: Have you been working all the way through? Did you have time off? Or as an administrator have you just been working all the way through from home or remotely?

LK: Well, you know, I've been working through, and largely working on classes. [14:00] I'm teaching one now, I'm developing my fall classes, getting ready to go. So it's been largely focused on classes and that kind of work. Though I have done a ton of webinars, I've been to one virtual conference, I've got

another one coming up I think I'm going to go to. And, you know, I've been prepping some talks with other classes and groups, I've been doing my research, so yeah kind of been working anyhow. But pacing myself.

LB: Sure. When things closed down in March, did you have to suddenly shuffle things around, and did everyone at the campus have to shuffle things around? Since you're a person who really understands IT, were people all coming to you and saying I don't know how to do this, and to be able to teach the rest of the --

LK: -- Yeah we had some of that. We had some of that. In the department we had set up a number of meetings of faculty as a group to get together, [15:00] and those were the faculty who were less experienced with using the technology, particularly the learning management system and the video systems, and wanted to learn about them. You know, we'd get together in a Zoom meeting just casually and ask questions, and do this, that, and the other thing. And actually the college was fairly good at setting up training programs in Spring and now through the Summer to support the faculty to get things together. So that's been very helpful for faculty that needed it.

LB: Yeah. Are you hearing from students, with regard to how they feel about the potential of a year or two, or a year without direct contact? How do people - Are you getting anything from students about that?

LK: A little bit here and there. I have a few undergraduate advisees, [16:00] and I've picked up that it's somewhat of a mixed bag from what I've talked with them about when we Zoom. And some of them are not particularly happy that they may still be online, because some of them are stuck in a situation where they don't -- even in Palmerton for that matter, where their internet, their high-speed internet is somewhat iffy at times. But there are still some students who are also in a situation where they're not necessarily looking for (inaudible) we say of a regular classroom course. They're actually looking to go online, and they're building their schedules that way as undergrads. The grad students, you know most - they are working for the most part. So for them, it's almost easier for them to go online. So most of them really preferred at least some face to face time contact in a classroom. They seem to learn that way, so it - better that way. [17:00] So even my online versions of class are really somewhat blended format, because I do still structure them with having maybe ninety minutes of online synchronously every week so we get to talk to each other. We go over issues like the class now in their thesis, we get together and I have them update the whole class on what they're doing, and their project, any questions and issues, and things like that that are going on. So everybody has some contact at least, and I think that's pretty important.

LB: Yeah, sounds great. Good for you. So what about other people in your life? Well, let me ask you too, this first. Has there been layoffs at the college? I forgot to ask other people that, but.

LK: There were furloughs now. And I know some people were furloughed and then brought back and people who were [18:00] there on campus were then furloughed to be brought back again. I mean the college is, as an employer and as a whole -- well I guess many employers do have different structures in terms of employment. I mean there's people like myself who are on a twelve month contract, for instance. You've got people who are ten-month contracts as faculty, but also staff. And not all staff are on twelve month all year round at the college. Some are ten months then two off. So the college made the decision early on that people who would benefit by the additional six hundred dollars, same or get a bit more money, they were the ones who were furloughed first. So in terms of monetary income, they weren't really hurt by it. It's still quite down though, because buildings are empty, you know, lights are off [19:00] but some of the facilities crews are still working away and they've still been doing capital projects on campus.

LB: Yeah. Yeah, oh that's, capital projects... I was just saying to Trish, so, have they finished the Tilghman Street Bridge? Because for Heaven's sakes, I mean it's not like they

have to be dealing with traffic. It's sort of an unimpeded work time, so I don't --

LK: -- One would think.

LB: That's - maybe in the future, people may not know that people who were working construction, they just continued to work. There really wasn't any circumstance that, where they -- they were considered essential workers and construction projects have just gone on. So literally you could -- I've hardly been downtown at all. Once in a while I'll go down and go, "look, that building is done now." And then I don't realize how long it has been. [20:00] In fact we just had one employee on Slack say they'd seen another employee in person for the first time since March. So "I just saw Katie for the first time since March." So it's remarkable. And I think, I don't think about that.

LK: Well I walked every day; I have my Apple watch and close the circles for the my health for exercise. I've been walking every day to close all those circles. So I've been able to get up, across campus for instance as part of my walks to see the work that's been going on on campus and the like. And I get to downtown and see what the streets look like that are blocked off and set up for outdoor dining kind of things, as well as in other areas of the city, I do that. I must admit I worry about the squirrels on campus, because without people around, are they getting enough food? They got used to people. (Laughs)

LB: Apparently that's a thing about cats, particularly in big cities, about cats [21:00] and bad things like rats. That would, because there wasn't as much restaurant food, because people weren't eating in restaurants, and everyone who eats in a restaurant, if they don't eat something they just throw it away. So it was filling, you know, feeding all these cats and stuff, and now all these cats and other things are really aggressive in the city, because it's really affecting them. You don't even really think about the applications of that. So I bet the squirrels are pissed. Squirrels have to eat, for Heaven's sakes. So are you communicating with other pals and friends and families by phone or video chat more than you normally would, and stuff like that, do you think?

LK: Meh. Not so much family. My daughter and I, every other week or so we chat a little bit while one of us, usually her, is on a walk. Occasionally my sister. [22:00] I see my mother; my mother is in independent living at Luther Crest. And she doesn't have a car, so, you know, I became her Uber, her Grub Hub, and her medical transport. So I've been able to - had contact with her every other week for a while. Finally it's to every week, and I've been allowing her to go to the grocery store with me.

LB: So she's in independent living, which means she has an apartment, so she can, in effect, can come out to you, but I

would guess that in the assisted living they're not letting people in to visit.

LK: No, they're not. And I don't - I know some of the - some of those programs have been totally off limits, even during the green time for visitors. [23:00] And Luther Crest has taken the point, well if you're in independent living, you're "independent." But I've tended to be a little more conservative, because she does talk to people and get to walk throughout the hallways and everything else still. They just don't congregate. And so, you know, given her age and everything, it's a bit of a risk.

LB: I was talking to Steve Ziminsky yesterday, whose roommate, Liam, is in Manor Care now, which is another assisted living and nursing home. He's actually in the nursing home. And Manor Care which is in Allentown has one hundred people had COVID-19 there -- one hundred people within the space, including employees, too, so. And he had it. I mean, everybody had it. I think everybody had it there. I don't think they're making that public, but I think every single person that lived in that care facility had COVID. [24:00] And they either died or they made it through. But apparently it was a terrible situation. So you are getting to - Well that's great, it would be terrible if you didn't get to see your mother. It would be so hard for her too, I'm sure. She's used to seeing you. What's your biggest concern

during the pandemic, including your biggest concern for the LGBTQ population? What do you think about that? But just in general, and then, you know...

LK: Yeah, this one can take me on a roll, I mean.

LB: Go ahead!

LK: Of course, just the virus itself, you know. I'm sixty-four, so I'm, you know, getting up there, I'm a type-two diabetic. I don't control it with insulin, thank heavens. I walk a lot and watch what I eat. But there's a risk there for me for it. So personally there's some concern there, and I'm concerned that we're not controlling it. [25:00] We have the, you know, the politicization of the whole thing about masks. I have four of them, personally. (laughter) Including one I made myself, which, by hand, no sewing machine, which is kind of a miracle. (Laughs) And, you know, Black Lives Matter, it's all really fed, a really turbulent time in this household. I mean the federal administration is really taking advantage of the pandemic, trying to push through executive orders, to the detriment of the LGBT community. And like, the latest one we talked about earlier with HUD and homeless shelters. The push basically is to exclude transgender people. So the way they're going about it, it's like, well if you look at them, you can tell who is transgender. [26:00]

LB: I just read the rules.

LK: Yeah.

LB: Tell what that is, so that people in the future can know, what the rule is. Basically, it's so unbelievable.

LK: Yeah, they say that you can tell when you look at them. If they have an Adam's apple, you can tell if it's a transgender or not, but if they're tall, yeah, big feet and big hands. It's like, really? You know, so it's gonna be a mess.

LB: And then, the second level of the rule is that if you suspect that they might be transgender, they have to prove their gender biologically. Well how do they do that?

LK: But you can't - but according to what I've read, they can't ask you to disrobe and show your parts to do it. It's totally crazy, I can't see a judge actually saying, oh yeah that's okay, go for it. [27:00]

LB: I know, so bizarre. And talk about blatant discrimination based on sex, it's blatant sex discrimination.

LK: Yeah. Absolutely. So those are huge concerns for the community overall. And not just the transgender community, but those could easily leak into the lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer community as well. I mean, particularly with non-binary queer people will have some really interesting times if they need to get shelter, and many do. You know, the 600 dollars disappears for people who have been on unemployment at the end of this month, that goes kaput. And a lot of people have a lot of

concerns about people not being able to make their rent, they're going to be evicted, and that is just going to put a huge demand on the homeless shelters. We're not ready for it.

LB: Yeah, I mean - Apparently the statistic is, again for future generations to hear this, [28:00] that fifty million people have lost their jobs. So that's a very significant thing when we're talking about that stuff, and people who have their jobs --

LK: And it hasn't - And it hasn't been distributed evenly across the population either, across the labor force. Most people who have lost those - you know that 50 million people who have lost their jobs are people who are in the service sector. And those are jobs which are less well paid than the rest of the world. We're talking to people working in restaurants, the toll there has been horrible. We're talking about people working in brick and mortar stores and the like. So it's been really tough for them, and it's not going to get any easier. And there's just no -- you can't just go pick up a job, oh yeah I'm going to be a welder. No, you need training first. I'm going to drive a truck. No, that doesn't work either, you need training. Unlike some in our (inaudible). [29:00]

LB: So, how - We like to ask everybody this, because we're lucky in the state of Pennsylvania, that we have pretty good leadership at the state level, and we have wonderful leadership

with regard to our secretary of health. So talk about that, because we want to prop that up.

LK: Dr. Levine!

LB: Yeah. You've met Dr. Levine, right?

LK: Yes, I have. And the governor as well. I think they both handled it very well, putting up with a lot of baloney. I'm being polite, because this is for the future. (laughs) And, I mean Dr. Levine has just handled everything very professionally, quietly, calmly, and even through loads and loads of disrespect, including what happened at Bloomsburg Fair, apparently in the dunking tank. Which is horrible, it's absolutely abhorrent.

[30:00] And so yeah, I think we're lucky to have her, and the governor, because they really kept focus. And, they've been deliberate whereas some have not, and we're seeing the results of that, particularly down in Florida and Texas and Arizona and even to some degree California. So I think we've been - it's been good for Pennsylvania to have both Dr. Levine and Governor Wolf there. Because it's an important time to have a level head to deal with this pandemic. I really think it's a matter of control. We need to get it to some semblance of control. We can do that with masks, for instance, until we get a vaccine that will work. And, you know, who knows how long that's going to be? I know the trials so far, some cases are going well, but there's, you know, a billion people plus on this planet, who all

need the same vaccine. Who's going to get it first? [31:00] How are we going to manage that process? That's going to take some time in itself to do. So we have to be able to do other steps and, you know, Pennsylvania has been good for that at this point.

LB: And I think for our own community it's been terrific to have somebody from the queer community who is the spokesperson for health and science in the state. It's inspiring for a lot of us, too.

LK: She's been front and present almost every day since the beginning of the pandemic, and just quietly doing her job. And so - Look, here's a model. Someone who's transgender yet she's not crazy. She's intelligent, she's handling everything quite nicely. Huh, maybe other transgender people do, too. Because some of the research suggests that when you - when people know somebody who is transgender, [32:00] that tends to tweak their thinking a little bit differently. They have an impact on, not directly on their implicit biases, but they may think before they act on that bias because they know somebody in a positive light.

LB: Yeah. Okay so yeah, it's been great, I think it's been great. Now this says here, this is one of the questions they gave me to ask everybody. Are you spending your time on any queer dating or hookup apps? Have you found queer communities --

here, you can say this. Have you found queer community despite the restrictions?

LK: Yeah, you know I'm not a big fan of the dating apps. They haven't really worked well for me, so eh. (laughs) But I have spent a lot of time on Twitter though. And that's been very interesting actually, through the pandemic. I've spent more time, we're on Facebook together. And as I posted the other day, [33:00] you know, I basically rejoined Facebook just to keep some contact with people in the Lehigh Valley in the community. So I understood that with everyone being locked down, that kind of slipped away. But really I spent much more time on Twitter. And that's been interesting because my Twitter-verse includes, you know, trans and queer people in the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Australia, and Austria. So it's been really interesting to make those contacts all over, and there's really an age span, too, from people in their twenties into their seventies. And particularly with the trans community, people who are coming out at early ages, or are younger and have been out, and even people who are older. There's a couple people in their fifties, sixties, coming out now as well, and they're part of this [34:00] Twitter, or trans Twitter, I guess, if you want to put it that way. So it's really been interesting, and interesting to see the differences in the way the younger folk process things from the older folk. You sometimes kind of look

at them and say, "okay, okay, be patient with them, they will learn." (laughs) And also to know that with, particularly people in the United Kingdom. They're putting up with a lot of crap right now. With TERFs and, you know, the government, poor Boris Johnson came out yesterday and said basically conversion therapy is an awful, awful, awful thing. But we can't ban it until we study it.

LB: Oh for Heaven's sake.

LK: Yeah, it's like what the heck does that mean?

LB: And then there's the whole JK Rowling thing, which has totally destroyed, for so many young people who are trans who loved the whole [35:00] Harry Potter thing, and that's totally gone. Just flushed away.

LK: She's pretty much known as She Who Will Not Be Named now.

LB: No kidding. No kidding. Lost it completely. I knew people who were - who -who had - I knew somebody who had retired from a university, and he was going to just whimsically become a wand maker. And he's totally stopped it. He said, "I'm not doing that, I'm not going to be involved with that, I'm throwing all the books away." And he's a straight, cisgender man. But he's a massive ally, and he said, "How could I possibly support this kind of stuff?" And I know people - And we know people, we both know people who are transgender who were so committed to Harry Potter, that any kind of dress-up would never go by where they

weren't wearing their Harry Potter outfits. Now that's totally gone. And I think that the [36:00] legacy of these books is over, it's absolutely over. I think people are taking them out of the library, it's amazing. Book stores (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

LK: Book sales, for instance, you know, book sales, hard book sales have actually increased because of the pandemic. People are buying them online and getting them shipped. But Harry Potter books have not. Their increase has been relatively small compared to the larger increase in sale of books overall.

LB: I can't even understand it. I mean, this is a person who was so outspokenly supportive of people who were different for so long, that it's like an alien has taken over. Her arguments are crazy, they don't make any sense at all. It's so hard to understand, it's just so hard to understand. And, you know, I don't even like the term TERF because I don't think anybody who considers themselves a feminist [37:00] gets to say that they're discriminatory toward anybody. I think it's a bullshit definition. It's like saying you're a patriot and then hating your country. So you know, or they're not supporting - or you're patriotic but you support someone that thinks that it's okay to collude with the Russians to kills troops. It doesn't make any sense.

LK: Yeah, I was thinking that too.

LB: Well there you go. But anyway, it's interesting to bring that up about what's happening in England. And I think also in Great Britain, they did a massive, massive shutdown, where people were literally not allowed to drive their cars or leave their houses. And it worked. It totally worked. They've done a very significant job in ending the necessity of even having to wear masks. They pretty much ended the pandemic there, in a brilliant way. In a committed way. So you've been walking around, but are you limiting going out to do other stuff?

[38:00] Have you been going out to eat or stuff like that? What do you think about that?

LK: I've been to the grocery stores, to Wegmans and Giants, Giants for my mother. I've been to CVS to pick some stuff up, but up though the driveway. When I had to pick up a prescription, I have go to Hartzell's Pharmacy, for my hormone prescription since it's compounded I've been there. I've been to a friend's place once, and two weeks ago I went and got my hair done. That's been it.

LB: I think - Were you scared when you went? We haven't been in the grocery store. We actually haven't been -- Trish is at such risk that we don't go to the grocery store.

LK: Yeah. I've - It's kind of hard in a grocery store to keep six feet, frankly. You know, they tell you to try but I mean, I'm masked all the time, of course. [39:00] I watch out for

somebody who may not be wearing a mask, or who likes to wear the mask with their nose hanging out, which is kind of useless, and kind of make you go around them. But I'm cautious, I don't know that I'm scared, I'm just cautious. I understand the risks, and I understand too, I just need to get out a little bit. Because it can be a little challenging, shall we say, just being in here by myself all the time.

LB: It can, I agree, I agree. So you were talking about some of the queer activities you were doing through Twitter and stuff like that. I was talking to somebody about a professional conference, and he said, "No, no it's not a professional conference, it's a conference for black and white men together which is something that I've been involved with." So have you been to any conferences or any sort of online Zoom things [40:00] that were part of the LGBT community?

LK: Well conference wise, only two. A professional one with our accreditor. And I have another one of those coming up in the Academy of Management that I'll probably go to. But as far as - well I've done a couple things with the center. We had the one session on the book review with the author on the queering of corporate America, I went to. And I went to one or two things on Renaissance with Amazon -- with Amazon, with Zoom, here. But that's it. I did one of the Broadway Zoom events, and one of the

Pride events that was all Zoomed and online as well too, I did that. [41:00]

LB: Cool. Well you're working it out then. So let's see. And we always have - that was a - We have a question about, you know, young people who are trapped with their parents, you know, can't be out. But I think we older people who are out every minute of every day, that's never really an issue for us. And it's - we forget how limiting that is for youth. Have you had any students who were having that kind of issue?

LK: No. No. But in Twitter, the feed that shows up, what's interesting is that there are some people, they're younger, they tend to be. And, you know, they work, they live alone. And essentially they consider themselves to be out. They've been at home now since March, whether they're working from home or whatever. They consider themselves to be out as transgender women, for instance, in the community. And now some of them are starting to be called back to work, [42:00] and there's a lot of anxiety. "Oh no, I've been living full time as a woman, now I have to go back to work, how am I going to handle this? What am I going to do?"

LB: Oh that's interesting, yeah.

LK: And so - Some of them are working it through. And there have been some people who have -- I saw one person this morning going back to work, she said that she was - she had come out at work a

week before everything shut down. So she's been out at home, and now she's going back to work with only that week. So it's almost like reintroducing herself to all of her co-workers again from scratch. And she's been anxious about that as well. So it does set that dynamic up as well for the young ones who have been out at college for instance, and now they can go home to non-supportive classes - or non-supportive homes [43:00] and families. That can be a real issue too though. I haven't seen any that pop up at college.

LB: Well that's good. So what's the biggest frustration or the biggest challenge you've had to come into contact with?

LK: It's interesting in many ways. And I've spent - We've been doing some work with the college in terms of response to Black Lives Matter. Frankly it kind of drives me nuts because it's so episodic. Something happens, the world goes nuts, "Well we have to address this," and they take this very narrow focus. And they talk about it really at institutional levels, but we're talking structural stigmatization issues and the like, and then everybody goes through it, and says "Okay we've done it," and then they walk away. [44:00] But they haven't really dealt with the real issues. So that drives me kind of nuts. And it's not just for Black Lives Matter, it's for the LGBT community, it's for all the transgender people as well. It's this piecemeal approach to everything, instead of going out, looking at this as

a whole about diversity, equity, and inclusion. And looking at what really is the key for me, and, you know, I do my research in this area, so cut me off if I'm rambling on. Particularly I've adopted this stigmatization model, and when you look at it, the real issue is culture and organizations. And its leaders who need to change the culture if you're going to change any of the issues dealing with bias and organizations. And we've done some work with, coming out of a young person, a young black woman, a PhD who does a lot of consulting work [45:00] in implicit bias. And I talked with her too, we've done some phone calls about it. And the intersectionalities that are at play are really, really important. Black Lives Matter, you know, you have the intersectionality in the black trans community. And it's been devastating for the black trans community in the last few months, for instance. And the, you know, all that comes in the intersectionality for the whole trans community as well as the LGBT community. And my guess is, I can't support this empirically, but for older members of the trans community such as myself, you know, we're probably fighting a bit of a PTSD when it comes down to it in dealing with the anxiety in the decisions we had to make about not coming out, coming out, not coming out, finally coming out. [46:00] I mean, even the anxiety, because we internalize the stigma, whether it's structural or an inner-personal stigma, we all expect it to

happen to us at some point, that someone is going to, you know, attack us in the bathroom, in a public restroom, because we're trans and that's what happens to some trans people. We've all heard the stories about the discrimination. So it's all internalized. So Black Lives Matter, just, for me at least, and I'm guessing for others too, it just triggers a lot of that. The concern, the anxiety, the fears and the frustrations, and to me, it also creates the challenges, how do you deal with this overall? We need to deal with the Black Lives Matters issues, the prejudice, the bias in this country for 400 years with the black community. If we do that right, we'll uplift everyone. And that's my greatest frustration, feeling or challenge right now, [47:00] to deal with it. And so, kind of really, you know, some ways, academically, I was moved by stuff where I'm addressing some of this research. I did get a book chapter written and out to the editor during this time on workplace transition issues. I've been talking with nurses and classes about the stigmatization. So, I just got to get this model together and get the next article published. And eventually, I want to go out and actually test that model empirically. But it's really, you know, so much is about -- it's structural, it's what people -- call systemic. But it's also the interpersonal, that implicit bias that people act on that pushes through discrimination and anti-trans behaviors. And those combine together and they feed

each other in organizations and in our society. And, you know, we've got to break that chain and that's [48:00] all about culture. And in organizations where I focus my work, it's leaders. And leaders have to step up to change the culture but most leaders, in my experience, don't get that, don't understand it. They think you can change policies and everything's taken care of and, nope, that's not going to do it.

LB: And they also think -- they do tend -- I think what you were saying at the beginning, in terms of being reactive that, you know, something happens and then they react to it as opposed to recognizing that the atmosphere is allowing that to happen every day and that they're not always --

LK: Yeah.

LB: -- taking that in consideration, no question about that. It's great you're (inaudible).

LK: There was an article on NPR last evening about diversity inclusion officers in corporations. And generally, the experience there has been, well, you get a person who's your D&I person. And basically, you know, their tenure in organizations is relatively short. They have a tendency [49:00] to, you know, come up with a report and try to follow up a year or so later and nothing's changed kind of thing. They often don't have access to the metrics they need to look, to understand what's happening with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion. And

basically, it's -- D&I officer is really about displaying, "See? Look at us! We're all wonderful and we care about diversity inclusion." And, again, it's not that -- one person's not going to change it. It's got to be the leaders in the organization who take this certain role.

LB: Yeah. Yeah, that's so true. So, yeah, I just read a whole big article about the language that -- I just was working on that this morning, that because I'm updating a bunch of my trainings, too -- so, I'm doing a bunch in August and the -- and I'm looking at it from the lens of [50:00] language and how language is constantly -- the fact that a lot of language is coded to be racist and favor white supremacy without people understanding that. And it happens so frequently in academic settings and also in general support settings, particularly for youth. So, when you talk about disenfranchised youth, it's not that they're different. (inaudible).

LK: I saw that.

LB: -- you know? So, I think that's an issue, too. So, I think we covered most of the stuff. So, in general, do you feel your mental health is pretty good during this stuff? You're doing pretty well but I can see how there's also frustrations and stuff. What's the hardest thing you've experienced so far?

LK: [51:00] I think - Truthfully, the hardest thing so far has been dealing with, you know, the frustrations, the anxieties,

the fears of Black Lives Matters and the intersections of that. And, you know, see what's happening and being just so totally frustrated and upset about it and not being able to really do a heck of a lot about it in a positive sense.

LB: It's true. It's true. So, do you know anybody --

LK: And so it's just --

LB: -- that's --

LK: -- depressing at times.

LB: Huh? What'd you say?

LK: It's depressing at times, frankly.

LB: It is. It's totally -- do you know anybody who has been sick or who has had any other -- anybody around you or [any that?] --

LK: Yeah, I had a grad student who was ill.

LB: Oh, God.

LK: Yeah. I had a grad student who was ill. But, you know, yeah, she and her husband both were, [52:00] you know, had -- went to the emergency rooms, got diagnosis and all. And so, they were self-quarantined at home by themselves. But, you know, the class was an online class, so I had no interaction with them except through the class. There was no personal interaction kind of thing back and forth. Otherwise, no, no, I haven't.

LB: Yeah. It's interesting, 'cause --when I talk to somebody who has had a lot of exposure within their family, at the

beginning, the first ten people I interviewed who were all the HIV/AIDS guys were older people who were tending to -- because a lot of them were retired and stuff -- were far less likely to know somebody that was at risk or who had had the illness. But since I've been interviewing the COVID folks, who is a much bigger or broader demographic, those folks have -- you know, the first person I interviewed said, "Yeah, eight of my family members and three of them have died." And, right, the first thing they [53:00] said. And --

LK: Wow.

LB: -- you know, it's somebody in our community. And so, like, and I'm thinking, like, oh, you know, maybe I'll find a couple people and it pretty much -- everyone I've spoken to has told me about somebody who was sick. I just talked to somebody yesterday whose father was intubated for two weeks. I mean, was on the oxygen --

LK: Ouch!

LB: -- for two weeks. Yeah, ouch, man, so -- and we're talking about a second wave of this and I think it's unlikely that we're going to --

LK: Yeah.

LB: -- miss out on that. I think it's going to happen, and particularly, people have been so cavalier about it. So --

LK: Yeah.

LB: -- we're pretty much coming to the end, so -- and I got another one of these soon after. So, I wanted to ask you if there's anything -- so, we were really talking about this and we talk about Black Lives Matter because I wanted everybody to talk about that. Is there anything else that you want to say? Because we are looking at this as something that somebody might look at 30 years from now, [54:00] forty years from now. Maybe we - maybe you and I won't be around, I don't know, in forty years. But if there's anything else that you would --

LK: It'd be a miracle.

LB: Yeah, I think so, too. If there's (laughter) anything else that you would like to sort of say to those people, then, who might be looking at this as a research project to see -- they kind of know what's going to happen but they don't know what -- how it's happening for individuals. So, I think that that's an interesting response, to talk to somebody who is there in the future, watching this video about you or --

LK: Well, I wish they would, you know, send me a message so I would know what happens in November. I need to know if I'm going to move to Canada or not, you know?

LB: Yeah.

LK: (laughs) It's kind of sort of funny in a way that when I was just entering college, way back when, the Vietnam War was on and people were going, some people were going to Canada and

avoiding the draft. Now I'm talking about going to Canada to avoid Donald Trump if he gets reelected. And God, I hope not.

[55:00]

LB: Yeah.

LK: Be really interesting to know that. Yeah, it's such -- in my heart of hearts, I'm really, really, really hoping socially this is the last gasp of the white male conservative culture in this country having power and that we can, as a society, defeat Donald Trump in November and step back, fix what has happened, and then look ahead to a more inclusive society, a more equitable society across the board, which I think has got to happen just for the country, for the future. That's really what I'm, in my heart of hearts, I want to happen at this point. And I will do my part to make sure that happens. [56:00] Get out and vote, yes, you know?

LB: Yes. (laughter)

LK: My government check went to political causes, to Joe Biden. It went to Susan Wild, you know? Get the Democrats in office, and -- as well as to Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center. And so, you know --

LB: Yeah, it's too --

LK: -- it's really --

LB: -- exactly that --

LK: -- such an interesting time. And I think of my daughter who's a Ph.D. academic historian. And what we've talked about -- and her area's about Reconstruction, post-Civil War, historical memory and all that. And it kind of forms some of the ideas in my brain about when you ask a question like -- as you did about what's happening, [57:00] what else to come and all. I really think we're at -- on that point, that edge point, is something going to happen? And I really hope it falls the right way come November, you know?

LB: Well, me too. I can't -- there isn't a minute that doesn't -- that I don't think about that. And it's going to be that way for --

LK: Yeah.

LB: But then, after it happens and if we're ultimately successful, we can't just go, "Okay, everything's fine now," you know?

LK: Oh, and, yeah, that could be the big battle.

LB: That is going to be --

LK: Yep.

LB: -- the big battle.

LK: You know, I've been working hard to think about what I want to be when I grow up. I figure, you know, I'm really only about seven years old. I mean, I came out full-time on 2000 -- you know -- September 3rd, 2013. So, I'm just about seven years old. Well,

we'll add a little dog years in there. So, I'm a little older. But, I mean, so I'm still growing as a person [58:00] and, you know, there's still things I think I want to get done in the world and I just haven't figured out how to do 'em yet. But I think November's going to be very important and I'm hoping there's some path for me there, too, as well, other than just retiring. (laughs)

LB: Yeah, no kidding. Well, let's hope for that. Anyway, it's been great to talk to you. Thank you so much for talking to me.

LK: Yes

LB: It's been -- always --

LK: You're welcome.

LB: -- a pleasure to chat, I'm sure. Sorry your shirt wasn't more purple but I can see lavender in it now, so (laughter) that's the important --

LK: Okay.

LB: -- but I really appreciate that. You've been great, as usual, and you look terrific, as always.

LK: Thank you --

LB: And the video --

LK: -- for saying that --

LB: -- was particularly good. I mean, you know, sometimes I think the lighting is so bad on this person and you've hit on it. I think you're there. You're good at the --

LK: Well, I have my one LED light here, on, giving a little light from that side, plus I get the light from the left-hand side from outside, so --

LB: Yeah, there you go. You're on it. [59:00] Okay, so take care and just stay safe.

LK: You, too.

LB: And I appreciate --

LK: Thanks for inviting me to do this.

LB: -- and you're -- love it, okay.

LK: Okay, take care, bye-bye.

LB: Bye-bye. [59:10]

END OF VIDEO FILE