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Life decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Relationships to EWU: student

Additional information: MPH Student completing everything virtually. I work part time virtually for GAPPS.

Your experience during COVID-19: 6 months prior to the pandemic, I was living in Seattle with my boyfriend. He came back from Spokane in November with a job offer in-hand to work at the Court of Appeals. We decided to get engaged and take on this journey together.

The pandemic began when he started his final term of law school, studying for the bar exam, and I just finished submitting my grad school application at EWU. We were trapped in our 600sqft box/apartment in Seattle, listening to riots and protests, trying to focus. Our apartment was so small that we essentially sat 2-3ft away from each other all day every day with me working on the couch and him working at his desk. With all of the news cycles happening at that time, we had so much to talk about constantly. It was the only way we could manage the stress of spring/summer 2020, moving, bar exams, job transitions. Looking back, all of those tough conversations brought us closer when everyone was afraid of ending their relationships from cabin fever.

Finally, we made the trek across the state into an apartment in Spokane. We chose our apartment assuming we were going to be doing everything virtually for the next year, which was such a smart decision. We each were able to have our own private work spaces. And when I say moving was a relief, I cannot express how relieving it was. No longer were we listening to protests at 2am, living in a concrete jungle unable to escape to nature. Both of us immediately felt happier in Spokane.

My whole MPH cohort had no choice but to figure out how to socialize virtually. We embraced it - how weird and awkward it was - and classes seemed to get easier because we weren't alone anymore. By the time December rolled around, I got into a rhythm with work and school.

Then we had to start talking about our wedding. Millions of weddings were pushed because of the pandemic, which would make planning ours more difficult. But there we were, deciding to move ahead and plan the thing anyways (thanks to the parents). Thankfully, I got to benefit from picking vendors virtually since everything got pushed online. However, finding available vendors was difficult because so many of them were still servicing clients from 2020 in 2022 or 2023. Additionally, EVERYTHING is more expensive because farms and production lines were shut down. Flowers, travel, chargers (the list goes on) are now up to 30% more expensive.

Moving into April 2021, my parents alerted us that mortgage rates are insanely low, and we can no longer ignore them. Basically, in the last few weeks of Spring semester (when I had 6+ group projects, an internship, work, my research project launching, and a pandemic wedding to plan) we began house-hunting. And boy was it rough. I thought I was going to go insane for a few weeks. We eventually found a home and we are so grateful that the pandemic presented this opportunity to do so. Shortly after moving in we adopted our pup, Sheila, from the Spokane Humane Society. She now chaperones me while I work and study at home.

All in all, I feel like the pandemic has led to a series of "wins" for me and my fiancée. We went from cramming into our tiny Seattle apartment under high-stress conditions to creating a home for ourselves

in Spokane. We have taken on so many challenges during this pandemic. And still, we show how resilient we are to obstacles and change.

