**SOC439 Transcription of Interviews**

**Interview 1: Sienna**

**Taylor (Interviewer):** For current working conditions, like, are you working right now? Hours, job tasks, anything like that?

**Sienna:** Currently, I'm working. I work at Loblaws. I'm technically an essential service because I had to go find another job that I could work during COVID and that I wouldn't be scared would close because I kind of need to continue to make money. I did go find an essential service job. We were like, technically speaking, I am an associate. But I can work anywhere between 30 and 40 hours if I wanted to, like they call me in. Like they called me today to come in early. I was supposed to start at 1 but now I don’t. If they don’t schedule me, I don't come in because I have to work around the schedule for (child’s name).

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Do you have like a fixed schedule or not really?

**Sienna:** No, I don’t have a fixed schedule right now.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay, do they just call you when they need you?

**Sienna:** Well no, I have a schedule but it's not the same every day, you know what I mean?

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Yeah, like not the same every week, right?

**Sienna:** Yeah, exactly. But I'll get three weeks notice. So I have to have three weeks of schedules made. But like, any days that I have off days or any days that I start later in the afternoon they’ll call me to come in earlier. This is to add hours, so I have a made schedule already and then they’ll add hours onto that.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay. That makes sense. How has the pandemic affected it? Were you working somewhere else before?

**Sienna:** Before, when the pandemic just started in March, way back, when we went into full lockdown and everything was closed except for grocery stores. That's when I was just getting off maternity leave. I needed to start working because my maternity leave was gonna end and I was going to stop getting paid for mat leave. And I needed to get a job. And then when you go on maternity leave, technically speaking, you're guaranteed your job back. Due to the pandemic, I worked at (name of mall) and (name of mall) was closed. So I couldn't go back to work. So I did end up needing CERB for a bit of time. Because I needed time to like job hunt and find a new job and I qualified at that time because I just got off mat leave and it wasn’t my fault.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** So you started looking for jobs like pretty much right away?

**Sienna:** Yeah, I literally started looking before my maternity leave even ended. I had already contacted my old job and asked what was the situation. They were like, yeah, were laying everybody off now like no one could come into work. The only people on staff there now are managers because they don’t want to lay them off. When the mall opens managers can get back in there.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Yes. That makes sense.

**Sienna:** Yeah, so everyone like literally the stores were running with only managers coming in and basically doing everything, they were cashiers, they were everything. They took on other roles because it wasn't worth paying other employees to come in for like the two people who come in the mall. I worked at Shoppers Drug Mart. So even though the mall was closed, Shoppers Drug Mart, my specific store was open because technically it’s an essential service and we have our own exit. Shoppers Drug Mart is right on the edge and we have our own exits outside so we're allowed to stay open, but they laid off everybody and only allowed managers working. If they allowed other people to work then managers hours would be cut and then it would be like a whole problem for like everybody. Right?

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Right. So, did you just quit the job entirely?

**Sienna:** Yeah I did because it was too iffy. Like okay we were in lockdown, and we kept on like, prolonging it. Two weeks more, two weeks more, two weeks more. I'm like how many two weeks am I going to go without getting paid?

**Taylor (Interviewer):** That kind of goes into my next question. What were your main fears or concerns when like the second wave hit? Since I guess you already had that job by then. Right?

**Sienna:** Yeah. Like literally, like, I got three months of CERB and then I had a job. The job I applied for was one of the first jobs I applied for because I was looking for literally essential service jobs. Because, like, at that point, we were in super full lockdown and who's going to be open? Yeah. Who knows whose going to be able to work? I was like okay find an essential service job, apply at grocery stores, places like that. I didn’t want to work at like nothing too like not good. You know? So applied at like Loblaws, LCBO, places like that. I'm still union, I still get benefits. Because like at Shoppers I had the benefits and stuff. But I was like yo I don't want to give that up. I don't know. Also I work downtown so I work with like, a lot of people, we're like swarmed all the time. But like at work due to COVID we now have to do like hourly hand washes, we have to sanitize everything after every customer, like if you're using a self-checkout machine, sanitize it after every customer. If you’re using like a regular checkout, we sanitize it. Customer Service. Everything.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay so is what you're saying that because of that contracting the virus isn’t the main fear?

**Sienna:** Me personally, I am scared for my family to get sick. And like people around me to not get sick than I personally am for myself. Yes, I'm one of those skeptical people. I believe there might be a virus out there and it's hurting people. But I don't believe that is as traumatic and like the world needs to be locked down. For my family and people around me yes but for myself I do have questions.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And has your time at home been different during COVID-19? What does that look like?

**Sienna:** Honestly it’s just getting boring. There’s only so much you can do at home. So much dishes laundry, like clean up. And then you're kind of like, okay, next, what's next? I kind of miss being able to not even like, go to crazy parties or anything but just go out for dinner. Or just do something. Like, I can see how people get like, really sad and even depressed. I have other mother friends that I've made being a mother. I know some of them have got really depressed through this whole situation. Some are single mothers and just them at home alone with their kids. They’re just like really isolated. At least for me in my house. You know, I have my parents, I have my sister. We have a crazy house going so it is hard to be bored. There’s at least something happening.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Yeah and do you think that's made any of this better for you?

**Sienna:** I think it did. Having people in my home did make it better and like, my mom is working from home. She’s been a big help when like I have no one to watch (child’s name) or if I work a late shift. She is in daycare. But yesterday I literally got calls, literally yesterday, that I had to pick her up early. I dropped her off around 9:30. Then I got calls around 12:00 that I had to pick her up early because one of the teachers had tested positive for COVID. So she's now not allowed to return until Monday, because they need the like four or five days off to fully sanitize the place and make sure the teachers aren’t not coming back until they’re fully well. They have to like, make sure anything that the teacher was in contact with is fully sanitized. Luckily, yesterday was also the first day I sent (child’s name) back to daycare. I kept her home for the Christmas and New Year's holiday. Luckily she actually had no contact with the teacher because the teacher didn't go to daycare yesterday. She's already been off for a couple of days because she wasn't feeling well. She just got the test results back yesterday. And then called in. Yeah, luckily (child’s name) had no contact because I kept her home during the holidays. And yesterday was the first day back and she was literally at daycare for like three hours. Then they called me.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** So now when you go to work, does your mom watch her?

**Sienna:** Yeah, so that's another problem. Like, I'm lucky to have my mom working from home and they’re accepting and able to help me out when I need, but like a lot of people don't have that. A lot of people rely on daycare. They can't work. They would need to go back on CERB or something. For a lot of people that would be really hard, like, I am one of the lucky ones. Like even the situation like if my mom was working, and even if she wanted to help, she wouldn't be able to because she would be at work.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Wow. I can’t believe the daycares closing.

**Sienna:** Yeah and like my daycare hours are 7am to 6pm. So if you work a regular like nine to five job. And like, maybe like four out of seven days I’ll work daycare hours. And then a couple days I close and work till 9:30. And then those, well, I need someone's help. But a good majority of the days, daycare will do the job for me. So daycare closing is like oh my god I need help 24/7.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** That’s good she was away from the daycare at that time, I can imagine other parents are really worried.

**Sienna:** Yeah that's what I'm saying. And it wasn't a teacher in her specific class. So they're like luckily she hasn't been there. She has no contact with the teacher. But like, still protocols, no matter what class gets it they have every class close. And like they have the hazmat team come in and like, bring the whole chemicals.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then until Monday, they can't go back?

**Sienna:** Well as of right now they told us Monday. They said they're gonna give it a couple of days to do like a full, because Toronto Public Health is obviously involved in this whole situation. Public Health told us to give it a couple of days to close the school down. The teacher is not allowed to come back in and all the other teachers have to get tested first before school or daycare resumes. And they have to fully sanitize the place.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Is there any new challenges?

**Sienna:** It’s just kinda the unknown. Like not knowing if daycares going to be open or closed. Not knowing if you're gonna have a job or not. Like, those types of things are like, the bigger challenges to me. Not knowing what's going on.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Right. And is this the first time the daycare has closed?

**Sienna:** It’s the first time it happened at my daycare. But this has been happening to daycares all around so like a lot of parents have been affected by this. At my daycare thank god this has been the first case. But like also daycare is expensive. Daycare is rent. I’m telling you I am on subsidies with daycare as a single parent. It’s helping tremendously. But I had to pay my first month of daycare before my subsidy even kicked in to like ensure my spot because I was on a two year waiting list. Like I put (child’s name) on a waiting list when she was born. I just got daycare last September when she turned 2. It’s crazy.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** You had to pay your first month?

**Sienna:** I had to pay the first month, and the first month was 1800 dollars. Just for daycare. And then for the first month, I had to pay like all the like, subscription fees, like the registration fee. This fee, this fee, like the one time fees. So it ended up being 2500 dollars just for the first month. Every month after that if I was paying for it fully out of pocket it would be 1800 dollars.

It literally is rent to put your kids in daycare.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Wow. That is crazy. And is this daycare near your house?

**Sienna:** Yeah it is right at the corner.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay and do you feel like subsidies help a lot of people then?

**Sienna:** Yeah. But that subsidies has nothing to do with COVID. They were there before and will be there after hopefully. Subsidies are like, amen. Subsidies work based off of your taxes, it goes off of how much money you make a year. Then you pay a certain percentage for daycare. Everybody has a different subsidy rate. It goes based off what you’re making. So thankfully last year I was on maternity leave so I was making like nothing. Because I took 18 months maternity leave. Which means I was making 33 percent of what I was normally making. So I was making one third of my paycheque. I was making like 356 or something, I was making like under 400 dollars every two weeks.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And that’s better for subsidies?

**Sienna:** Yeah way better for subsidies because the less you make. So the fact that I was on maternity leave last year helped me for this year because now I pay like nothing for daycare.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay that makes sense.

**Sienna:** Yeah but next year, when I do my taxes, now that I'm working again, I'm making a little bit more money. I would probably be having to pay like a couple $100, a couple something dollars, like I would have to pay for something. But for now my daycare is free because I made, last year, I made under the minimum requirement. So they were like, yeah, no, you can't afford daycare. We'll make it free. Because on paper, I wasn't making enough.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Right. So year to year they reassess it?

**Sienna:** Yeah every single year you do your taxes and you get a new subsidy rate. So you could be paying zero this year. But next year, you're paying 500 a year, after that you're paying 600. It depends solely on what you make.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then I guess, the main sources of support, you're saying, like your parents, right?

**Sienna:** Exactly. So yeah, like my parents, help me out through everything. And like, the fact that my mom is home is like, the extra help. Because if she was working, like, they still help out regardless. But like daytime hours, like when she's working, she'll come home at like 7pm. So like daytime hours even if she wanted to, she wouldn't have been any help like she couldn't. The fact that she's home is a little bit more flexible, because she's like working in her like little office space that she made in the living room. But if I ever need any help, like, it wouldn't be too hard for her to just have (childs name). She has her own crib. Like if you really need to lock her up you just make sure she’s alive and well and we’re good.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And is your sister able to watch her?

**Sienna:** She does help out when I ask her but she is very ADD. If (child’s name) cries for like one second she’s like oh my god I can’t do this.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** In terms of subsidies, is it just daycare and CERB?

**Sienna:** Yeah I took CERB in the beginning because it was what was available and I qualified for it. And then after, and then after, like, you can qualify for CERB while working only if you're making under $1,000 a month. And then I was making more than $1,000 a month from my job alone and I had to stop collecting CERB because I didn’t want to get put in jail. So I was like okay maybe I shouldn’t do this.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And do you think that these subsidies alone are good for single parents? Are they enough or no?

**Sienna:** I don’t know about enough. Like doing this all by myself? Yeah, I need way more support. Like, you know what I mean? And if I didn't have my parents like taking care of (child’s name) when daycares closed, and like when I need it, I would probably be like struggling even more. I would probably have to stop working. And then like, accept just whatever the government's giving me for stopping working, because there is a benefit in place right now for mothers who have stopped working, due to needing to stay home with their kids, because even elementary schools and high schools and all that, like kids of all ages are being affected by this. So even if you have like an 8 or 10 year old, like, your kids in elementary school, kids in high school, like your kids still home. And depending on their age, they can't really stay home by themselves, even if they're a little bit bigger. Maybe for me personally I can be like, yeah, this is enough for me, whatever. But a lot of single mothers, it’s not. If I didn't have the help, it really wouldn't be enough. Because what do I do if I get COVID, I would literally have to stay home. And the benefit is like $900 every two weeks. So like 1800 dollars a month, which is only the daycare fee. And then like if a single mother is stopping working her full time job where she was probably making like double that. And now she has to pay rent. Forget the daycare fee. You can't even pay rent and the daycare fee. You know what I mean? For some mothers it is like insane.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Do you have any recommendations on what the government can do to better help single mothers?

**Sienna:** Like, even if they have like emergency daycares. Like, like I don't know, like how to explain it. Like emergency daycare, like oh your daycare is closed, well this daycare is available. Like secondary daycares you can use. Honestly anything. Emergency daycares like the case where we just had like our daycare is closed until Monday because of a positive COVID test. Like if there was like, a secondary location that they told me like, okay, so your daycare is closed for the five days. But within these five days you can take her to this location. Even that would be really good for single mothers. I’m trying to think too if I didn't have my parents helping me out and I wasn't in the situation that I am, these things would be like a top priority for me, I would be like, Oh my god, like, what the hell am I going to do? Like, I need to do something?

**Taylor (Interviewer):** I didn't even think about that. That would be your number one thing that you think that they could do better to support single mothers?

**Sienna:** The only, like, the other option is staying home. And then you're like, limited on the amount of money you can make. The government saying I'm going to give you $900 every few weeks. It doesn't matter about your situation. It's not like a subsidy where it's personalized. This is like $900 every two weeks no matter who you are. So if you have to pay, like 2500 dollar rent. We wouldn’t even have enough to pay rent. So unless they're giving people more money to be able to support their lives. I'm not saying give people more money than to support a life that you didn't already support. But if they already have a good job, and they're supporting their life, and now because of COVID they're not allowed to work, or they can't work because your kids have been pulled out of daycare and school, how are you going to give them like a quarter of what they were making before and expect them to like maintain their same life? Then that gets to the problem where people can't pay rent, can't do this. And then they're getting affected because daycares are closed and schools are closed like it like it just trains on after that. Right? The easiest option I'm thinking for the government is to make secondary daycares. Unless they want to open their wallets and dish up more money. Like a lot of single parents struggle right now. I was thinking, especially ones with like, a little bit older kids. Like, kids who are like, five, six, where they’re really in the middle. Those kids parents have to stay home unless you can also find private daycare and find someone you trust that can like watch your kid at home type of thing.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Yeah. Which is probably even more expensive?

**Sienna:** It's about the same. It's not really more expensive. It's about the same. But then we are more obligated to like provide food and stuff like that. You know what I mean? If you send them to someone’s house. If I send her to daycare then like I pay for food. Like my daycare fees pay for food as well. If you go to a personal person you pay for their hours taking care of your kid but then you also feel like okay now I have to send food and other things to make sure my kid is properly taken care of. At least with daycare they have protocols and minimum requirements. They’re like required by law to do certain things. If you go to a personal person they’re not really required to do anything.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And is co-parenting something you take part in during the pandemic?

**Sienna:** No. I have (child’s name) all of the time. I really do. Yeah, like, literally, anytime that I'm not at work. I have her. Unless, like, I ask my mom to like watch her once in a blue moon. But anytime I’m not at work I have her. Also, like, if you have kids past a certain age, like 11 or 12 then you’re like whatever I’m going to work and you stay home. But if you have kids that actually need to be like taken care of that’s when the problem lies. Either I literally stay home or find some childcare for my kid.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Thank you so much for your time. Let me know where you would like your 20 dollar compensation to. Thanks again.

**Interview 2: Kristen**

\*Cutting out due to poor WiFi in a room she identified\*

**Taylor (Interviewer):** For current working conditions, like, are you working right now? Hours, job tasks, anything like that? You can speak on it freely.

**Kristen:** Okay hold on a sec. Elle, What are you doing? Can I have a minute please? Give mommy a couple minutes. I am not working at the moment. Can you be more specific?

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Are you not working because of the pandemic?

**Kristen:** Yes. I’m currently not working because of the pandemic.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** What are your main fears or concerns in terms of being a single mom during COVID-19?

**Kristen:** My main fears are me not being able to get work. I'm actually in the process of finding a place to live. I lived with family and friends since I left my my daughter's father. I'm trying to save money for first and last month's rent. Rent is very high right now and it's hard when you're not receiving child support from either father, right? To save money.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** In terms of balancing childcare on your own. If you could speak to that and the challenges that come with it.

**Kristen:** Like especially during the pandemic it's really hard to, you know what I mean? It's really hard finding a job and wondering who is going to watch my daughters. They’re young. (Son’s name) goes to school full time along with my daughter whose 5. I now always feel on edge if I try to get a job now. How’s it going to work out? Where are they going to go right now? Is it going to be safe? Am I going to be off in time to pick them up?

**Taylor (Interviewer):** What has your time at home looked like during COVID-19 with three kids?

**Kristen:** Stressful. Very stressful. We live in a one bedroom right now and like it's a large one bedroom. But like my daughters need a room, I need my own room, and my son needs his own room obviously. We’re in a large space but we’re always in eachothers faces constantly so yeah it is a struggle. It is very stressful. I am in and out of depression and like, in a sense, I don’t want to wake up sometimes in the morning. I want to wake up but I just don’t have the drive when I wake up to want to do much except make sure they are fed and provide for them. I don’t even care about myself now most of the time. I put them first.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** In terms of housework, that likely adds to the work too. Are your children in school?

**Kristen:** Give me one second. I’m going to go outside. They’re not in school at the moment. But (daughter’s name) and (son’s name) went to school full time.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Right and now during COVID-19, they were online or in class?

**Kristen:** They were in class but now they’re doing online.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Do you have to facilitate this online school or can they do it? Can you speak on this?

**Kristen:** It is difficult. I am grateful that (son’s name) is able to sit there on his own and be able to do his work but with (daughter’s name) I have to be there with her. While I have (other daughter) running around wanting to be a part of it and I have to keep her occupied.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then in terms of doing tasks, like going to the grocery store…?

**Kristen:** Ugh. I don’t like it at all. I don’t want to go shopping ever. Food Basics right now, Walmart, none of those places. Unless I truly have to. I bring (son’s name) along for the ride so he can sit in the car with my girls and I can do my thing real quick and be out.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Are you able to speak on your main sources of support during COVID-19?

**Kristen:** Uh, my sister. My cousins. I live in the basement. They are my main sources. And (son’s name) I depend on him a lot. He is the man of the house in a sense and he has had to grow up a little more. I really need his help. He’s quite capable but I also look at it like he is learning. Yeah. And I also look at it as you know, what, at his age, chores and responsibility, and you know what I mean? You need to learn to be. But yeah, as like, me as a single parent. And if he's capable, like, I put a lot of responsibility on him. And I, I mean, I think it's, I don't put, I do put a lot of pressure on him but I also think it's good for him, in a sense. Like, I don't take away, you know, activities or certain things, you know, like with his friends, but I do like, expect a lot from him. But I think it's good for him, like they need like, he needs that, you know, he needs some kind of sense of responsibility. And to know what like the real world is about right now.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And is co-parenting something you are able to speak on during COVID?

**Kristen:** I co-parent with one of my daughters fathers. The other fathers are not around but I am grateful for their families.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Are you able to touch on government subsidies for single parents during COVID? Are they doing enough?

**Kristen:** I don't, I don't right now. Because when I left (son’s father) when my son was a baby. When I left my son’s father, there was tons of support out there. There was tons of like, help with housing and counseling, and, and all that, but then when I left my daughter's father in COVID, like later on in life. I went to the same resources that I used before and me being a single mom with my son. When I went to the same resources, I was told that there's not much out there because of immigration, and they've taken a lot of the housing. And I thought because I had three children now. Wow, there's gonna be help. I can just go get it like where I got it before and yeah, it's not there. I was told that it's no longer there like they can't help me the way they did 10 years ago. You know what I mean? So yeah, I don't I don't believe there is though. Yeah, they're not doing enough.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Perfect. That's all really that I have to ask. Thank you so much!

**Interview 3: Elena**

**Taylor (Interviewer):** The first question that I have here is just asking you to speak on your current working conditions during COVID-19. So your hours job tasks, what the job entails, all of that.

**Elena:** Okay. I was self-employed. Normally I would run two businesses. I ran a hair salon and a gym, a boxing gym.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And can you speak on how the pandemic has affected your work, if in any way at all?

**Elena:** Ugh. Yup. Well they, uh, both shut down.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And going off of that, your main fears or concerns now that the second wave of COVID-19 is hitting? And being a single mom?

**Elena:** Just financial is basically it. I'm not worried about COVID as much as I am just sort of the financial impact it's having on me. You know, like I'm social distancing and protecting my kids. So I'm never worried about catching COVID.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** In terms of childcare during COVID-19 and the second wave. Has this been easier, harder, if you could just elaborate on that?

**Elena:** You know for me childcare has been easier. Because my girl’s we’re all home and I never sent them back to school in the second wave since September. Now im not working at all now in this second wave so it feels like I am just a stay-at-home mom for them.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And what has this time at home looked like during the second wave of COVID-19?

**Elena:** Everybody home, we are all home. It feels like we are locked at home. I’ll take the odd hair client at home. I try to squeeze somebody in at their lunch time just trying to make a little bit of money that I can during the week. And you know, it is not much. If I need to run out now I leave early in the morning when the girls are sleeping so I can be back by 8:30 to help them with online school.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Great. Just going off of that, you said the children were in school, and in terms of online learning are they able to facilitate online learning on their own and can you speak on any challenges with that?

**Elena:** Ugh. My 12 year old is doing fine. I don’t have any issues with her. She doesn’t need any help. But my 8 year old is a completely different ball game. When they first went online in the second wave, my schedule completely changed. There is absolutely no way she can do it on her own. It feels like I am repeating grade 3 now. Like there is no way you can expect an 8 year old to stay focused on their own without supervision. So I have to have the teacher on sound in my home and I stay listening the whole time and help her and help keep her focused. I play a huge huge role.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** In terms of completing daily tasks like grocery shopping or attending appointments during COVID-19, do you have fears and concerns with this that you can speak on.

**Elena:** Well it has been hard. I try to get it done early because I need to be available for them at 9 when they start school. So I need to get it done at 7 or 8 AM. I don’t do anything at night ever because I need to be home now yeah. I am definitely not comfortable bringing them into a grocery store at all.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Perfect. Okay. If you feel comfortable, are you able to speak on your main sources of support during COVID? Or has COVID changed this at all? Is there anybody that you rely on?

**Elena:** Well now they see their dad every other weekend. So they see him every other weekend and on Wednesdays so I just have to work around that. But I don’t get very much support. I never call anybody to watch them or anything like that I just don’t feel comfortable with it.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And if you are able to speak on your experience with co-parenting during COVID-19?

**Elena:** You know what? I just never want to focus on something that I have no control over. Is it a concern of mine? Yeah. Because I also know he's dating. And he is also a massage therapist. He sees a lot a lot of people. But it feels like I can’t say anything because they are his kids and he still needs to see them now. I try not to focus on it because I make myself crazy thinking about it. I just need to accept that this is what my reality is and just go with it.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** In terms of government subsidies for single parents, are you able to speak on them and whether you feel they are enough to cover the needs of single parents.

**Elena:** No, no. No, absolutely not. I mean like right now they're giving us $900 every two weeks. And that that doesn't cover anything. That barely even covers our rent. Especially me like I used to be a business owner and now it’s like what am I supposed to do with 900 dollars every two weeks.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** What do you feel like they can do to better support single mothers? What would help the most?

**Elena:** I don't know. But I do have to say that every time I apply for that money I am extremely nervous. I feel like I am going to have to, in one way or another, pay for it later. So you know to ask them for more puts me in an even more insecure position. So I don’t know what the answer is. For me I'm definitely in a better headspace now during the second wave than when I was when we first went into lockdown in the first wave. It's definitely 100 percent. I just had to snap myself out of it. The first bit I was completely shocked when my businesses shut down and it was like well this is it now and this is the end of both of them. And the club I've had for 10 years and I just couldn’t believe I could lose it like that. I think too that the most frustrating thing is that they don’t really give us any information like even ahead of time. They keep locking us down longer. With no big picture. We can’t plan for anything.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay. So the relationship with your kids has gotten stronger in the second wave of COVID?

**Elena:** So much stronger. It was always strong. But it is a very different type of strong now. If it wasn’t for the financial aspect of COVID and what that has done to me then I could do this.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Well that is pretty much all of my questions so thank you for participating. Let me know where you would prefer your 20 dollar gift card to.

**Interview 4: Raquel**

**Taylor (Interviewer):** So, to begin, if you're just able to speak just on your current working conditions, so like hours, job tasks, things like that.

**Raquel:** Well my job reduced my hours so I've been working from home since December, December 9. I'm only working for four hours a day. So my hours were reduced.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Yeah, so that was going to be my next question was how the pandemic has affected your work?

**Raquel:** Well, it's gotten really slow, and they don't me need full time. So I'm back to being just part time. I just do 20 hours a week now.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And also, if you're able to, can you speak on your main fear with the second wave of COVID-19, hitting, specifically in relation to like, being a single parent?

**Raquel:** Uh well it’s a struggle, because, you know, having to work but also help (child’s name) with school. And she, she suffers from social anxiety disorder, and she doesn't like online at all. So it's been a struggle since she's been home, even throughout the holidays. Okay, she just, she just goes into, like, the panic mode. And then it's trying to juggle everything, like, you know, school, household, leaving the house just for groceries and not knowing what the future is going to bring us like this uncertainity? Like, she's really scared about school. Like she doesn’t like it. She doesn't know how she needs a social connection with her friends.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** So yeah, that was gonna be one of my questions as well. If she is in school, and also if you if she's able to facilitate this on her own, or if you have to help with the online learning?

**Raquel:** I help her, she needs help, because she also has an IEP for certain subjects. So I do have to assist her.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** So that you were saying is something that is a particular challenge with working and doing helping with online school?

**Raquel:** Yeah, you know, it’s just me, My mind goes everywhere, like, when is this going to end? When are we going to be able to go out, like, you know, what, what if I lose my job completely? Like, what if they have to shut down then? I don't know how I would survive just with my paycheque with everything like, right. You know, it's just thoughts that you have.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Yeah. And also, would you say that you experienced an increase in housework since COVID-19.

**Raquel:** Right now, things are a little bit slower. But when I was working from home, on the first time, and even the beginning of December, I think I work more at home because we don't take breaks, really, we're just sitting at our desk or table or something. And then since we spend more time at home, it seems that things get more dirty. There's more meals, like I have to cook a meal where I would just pack her a lunch. Yeah, I think there's always more to do more to do.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And also, you kind of mentioned this a bit already, but what do you find it especially difficult to complete tasks, like grocery shopping or attending appointments, things like that?

**Raquel:** Yeah, but Emma had, back in October, (child’s name) fell and bumped her knee. So in the beginning of December, I was in and out of appointments at Sickkids, working, juggling everything. And then she started physio, like in an hour, we're going to have a physio appointment. So it is like and then you know, you're only there for 20 minutes. It's an extra bill that I have. And it's just like, my benefits don't cover everything. And yeah, it's just a juggle because she's also, I got to go with her to get her braces, but now I don't know. Now that there’s a second lockdown who knows if they’re gonna see her. To be able to coordinate and it was choosing her high school and stuff, and it's just me like making all these decisions now and I'll be honest, there was a time that I just thought okay, I can't do all of this. It was just my anxiety just hit the roof.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then also this kind of goes hand in hand too. Do you have any outside sources of support like other people? And has COVID change this at all?

**Raquel:** I have a few. But like, we haven't really seen each other, so it's just me and her. So it is. It is like, you know, it's always we're always anxious and kinda like, we’re not bored, like we try to keep entertained. But sometimes you're like, what can we do? Even if we go out, there's nothing open. Yeah, like it's hard. (Child’s name) really hasn't been out at all since this whole thing started. Well she went back to school but that was it. She would go to school and come, go to school and come home. She started in school because she needed that connection.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then this will be like the last little bit here, just in terms of government support and benefits. Do you think that the government does enough to cover the needs of single parents? If this is something you could speak to at all?

**Raquel:** I do get a child benefit. I think if we could have like, I'm lucky and lucky that I was given a work computer. If not, I'd have to go out and buy a computer for her. Right? Like we only have one. So the only thing I was really able to buy online was like books or a puzzle. You gotta find ways to keep kids entertained other than iPads or something. Like you can’t just have them on online daily. So that was the only thing she asked me was for books and that but, you know, Christmas was just me and her and was quite different. Yeah, it's just been really hard for us. I could say that. And for (child’s name) anxiety, I had to reach out to my doctor which put us in contact again with the psychiatric ward at Sickkids. And we did have therapy over ZOOM but it's like she says it's not same and they say it's not the same. And I know she probably would like to open up more and she doesn't because she's scared. She's gonna make me worry more. We kind of rely on each other for that but I think I think that's another thing I know there's sites for mental health support and all that. But not many kids are going to open up online or even over the phone like I asked her principal because she has a social worker. And he goes well she can talk to her over the phone. I said it’s not the same. She can disconnect because. She doesn’t feel like talking to that person but she actually needs the help. So I think the resources in that case, yeah, difficult.

**Interview 5: Julie**

**Taylor:** And if you don't mind just, if you could speak on your current working condition so hours job tasks job location things like this just what you're currently doing.

**Julie:** I'm, I'm in a management role, as a receptionist part time. And for hours I'm gonna say like a 20 Hour Workweek right now.

**Taylor:** And I guess this leads me into my next question has the pandemic affected your work in any way.

**Julie:** i mean i think it's affected everybody's work they're working typically from home now Right. So I am working from home now as well. I'm pretty much working the same amount of hours. In terms of hours I would say that they kept the same in terms of role, I'd say that my responsibilities were heightened or at least I had more responsibilities. I am working 100% from home.

**Taylor:** Also, in terms of being a single parent, or you can, what would you say is your primary fear, with the second wave of COVID now hitting and being a single parent?

**Julie:** Well I think anyone's fear would be losing their job, job loss of income. Also, me getting COVID and not being able to take care of my children. And for them getting COVID. Mostly because I'm a single parent you fear mostly from a health and safety standpoint, like I fear if I get COVID what happens.. How will I take care of them If I have COVID, because you cant have people coming into your house to take care of you. How can I perform my work duties If I'm sick or if they're sick or even the fact that they're homeschooled I don't know if that's part of your question yeah.

**Taylor:** Do you find it, that there are any new challenges that you're experiencing working and balancing childcare during COVID or has this changed in any way for you?

**Julie:** Yeah. Everything changes so I'm working much later now too, because I have to still get my work done. My place of employment offers flexibility there but I still have to get my work done and their work, their school schedule doesn't change. So from nine to, let's say, from nine to 340 I'm running between meetings, doing their homework, setting them up with lessons, making sure they're doing their work, going into other meetings, doing some of my work. So it's it's changed 100%

**Taylor:** And also, in terms of housework, do you feel that this has been something that has increased for you, like cooking, cleaning, things like that?

**Julie:** Well, I mean, I think, cooking and cleaning remain constant in the sense you need to make three meals a day. It's nice that I don't have to make lunches for school. Okay. But it's kind of a joke but I mean bigger to that I mean, at the end of the day, I have to go to the grocery store and get groceries, I have two kids, how do I do that. Yeah, okay, that is also one of the challenges that I deal with. I can't just bring my kids with me to the grocery store right. We do that. So it's not the fact that the cooking and cleaning is the client we are in the house more obviously you're making a mess more Yeah, you're physically in the house. But at some point you just gotta let something go. Yeah, so I'm cleaning now. But I mean, I will never let my house get filthy because that's disgusting but if it's a little bit untidy, yeah well you know, we're just gonna have to deal for now, because, or else I'm just gonna have to hire a robot to pick up bastard. Because they are still young, right. So they're not going to sit there and to make their room. Nice. Yeah. But yeah, my more concern comes to getting those things so so oftentimes I have to organize with the grocery store for pickup organized for pickup services so that I just get there, and it gets put in my trunk and I go right so that actually. Yeah, that was

**Taylor:** Do you find it especially difficult in completing like daily tasks, like grocery shopping. Is that something especially hard now for you during COVID, being a single parent?

**Julie:** Yeah, or just saying okay you know like I think a lot of people have resorted to online ordering since COVID-19, like I've never ordered laundry detergent online before or things that I would just naturally just say I'm going to go to the store and get it, but I'm not just ordering one. Now I'm ordering like five at a time, right like soap I'm getting in huge bulk at a time right so the concept of shopping is different. And so, I have to balance budget differently because now I'm not just going every month and getting what I need. I'm stocking up. The fact that the function of how like so one month I could be spending way more than the next month, because that month I bought everything.

**Taylor:** And also, in terms of facilitating online learning, do you feel like, since your children are still young, you have to play a big role in this like this takes up a significant amount of your time is facilitating the online learning, or are they able to do this on their own?

**Julie:** Actually, they've been doing it since March, they know the routine. It's more keeping up with their homework and making sure that they're doing the work that is required for them in class. Okay, so that's more where I find my challenge like okay you sat there and listened to your lesson. What's the homework. All the homework, assistance on this. Okay, sit down. Be quiet and do it. Why are you running around the house. Gosh my challenge, is having them sit down and pay attention to their teachers has actually been fine.

**Taylor:** And then also, do you have any main sources of support in terms of other people and has COVID changed this at all or affected your support networks?

**Julie:** Well yeah, you can't see anyone. But we're resourceful so we work around it so instead of physically fooling people so I'm gonna break, pretty much that's part of the problem, get a break, by having your support or people around. So the concept of rest or getting a break is very limited. But, you know, we have all drop off food at people's houses, they'll drop food off at mine so there's no contact. But if I had, say, a day that I had. I don't know meeting goal day. And what's cool is with the children all day is like a family member come in, they'll make and prepare food and drug what else door for me. Okay.

**Taylor:** Is co parenting something that you do or partake in during COVID?

**Julie**: Unfortunately, yes it is.

**Taylor:** And then, and then my last question here is just, if this is something that you're even able to speak on or if it's relevant to you. Do you feel as though the government in terms of subsidies, benefits, support, anything of that matter that they do enough to cover the needs of single parents in your case?

**Julie:** Well, just because of my pay, I'm really, I don't really get any. Yeah. I'm kind of exempt from a lot of that stuff. I can't speak to that one.

**Interview 6: Naja**

**Taylor (Interviewer):** So my first question is about working conditions, so hours, job tasks, just a little bit briefly about kind of work you do.

Naja: I work for Royal LePage, I am full time, I do I am the deal processor within the office. I also help out with the front desk in locating and confirming appointments. I call for commission, all that kind of stuff.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And has the pandemic in any way affected your work or have your hours remained the same throughout the entire thing or can you speak on that?

Naja: I worked throughout the entire pandemic. My hours didn't really diminish. They pretty much stayed the same but while working at home during the first lockdown. I was kind of working, different shifts so instead of a nine to five. It would be one to nine or like three to seven, and then weekends as well.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then for this, this is a general question so your main fears or concerns with this second wave of COVID-19, and in regard to being a single parent?

Naja: My only concern really is that I'd really like to continue working within the office. I really don't want to work from home.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then, from your experience working from home and also working at the office, and balancing childcare during COVID-19. Has this been challenging in any way?

Naja: It wasn't really challenging. I do have my grandparents and my grandmother who do actually help me out a lot. So, during the first wave and the majority of it I was home and then going back to work, they would help and come watch her. But now that she's home doing school and I'm back in the office, I'm letting her stay home so it's not bad.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Yeah. Okay, perfect. That leads me into my next question. In completing housework and childcare, any sources of social support?

Naja: Yeah, I have my grandparents and my mom as well.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And in terms of school, is your child currently ins school or online?

Naja: Everything now is online but when September did start, she did want to go back so she was in class up until the Christmas holiday and now she's home.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then, in terms of facilitating online learning, she does that herself or do you play a large role in this? Can you speak to your experience with this?

Naja: Yup she does this herself, she got a new laptop so she's basically pretty set to go. She’s doing really well, she’s finding it not as hard as we both thought it would be. She’s enjoying it staying home.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** That's good to hear. And in terms of government benefits or support during this time, has this been relevant to you at all and is this something you can speak to?

Naja: No, I was working, so I didn’t collect CERB or unemployment, so no.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And another question that I have briefly is in terms of CO parenting, is this something that you experienced during COVID-19, if so, is there any challenges during COVID-19 specifically with that?

Naja: Actually her father passed away in September of 2019. But before that by decision, he never had contact with her.

**Interview 7: Roberta**

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay, so the first question is on working conditions, and like how you are working currently. So include hours, job tasks, job location, anything of that sort.

**Roberta:** Okay so right now I'm on mat leave. But right prior to that it was a salary based job that I do 40 hours a week.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And were you working this job when the pandemic had hit?

**Roberta:** Yes. And the location was downtown Toronto.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Were you still working downtown Toronto during the pandemic?

**Roberta:** No, I was working from home.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Perfect. How has the pandemic affected your work?

**Roberta**: In my case it didn't.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And then the next question is just about your main fears, with single parenting during the second wave of COVID? What are you most worried about?

**Roberta**: Her education. I'm scared that online is not the same as in person. And I can kind of see how the online isn’t really online. At least with her teacher right. I'm sure every teacher is different but with (child’s name) teacher, I felt like it was just photocopies and here do this and there was no lesson or nothing like that, so she doesn’t learn multiplication she doesn’t learn any of that. So, she’s in grade 4 and she still doesn’t know now any of that. So my main fear is her education and the pandemic affecting it.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** And also, when you were working, and being a single parent during COVID, was there any specific challenges you experienced in balancing working and childcare as a single parent?

**Roberta:** Oh, absolutely. So, a lot of the online for her again with her teacher it was independent learning. And I was working a full time job right so there was times when it's like I'm in meetings and I have her knocking on my door because she needs help on something like it was juggling the job with client meetings and all that stuff and due dates and deadlines and still having to kind of guide her and help her through her online.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Okay, perfect. And also in terms of housework, childcare, and being a single parent. Was that something that you found, especially difficult or not really?

**Roberta:** Yes so I find that it’s way more right because you're at home more, so you're now liable for, for example, not liable but you you have to think of breakfast and lunch for (child’s name). Whereas before, when she was going to daycare in the morning or before and after school programs she would have breakfast there and I would just pack her lunch, obviously, and then she would have lunch there. So now I have to take time to prepare her lunch, prepare her breakfast. And because you're living in the house more it gets dirtier more whereas before you're out of the house for however many hours a day and you're only home really four or five hours. Now you're home all day so the cleaning piles up so it really did have an impact.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** You kind of touched on this already but facilitating online learning was something that you have to do and (child’s name) can't really do on her own?

**Roberta:** More so in the first wave then the second wave. Now I find that they follow more of a schedule and the teacher provides lessons now and she’s there. Before, the teacher was just there in the morning and she would say so your homework is this and scan some sheets or whatever and she was responsible for doing it on her own and submitting it. It was more independent and now it is more structured. This might just be teacher based or because of the situation that we are in.

**Taylor (Interviewer):** Right. And then, in terms of being a single parent, do you find things like attending appointments, or grocery shopping during COVID particularly challenging? Can you speak to that?

**Roberta:** So it wasn't challenging in the sense of me actually being able to go. The only impact to that was I was pregnant and so we have this whole pandemic thing and they weren't really sure how it affected pregnant women. That played a role a little bit like that I was a little reluctant to do, where I was scared to go grocery shopping but at the end of the day I had to do it. That's the only really impact I felt to grocery shopping.

**Taylor:** So it wasn't too difficult like with (child’s name) like going grocery shopping or going to appointments anything like that?

**Roberta:** The problem too right is because my boyfriend only moved in like later in the year like May or June or whatever it was in the beginning. It's like everywhere we go I have to bring my, my daughter with me right. Not only am I putting myself and my baby at risk, but then I'm also putting (child’s name) at risk. Right, and it was scary but unfortunately had to get done.

**Taylor:** Yeah. And then also, the next question is about your main sources of support and this pertains mostly to like other people, and whether COVID has changed the support networks for you?

**Roberta**: So, I don't get any outside support and that didn't really change.

**Taylor:** Okay, perfect. And then my next question is about co-parenting and whether you're still doing this during COVID-19, or if you're not doing this?

**Roberta**: Co parenting as in she goes to her dad? Yeah, she was going, she stopped going in March. And then she went in June, July, August like over the summer, and then September she stopped.

**Taylor:** Okay, and did this scare you with COVID or not really?

**Roberta**: It did because you don't know where the other person goes right. You don't have that control, you lose that control.

**Taylor:** There's just very few questions left. In terms of like government benefits, subsidies, support, do you feel that the government does enough for single parents, or if you can speak on this if this relates to you at all?

**Roberta:** So with me I'm fortunate where I make a decent amount of money, so I'm not dependent on government benefits and stuff like that. So I wouldn't say that really applies to me, obviously, the government wanted to help me I’d accept it. But I'm in a position where, like I like I get no outside support and by that means that her dad doesn't even pay child support. I kind of learned to do it on my own and I make not great money but I made decent money where I'm not dependent on anything else and that includes government finances and stuff like that.

**Interview 8: Magda**

**Taylor:** So the first question just pertains to working conditions so if you don't mind if you could just speak on your current working conditions, like your hours, job tasks, job location, things like that.

**Magda:** Yeah, I'm a full-time administrative assistant at (hospital). I work Monday to Friday, pretty much nine to five.

**Taylor:** And has the pandemic in any way affected your work from the start up until now?

**Magda:** It made it more busier if anything.

**Taylor:** Okay and what are your main fears personally in being a single mom with the second wave of COVID-19 hitting? What would you say is your primary fear?

**Magda:** My fear is things not going back to normal. But as far as having the girls here, my six-year-old, is a bit grumpy but the grade seven it's been really a good experience for us. Because grade seven can be tough on girls. And there's a lot of drama that she just doesn't really want to deal with it and now we can kind of bypass all that…If it wasn’t for the financial aspect of COVID and what that has done to me then I could do this.

**Taylor:** And do you experience any challenges, different or new challenges with working and balancing childcare during COVID?

**Magda:** A little bit just with her schooling, because she is in school.

**Taylor:** Right. Okay. And in terms of housework as well, do you feel this has been increased, stayed the same., etc.?

**Magda:** For housework probably increased, increased.

**Taylor:** Do you feel like there's a big burden on you to facilitate the online learning or can (children) do it themselves?

**Magda:** No they definitely need assistance.

**Taylor:** Okay. And in terms of completing daily tasks, like appointments or grocery shopping. Do you find this particularly difficult being a single parent during COVID-19?

**Magda:** Yes, definitely.

**Taylor:** And also, if you don't mind, can you just speak on your main sources of support. This is in terms of other people and whether COVID has affected these at all.

**Magda**: My support has been mainly like friends, my partner. (My child’s) father helps as much as he can sometimes.

**Taylor:** So that was my next question, which you kind of answered, it was about co-parenting. Do you do this during COVID-19?.

**Magda:** Oh yes, we are still doing it during COVID-19.

**Taylor:** Does this bring any fears in any way?

**Magda:** No none.

**Taylor:** And in terms of government benefits or support, do you feel as though the government is doing enough for single parents, if this pertains to you in any way.

**Magda:** No it’s not.

**Taylor:** And I don't know if this is kind of a difficult question but do you, do you have any suggestions on what the Ontario government can do better to support single mothers?

**Magda:** I think they could look at maybe work, like, right. I'm lucky enough that my work lets me work from home from time to time. Okay, so I could work from home but even working from home with a child doing online learning it's hard to juggle both. So I don't know if there's like a benefit that you can do like a part time leave so you don’t put your job at risk or anything.

**Interview 9: Vivian**

**Taylor:** So, just to get into the questions now. I know you spoke to me a bit about this already but your current working conditions, like hours, job tasks, job in general?

**Vivian:** So, I mean pre COVID I was a high school science teacher, and my hours were 8:20 to 2:20. Just recently, in the second wave I was actually promoted to guidance. So, my hours are able to be staggered. So, I can just jump on to work when my kids are done online.

**Taylor:** Perfect. And again, you kind of already touched on this, but how would you say that the past pandemic has affected your work?

**Vivian:** It's not as focused right. I can't give an hour to students if they have a question about post secondary I have to make sure everything else is done within the house so I can get alone time. So, I can put a little bit of more attention to the students. Sometimes I'm working late into the evening and answering emails or questions that students may have had during the day, which I would have been able to do in my office, with no distractions or anything, you take a quick lunch and eat you kind of work through your lunch but this is a little bit staggered work. I’ll in the morning and then you're getting them their snack and then you work in the afternoon after their lunch and then you're working in the evening and then get them to bed and then once they're in bed then you just kind of continue with stuff that you don't have to call them one on one, and then kind of goes on and the next day is the same thing.

**Taylor:** And also, in terms of what would you say your main fear or concern is with being a single parent and now with the second wave of COVID-19 hitting?

**Vivian:** There's no personal fear for me. My fears for the kids and the social aspect of them missing out quite a bit at school. The friends, the interacting, the learning in a different environment versus in their rooms on the laptop so my friends missing out a whole season of potentially trying out for the basketball team. My daughter is just making, you know, connections and friends where that you know it was a little bit awkward now she's quite the girl right and so, you know, and then on top of that, they have connections outside of school. My son plays soccer so four to five days a week we're out and he's got connecting with those kids right and so that's still missing. Yeah, so my fear. I'm okay. My fear is for them that they think it's the new norm and they adapt so quickly when they're young, that I don't want them to adapt to this of being the normal right so that's my fear, no fear of getting sick or any of that it's just them being with people then being able to walk up to someone without them having to cross the street because they're afraid of COVID, and this is how it is we'll go on walks or bike rides and people really step out of their way to be nice near you, you know, people on the same side. Before you may have even shrugged shoulders with someone on the sidewalk and that would have been fun.

**Taylor:** Yeah I know. And you kind of already touched on thisl but for you, particularly, do you think balancing work and childcare during COVID-19 has been especially difficult. I know you were talking about working into the night.

**Vivian:** Yes, Because now you are, you know, as weird as it sounds, school gives you that break, so they're normally in school from eight o'clock till 315, and that gives you time to work and focus and also socialize on your aspect right you're working with colleagues you're working with other students, administrators, and so on. This has been really difficult because, sorry, what was the initial question. You now lose your sense of the day so you get up to get them ready, and then you work but you can't finish and then you're trying to do things and then you're frustrated and then, you know, you don't get that break from the kids, you come home and then it's full blown because they're home full time and then you're working through it, work in the morning, your full blown, and you're trying to get your work done it just, there's no it doesn't really work at the end of the day and it's and it's three o'clock and everyone's frustrated, yelling, this one's crying, this laptop didn't shut down, the meeting dropped the call. And then you just don't feel productive, you're not 100% focused on what you should be doing. Yeah.

**Taylor:** And also, do you find that there's additional housework to be done or is that kind of the same as it was before?

**Vivian:** No, it's constant, and more so, it was usually pre COVID, they'd come home, we would get ready for soccer, let's go in the car, come home, Shower, do a load of laundry, clean up after dinner, and put them to bed so it's clean for the next morning. During now being the house all day, it's up and down. If I forgot this paper left here, I just want to snack on these things here, leave this wrapper here, and return, it's like a hurricane. You clean up one area here and, oh there's pencil sharpenings all over the floor and you know printing over here and papers, it’s constant.

**Taylor:** Right and also, I know you mentioned that your children are both in school, online now so do you feel like this is something they can facilitate on their own or do you feel like you have to play a big role in that?

**Vivian:** So, my son has been great. He is quite tech savvy and facilitates his own learning and the teachers are doing a really good job online. However, when they do break or when they do have time to work independently he needs to come down and say, Okay, can we go over this last question, whereas in school, he has a teacher. So, I mean, most of the day is okay with him. But there will be hey I need help on this monologue, I need help in science and because I'm a science teacher it's so easy for him to come and ask me. And then my daughter is constant, because this is new for them. You know the two hours, how do I sign in to live stream, the teacher now wants us to click on this, and so you're caught up and then you're working. Yeah and you also have a ear open of listening to what her teachers think because you don't want to miss what they want to say about tomorrow or about logging in. Right, so you're trying to have your ear, your attention split three different ways.

**Taylor:** I can imagine that would be difficult. Yeah. And then, in terms of like completing daily tasks like maybe attending appointments, or going grocery shopping. Do you think that this has been difficult for you or not really like during COVID and being a single parent?

**Vivian:** So during COVID it's been a bit difficult because you know you have to pick a time when you can go, you need to know when it's the busiest at this time, so you don't have time to wait in that line. So you know what i'm just going to stay home and I know around noon or something I could pop out and there will be a line at the grocery store, everything's now closed down, so I can't really go in store shopping but even for example, getting them new skates. Yeah, there's a pond that they can skate at, and that my daughter's gifts are too small my son's teacher too small, but the Hazel gates are too big for now I got to order them all and now I've had a search online, oh this location doesn't have it, and curbside. And so, there's so many to do the current point but to do all that research takes time, right. So, it just seems like there's more of an effort has to be put in rather than just getting in the car going to court to try on these gauges it's a good size and let's go. Yeah, there's also been ways in which Hey, how can I reduce this a lot of online shopping amazon for their for whatever I need I, something was missing for dysautonomia easily Amazon's here in two days I was like wow I'm not used to that. That's fine with my time that was still a lot of things have kind of shifted even sometimes grocery shopping now I went, you know what I don't have time, I can't go by ourselves. Let's get this. Go cart delivery delivered right and so you're like well that was convenient. Yeah, you're also paying a bit more because now you're paying for that delivery, you're paying for premium, whatever. I don't know, different, for sure.

**Taylor:** Yeah, perfect. And then also in terms of like main sources of support from other people do, is this something you deal with and has COVID changed this at all or not really?

**Vivian:** So I have a great support system. My brother lives quite close to me with his wife and kids in case I need to get out and watch them. My mom and dad, as well. I mean they live in Mississauga and Burlington but they're always available during COVID, not so much because I can't go anywhere. So it's not like I'm like hey can you want to because I'm. To do this, but there are times I'm like, Can you take them for the night because I'm going to kill someone. And I have not had a break away from these kids all day, every day, day in and day out, right, right, right. Yeah.

**Taylor:** And then in terms of co-parenting, is this something you do or don't do.

**Vivian:** So our situation was a little sticky, I have full custody of the kids. Okay. There's not much CO parenting present, I make all the decisions, I do all the appointments. All of it. So it's not like they're 50/50 hey, pick up the slack and so on. So, every other weekend from Friday to Sunday that's pretty much it. So six days out of a month he’ll see them and get them. Sometimes it's canceled and of course, it's not like I can say figure it out you have them, they always default back to me right so there's not much CO parenting time.

**Taylor:** And then, this is like the final question here is in terms of government subsidies, benefits, support. Do you feel that the government does enough to cover the needs of single parents?

**Vivian**: I've been teaching for 15 years I make 100,000 a year. I'm a single mom, there's not much that I can get. My daughter pre COVID, went to the YMCA, because I have to get to work before the school starts SO i have to put her at that program and there's no subsidy there for single moms, because you make a certain amount. I do know you know you do your taxes and so on. I know there is one, like the child welfare benefits. It's great. We get monthly for the two kids and so on and it shows how much I made it, it shows what their dad gives them for child support, which is minimal. And so it helps. It's not the greatest, but it's better than nothing but I didn't find that there was any subsidy for anything other than when you do your taxes I would get more monthly than someone who is not a single mom and has two incomes.

**Interview 10: Noelle**

**Taylor:** So the first question that I have is about your work so what are you currently doing hours job tasks location?

**Noelle:** Okay, so my job title is dietary aid in a long term care facility. I've been there for 20 years around there. Yeah, a long time. So basically what I do is prepare the nourishment for the residents in the building. So I make their sandwiches, prepare any special diets, puree nourishments, mince things for them, provide certain diabetic foods for them. Different supplements.

**Taylor:** And then how has the pandemic affected your work has it changed it in any way?

Noelle: So they increased everybody's hours just to cover because some people now couldn't come to work because they were affected. So the increased my hours a bit. Now we have to do the screening every day, the swabbing three times a week, other measures, like increase hand sanitizers, increase cleaning every hour.

**Taylor:** Yeah. And then also, if you don't mind if you could just say some of your main fears with being a single parent and the second wave of COVID-19?

**Noelle:** For me it's just my son contracting something and bringing it home, or to his grandmother's house on the weekend.

**Taylor:** Do you feel it's rather challenging working and balancing childcare during COVID-19, or do you have any source of help ?

**Noelle:** I do have help like I have to work on weekends. On the weekends my aunt, she would help me take care of him when I work. I guess if he has a PA day she would also help me because her son is also the same age as my son, and we have the same days off. Hours wise at work I’m able to work it out with my boss like I can drop him to school and pick him up. He is also in a before and after school program.

**Taylor:** And then also, your has your time at home in terms of like housework and childcare changed all during COVID-19?

**Noelle**: No, not really.

**Taylor:** With online school, did you feel like you had to facilitate that online school or was he able to do it on his own?

**Noelle:** The first one or two days I had to be there. But he really didn’t need my help at all, I thought he would but he didn’t.

**Taylor:** In terms of like daily tasks, like attending appointments or grocery shopping, do you find that difficult with COVID-19?

**Noelle:** It’s basically the same because I usually have one day off in a week and I’ll take that time to do my laundry, do my groceries. With COVID too, they let health care workers go in first so I don’t have to stay in line, I just show my badge and go in and out. That was a bonus.

**Taylor:** This is one of my last questions, in terms of government support, or benefits or anything. Are you able to speak to this at all or does this not apply to you.

**Noelle:** Yeah I can speak to the COVID benefit, I think they gave that to everyone like three times it was like 250. I applied and got all of those but I didn’t take anything else they were giving out.

**Taylor:** Perfect, and do you feel that what the government is providing is enough for single parents?

**Noelle:** I do not no because an extra 200 or whatever is not enough. I have to drive my son to my aunts house, I have to buy more food, I have to buy activities for him to keep him busy during COVID which he would usually do at school but cant now.

**Taylor:** What do you feel they can do better to support them?

**Noelle:** Money could help but honestly we need things to open up for these kids to get back to their normal lives.