



# THE NEW NORMAL

How virtual students feel their year is going.



The country is closing in on one year with Coronavirus. As a result, every school district is offering multiple options to students so that they can feel safe. How does the virtual option affect student's mental health? Can being alone for long periods of time and not having the social interaction from a classroom affect one's mindset? While some students find virtual learning easier, many have struggled.

Freshman Paisha Goodrich, junior Grace Clingan, and sophomore Jaquelyn Rosas were of the 30% of students that chose the virtual learning model. Each of them said they picked this model for safety reasons.

"I want to be as safe as possible. I have people in my family that could get seriously ill if I were to give them Covid, and I honestly want to avoid it for my own sake," Clingan said.

Although they are staying safe from Covid,

there are many struggles that come with online learning.

"I struggle to keep up with all my work and I usually struggle to stay focused," Goodrich said.

Clingan agrees that time management and staying focused is harder in the virtual model.

"When you're at home it is easy to ignore work, but on a good day I can manage to stay focused enough to get things done," Clingan said.

With the workload increasing due to shorter terms, time management still remains an issue.

"I think to myself that 'Oh I can get that done later during the day so I can do something else instead,' or laziness will get the best of me from time to time," Rosas said.

According to The American Psychological Association, psychologists are concerned about how students will cope psychologically with the ongoing loss of access to the friends, teachers, and routines associated with going to a physical campus.

"Luckily, I am an introvert and I have not been affected to the extent a lot of other people have been. I like being with myself, so I have been able to cope," Clingan said.

However non-introverts may have a harder time coping with online learning. With this, their anxiety and stress levels have gone up.

"My anxiety has gone up a lot because we are learning at such a fast pace and I can't

**"DMPS NEEDS TO HELP US HELP OURSELVES BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN HARD ON US AS STUDENTS AND WE DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW TO HELP OURSELVES." - PAISHA GOODRICH, FRESHMAN**

always keep up with what's happening in my class," Goodrich said.

Clingan also agrees that there has been a big change and it does impact aspects of her life. Along with becoming exhausted and worn out, losing sleep has become a common issue.

"The most that has affected me is the lack of sleep I get due to staying up late to finish an assignment that's due the next day, or the sudden lack of motivation," Rosas said.

While many problems occur while learning virtually, there should be ways to make the process easier.

"I feel like DMPS can add certain days where kids can catch up on school work, because so many kids have failed or have been close to failing in this model," Goodrich said.

Clingan believes teachers pushing for more participation may result in less students failing.

"I know students hate it, but when my teachers did that it forced me to learn the material," Clingan said.

Virtual learning is a huge change for all students. Like all major changes, it takes time to adapt. It will take a lot of effort to return to normal but until then it's vital to take care of yourself and one another. Check in on your friends and remember things will get better with time.

## **Resources for teens:**

**-COVIDrecovery.org-** free counseling to lowans virtual options, Iowa Warm Line 8447759276 request a counselor

**-The Trevor Project-** How LGBTQ youth can cope with anxiety and stress during covid19

**-ICISF.org-** International critical incident stress foundation inc. Suggestions for sustaining resilience during the covid 19 response (resilience building tips)

## **Resources for educators/ counselors:**

**-pchsia.org-** cultivating resilience webinar

**-mhffcnetwork.org/ pacificsouthwest – school mental health crisis leadership lessons**

**-MHTTC Network-** National school mental health curriculum: guidance and best practices for states, districts, and schools

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN BY CALLIE GARCIA  
PHOTOS BY LILLY JOHNS