Transcript

Allison Interview

Interviewer:

Going somewhere new can be daunting, especially when that new place is somewhere like school. If you do not know anyone in this environment it can be easy to feel separated from everyone else. Building community is very important to navigating this new situation. I know from experience, sometimes this is difficult. Not everyone has the same capability, or confidence in social situations. But, much like nature’s beasts, some of us adapt and overcome. Here I have with me, Allison Rojas. Which I will ask if you want to be anonymous by the end of the recording. Say ‘hi’.

Allison Rojas:

Hi.

Interviewer:

That was very good. I have a set of questions that I would like to ask you. The first being: how did you physically and mentally navigate the new social environment of highschool?

Allison Rojas:

Okay, so… I kind of have two, I guess like introductions into highschool, because like the first one was actually freshman year, and when we started, but then I would say that the other one was actually going in person because obviously that’s very different than virtual. And going in person kind of combines when we got a new building, and you know everyone came back. But starting off, you know, stuff like physically and emotionally, or something? What did you say?

Interviewer:

Physically and mentally.

Allison Rojas:

Physically and mentally. So yeah, basically you know starting off was you know, I was sitting in my basement with a laptop. It was virtual and it kind of sucked, and you know that connects to the mental part of it because I, like I knew people but it’s not like we could really actually talk to each other. It was really difficult to socialize and you know you really need that when you’re going into a new school that, you know you really want to make friends, and get to know people, but when the district that you’re, that you go to school in removes the like, chatting ability that kind of makes it a bit harder. Sometimes you have to start communicating via email, and not, you know no one really wants to do that sometimes. But yeah, you know mentally starting off it was really rough, because you know there were a lot of people that would, when we were virtual they would have bubbles and I could see them like actually with each other and I’d be like ‘I wanted that’ I wanted to get to know people and I wanted to have these friends. And actually when we went back in person and going into sophomore year too, it was I guess I don’t really know about physically but mentally I liked it a lot better because I could actually have these interactions, I could actually have the socialization that I was looking for, and it was a little, like it was a little… like it was a little awkward at some points because sometime there would be people that, you know already knew each other and were like, if it like they were– especially because I had come back in person later than some other people came back in person so there were a lot of people that were already, like close friends or had already, you know interacted and everything before I had and I had felt a little awkward.

Interviewer:

Yes. Very much so. And then, what steps did you take to try and adapt to this new environment? Specifically like, to meet people/make connections?

Allison Rojas:

So when we were still virtual, I would, because I really didn’t want to just email people, I would look up their names on Instagram and see if I could find if they had an account, and I did actually find a lot of people like that, and I also found–you know how Instagram will like recommend you to follow certain people or something like that–I found a lot of people that way too, because you know I had friends that I already followed on Instagram that followed these people from their middle school and it was all kind of connected. So definitely, you know social media helped a lot and there were lots of Discord servers that were made. Well I say a lot, but there was like one and then there were two and then–well anyway, you know joining Discord servers also really helped with like socialization because if we couldn’t chat on Microsoft Teams we could chat on Discord, so yeah it sounds really stereotypical but genuinely like social media and like, things like that have really helped me get to know people and socialize. And then I feel like that was really helpful because when I went back in person it was like, I already knew these people, I-I it was almost like meeting an online friend in real life, because like ‘I’ve chatted with you a lot and now I actually get to physically and literally hang out with you’.

Interviewer:

Awesome. That was a fun switch. Next question, what aspects of the new space discouraged your attempts at making connections?

Allison Rojas:

Like ‘new space’ as in, like when I went back in person, or new space as in when we got this new building?

Interviewer:

Like, the new school environment. I know that you talked about already, being online and how that was a very… a very obvious barrier. Were there any other obstructions that kind of made it harder to try and connect with people?

Allison Rojas:

Well yeah like you said, you know, when we were virtual obviously it was really hard to connect with people. And again you know going back in person when some people already had these friends they had made or even groups they had made it is a little hard because you can’t really like invite yourself into a group. It has to like, naturally happen, at least for me it feels like. So, I also just feel like this wasn’t really a barrier but it was almost like a precondition that you know a lot of–like I was the only person from my middle school who–like I was the first person from my middle school and the only person in my grade from my middle school to come to Collegiate, so a lot of people, went to middle school with each other and they already knew each other and they already had this friendship, so it’s not like they even–it’s not like they’re developing a new friendship while I’m not, it’s that these people already had that while I don’t. So that was also kind of difficult because people would have all these things like ‘Oh yeah, do you guys remember that one time in 7th grade’ and I’d be like ‘no cuz I wasn’t there’ you know? It was just a little difficult to connect to people when I was, like, the only person from my middle school.

Interviewer:

Oh yeah I definitely understood that experience. Man, last question, if you could tell anything to yourself at the beginning of the year… at the beginning of the year you were first in school in person, what would you say?

Allison Rojas:

I would say, just don’t sweat it, because I was obviously stressed about like, how I’m gonna socialize and how I’m gonna make friends. In the end, it worked out. I have some great friends, even some friends I didn’t meet when I first came back in person. And like, friend groups are gonna form naturally, like you find your people and sometimes their, it's only specific to a certain class, like I had freshman year when I was first in person, I had… like there were these people that were in my art class and while I did kind of have a friend group with those people it was also like specifically interacting in that class so that was really fun and like memories from that and like, yeah. If I would tell myself one thing, it was just be, like ‘it’s all gonna work out in the end when it comes to like friends and socialishing–socialis–socializ–excuse me… socializing. Because I- remember first starting virtual and thinking, like I was really not gonna know anyone. I know people but never interact with them. But I definitely did end up with some great friends and I’m–it’s-it’s awesome now.

Interviewer:

Nice. Alright, thank you so much for your time. Do you want to be anonymous?

Allison Rojas:

No.You can keep me in.

Interviewer:

Alright nice, I will use your name then. Thank you.

Jasper Interview

Interviewer:

My next interviewee is Jasper…

Jasper Hutchings:

Hutchings.

Interviewer:

Hutchings? Hutchings, thank you. Thank you for coming out by the way.

Jasper Hutchings:

I’m gay that’s what I do.

Interviewer:

Slay. Alright. My first question, is how did you–in regards to school–how did you physically and mentally navigate the new social environment?

Jasper Hutchings:

…So…I didn’t really…so freshman year, right, it was virtual. And so a lot of it was online making it–and actually a lot of my friends didn’t go to this school. It was kind of hard social–navigating socially, especially because, like…you don’t really know anyone, and a lot of people came from schools, like groups of schools, so you have the PCS kids you have the McKinley kids, like there’s a lot of clusters of like they-they came from the same school so they know each other, and because we were virtual it made it kind of hard to like, find a place, because it seemed like already–everybody already had connections. And I also felt it was kind of hard because, I felt like groups were forming, and once a group had an opinion about you, it di–it was really hard to change that opinion. And so navigating socially was hard just kind of like, trying to find where I can fit in, and I’m still trying to figure out how to navigate socially. It’s just been–it’s a lot of…seeing who will accept you for you and who wants to be around you. So…

Interviewer:

What steps did you take to try and adapt to this environment? For instance, like meeting–how to…to like meet people and make connections?

Jasper Hutchings:

This is like, basic, but I really tried to like, I did a lot–I do a lot of observing, and like watching. So like I would try to figure out what people were really into, because I grew up homeschooled, so I wasn’t really in on what was the latest trends or anything like that. So I kind of just tried to observe and then I would look into those things. Like, I remember freshman year people were really into the Dream smp, so I went and I watched a bunch of videos about, like, the lore and stuff because I wanted to try and fit in. Like, when we got to the new building, like I really tried to be more…I tried to be more extraverted. Like I was in STUCO when I really wanted to, like…kind of stick myself out there because I knew there was going to be a bunch of new people that I hadn’t met that were going to be in my grade, because a lot of people were virtual the entire year, and I felt like that was…I felt really happy about that, to like–there was going to be new people that didn’t really know me cuz some people who I didn’t really know were in our class because I had no classes with them, and I feel like it was, like a lot of trying to figure out…what people are worth try–putting in the effort to be friends with, and like, figuring out, like who are–who are people who genuinely want to be friends with you who’s…who’s gonna make your life better, who’s gonna make your life worse, and just looking and figuring out ‘okay this person is friends with this person’ and like, it’s just…Taking a lot of time to observe is how I mainly navigated, was watching people and how people interact.

Interviewer:

So, what aspects of the new space discouraged your attempts at making connections?

Jasper Hutchings:

Like the building itself?

Interviewer:

The building, and also like, the social environment and like the-the people around you.

Jasper Hutchings:

Well, the building was like…the building I feel like could help, in the sense of nobody knew where anything was. But it also was kind of like…it, it’s gotten better but it feels kind of prison-y, you know? Like the grey walls, the blue floors, like very…it was-I was starting-it was very like, bland, but we have added a bunch of stuff to it. And I feel like because we were all in person now, it was kind of like…now if you couldn’t connect with the people it wasn’t like there was gonna be a bunch of new people in your grade, because whenever we transitioned, like I said earlier there was like, a whole bunch of people I haven’t met before, and haven’t interacted with, but like, now that we were all in person, it kind of like…if you aren’t able to make friends while in person, then you weren’t really going to be able to make the chance to make friends, because…once people have their groups they tend to stick with their groups. So, I feel like that was definitely something, was just kind of like, transition–and I also feel, social aspect, it was…because I did go in person, for my last half of junior year and I did know some people I like–there was some prerequisites about me, and like, people already had some opinions about me, because high school drama, and whatnot.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Jasper Hutchings:

And I feel like that, really made it difficult, because it made it feel like I had to avoid some people, and like, there was a kind of social hierarchy, I feel like, freshman and sophomore year, and so it was kind of like figuring out who would want to be friends with me, and…yeah.

Interviewer:

Alright. If you could tell anything to yourself at the beginning of the year you were first in school in person, what would you say?

Jasper Hutchings:

Whooaa…It’s gonna be very vague…but, they’re not worth it. Like, put yourself first.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

Jasper Hutchings:

Like…cuz the fact of the day is, I wasted so much time, on people that really didn’t care about me, and like, cuz I wanted friends so bad, and…I feel like it’s–was important–I wish I would have known, it’s–they’re not worth it. It’s not that worth putting all that energy into, it’s not worth tearing yourself apart about it, like even though, it’s scary watching, like–being in a new building, and like…I don’t know, like you need people for your high school spear–experience to be an actual highschool experience. That it’s just not worth it to try to–to put so much of yourself into people that really don’t care.

Interviewer:

Alright, thank you for your time.