**Participant DDS62**

Listener: For purposes of the recording, may we have your consent to record this?

DDS62: Yes

Listener: Thank you very much. <Researcher> probably talked to you about this. What we’re really interested in is, I guess, your inner reasoning, your reactions, about eating out during COVID. So, what I’d like you to do is think about the last time that you were making a decision about going out to eat, and not takeout or delivery. I’d like you to remember where you were, what you were doing, maybe who you were with, time of day or night. Just really place yourself there.

DDS62: Do you want feedback from the last time I tried to eat out? Or do you want feedback from the last time I successfully ate out? They’re like two different things.

Listener: Those are both great and so I’d like you to choose whichever one you’d like first and then I’d like to talk to you about the other one. And you’ll probably talk about them interchangeably, which is fine too. So, the last time that you were making a decision about this. Get that in your mind. What was going through your mind when you were making that determination?

DDS62: So, it was a group decision. It wasn't just mine. My in-laws and my husband and I, and my daughter were together after quarantining and taking a COVID test and we wanted to go out. Actually, they own a boat and so we were going to take the boat to a local restaurant. Obviously, via boat, there aren't a lot of choices. So, it was more of a do you want to do this, or not? It wasn't a decision about which restaurant. It was more about are you guys up for this, or is it too nerve-wracking? I think we were open to it. We called; we made a reservation. We knew that they had outdoor seating. We confirmed that. When we arrived it was very clear that while people, in fact, had masks, there a lot of people inside. There was a wait outside. The patio was packed. It didn't feel like things were distanced properly. And it turned out that our "reservation" was for inside, not for outside seating. So, we made the decision, as a group, that we didn't feel comfortable eating our meal inside. So, instead, we switched to a takeout order and ended up eating lunch on the boat, which was fine. So, that was kind of the most recent that I can recall. The decision making process really is are you comfortable and do you feel like this is a safe situation? Or, do you feel like it's too risky? And in that case, it felt too risky for us.

Listener: Ah, okay. So, you said that when you were first talking amongst yourselves, the conversation was this can be too nerve-wracking.

DDS62: Yeah. Sort of like, “Is this an excursion that you’re up for, or do you feel like we should just stay home?” kind of thing.

Listener: A little bit of that – was this like a – do you – is being with your in-laws, as a family group, a frequent occurrence for you?

DDS62: Um, so . . .

Listener: Was this like a special event?

DDS62: Yeah it was. So, in the beginning of the pandemic, we probably didn't see them at all from March until, I think, June or July because we were trying to be very careful, just because, you know, they're a little bit older and we just tried to minimize spread. And then it became very clear to us that this was going to be going on for a really long time and so we needed to make it a priority to have a visit. So, we kind of all got on the same page about what to do and we – I mean we literally grocery shopped more than two weeks out and didn't go basically out in public for the two weeks before. We've seen them about once a month since, so we're not seeing them all the time. For example, there have been a couple of instances. They spend half their time where they're going to retire which is where the boat is and it's about a 2-hour drive south. And then they spend the rest of their time – they have a place that's like 6 or 7 blocks away from us. So, they're actually nearby fairly frequently, during the week, but, for those visits, we do them outside and we social distance because we're just trying to keep it to a minimum.

Listener: And . . .

DDS62: I’m pregnant. I don’t know if <researcher> told you that, so that’s definitely a factor. I don’t think there’s a lot of evidence yet how that impacts mother and child, but I’d prefer not to find out personally. So, we’re being careful because of that now.

Listener: So, it was one of the times when you were getting together, one of those once a month?

DDS62: Yes

Listener: So, tell me about, um – when you were talking about too nerve-wracking and the questions about safety and were people up for the excursion, what was going through your mind as you were having those conversations with your husband?

DDS62: Sure. It’s just like a low level of anxiety all the time, it feels like. It’s just a constant consideration. For us, I think – luckily my husband and I, kind of without even talking about it, are pretty aligned with our being safe, especially with the pregnancy. But it’s just, it’s just – like logistics and anxiety and a small level of like low-level frustration all the time that we have to deal with this kind of thing. You know, it’s a cautious feeling. For us it feels like a calculated risk that we even considered it.

Listener: Calculated?

DDS62: Yeah.

Listener: What are those calculations for you?

DDS62: Am I going to go crazy if I have to stay in the house for another day? Versus, is the place that we’re going likely to feel safe to us? Meaning there is social distancing. Are they observing COVID? Do they have outdoor seating? We haven’t eaten inside of a restaurant since the beginning of the pandemic. It’s kind of those factors, if that makes sense.

Listener: Uh-huh. And what for you – when you think about safety, talk to me just about safety.

DDS62: Sure. So, I feel like the safest is just staying home, not exposing yourself in any way to other people. I particularly appreciate the additional information about COVID being kind of unlikely to survive and expose people on surfaces because at the beginning I was wiping down groceries and things like that. We feel pretty safe regarding takeout because somebody just knocks on our door, and drops our food off, and we don't have any physical interaction with them. It just feels like any physical proximity interaction with somebody, definitely without a mask, but even with a mask, it feels risky.

Safest would be stay home. Next is like go get your groceries because you have to because you couldn’t have possibly prepared for how long this is lasting. And the next is kind of that level of are you willing to risk a little bit of additional exposure to, say see your family, or to have a meal outside, or to go for a walk with your kid, or something like that.

Listener: Yeah. So, when – you said it wasn’t just your decision. You were in a group of folks.   
What about – you said you and your husband, you think, are pretty much on the same page?

DDS62: Um-hmm

Listener: Are you – have you talked about this a lot, or is this just an assumption that you’ve made?

DDS62: Yeah. Especially in the beginning when it was like what are you comfortable with? What am I comfortable with? Yeah, we definitely had a lot of discussions, particularly early on and as information kind of changed, or evolved. We’re just both pretty conservative in the arena of is it safe to eat out inside of a restaurant right now? We feel like the answer is it’s not worth the risk. So, I guess the answer is no. We’re on the same page about that.

Listener: When you think about risk, are you on the same page, just in general about risk? Or is it in specific scenarios?

DDS62: I think we usually talk through a scenario. And generally, we seem to be on the same page, related specifically to COVID. We kind of make sure, like hey are you comfortable with that? Are we comfortable with that? Our daughter is getting ready to turn two, so that's a factor for our consideration is, is she going to be like – is it possible that she's going to be running around and that's a no-go for us. We're not just having her run around if there's other children there or things like that.

Listener: If there are other kids there?

DDS62: If there are – so, like, for example, she can go to the playground, but they try to keep a distance from other children. But like if there was a scenario – we wouldn't take her to like Chuckie Cheese, even if they had a patio, because the expectation would be that she could run around and we're probably not going to do that, so that she could just randomly interact with people that we don't know. We're not really seeing our friends. We're trying to be very careful with our family. So, we kind of have the attitude of like yeah, we don't need any exposure from random people, for no good reason.

Listener: IS there a good reason?

DDS62: Well, you have to buy groceries. So, for example, my daughter has not been in a store since the pandemic started. There's no reason. Luckily, we're two parents and we can coordinate, so we haven't had her with us. But that's pretty much a necessity, I think. And it has lasted a really long time and so I do feel like our risk tolerance – I guess our willingness to take risks has gotten a little higher as we've realized like we can't just stay home all the time. In theory, we could, but we're going to go crazy.

Listener: So, you talked about that, “Are you just going to go crazy in the house?” Now, you said that you feel pretty conservative around risk taking. Can you tell me a little bit more about that and in how you think about dining?

DDS62: I just think I have the potential to interact with somebody that is outside of my normal bubble which is taking a risk because I don't know what their behavior or their tolerance is. Whereas, within our bubble, we know very well that, for example, my parents and my husband's parents are making it a priority to see family and are acting accordingly. But at a restaurant, you don't know what the person at the next table is doing. So, that's kind of, I guess, a bit of a trust in the public. And necessity. I mean if somebody said you can never go to a restaurant and eat inside again it would be like, okay, well, I guess I'll stick to takeout. That doesn't feel like something that's life-sustaining to me. It's a nice to have and it's something we did regularly before the pandemic, but yeah, it seems like too big of a risk right now.

Listener: So, trust in the public.

DDS62: Yeah

Listener: Can you tell a little bit more about how you think about that?

DDS62: Sure. I think everybody is different. I think we’re a society where everybody thinks as an individual, maybe even a little bit too much. You see it on social media. You see it with your interactions with friends. Everybody's risk tolerance is different and if, from my own observation, I'm on the conservative end, then that probably means that other people aren't as conservative. And if I wasn’t willing to take those risks then I don’t think I should be around people that are willing to.

Listener: How do you – so, you said you see it on social.

DDS62: Yeah. So, I grew up in southern Delaware which is a very conservative area, so I have quite the dichotomy of this is fake, or these kids need to go back to school, or a mask is my choice, all the way up to our attitude of it’s an inconvenience, at worst, but it’s protecting us and it’s protecting the people we interact with kind of thing.

Listener: Okay, so that . . .

DDS62: So, when I say public, I’m seeing it within my own sphere of people that I’m, at least, acquainted with, and I assume that kind of bubbles out to the public the same way, right? Everybody is different.

Listener: Um, so are you saying you – when you talk about trust in the public, are you saying that you – what’s your level of trust in the public in this regard?

DDS62: I guess it's pretty limited, otherwise I wouldn't be conservative, right? So, I guess if I were in – what is it South Korea that's doing so well – and I knew that as a society if we were taking things really seriously, and that therefore it was safer to go into more interaction socially, then I probably would. But it doesn't feel like we're taking it seriously as a nation. We have higher rates of morbidity than pretty much any other developed country, so it seems like okay, well that's a fact. And I think in our region we're doing a really good job, for the most part. Even on the street outside, for the most part, I see people with masks. At the playground all the parents have masks. The little kids don't. The bigger kids do. I just feel like that's not everywhere and it only takes one dummy to give you COVID. Go to a party and then go to a restaurant. And it also kind of feels like if I view eating in a restaurant inside as risky, but I am willing to do it, it kind of feels like – it's a risk behavior, right? Like it's a higher risk behavior. So, the other people in the restaurant are also willing to take higher behaviors, and so therefore they might be more likely to be exposed.

Listener: Okay

DDS62: Does that make sense?

Listener: Yes. So, I’m going to repeat back what I think I just heard you say.

DDS62: Sure, sure.

Listener: Let me know if I got it wrong, because I might want to dive into that. You said that even though you're conservative with your risk, when you go to a restaurant it's a higher risk activity and if you see that as a higher risk activity then everyone at that restaurant is also willing to take a higher relative risk to come to that restaurant. And because of that, you question how risky they are outside of the restaurant?

DDS62: Right. I think that’s pretty fair. I think the only distinction, I don’t assume that everyone is automatically higher risk. I just think it’s a possibility, if that makes sense. There was when part of that statement when you repeat it back that seemed very concrete and I don’t think that’s the case. I think there’s a decent chance that everybody in the restaurant is being careful, but I don’t know that because it’s random people.

Listener: Um, yeah. I didn’t mean to make it sound like that. I think you’re saying it could be that they’re just like you.

DDS62: Yeah, exactly. Yes, of course.

Listener: Okay. Not that you’re assuming that they are obviously carousing with . . .

DDS62: Right. They didn’t…wedding reception or a party, or something necessarily, but they could have.

Listener: Um-hmm. Is there – yeah, that's so interesting. I mean I hadn't thought about it like that. So, I'm curious, like when you go to, let's say the playground what you're thinking about when you see the other parents and the older kids. They're wearing their masks. If you were going to assess the likelihood of their risk taking elsewhere, would that be different than the arguably uninformed assessment of risk taking of the people in the restaurant? Like, are those different?

DDS62: For me, it is because it's outside. I think that there is some of it is that being inside, in an enclosed space, for an extended period increases your risk of exposure. So, being outside and having a quicker interaction with somebody and then coming home and washing your hands feels less risky to me than it does to sit in an enclosed restaurant and eat indoors.

Listener: Yeah, okay. So, when you got – let’s go back to when you got to this restaurant and you see the people – like the patio is crowded and the inside was busy and there was a line to get in. What was going through your mind there?

DDS62: Uh, we're not going to go inside, are we? Uhh, this is awkward. Because it's unfortunate. We went with the intention of having a meal outside on the patio and instead it was like, oh God, we're definitely not doing this. And we knew, pretty much from the instant that we got there. It was like a 15-mile boat road, so it wasn't like a quick jaunt. You know, I just try to roll with the punches, but at the same time it was very clear, and I think to our whole group, that there's no possible way that we're staying here to eat. Honestly, I don't even know that we would have eaten on the patio. Probably, but at the information that we didn't have a table outside, that we would have to eat inside, if we wanted to dine in, then we are all on the same page immediately that that was not going to happen.

Listener: And you said something about it being awkward?

DDS62: I mean it sucks. It's unfortunate. There's this dichotomy between what we used to be able to do without a second thought and now everything feels riddled with risk assessment and thinking about germs. I am the opposite of a germaphobe, so for me, this is like, oh God, I really don't even feel like thinking about this. There's just a fatigue that goes along with it. Like, okay, well we came all this way, but there's no possible chance that we're going to eat – we're not going to have the experience that we thought we were going to have.

Listener: When did the awkwardness come in?

DDS62: Like – well, more like – well, I hate to say this, but I’ll say it. I’m a little bit judgmental that a business would run in a way that felt so risky. Kind of like a discord between what we would expect and what we were experiencing, maybe, if that makes sense.

Listener: Yeah. Tell me a little bit more about that.

DDS62: I would say most of the businesses that we’ve frequented have been doing a really good job. Pretty much anywhere that could do, like a walk-up window, has been doing it. It just seems like, for the most part, people are reacting in a way that protects the public and this just felt like they weren’t. I think most people did have masks, but I feel like yeah, but you sit down and eat your food and take your mask off. You know we’re all in the same room and it’s the same ventilation system. I don’t know.

Listener: And so that was judgmental about the restaurant itself?

DDS62: Yeah. Sure, because I think it’s ultimately their decision how they’re going to run their business, right. It’s not – if they took out 60% of their tables and they put a bunch of picnic tables in the field, we would have been like, “this makes sense to us.” But to have basically the same capacity that you would have pre-COVID, inside, just – yeah, I guess I was judging them. I get it. Like they need to make money, but are you going to read on the news about an outbreak at that restaurant and are they going to be closed for 2 weeks?

Listener: I’m curious about why the word awkward, and if it felt awkward in any of the other – was anything else about those moments when you got there awkward to you?

DDS62: It feels awkward when – I feel like people are used to social norms and there have been occasions where it’s like it’s clear to me that somebody here doesn’t agree with my level of conservativeness, and for that, that’s awkward. It’s like oh we don’t agree.

For example, we walked up to like a window for ice cream. We intentionally chose this business because you could walk up outside. You didn’t have to go inside. And the girl, who was like 16, was like, “oh you guys are outside, you don’t have to wear a mask. You can just step up to the window.” And then we couldn’t decide, and she was like, "well, if you want to come inside and look at the ice cream, you can." It's like what is going on here? It's like the difference between your opinions on this pandemic and mine are very evident, and that's awkward if that makes sense?

Listener: Yeah, yeah. So, social norms, how do those play in that feeling of awkwardness that you have?

DDS62: Well, I feel like day to day you don’t usually come across an interaction, pre-COVID, like where there’s so much possibility of a discrepancy that big, that’s that evident. Like you don’t know if a dude sitting next to you is racist, but if he’s not wearing a mask, he’s probably – like he probably thinks COVID isn’t real. It’s kind of an outward social norm and those normally aren’t visible.

Listener: Oh, okay.

DDS62: So, I feel like it's this new thing that everyone has to deal with. They choose to deal with it in their own way, but if you're dealing with it differently than someone else, unfortunately, that may mean that they're putting you at a higher risk, right. Like if they're less conservative than I am, aka they're willing to come within 6 feet of me, without a mask on, indoors, and I'm not comfortable with that, then that feels awkward to me. Because then you have to be like, “can you please back up.”

Listener: Okay. So, the awkwardness is?

DDS62: I need you to respect my decisions.

Listener: So, is it about making clear your position?

DDS62: It doesn’t have to be. I don’t have to impose my conservativeness on everyone, but I’m like hey, I’m pregnant and I don’t need you to come any closer right now, period. Like, just stop right there. You hate to, at least for me, like normally I’m very friendly, very open. Obviously, I was willing to do this. I don't have problems talking with random people, and so for me, it's a little bit hard because all of a sudden, I need to have this like protective bubble around me because of COVID. And I don’t like it. It sucks.

Listener: Yeah. I think that you referenced that a little bit earlier around the fatigue and the frustration.

DDS62: Yeah.

Listener: So, this time you show up and the world is at this restaurant and you decide we’re going to take it to the boat.

DDS62: Just wrap it. Here’s our order, just bag it up and bring it out and we’ll take it to the boat and eat it. And it took like an hour and 45 minutes, which I’m not already a patient person when it comes to food, but I was like I’m also pregnant, like I need some food.

Listener: Oh, wow. Okay.

DDS62: It didn’t ruin our afternoon. We’re an easy bunch, but it was like I’m so hungry.

INDI STOPPED COMBING HERE

Listener: So, tell me about the time when it was successful.

DDS62: Sure. Again, made the decision to meet up with my parents in person after a long time of not seeing them. And they're about 2 hours away. So, instead of one of us going the whole distance, for what ended up being a very short visit, we decided to have a meal someplace that's about halfway. That also felt like it's a real bummer if you drive an hour and it's not safe to eat. But luckily, this place, everything was outdoors. Their tables were far apart. Their staff was masked. At no point did we feel like we even had to really come into close contact with anybody. You know the server was kind of in and out quickly and they dropped things off and kind of left us to our own devices and that felt fine.

Listener: So, it was once again a group activity?

DDS62: Um-hmm

Listener: You and your in-laws?

DDS62: Me and my parents this time.

Listener: Oh, your parents. Okay. So, was it also a group decision as to which place – that you were going to dine together and where you were going to dine, and what that would look like?

DDS62: So, the place – we’re pretty familiar with it because it’s halfway. So, we knew they had an abundance of outdoor seating. We didn’t heave and haw over the place. We kind of felt like that was our first choice and if that didn’t work then maybe we would try to find something else close by, but we were pretty optimistic because we’d been to the place a bunch of times.

Listener: Pre-COVID?

DDS62: Yes

Listener: Okay. Did you verify?

DDS62: Oh yeah, I called to see if they had outdoor seating, what's the deal, do we need to be in a mask? When do you open? Do you take reservations? Yeah, I called, which is not something I would normally do. Usually this place you would just show up, but I did call to kind of make sure because, like well, you know, you never know – and I think this was before the boating incident. It's like you just don't know if they've just decided to flout the recommendations and just do their own thing.

Listener: Who decides what those questions are that you’re going to ask?

DDS62: I guess I did in that instance because I was the one that called.

Listener: Okay. Is there – so, talking about you and your husband being on the same page and having talked a lot, regularly, about COVID and risk, is there a – is it a – do you have an explicit understanding of what’s important? Or is it more implicit?

DDS62: I would say explicitly it’s staying outside. It’s making sure that that’s a possibility. Like, for example, I think my husband probably would have asked the same questions I asked. Like do you require masks? Is your staff wearing masks? So, I would say it’s not like we had one conversation and came up with a list or anything. I would say over the course of our conversations we have pretty well established those parameters and we stick to them pretty closely.

Listener: So, you made your reservation and how did you communicate with your folks about all of this?

DDS62: We just said like hey, your reservation is at this time – the hostess stand was still – it's like in a covered area, but we were like we're just going to send one person in to get our table and then basically come to the exit, because it's all outdoors, like no enclosure, nothing. It was like okay, we'll just send one person in to figure out where they want us to sit outside, and then we'll all meet outside. And that was fine.

Listener: Okay. So it met all your – you did all the prescreen and it’s an hour drive. You said something about it would be a bummer if it didn’t work out. So, an hour is a long time to be thinking about that.

DDS62: Honestly, I don’t think we spent the hour beforehand thinking about it. It was more like as we arrived, okay, this looks about like what we would have expected and then go check it out and feel like yup, we’re still comfortable the table they have for us is pretty isolated compared to, I don’t know – it was 6 feet from other tables. So, it was more of a risk assessment as we arrived, not the whole time.

Listener: Okay. I’m curious, had you eaten outside at this restaurant before?

DDS62: Yes

Listener: Okay. And the place where you went to with the crowded patio, had you been to that restaurant before?

DDS62: I had not. My in-laws had several times, but I had never been.

Listener: I’m curious just about their response, your in-laws. Was it as they had expected it would be as well?

DDS62: It was more crowded than any of us were expecting. After like being in pretty much isolation and you’re like whoa, there’s a lot of people in a small space.

Listener: Oh, okay.

DDS62: For them too. It wasn’t like – there was no family fight about we shouldn’t stay here to eat. It was like oh yeah, no. If there’s any one person that’s uncomfortable then we’re not going to, and we were all pretty uncomfortable.

Listener: Okay. So, you said a couple of things there that I’d like to follow up on. The first one was if one person is uncomfortable then we’re out of here. Tell me a little bit about that stance.

DDS62: It’s a basic respect that everybody is handling this differently. Me, being pregnant, I’m probably one of the more conservative ones, but like, for example, my brother-in-law and his wife have been helping her parents and her father is – I think he's over 80 and he has advanced dementia. Ideally, his care would not be received at home, but obviously, their risk tolerance is much different than ours because the stakes are higher. Like my in-laws are pretty healthy. They're in their early 60s. My parents are relatively young, also in their early 60s/late 50s. So, that’s different. So, I have to respect that everybody is having a different experience and I’m certainly not going to push someone to be less conservative than what they’re comfortable with.

Listener: Okay. And pushing somebody to have a different experience looks like what to you?

DDS62: I guess it looks like, “well I think we should stay here. I want to go inside,” when somebody else in the group is saying, “I’m not comfortable.”

Listener: Okay. You also said that after being in quarantine for – I don’t know, it’s been what, 8 years now?

DDS62: Yes! The only benefit of pregnancy during quarantine is really there’s not a lot to miss. [laughter]

(new one)Listener: I can see how that would be. For being quarantined for so long you said seeing a bunch of people – you had a response to seeing a bunch of people.

DDS62: Oh yeah. It's anxiety inducing. To me, it feels like that's a mistake. And it's a bunch of random people that don't know each other. You're like guys, this is how you spread COVID, just what you're doing here. So, yeah. You know, I feel like if you do something for a long amount of time it becomes habit. And habitually we’ve become very isolated because of this pandemic. And so it just is anxiety inducing to be around a group of people all of a sudden.

Listener: Yeah! I guess I’m trying to understand – this is potentially a leading question, but the difference. Is there a difference in how these things work and how they combine for you? This idea about habitual isolation and just seeing a bunch of people and the equation of a bunch of people with risk.

DDS62: Mmm … Yeah, I don't know. That correlation is probably different for everybody. For me, it would probably be different a bunch of people that I know versus a bunch of random strangers.

Listener: Okay. How is a bunch of people that you know – like how do you – what is that for you?

DDS62: For example, my brother, his risk tolerance, not only is it higher than mine, but it has to be. His job is still going on. It's in person. He works for (? 39:41) company. You can't do that remotely. So, because of that, we haven't seen him since the pandemic, and his family. It's unfortunate, but it kind of is what it is. That's driving our decision making. He doesn’t have a choice. He would otherwise lose his job, but that kind of takes that option off the table. So, if it was a group of people that I knew, that I was associating with, it would be because I felt like they were all in a similar headspace as I was about risk.

Listener: So, those are people that you would see?

DDS62: Right. And by that, I mean I just wouldn’t feel as anxious about being in the group. I would still be anxious. Like don’t let me make you think that I would all of a sudden be very comfortable because, like I said, we’ve been isolated for a long time. If it was a group of like 20 people, even if I knew them, I would be very anxious. I would worry that we're having some sort of event that's going to just give everybody COVID and we're all going to be sick.

Listener: Okay.

DDS62: It would be quite a bit less if I knew the people than if I didn’t.

Listener: Okay. Okay. So, you’d still be – so that anxiety is about getting sick.

DDS62: Yeah. Not even for me, honestly. Well, it is with the baby, but also spreading it. I worry most about giving it to somebody that’s more vulnerable than myself and them being impacted.

Listener: Um. Yeah, you worry most about that?

DDS62: Yeah, I don’t worry too much about actually getting it. I worry about spreading it. And as a citizen, you don't want to be like the one that made a mistake and then spread it. We're trying to keep this to a minimum. I'd like to do my part, if that makes sense.

Listener: Un-huh

DDS62: So, I don’t spend a lot of time with anxiety about me personally being diagnosed with COVID. Now I say that. There have been a couple of times where my Mom had a false positive COVID test. That brings your anxiety level up. That makes you really think like oh my God. And I wasn't too bad until I spoke with my brother and he was like, "yeah, if she gets sick and goes in the hospital we might never see her again," and then I was like pure panic. You know, like that incident in particular, in my mind, was anxiety inducing. But day to day I don't worry like oh, I could get COVID and these are the things that could happen to me and this is what my symptoms would be, or anything like that.

Listener: Okay. Okay. You said you worry most about spreading it to somebody more vulnerable and that – so, you were talking about a group of people you know. So, let’s say family, and you’re fairly confident that even if they have the risk level as you, you’d still be anxious?

DDS62: Yeah, just generally. It would be lower anxiety.

Listener: Specifically about spreading?

DDS62: Yeah

Listener: What’s your sense of – like if you did kind of a self-diagnosis right now about your likelihood of having spread, or spreading COVID, unknowingly, how do you think about that for yourself right now?

DDS62: I think the likelihood is pretty low.

Listener: Okay. So, yeah, so there’s the craziness of feeling crazy in isolation and then this idea of a group of people that you do know, and then I think what you said is the big anxiety is a bunch of random people that you don’t know?

DDS62: Yeah

Listener: In this same space. Okay. So, was your experience at the restaurant you stayed at?

DDS62: I mean still a little bit of anxiety, but manageable and kind of worth it because we got to see my parents for the first time in a really long time.

Listener: Okay. … Manageable anxiety?

DDS62: Yeah, right, like low level. <crosstalk>

Listener: Actually, I do. <crosstalk> In what ways was it – like what do you do to manage that while you’re sitting in a restaurant having a meal with your family?

DDS62: Good question. I mean just tolerate it, I guess. It’s by no means to the point of causing physical symptoms, or anything like that. It’s just kind of like this thing in the back of your mind that this is going on and you need to be careful. I don’t really know how to answer that.

Listener: So, it’s part of your experience while you’re having your meal and interacting with your family.

DDS62: Sure

Listener: While you were having your meal, interacting with your family, and the server you said just pops in and out, do you recall any of what was going through your mind while you were having your meal?

DDS62: Definitely a little bit of resentment towards the pandemic. Like I know for a fact it was like this didn't use to be this stressful kind of thing. That's definitely one aspect of it. That's kind of the main thing. Just kind of like this nagging feeling of ugh, why isn't this easier.

Listener: So, just kind of a universal ugh.

DDS62: Yeah

Listener: Were you doing anything differently? So, there’s the masks. I guess I’m curious about your experience with the logistics of mealtime at a restaurant?

DDS62: So, for example, this place had like a little boat with sand toys in it. We wouldn’t let our daughter – like normal times we would have been like encouraging her to do interact with any other kids that were there and get her out of her highchair. Instead, we're like very much trying to wrangle her. You know, like trying to avoid using the public restroom, if you can. Of course, sometimes that's not possible, but I honestly don't think I've used a public restroom since the pandemic started.

Listener: Hmm

DDS62: Yeah. It’s getting more troubling as I’m now at 5 months, so the trips are getting shorter to avoid it. [laughing] Yeah. I would say those are the main things. As far as like the interaction at the table, just like, you know, you’ve kind of got to acknowledge as a group – I think we said something like it’s really nice to be able to do this. It feels like a treat all of a sudden instead of like oh, well no big deal, because it does feel like a big deal.

Listener: What’s a big deal?

DDS62: Going out to eat.

Listener: And a big deal in what way?

DDS62: Um, just that it’s not something we’re doing all the time, whereas before it was never a second thought.

Listener: Hmm. So, big deal as in production? Or big deal as in?

DDS62: I would say big deal as in like kind of both risk and reward. Like it feels risky, but we’re doing it, but it’s a real privilege to be able to get together in this time because that’s not a given.

Listener: Hmm. … Um, I was just writing something down. Yeah, I really hear you, how small things are now – I don’t know, more visible.

DDS62: Yeah

Listener: I really hear that in your story.

DDS62: You kind of don’t realize what you were taking for granted until all of a sudden you have to think about all of this crap just to go eat dinner.

Listener: Yes. That’s an excellent point. I’m curious what you had for dessert?

DDS62: Hmm. Did we have dessert? I don’t think we did.

Listener: A friend of mine also went out to a restaurant a couple of weeks ago and was just so happy about . . .

DDS62: It is really nice. I’ve cooked so much. I’m so tired of cooking and dishes. [laughing ruefully]

Listener: Yeah. Does that figure into how your thinking about eating out?

DDS62: Honestly, no, because we'll do takeout. We're pretty comfortable with the idea that you can go pick something up, or something can be dropped off. So, that's kind of our release from cooking and dishes. But of course, it still comes with parameters. It's not the same as going out to a fancy dinner, but it will have to do for now.

Listener: Did this feel like going out to a fancy dinner?

DDS62: Yeah, it felt like a treat, yeah.

Listener: Are there any other times when you made the decision to go out and eat?

DDS62: Um – I mean I would say less than a half dozen. There was a time – ironically, my parents, who live two hours away, also have a boat. We did something similar with them. We took a boat ride and the patio of the restaurant was all like where you park your boat, so we could literally check it out. The hostess stand was outside. I basically was like, okay we have four adults and a child, and the lady tried to get me to walk through the restaurant with her, back to the patio, and I was like, “so, I’m pregnant, I’m going to meet you on the patio. Like which side do you want me to meet you on.” And she was totally fine. Yeah. That time we went out. And even though it’s like a very casual beach restaurant, it still feels very much like a treat to be doing that because we haven’t been doing it very often, at all.

Listener: What influenced your decision to choose that restaurant? To stay at that restaurant?

DDS62: The ability to feel like we were safe. For sure. That’s an excursion that my parents would have taken us on normally, like last summer, but it also happens that everything is outside, so you can kind of enjoy the weather and the company and we knew that.

Listener: So, you’ve been there before?

DDS62: Yes. Oh, yeah.

Listener: Okay. Okay. So, you knew the layout?

DDS62: Yeah

Listener: And the outdoors?

DDS62: We knew what to expect, for sure.

Listener: Did anything else contribute to your decision about staying?

DDS62: No, I think – probably that we could tell that the staff had masks on. We could tell that anybody that was up and moving around had masks on. And again, we were outside, so it didn’t feel like as big of a risk. I can’t wait until winter when it’s just freezing outside, and we’re all stuck inside. It’s going to be painful this winter.

Listener: Okay. Yeah. I’m not looking forward to, like the time change.

DDS62: Oh, there’s many reasons why I’m not looking forward to the time change.

Listener: Gosh, I think I’ve asked you all the things that I had on my mind.

DDS62: Okay

Listener: Is there anything that we didn’t talk about that is relevant, or that you’d like to make sure that we know about?

DDS62: No, I don’t think so. And I also have a 3 o’clock meeting.

Listener: So sorry about keeping you.

DDS62: That’s okay. I just realized it. It’s an optional one, but I should probably call in. I think we covered pretty much how I’m anxious all the time about COVID and we’re not going out very much and it’s only outside.

Listener: Okay, well thank you so much. And I hope you have a marvelous, smooth pregnancy. Thank you so much for participating.