



Case Study  
Survivor of COVID-19  
Cindy, 42

“For about 2 weeks before I began thinking it might be COVID I started getting a dry throat which then developed into a dry cough; there was no phlegm and you can’t get rid of it. Then my breathing was not good and then it cleared for a few days and then came back so much worse. My chest was heavy and there was a weird sensation going across my diaphragm. My partner had the same symptoms and he has had pneumonia before and it was a similar feeling. The next 4 weeks I was on and off bad, the only way to relieve it was using my inhaler or lying on my front, it went on and on. The first two weeks I wasn’t sure if it was COVID, but then there was no doubt in my mind I knew it was, especially because my partner was going through it as well.

It’s like nothing else I have ever experienced. It’s not like a normal flu, you just can’t breathe, and the diaphragm doesn’t seem to work properly. One night I woke up suddenly and my diaphragm felt like it clicked, then I started getting breathing problems that felt like warm air and loads of wind. I was isolating at that time. After around a month and a half I went out and got shopping, but all the time I was struggling to breathe and having stomach problems.

Emotionally I was a state, I was panicking all of the time which added to the breathing problems and at times I just broke down crying. I can remember ringing the doctor up; she just said it’s a long term thing that’s taking months and months to recover from and that was it really. They said I could go in if I wanted to but they didn’t want me to because of obviously the spread so I was just so alone. It felt like there was no safe space for me, nowhere I went felt right. I’ve been in a state of high alert for so long now it has taken over my life.

They did reassure me but it just felt that you can’t trust what was being said, because you don’t believe they really know what is happening or what the risks could be. I remember asking the doctor is today the day I am going to die? She did reassure me and say because I was not in the vulnerable category and that it was usually within 5-10 days of having the virus so it was extremely unlikely but that was how I felt. I was panicking as well so it was hard to know if it was my anxiety or if it was real. It triggered OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) as well and I was constantly washing my hands, constantly using hand sanitizer and being wary of everyone. It was lonely because of not having anyone to talk to about it, not being able to listen to other peoples experiences. The not knowing and feeling you’re the only person going through this was hard, although you know it’s not true that’s how it feels.

I think the only thing you heard was only a few of the symptoms but that’s not enough information for people struggling with it long term. There needs to be more information out about that, if you knew other people were going through the same thing as you, or knowing you are unlikely to die from it. Because that’s not out there enough it causes more problems, especially mentally. I think social media scares people; you can look on certain stories and people putting certain scary things out there and that can trigger you. You get stupid people on there that are scaremongering and then all you’re hearing is the death toll. There is too much emphasis on the deaths rather than the

survivors and their stories. Having proper information and being able to access resources and being able to speak with others going through it would have really helped. Hearing health professionals talk about surviving and more support around anxiety and mental health would have been really useful.”