

Shani - Age 16

Los Angeles CA

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This is my third week in quarantine. I have been stuck home with my family, leaving my house only to go on walks around the block, not having any other kind of human contact, for over two full weeks. And we don't know when it is going to end. They are telling us to stay home so that we "flatten the curve," but it is almost impossible to know when that is really going to happen. Two weeks ago, when my mom first told me I wasn't allowed to leave my house because we were on 'self lockdown,' I thought that it would only be for two weeks, and that I would be able to go have fun at the beach with my friends for spring break. But by the time my school classes had transitioned to go online, almost everything else on my schedule for the upcoming weeks had been cancelled. The debate team trip, soccer tournaments, meetings with college coaches, concerts, programs, all erased off my calendar. My weekends had never felt that empty. Now, two weeks later, I don't see an end to this isolation. The public schools are scheduled to reopen on April 19th, but I'm sure they will be pushed back. My family is trying to stay informed and educated about the things that we do know, because there is so much that we don't. My mom has been creating her own spreadsheet of the number of deaths per day to see if she can try to find patterns in the data that the news is not reporting.

Many of my classmates have been using this time at home productively, challenging themselves, learning new skills, and trying things they didn't have time for before. However, I am finding it very difficult to motivate myself to do anything but be stuck to the couch and stare at my TV screen. I stay in pajamas all day, grab a handful of our quarantine snacks bought in bulk, and go through movie after movie. It has been difficult for me to maintain contact with

friends who I would normally see everyday, since I am not used to having to go out of my way to communicate with them. Many institutions have organized platforms and activities to try and bring people together and provide a sense of community in this time, but it's hard to feel supported and connected when you can close your screen and it all goes away.