

## Transcript of talk: Student's perspective

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### INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone,

My name is Aminat Abolade and, I am currently a 4th-year physiotherapy student at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. I am also the co-facilitator for the Africa Region at the Future Network and, here is my experience and tips on thriving as a physiotherapy student in the pandemic world.

### CONTENT

The impact of the pandemic was felt majorly in late March 2020 when the government announced the lockdown of schools across the country.

This was quite challenging at first because, apart from the global panic, as a clinical student, I was already used to a routine lifestyle and being away from that routine affected me mentally. It felt like a breath of fresh air that still chokes a little.

I felt underproductive and I began to rethink my career path and what I wanted to do.

So, during this period, I had to stay home for months without lectures, exams or clinicals. It was just me with my family and, it did bring me closer to my siblings. But after a while, I had to find something to keep busy and ease my mental burden. That was when I came across online volunteering programs and orientations. I applied to be a volunteer for Physiopedia during this period. Physiopedia provides universal access to physiotherapy knowledge online. It was a good learning process for me. I developed writing, research skills and, I got to network with people across the world.

#### ➤ **My first tip will be: Seek Opportunities and don't stop learning.**

This includes: taking short courses, networking on social platforms, volunteering because all these help you shape your career path, and figure out things you are passionate about and, you also develop new skills.

Eventually, my university announced virtual teaching through an online platform. This was quite challenging at first, as students had to navigate the use of new applications, adjust to virtual classes, network issues and lack of resources. The first few tests we had virtually was quite chaotic as those factors came into play and eventually, we had to take the covid test and return to the university for a physical examination for the semester. That went well. We resumed the next semester physically in 2021 and, around that time, the covid vaccine became global and, students were urged to get vaccinated.

Sadly, few weeks into the new semester, we had an outbreak of covid in the university and we were sent home once again. We had to do virtual lectures and virtual clinical practicals and it was challenging. Luckily for us, we were asked to resume back physically to write our final written and clinical examinations.

#### ➤ **Second tip: Adaption**

The pandemic has reshaped and infused technology into academics. From a student perspective, the environment of learning plays a big role. One may have to deal with responsibilities at home, distractions, mental health, societal panic, terrible network service and lack of funds to subscribe to a network.

For me, the best way I adapted to online learning was taking it slow and setting personal goals for myself. I joined online study groups because learning on zoom was a bit difficult for me. I watched YouTube videos for detailed explanations and registered for online courses on clinical Physio. I also listen to podcasts by physiotherapy students and early career professionals.

➤ **Third Tip: Mental health**

It can be quite overwhelming because we are adjusting to virtual learning as well as a syllabus expansion. We had the syllabus expanded to take in some new topics in some courses due to the impact of covid. So we had to learn the pharmacology of covid drugs, case studies based on covid 19, emphasis on cardiopulmonary physiotherapy and learning new skills on how best to manage these cases in clinical settings. There was a lot to learn within a short time as well as preparing for examinations.

You want to be able to watch out for signs of academic burn-outs and depression. It is okay to take a break when needed, reach out to your student advisor for assistance, talk to a therapist and/or loved ones and know you are not alone and seek help whenever needed.

➤ **The last and most important tip is to Protect yourself and help create awareness.**

You want to learn to protect yourself by taking the vaccine if available to you, wearing masks, performing hand hygiene and use of hand sanitisers.

You can help to create more awareness on social media and within your communities on how best to protect oneself from the virus and for those who had or had someone who survived covid, the possibility and effects of long covid.

As a student, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed but know you are not alone and being active in student communities and associations helps a lot.

**Thank you**