

## **Transcript of talk**

My name is Jesús Salas, I am a 24 year-old physiotherapist, graduated at the Universidad de Sevilla, Spain, in 2019.

It is a pleasure for me to share with you my experiences through this challenging past year.

Covid pandemic implied a lot of changes in all fields of our society, and of course physical therapy was not an exception.

I personally experienced these changes intensely and learned a lot from them, so I hope to be able to bring you the conclusions I draw from the different situations in which I found myself, and point out some key aptitudes that from my point of view are important to thrive in this context.

### **Mental toughness**

When the state of alarm was established in Spain, I was in my third week of work at a private clinic in the Canary Island, where I had recently moved to. Due to the general shut down of all non-essential physical therapy activity, I lost that job.

In that moment, like many other colleagues, I had to find alternatives to make a living until physiotherapy practice could be resumed. I think that in this situation, like in many others in life in which your plans are suddenly interrupted, **mental toughness** is necessary to accept the new circumstances and look ahead.

### **Resilience**

After some time looking for a job, I was finally hired as a farmer. Honestly, it did not sound attractive to me, but soon I could see that it might be much more productive than what I thought in the first place.

I was working as a farmer, but I was still thinking as a physiotherapist. In that context, in which most of my partners suffered from several musculoskeletal injuries clearly related to the hard physical work that was carried out in the farm without an appropriate ergonomic training, it was obvious to me how much Physiotherapy could do to improve the occupational health and the quality of life of my partners at the farm.

With that in mind, I started to guide them through improvised stretching sessions, I started to advise them on how to do the physical work and even designed a specific risk prevention programme that I presented to the company managers. I would love to tell you that they accepted that and hired me as a risk prevention agent, but I can't. Anyway, this job and this situation was the only reason why this idea, that really motivates me and that I hope to implement someday, even came to my mind. So that is good enough for me.

In my opinion, a **resilient** way of thinking is the key to be able to adapt to a difficult situation and finally make something good out of a it.

### **Willingness to learn**

After some time at the farm, I could finally work as a physiotherapist again. This was at the neurorehabilitation unit of the Hospital Ciudad de Telde. Although I had previously worked with neurological patients, this was the first time that I was completely dedicated to them, so I had to put effort in order to live up to my responsibilities within my patients. This ended up to be the job in which I have felt more comfortable and fulfilled in my early career, and possibly the one in which I have learnt the most. The main conclusion that I extracted from that period, is that in any time, but especially in a context of limited job opportunities, it is necessary to be **willing to learn** in order to make the most of the labour options that you might have, not only for the fact of getting a job, what is important, but also because you may find much more than you expected when you discover deeply a new area of knowledge.

### **Responsibility**

As you know, patients with acquired brain damage are a COVID related high risk population. As physiotherapist I think that it is important for us to be fully concerned about our responsibility with the safety of our patients, and consequently minimize the exposure to social situations in which we could potentially be infected.

This of course must be complemented with appropriate prophylactic strategies at the workplace. My experience at the hospital was good in this respect.

- Personal protective equipment was delivered daily
- Each health care professional was assigned to only one hospital floor for in room rehabilitation to minimize contact with different partners and patients.
- The capacity of the main rehabilitation room was significantly reduced.
- All the materials were disinfected after being used.
- Familiar visits were cancelled.
- Interdisciplinary meetings were carried out outdoors.

All these strategies gave both the team and the patients a sense of safety that made it easier for everyone to be focused on rehabilitation. In fact, during the whole time that I spent working at that Hospital, no infection was reported.

### **Digital learning**

During the time that we were all locked up at home, especially in a case like mine in which for some time I was unemployed, it was interesting to make the most out of all the time we had. For me, digital learning was a great way to exploit this time and keep developing professionally.

The webinar we are carrying out today, is a good example of how useful digital learning can be, and how good can this kind of learning fit in the post-COVID educational field.