

A change in perspective: appreciating sacrificial career fields  
Gretta Nordgren  
VNN

Social distancing has forced most of us to lose many of our face to face interactions, but Covid-19 affects many people in more ways than just their social lives.

The medical field is one of the careers in which people have had to make sacrifices. Doctors and nurses diligently work to provide for the community in the midst of change. “It’s hard not being able to see patients,” said Amanda Guler, an LPN at the Essentia Health Clinic in Pelican Rapids. The clinic is now doing virtual visits through Zoom, and Guler spends most of her work days helping people get connected and setting up appointments.

Medical personnel also need to adjust their personal lives to comply with new schedule changes. “We always have to be ready to go,” said Guler, “so my family just has to understand that I might be home today and I might not.”

Nurses not only give up their time, but potentially their health. Steve Herdan, an RN in the emergency department at the Fergus Falls hospital, said that lots of nurses are afraid they are going to bring the virus home to their families. Every time they walk into work they are risking their own lives in order to save others. Herdan also mentioned that nurses are trained to be present, to be compassionate, and to calm people's fears, but that is a hard thing to do when they are anxious about their own wellbeing.

The dynamics of other professions have changed as well. “In my career field we don’t usually wear masks,” said Matt Satterlie, a sensor operator at the Air National Guard in Fargo, ND. “Now, when we enter the building we have to instantly use hand sanitizer and put our masks on.” Satterlie has also experienced schedule changes designed to limit the number of people he is in contact with. This way, if one of the employees gets sick, they immediately know who that person has been exposed to.

Teachers have also had to adapt to big changes as we wrap up the school year. Abby Mooney, who teaches English at Pelican Rapids High School said, “On a regular school day I have a full hour with the kids, so I have set up a lesson plan for that. Now, I really have to think

about how I can shave that material down to the necessities so that students aren't becoming overwhelmed, but they are getting what they need."

The Coronavirus has stolen the opportunities for many of the pleasures we enjoy in life. For Mooney, the hardest thing is not being able to interact with students. "So much of my pedagogy relies on in-person interaction, and I've had to sacrifice some of those little moments in teaching that aren't really content related, but that make it such a fun profession. Like those random side conversations with students, or little jokes they make." Video calls and emails make it a lot harder, if not impossible, for her to attain those meaningful interactions.

The coronavirus has affected all of our lives, and social distancing guidelines are inconvenient and even difficult at times, but they are only the beginning for some of the people in our community. These people have risen to the occasion, stepping up to keep life as normal as possible for the rest of us. And for that we can be grateful.