



## The Coronavirus Collective A Student of the Mind

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The Covid-19 Pandemic has been truly an unprecedented and “unreal” experience so far. On the one hand the newness of the experience and the intrigue of being a “scientist”, and on the other, the challenge of coping with ever changing huge amounts of data and “conflicting evidence base” and applying it for our patients physical and mental wellbeing. This is difficult. Overall so far, it has been rewarding coming home knowing that my patients are well, and my family is smiling with relief.

My daughter has been extremely proud of me. Prevention is always the mantra I was indoctrinated with when I grew up studying medicine in India. My background and training have helped me stay calm and focused.

Whilst I have not contracted Covid-19 (to the best of my knowledge), I know of friends who have, and those who have suffered fatal consequences from their encounters in clinical practice. This was surreal and something that I will find difficult to get over.

I am in a state of internal panic, but outward calmness when I look at my family. I want to protect them and be there for them, but I went through a gripping few weeks (this is lesser now) of thinking that it may be the last time I may see them.

The BAME part, has been less of a direct experience changer for me. It has for my colleagues and I can see why. The place where I work has been extremely responsive, supportive and understanding of these challenges and proactively made provisions to help me and people like me from BAME backgrounds. For that I am grateful.

Life came into sharp perspective. Priorities clearly changed. So many things I took for granted I did less so. I created an email

account for my little one and have started writing to her, memories that she can hold onto if something happens.

Doing the right thing, the right way, supporting others, being kind, being humane have all been the focus of my actions and work, ever more than it was before.

At this point, to contemplate a future is difficult and I am focusing on one day at a time, to avoid huge panic setting in. I am mindful of my parents and I find myself being more stoic as I realize the enormity of the situation and the helplessness facing us all. I am grateful, to be alive, to be there for my family and for what I can only describe as a humbling experience.

As a student of the mind, I have noticed how the true nature of people comes to the fore, for good and for worse. I wish all reading this safety, health and an experience that has hopefully strengthened us, our families and as a BAPIO group.

*Santosh Kumar is a consultant Forensic Psychiatrist in North East England. He was trained by some truly eminent teachers, and amazing parents, in India and in the UK. He remains a keen student of the mind and a follower of the passionate work of BAPIO here and in India.*