**Lockdown Story 4 (Anonymous)**

The Covid19 lockdown has been tough on everyone but as a disabled single mother I felt it acutely. I struggle every day with pain and fatigue so I relied on my child’s time at nursery to recover and rest. When this and any grandparent support (all were shielding) was suddenly taken away from me I found it difficult to cope. I decided my best course of action would be to create a routine we could both manage and would occupy my little one both mentally and physically.

I worried about the education and school preparation my toddler would be missing out on with not being at nursery so I found some pre-school workbooks on the internet and made a point of doing a little bit of work on letters, numbers and shapes, etc. each morning to make sure there would be no dropping behind the other children once school started.

After that we had a daily video call with my parents so everyone could all see each other and make sure we were all doing ok. Sometimes we would use a funny face app to distort our faces and give everyone involved a much needed laugh.

The next part of our daily routine was having some outdoor playtime. I am fortunate enough to have a garden and toys to help keep us entertained or active until lunchtime. The warm weather during lockdown was a blessing as I could put out a paddling pool or sand pit then simply lie down and watch the fun happen. That was the best of both worlds, I could rest while my youngster played, used up energy and had an amusing time while both of us got some fresh air and sunshine.

After lunch we would sometimes bake biscuits or cupcakes, making a mess as well as delicious treats. If I had the energy, we would take a walk around the neighbourhood looking for rainbows in the windows or even a slow walk in the woods for some real adventure. Yes, there were sometimes days when I could manage none of these and we had to have a film day, watching something age appropriate on DVD or Netflix while I lay on the sofa and rested.

Our evening routine remained pretty much the same as before but once my little darling was tucked in and asleep, that was when the loneliness set in. Most of my interaction with friends quickly disappeared as we all got into our own lockdown routines. I decided I would make a point of checking on a different friend every day, starting with the ones I knew were also going through this tough time alone. Some friends loved the peaceful isolation, some were simply plodding on and getting by, yet others were really struggling either emotionally, financially or both. Obviously we were all in the same boat of being stuck at home so there was little I could do to help anyone, but a message or phone call could make all the difference to a person’s day. I know how much it meant to me when a friend took the time to check on me. This time alone has really taught me to value my friends, especially those who bothered to ask how I was coping or if they could do anything to help me.

At times I struggled to get shopping and often I had to set an alarm to wake up just after midnight to make sure I could get a delivery slot for the following week. The significant extra expense of having to use a major supermarket, instead of using cheaper shops, and the additional delivery charges was a shock to my bank account. I had to watch my budget very closely and sometimes had to go without things I wanted to make sure my child did not. Some of my friends offered to get me things I needed but I didn’t want to bother them so only asked when I was stuck for essentials like milk, bread and flour. They did not let me down.

After my lockdown experience I will always remember my family and friends are truly priceless and should be cherished constantly.