

I am a Mental Health worker 3 on the DS Crisis team, and through this challenging year I was considered an essential employee. I have two school aged children, there was a point during this pandemic where my children's school had the highest number of outbreaks in the state. Because I was labeled an essential employee, I couldn't "stay home." I had constant anxiety because I worried if my children were exposed at school, I could then bring the virus into my work and my co-workers as well as the client we served would be at risk because of me. My family made huge financial sacrifices to keep my exposure as small as possible, my partner ended up quitting his job because my job allows us to keep our family insured and we could not both work having two children who we chose to keep home to help keep others safe. Our school did amazing while trying to keep families informed and limit the risk while still providing support and education. I chose to have my children stay home and do remote learning while their friends/peers were able to go back full time for months out of fear we could be exposed and I could bring the virus into the crisis house, exposing a fragile client and co-workers who have families with compromised immune systems.

While others were eligible for Covid relief, or time off from their employment without fear they could lose their job I did not have that luxury. I was denied Covid leave due to my essential employee status, I used all my sick/vacation time until my family made the financial sacrifice of losing our second income. I canceled family events, avoided or limited times in stores, pulled my children from their school, and lost our second household income to make sure I could come to work when I was scheduled and be healthy for those who rely on me.

Katie Marston MHW III

DS Crisis Team- Augusta

Katie Marston
MHW

I am a Mental Health worker 3 on the DS Crisis team, and through this challenging year I was considered an essential employee. I have two school aged children, there was a point during this pandemic where my children's school had the highest number of outbreaks in the state. Because I was labeled an essential employee, I couldn't "stay home." I had constant anxiety because I worried if my children were exposed at school, I could then bring the virus into my work and my co-workers as well as the client we served would be at risk because of me. My family made huge financial sacrifices to keep my exposure as small as possible, my partner ended up quitting his job because my job allows us to keep our family insured and we could not both work having two children who we chose to keep home to help keep others safe. Our school did amazing while trying to keep families informed and limit the risk while still providing support and education. I chose to have my children stay home and do remote learning while their friends/peers were able to go back full time for months out of fear we could be exposed and I could bring the virus into the crisis house, exposing a fragile client and co-workers who have families with compromised immune systems.

While others were eligible for Covid relief, or time off from their employment without fear they could lose their job I did not have that luxury. I was denied Covid leave due to my essential employee status, I used all my sick/vacation time until my family made the financial sacrifice of losing our second income. I canceled family events, avoided or limited times in stores, pulled my children from their school, and lost our second household income to make sure I could come to work when I was scheduled and be healthy for those who rely on me.

Katie Marston MHW III
DS Crisis Team- Augusta