

Ruth Mentor

For Ruth Mentor, a clinician at BAMSI, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic effect not only her life at work, but her life at home as well.

Mentor said that the pandemic has been a challenge as she balances her responsibilities as a mom and wife with her need to be there for her BAMSI family as well.

"It's been a lot being a working mom and also a clinician. I have to be mindful of my job requirement to be present," Mentor said. "But also I have to bear in mind that I have my three boys at home. Every morning I have to wake up and make sure they are ready, prepped for remote learning. Once I'm in here (at BAMSI) I have to be present."

According to Mentor, she has focused on self care as she stays vigilant in protecting herself and those around her from the virus.

"If I'm tested positive, I can't go home. Not only because of my kids but I have to worry about my husband and my mother in law who lives with me. It's quite challenging so it has been really hard. But I'm always thinking positive," she said. "I go back through my little toolbox for myself. I figure out some coping skills and one of the biggest things I've done that has helped me is that I've been taking care of myself a lot more. I'm seeing a nutritionist and I'm also walking every day. On the walk I'm able to free my mind, just focus on my steps and come in back in the office and ready to do what I have to do. Even ready to go home to care for my kids, cook for them, do whatever I have to do as a mom."

Watch Ruth's "I am Essential" video here: <https://vimeo.com/497350770>

Mentor has seen the toll that the pandemic has taken on those she works with at BAMSI.

"Covid has effected many of the kids I work with. A lot are struggling with their mental health. Covid has robbed us of socializing (and) engaging in things we always enjoyed, not only with others but activities that often the youth I work with are involved in (and) are encouraged to become involved in," Mentor said. "Now they're struggling not having that access as far as having the personal relationships that that they usually have with their peers. For those that have great anxiety...it just exacerbates their symptoms. It's a major struggle. It is going to be a lasting effect on them."

For that reason among others, Mentor knows that her job and the services provided at BAMSI are essential.

"I think our work is appreciated and is really quite essential."

Ruth was a featured guest on BAMSI's original podcast, *Humanity First*. You can listen here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-202640936/humanity-first-1-26-21>