



Saskatoon: 25 May 2023 – Story 7

Carrie: I feel that there's a lot more mental health issues now. That, society put it out there, that this COVID was so bad, especially for our elders. And so some of them, they have so much, so much anxiety about going out in public now.

Right, my name is Carrie. I've worked at Sherbrooke Community Centre for about 20 years, I work in recreation. Yeah, my job definitely turned when COVID hit.

At first, it was scary 'cause we didn't know what was going on. So, you could just imagine, every single elder had to stay in their bedroom. I think it was for at least 30 days, nobody could even come out to have a shower. So, during that time, my job was... I... we quickly got a lot of like trying to get technology like iPads. So, I did a lot of FaceTiming with families because nobody was allowed in.

When COVID had first started we I worked in Kinsmen Village. And there's about 63 residents. And we had an outbreak. Our very first outbreak. We did have three pass away. I actually was with one of them when they did because their family wasn't in at the time. That was definitely hard. Hard to watch.

I, I still remember that day because when I... When it did happen, I remember I needed to get out [stressed laughter]. And... They... We're on lockdown. Like, the only way I could get out is the front door, because they didn't want, they had every other door, access door here locked. And so, I had to walk through everybody just to get outside to get a fresh, breath of fresh air.

Right, it took us back to, like an institution, so bad. And that's what, Sherbrooke, fought for so many years to get out of that... that way. And so, it was definitely hard to go back.

Some of the policies towards the end that didn't make sense at all. Like it felt like, uhm, COVID was over in the rest of the world. Or like, society, except for long term care. Even just recently, or not recently, whenever we lost the masks only a couple months ago, in March, I think? Even before then we had to still try to social distance our people. I hated it because it's all like we

were the police. Because they want to sit together, and now we're like "Well no, you can't, you have to be six feet apart." "Well, why?" "Because somebody way up above uhm says it."

Trying to be a Rec person in this, and be the happy person, when the whole world's like, felt like it was crumbling... was also hard. Because so, my whole day, I'm trying to be happy, be the happy, positive person. Yet, we're trying to, you know, deal with it ourselves. Within our home life, or uhm, you know, just within here... And tryin' to help the... frustrated families connect with their loved ones, because they're mad

COVID^{IN THE} HOUSE OF OLD



they can't come see them, and help. The residents are mad because they can't see their loved ones. I don't know how many of them said they'd rather sign something, and live freely, and catch it versus being locked up. Like, it felt worse than jail.