



Toronto: Oct 5 – Story 2

Joanna: The loss of stimulation, the loss of identity, all of a sudden, you're just a person in a room, who has to follow rules. So, you just become anonymous, you become part of a retirement home, with all these restrictions. So, there's no Joanna here, there's just a person, an old person, in a retirement home, in a room.

I live at Christie Gardens, and I live in the independence living suites. And that is I live in an one-bedroom apartment. In the beginning of the pandemic, we were shut down more or less in the independent living area, we were required to stay in our apartments. And this went on for six weeks, where we couldn't leave the apartment at all.

So, in the beginning, you take what comes and you adjust. But didn't take very long for me to become very restless, then beginning to question the real need for being shut down, so to speak, so completely. So, then I started to feel angry that we were not allowed outside to walk in the corridors where we could at least get exercises walking up and down the corridor.

And then again, I started to resent the fact that we couldn't go outside without a whole lot of checks and balances. If I wanted to go outside in my car, I had to check in at reception and then check in when I got back. Why? I'm a responsible person. That's treating me like a child. As if somehow, I'm going to be bad. And so, I simply didn't. I found out later that I wasn't the only one who was doing that. [laugh]

And so we had a lot of discussions with the administration about being responsible, but allowing us to do different things and gradually that happened. And their – in many ways – their hands were completely tied, because of the regulations that were coming down.

For the most part, Canadians do comply, right? And as older adults and women we also comply. What we really disliked was not having any part in the conversation of the decision making for Christie Gardens. We would like to have been part of the discussion as to how much got shut down. What could we do that would be okay, and safe, but allow us to continue to have a life because essentially, we didn't have a life.

And so our autonomy, and our independence was taken away from us. We became children to be told what I keep using that word, but that was how I felt. And I was angry about it. There's lots of people just do as they're told, I have never been that person.