



West Island, Quebec, Dec. 23, 2023 – Story 2

JAMES: There are points in time where Coronavirus was going through all the hospitals, all the elderly care facilities, very rapidly, and one day someone would have it like, you know, one person on the floor. And okay, we gotta be careful. And the next day, you know, three more people would have it, and then it just...

You would be trying to take care of these people, and then you'd have to have these like blue hazmat suits on almost, and you'd have, you know, eyeglasses, eye goggles, with a face shield. So, the some of these residents who have, you know, Alzheimer's or dementia, or any kind of neurological disorders. They'd see you one day and then the next. They have no idea who these people are. They're just coming into their room. They don't know who they are. They don't recognize their voices, cause they're muffled by the masks all the time.

And it just created a really volatile environment for some people and just being a person trying to work through that be, do the best you can, it's not easy. Just doing that without all that stuff, it's not easy. But doing that with all that stuff on you making it harder to breathe. You start to, you know, sweat, and it becomes all wet inside, and you're constantly cleaning yourself in between shifts. And it was just, it wasn't good. Yeah. Yeah, I just, I can't find the words to describe that, the feeling.

INTERVIEWER: And how did it affect your, did you? Do you think it affected your mental health? Because it sounds like it wasn't easy for you to give the care that you would have liked to have given each patient.

JAMES: Well, you were constantly afraid of getting sick. And for most people, most staff members, we could deal with getting sick. But yeah, you just you, you really didn't want to get sick and then come to work and spread it to the patients. That was the number one priority. So, with that fear, the attention to detail was extreme. So that put a strain on your, on your mental health, and it'd just be very exhausting.

in the beginning we would have eight people working in the day and we'd have maybe two or three residents per orderly. But people would call out, because they get sick with the Coronavirus, and then those eight, nine, ten, sometimes even eleven or twelve people would be cut down to four people for 40 residents.

So then, I mean, I'm not good with math, I almost failed it in high school. But that that's a lot of people, a lot of residents per orderly, and you would barely have time with each person to make sure that they are getting their routine done. And sometimes you would put someone to bed, and they'd get up and they start wandering the hall. So, you have to go back. I'm like you have to say sorry to the person you're taking care of at that at that moment, and I have to go put this person back in the room and it just got really hectic. And sometimes, you know you'd forget certain things, and that's what really brought down the quality of life for a lot of residents.