



# My Subjective Experience

**I loved my job, before COVID. I was adding light to other's day.**

I am an LNA III. I've been going to school to be a nurse for an extended period of time. I love what I do, and I love the people I take care of. I am creating this page, artwork, and research to help tell the story of the forgotten ones. I don't want the echoes of history to forget our mistakes as a community, toward are oldest, and wisest set of population.

I needed to speak my experience because sharing helps heal, helps us understand what we have done wrong, and hopefully not repeat our mistakes.

**When the lockdown started.**

We were told only two weeks; we will lock down for two weeks to stop the spread while we set up hospitals to take care of the sick.

The field hospitals were set up. Just a little longer they said, on and on just a little longer.

My residents were cut off from the real world. They were cut off from their families, and even the other residents within the facility. Having to stay in their rooms with only window visits, facetime calls, and a small tv. Only having us as their connection to the outside world, gowned, masked, and shielded. Like aliens running around, unable to understand because our mouths were covered. No human touch: skin to skin contact. [https://www.digma.com/digma-images/video-scripts/fredericks\\_experiment.pdf](https://www.digma.com/digma-images/video-scripts/fredericks_experiment.pdf)

People die from loss of touch, we need human touch to thrive, to survive. I have worked in geriatrics for fourteen years, the summer of the lock down we were losing two residents a week. From my personal perspective, this doesn't usually happen during the summer. There is truly an eb and flow to death, the winter brings more, the summer much less. Normally during the summer months, we lose one to maybe two a month and sometimes none.

**We were COVID free for 10 months.**

Stuck behind a mask and shield, in a fishbowl, disassociated from reality; I watched so many wither, becoming pale like ivory, wrinkled/shriveling up dry like a rose plucked from the bush, death followed swiftly for many. I had a resident look at up the bright blue sky from the home's aesthetic enclosed courtyard, say to me "It's just a beautiful prison" with great sadness and longing on his face, if you could have looked into the depth of his eyes you would have been swallowed by the despair. I week later he was struck down by a stroke and passed from this world.

I watched a resident starve himself so that he could see and touch his family, (by this time if you were actively dying your family was allowed to come in and see you). His family came in, he started eating again he perked up and you should've seen the smile on his face, it was something to behold. It was like the first rays of the sun peeking through the trees. His family was told to leave, he was not actively dying. He then starved himself again to see them, he was a smart man by this time he knew if he started eating again and doing better, they would send his only reason to live away again. He chose to die.

I watched grown men cry, placing their hands on the windows to try and get closer to their loved ones outside.

## Covid hit.

With despair already rampant through the building we lost 37 to covid. I was in nursing school at the time, my school told me I wasn't allowed to go to work, or I would be kicked from the program. I had to abandon the residents I loved. The facility didn't do well, with the government, not letting people work for 14 days after a positive test, there weren't many to work. I can't tell the story of my coworkers but from the expressions on their faces when school allowed me to return to work, the devastation was achingly visible.

Where I work hasn't been the same since, we were attacked by the media, by a state representative, they said many evil things about the staff. No compassion was expressed, just blame. I don't know how to explain how this effects a community; my art is the expression.