



SKETCHES FROM THE FRONT LINES

Written by Dr. Jillian Horton Illustrated by G.M.B. Chomichuk
with Lettering by Lyndon Radchenka

Ontario Medical Association Physician Health Program is pleased to collaborate with Dr. Jillian Horton on this project. Conveying physician experiences and narratives during the COVID19 pandemic serves to document experiences and share powerful narratives for a profession at a time when full focus is on doing the job, taking care of patients and each other.

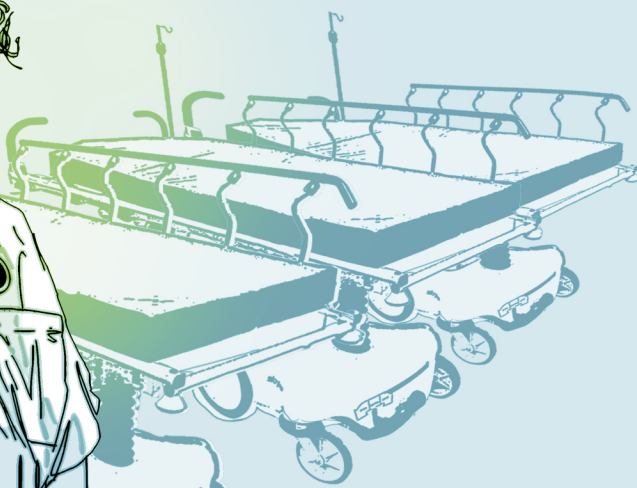
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MY NAME IS
**DR. CAROLYN
SNIDER.**

I'M CHIEF OF
EMERGENCY MEDICINE
AT **ST. MICHAEL'S
HOSPITAL** IN
TORONTO.

I STARTED MY
RESIDENCY HERE JUST
AT THE TAIL END OF THE SECOND
WAVE OF **SARS**. I MISSED MOST
OF IT, BUT I HAVE A CLOSE
FRIEND WHO HAD
SARS.



"WE'D BEEN GETTING READY FOR **COVID**
FOR WEEKS. I GOT THE CALL ONE NIGHT,
JUST AS IT HIT THE NEWS, "**IT'S HERE.**"



"MY FRIEND WAS ON CALL THAT NIGHT. I
ASKED HER IF SHE WANTED TO BE ON CALL.

CAN I
TAKE YOUR
SHIFT?

NO, I
THINK I'M
READY.



"WE SAT DOWN TOGETHER.



I NEED
YOU TO GIVE ME
THE LIST.

WHAT LIST?

THE LIST OF
EVERYTHING YOU **WISH**
HAD HAPPENED DURING
SARS.





"AND THAT WAS WHAT I WORKED FROM IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS."



"THERE WAS A LOT OF **TRAUMA** FOR THE PEOPLE WHO HAD WORKED THROUGH SARS. YOU CAN SEE IT'S STILL THERE FOR THEM. IT WAS VERY REAL. SO THAT LIST WAS AN IMPORTANT ROADMAP."



"THERE'S DEFINITELY WORRY. WHAT IF WE BECOME ONE OF THOSE BIG PANDEMIC SPACES? LIKE **ELMHURST, NY**. I HAVE TO KNOW THE **SIGNALS** ARE THAT WOULD MAKE ME SAY, "**GO!**" **TURN ON THOSE MONITORS. OPEN THE NEW UNITS. TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL.**"



"BUT LIKE MOST PEOPLE, THE THING I WORRY ABOUT MOST IS MY **FAMILY**. THIS IS GOING TO BE A LONG ONE. THINKING ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO FINISH A SHIFT, TO MAKE SURE I DON'T BRING ANYTHING HOME. MY HUSBAND AND KID HAVE BEEN SO PATIENT. I'M PUTTING IN 18 HOUR DAYS."



"BUT CERTAIN TIMES ARE SACRED. AT 7:30 OUR STREET IN DOWNTOWN TORONTO GOES CRAZY TO SHOW **SUPPORT** FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS. THERE ARE POTS, PANS, NOISEMAKERS, COWBELLS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. LITERALLY OUR WHOLE STREET IS OUT. I KIND OF FEEL EMBARRASSED."

"BUT IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR THE **CHILDREN OF THE FRONTLINE WORKERS**. AND IT'S WATCHING MY KID TAKE THIS ALL IN--**THAT TO ME IS HUGE**. SO THAT'S ACTUALLY A WONDERFUL TIME. WE CAN LEAVE THAT WORRY BEHIND FOR A MOMENT."

LAST WEEK AN RN COLLEAGUE WHO IS **WONDERFUL**--HE PRESSED WITH SOME QUESTIONS.

ARE YOU SURE OUR LATEST PROTOCOLS ARE **SAFE**?

I'LL BET YOU'RE LIKE **ME**, YOU PROBABLY HAVE **AT LEAST** AN HOUR A DAY WHEN YOU'RE WATCHING SOCIAL MEDIA WHEN YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY **SURE** YOU'RE DOING THE WRONG THING.

YEAH!

I HAVE THOSE HOURS **TOO**. AND I GO BACK TO THE STUDIES. AND I GO BACK TO WHO IS HELPING **MAKE** THOSE DECISIONS. AND I REMEMBER THAT I **TRUST** THEM AND I'VE **READ** THOSE STUDIES AND WHAT THEY'RE ARE SAYING IS PROBABLY THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

'IT WAS AMAZING TO WATCH HIS ANXIETY ALL DISSIPATE **RIGHT THERE**. IT'S **OK** TO BE AFRAID. WE **ALL** HAVE THOSE MOMENTS.

"ANOTHER FEELING IS--**EXPECTANCY**-- WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT? IN THE **ER** WE'RE USED TO THAT FEELING--STANDING AT THE FOOT OF A TRAUMA WAITING FOR **EMS** TO ARRIVE--MAYBE A GUNSHOT WOUND OR A THORACOTOMY. WE'RE GETTING **READY**. MENTALLY PREPARING. WAITING FOR IT ALL TO BE SET INTO **MOTION**.



"BUT YOU CAN'T MAINTAIN THAT **EXCITEMENT**, THAT **INTENSITY** WITHOUT TAKING A BREAK FROM IT PERIODICALLY.



"THIS PAST WEEKEND IT WAS MY **BIRTHDAY**. I ALWAYS MAKE SURE I HAVE THAT DAY OFF.

MY TEAM SAID, **TURN OFF** YOUR PHONE, **TURN OFF** YOUR EMAIL. MY COLLEAGUES SENT OUT AN EMAIL SAYING "DON'T BUG CAROLYN THIS WEEKEND, SHE GETS A FULL WEEKEND OFF, IT'S OUR GIFT TO HER."

"I MADE THEM PROMISE THAT THEY WOULD CALL IF SOMETHING REALLY TERRIBLE HAPPENED, AND THEY PROMISED. YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED? I **RELAXED** FOR 48 HOURS. JUST AT HOME, OF COURSE. I CLEANED UP. I CLEANED MY **BATHROOM**! I GOT MY HOUSE IN ORDER.



"BUT THE OTHER THING THAT HAPPENED IS I WOKE UP ON SUNDAY MORNING AND MY TEAM HAD LEFT **TULIPS** OUT ON THE PORCH.

JUST THE FACT THAT IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS THAT PEOPLE WERE THINKING ABOUT **ME**. THAT WAS THE **REAL GIFT**. THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE CARING FOR ME RIGHT NOW.



"IN THE MIDST OF **ME** CARING FOR **THEM**."



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