

Moral Distress During the Pandemic: Impacts on the Mental Health of Long-Term Care Home Staff in North Western Ontario



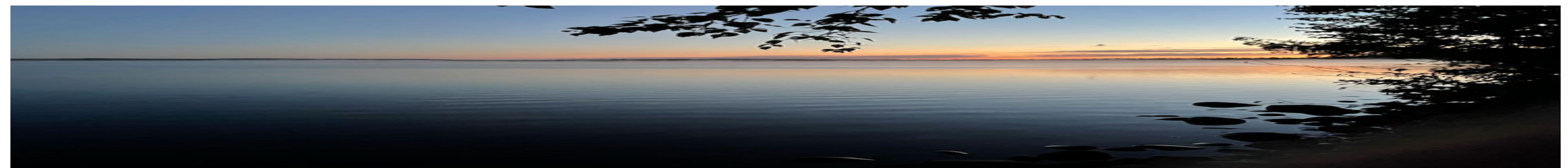
Nisha Sutherland RN, PhD

Caroline Sabotig, RN, MN (Student)

Elaine Wiersma, PhD

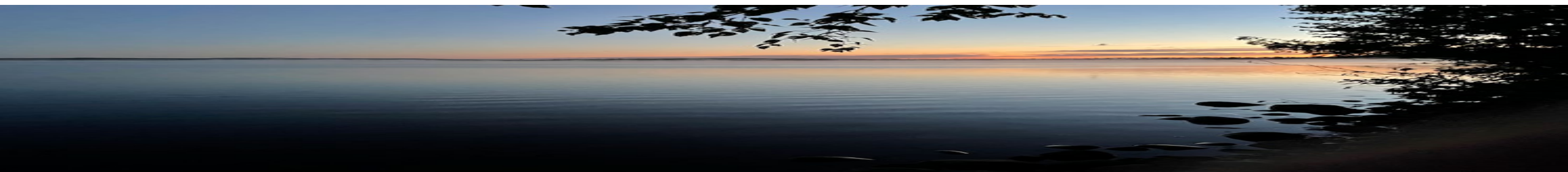
Lynn Martin, PhD

David Thompson, RN, PhD

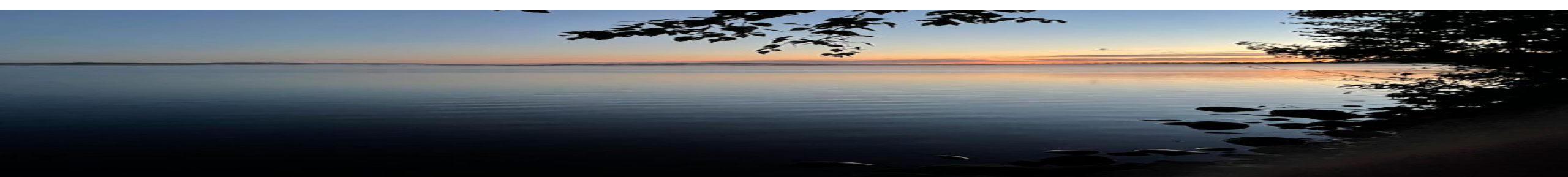
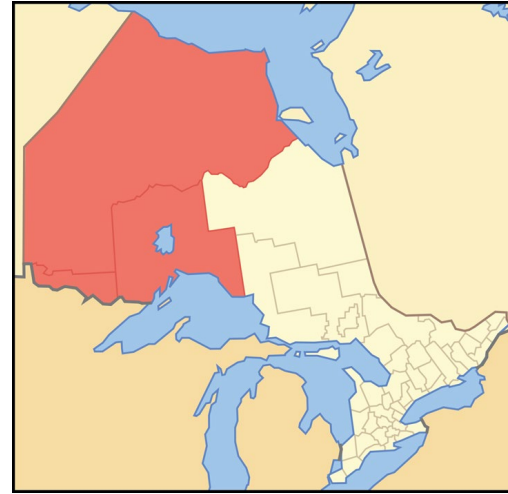


Study Purpose:

- To gain in-depth understanding of north western, Ontario LTC home staff experiences of moral distress during the pandemic
- The impact on nurses' and PSWs' mental health, as well as their resilience and adaptation

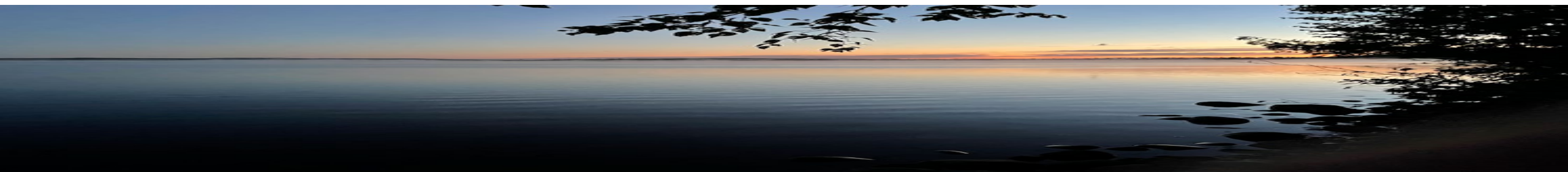


Introduction



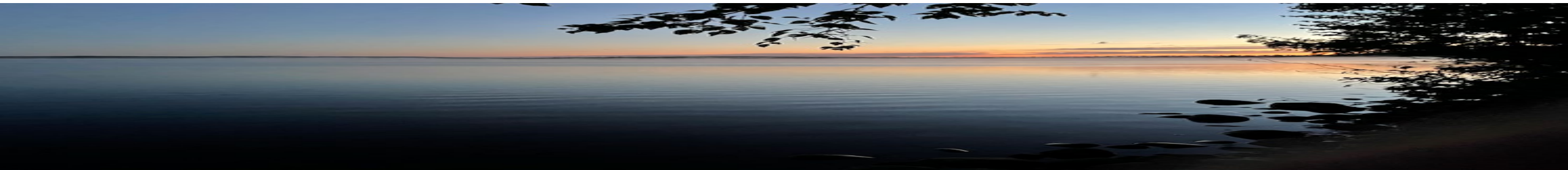
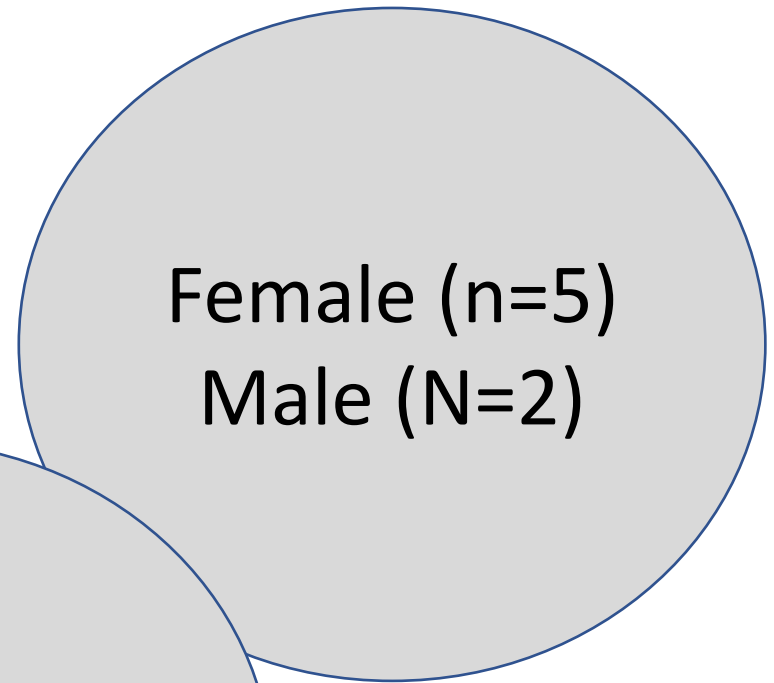
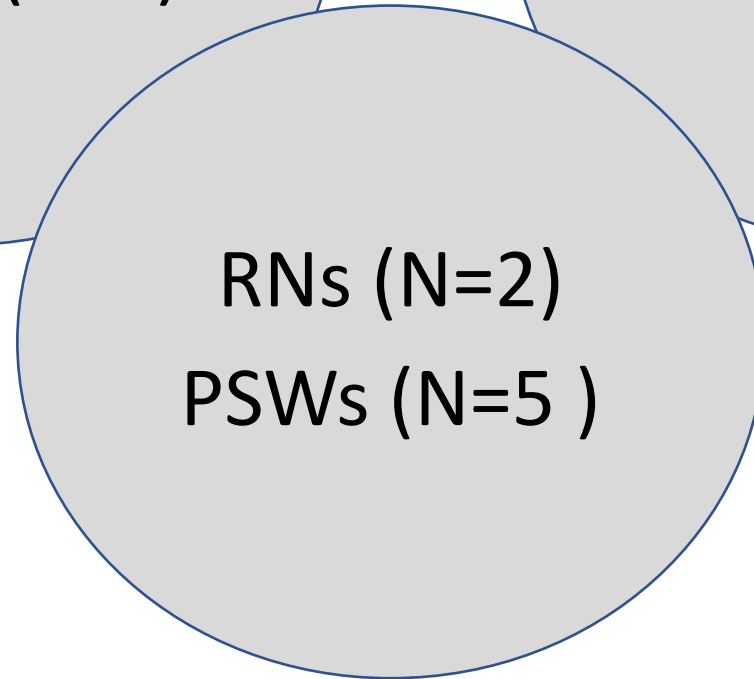
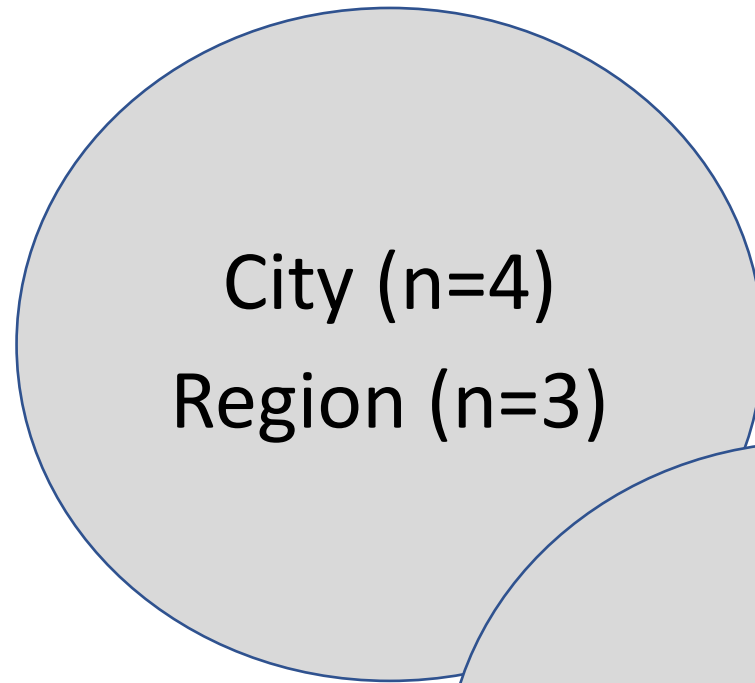
Methods

- In-depth interviews
- Voice-centred relational analysis
 - Situate participants' experiences within the context of LTC home structures



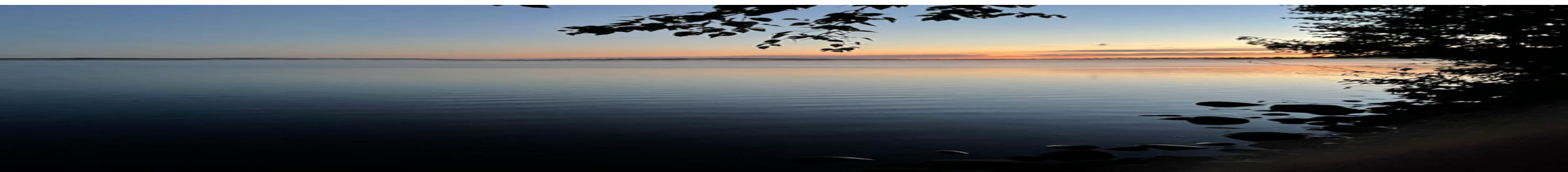
Sample

- N=7



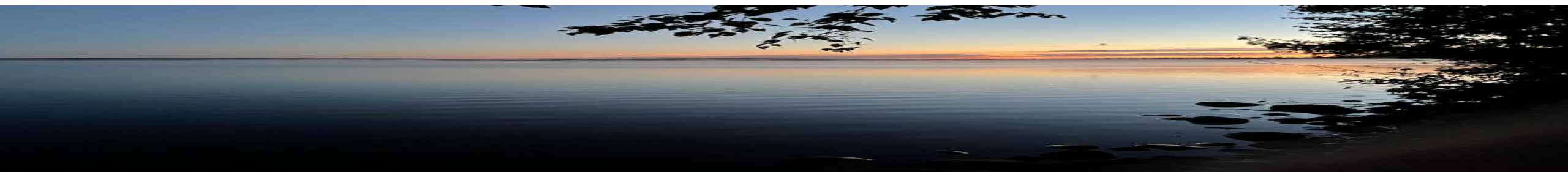
Preliminary Findings

- Witnessing suffering
- Enforcing rules
- Breaking rules
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling disconnected and helpless



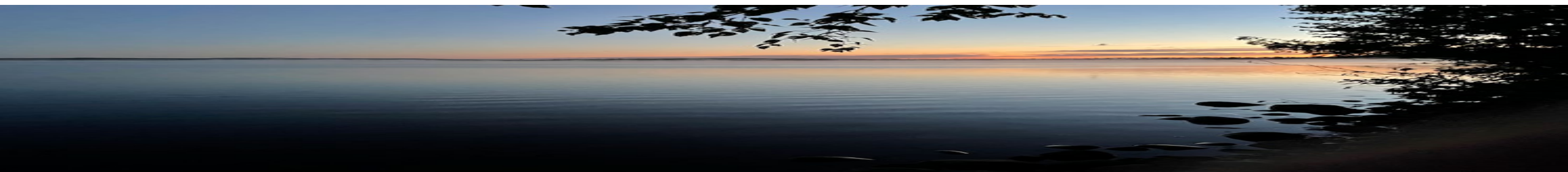
Witnessing suffering

- I just felt like it was like an ethical dilemma every day. And I really wrestled with that. Like first do no harm. And, like, I knew we were harming people when you have residents telling you, “I wish I would die. I'm 80. I just wish I would die.” That is -- like, I'm causing that (Jenny, RN)



Enforcing Rules

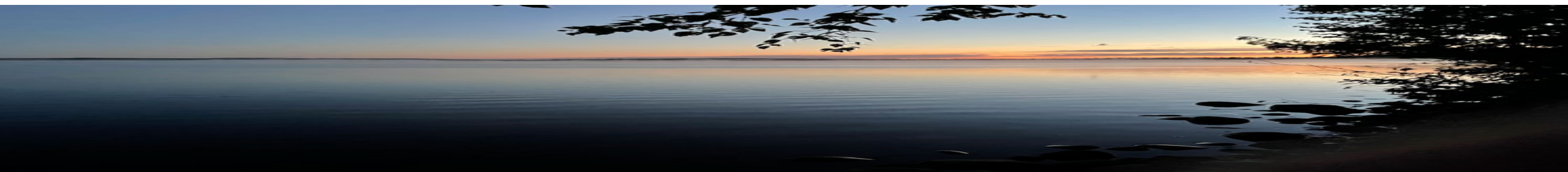
- I am not PCR'ing this person because... I need three people to restrain them (Rosie, RN)
- Why would they have done this? Like why couldn't the people have gowned up and come in? Like these people that made all these policies and procedures... obviously they didn't have any care and compassion because it made no sense (Nikki, PSW)



Breaking Rules: Fear of bringing Covid into LTC home

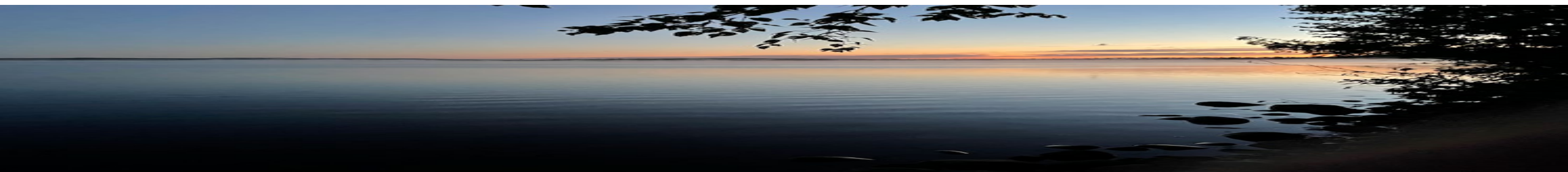
Yeah, it was very hard on my mental health to be alone. So, we'd still meet up...(Nancy, PSW)

Because we were short staffed...I was asked by management if I'm okay after five days... if I'm feeling better to come in to work... then I can take care of the COVID positive clients, since... I already tested positive (Julie, PSW)



Feeling guilty

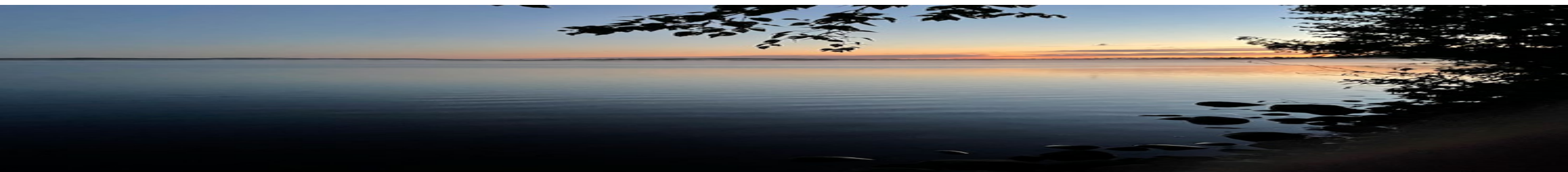
- It was so wrong to seclude them and not let family see them....It was really detrimental on their mental health.... So...maybe having more of a voice and speaking up (Nikki, PSW)
- Maybe I should have advocated louder.... I wish more people had... talked to... the media or called our MPs. I did actually call our MP.... I don't think there was enough advocating. (Jenny, RN)



Feeling disconnected and helpless

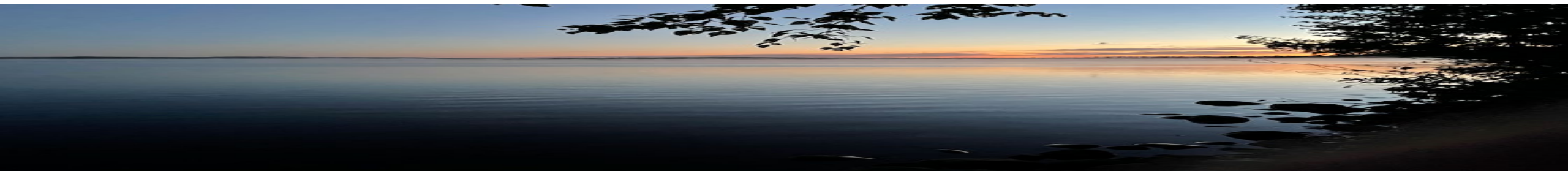
I was totally disconnected from my...entire life. ...When I was at home, I couldn't... connect with my family. And... obviously the restrictions. ... I just I felt like I didn't belong anywhere.... We were totally abandoned... our managers didn't even come on the floor. ...I kinda think they forgot about us (Rosie, RN)

Like we just kind of felt like you guys thought we were heroes in the beginning, then all like dropped us (Nikki, PSW)



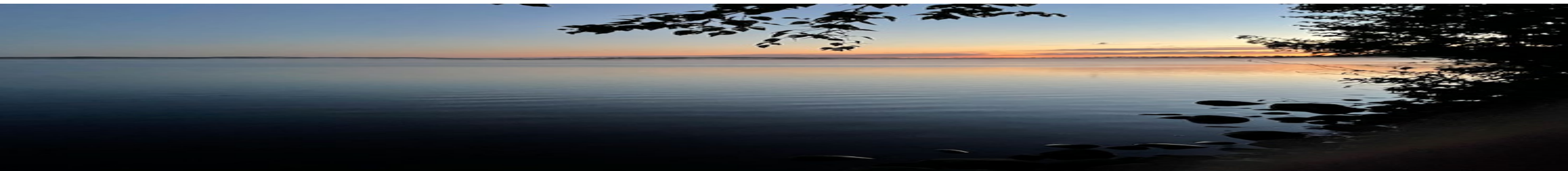
Implications:

- Include front line workers in policy and decision-making
- Provide ongoing support



Knowledge Translation Plans

- Local presentations
 - Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health lunch & learn
 - Encounters in Bio Ethics Centre webinars
 - Canadian Association on Gerontology Conference (2024)
 - St. Joseph's Care Group Health Research Conference, Thunder Bay
- EPID@work
 - Infographics, Reports, Recommendations
 - Unions; Ministry of LTC; Ministry of Health; Ontario LTC Care Association (Magazine)



- Thank you!

