

Jennifer:

Your health is important and you deserve to be healthy – right?

I was at university and I was hearing voices and developed some delusional explanations for why people would be talking about me since I did not realize that I was hallucinating. I became psychotic and they told me that I probably had non-verbal learning disorder.

Joshua Tepper:

Equity is about making sure whoever you are, wherever you live and whatever you have and whatever your needs are – the health care system is there to meet them. It's about ensuring that everybody is getting the care that they need. It's about ensuring that everybody can reach their full health potential.

Jennifer:

What's it like to go to the grocery store when you can't afford to buy things at the grocery store – so you know that you have all your carbs covered because that's what you get from the food bank right? You've got pasta and maybe some rice. A huge problem for a lot of people who are living in poverty is that milk is expensive and you want milk – like you really want milk but you don't get milk. Maybe you get one little bag from the food bank if you are lucky.

Jeff Turnbull:

Income should not determine your health or the health care that you receive but unfortunately it's the sad reality for many of the vulnerable in Ontario.

Jennifer:

It's unfair to expect low income people to have a healthy lifestyle where they are eating healthy food and exercising.

Joshua Tepper:

Everybody wants to be healthy, everybody wants to look after themselves, but the reality is when you are not sure when the next meal is coming from, when you are busy searching for a job or stable housing – it's really hard to focus on your health. It's probably why we see here in Ontario, the poorest people, having twice as many chronic conditions as the richest.

Jennifer:

The reason why I developed pre-diabetes in my mind is because of all the years of food insecurity and not being able to eat healthy – as healthy as I would have liked and the medication that I'm taking – which is known to cause metabolic problems like diabetes and obesity.

Joshua Tepper:

Equity is a critical part of the Common Quality Agenda and what makes a health care system high performing. But it's also about what we want as a society – it's what we want for everyone who lives in Ontario. It's about making sure that regardless of who you are, where you are or what you have or don't

have, that the health care system is and everything around the health care system is going to be there to serve you.

Jeff Turnbull:

We can't afford not to fix this problem.