



ONTARIO
HIV TREATMENT
NETWORK

FROM ENGAGEMENT TO EMPOWERMENT: ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HIV THROUGH PEER EMPLOYMENT IN COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH (CBR)

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Community-based research exploring HIV, housing and health

Food Security Fact Sheet: Ontario
The Impact of Food Security on Health Outcomes in People Living with HIV/AIDS

How Does Food Security Affect People Living with HIV?

Food security is a fundamental requirement to lead a healthy life. In Ontario, people living with HIV who have secure access to food report fewer health issues than those who are food-insecure.

People living with HIV who are food-secure...

 Experience 30% fewer HIV symptoms	 Are 11% more likely to take their HIV medications as prescribed	 Score 17% higher on measures of mental health-related quality of life
 Score 7% higher on measures of physical health-related quality of life	 Report 78% fewer depressive symptoms	 Are 13% less likely to feel stigmatized due to their HIV status

How Can We Address Food Security?


Food security in Ontario is affected by a wide range of social and economic factors. Any solution to food insecurity will require a long-term commitment to reducing poverty.

-  We must **develop holistic programs** that address the underlying causes of food insecurity, rather than tackling food insecurity alone.
-  We must **build stronger, broader community partnerships**, to address the social conditions under which people with HIV live, work, and age.
-  We must continue to support benefits such as the **Special Diet Allowance** offered by the Ontario Disability Support Program.



Impact of food security on health outcomes in people living with HIV/AIDS across Canada

employment change and health outcomes in HIV/AIDS


echo

Community-based research study on employment status and health

- Peer Research Associates are members of the community under study
- Participate at all levels of a community-based research study
- Conduct interviews & collect data
- Help with analysis and interpretation of results
- Help in dissemination of study findings

- **Isolation** – The episodic nature of HIV often results in underemployment or reliance on government assistance
- **Empowerment** – The meaningful engagement of people living with HIV in the research process
- **SDOH** – By addressing the SDOH peer engagement can benefit the health and well-being of people living with HIV
- **Peer Research Associates (PRAs)** – 14 PRAs conducted multiple OHTN community-based research studies that addressed the social determinants of health

- **Reflecting** the lived experience of people living with HIV
- **Identifying** & understanding social drivers
- **Sharing** the burden
- **Returning** to work in a supportive and equitable environment
- **Shifting** perspectives - HIV as positive

- PRAs interviewed hundreds of participants living with similar social pressures
- Social determinants of health are common ground for discussion

**Exchange of knowledge
=
greater connection to community**

- Personal challenges seen in a broader context



- PRAs have become mentors and leaders in their communities
- Peer engagement in CBR creates a choice about seeking employment

Peer researchers:

To learn more about Community-Based Research and working *as* or *with* peer researchers, please visit universitieswithoutwalls.ca



**Universities
Without Walls**

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THANK YOU!

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