

Thresholds, Episode Three - Freedom

Dolly Menna-Dack: Hi I'm Dolly, the clinical bioethicist and the youth engagement strategy lead at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. You're listening to *Thresholds*, a new Koffler Digital podcast produced by Maya Bedward, in collaboration with members of Holland Bloorview's Youth Advisory Council. Presented in five parts, each episode of *Thresholds* explores the experiences of these youth with disabilities as they transition into the adult world. In this episode, we'll be listening to Samantha in her piece entitled "Freedom."

Samantha: Imagine having to book to get somewhere at least a few days in advance. Imagine the night before getting a specific time where they'll pick you up and thinking *okay, I should get to where I need to be, on time*. Imagine getting ready that day on a specific time and the ride being late. Imagine checking your phone or your watch every few minutes and just watching the time pass before you can say that the ride you booked is late. (slow intense music) Imagine thinking of all the alternative options that you may have if your ride doesn't show up. *Do I call the right line and wait till I get someone on the line and get another ride? Is there anyone home to take me? Should I call a cab? Should I just give up on trying to get to where I need to go?* (music intensifies)

In my very first year of university, I had a midterm and uh – my first year of university everything is like I need to be very prepared, I need to do everything correctly and I didn't really give myself the freedom to be like *I can mess this up*. So, my midterm was at 3 o'clock so I had booked my wheelchair to get me to campus by 2:15, thinking that would be enough time. (pause, intense music) And then when I got the ride, I was like okay I'll get there in time and then it was almost half an hour late. (pause, intense music) Every minute that time passed I was like *okay, the more time passes the more time that I don't have to get me there*. If I don't arrive on time, I don't always receive accommodations because you know it's not fair. So, in that time, I started to weigh my options, *is there any neighbours to drive me to school?* Of course, there wasn't because it's like the

Thresholds, Episode Three - Freedom

middle of the day on a Friday, like everyone's at work. Do I call the ride line, which is like, *if you still need a ride after 30 minutes, you can call and see?* But if you're on the ride line it's 40 minutes of waiting to get an answer. (busy telephone signal) So it's not reliable at all. *Do I call a cab?* (Telephone dial tone) Okay, that'll be here in like 10 minutes and then by the time I was starting to call a cab, they had pulled up. I had gotten there 5 to 10 minutes to spare but I shouldn't have to go through this every single time I have to do something. (pause, intense music) If I had missed my test I would probably have to appeal it because, with the reason that I missed it, I would have to go to like even the higher up than my professor because that's a bigger issue, that's a school issue. And even if I had shown up late, it's just that I wouldn't have my accommodation and they don't let people in the past 20 minutes, I think. That was the start of me taking the Wheel Trans, that was my first experience of possibly missing something. from this day forward I like to book an hour in advance for almost everything. Everything has to be thought out meticulously, like *where am I going? What do I need to book for? how much time?* (pause, music continues) And if they're late, I have to wait when they can't even wait more than five minutes for me? And for the most part, I get it because of traffic and weather and stuff. But there are days where I'm just like I want to go home (sighs). (short pause) It's a little bit harder for me to socialize, I just can't get up and go. Sometimes my friends and my family are like, "do you wanna come over?" And I'm like, "yeah cause no one's home and I haven't booked so, I wish I had more freedom with Wheel Trans than I do now. Wheel Trans gets me places safer because it's a door to door service. With TTC it's a little bit more unsafe for me because you're not guaranteed a seat, with the big crowds I could easily fall over because my balance is off so it's just safer for me to take Wheel Trans. But again, I just wish I had more freedom. Sometimes I can't make promises for certain things for people because I don't have control which sometimes, I wish I did but right now I don't.

(long pause, music continues)

Thresholds, Episode Three - Freedom

Dolly: Thank you for listening to *Thresholds*, this podcast is created by Koffler Digital. Produced by Maya Bedward. Ben Wood is our recording engineer. Music and sound design by Laura Dickens. I'm Dolly Menna-Dack, clinical bioethicist and the youth engagement strategy lead at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. You can learn more about this project at koffler.digital/thresholds