

## Transcript of Interview with Dawn Brunschon by Emily Brunschon

**Interviewee:** Dawn Brunschon

**Interviewer:** Emily Brunschon

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**Location (Interviewee):** Poplar Grove, Illinois

**Location (Interviewer):** Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**Transcriber:** Kalissa Reins

### **Abstract:**

Dawn Brunschon is a K-12 librarian currently working at home and helping to find new ways to connect with kids from afar and to connect kids with books. In this interview, Dawn discusses the challenges of working from home, what education might look like as the pandemic goes on, worries about her family and the economy, as well as social issues.

**EB:** Okay, so what's your name?

**DB:** My name is Dawn Brunschon and- hi.

**EB:** Where do you live and what time is it and the date there?

**DB:** I live in Poplar Grove, Illinois. It is 5:13pm on May 8, 2020.

**EB:** So, what's it like where you live?

**DB:** Ah, we are more country. We're more rural out here. We do live in a subdivision but it's still definitely more rural. It's not like being in the Chicago area.

**EB:** Well, what's the weather like there right now?

**DB:** Right now, it is sunny out. Chilly but sunny.

**EB:** So, what is some of your demographic information that you feel comfortable sharing like, race, ethnicity, gender, that kind of stuff?

**DB:** For me?

**EB:** Yeah.

**DB:** Not in our area. So, I am Caucasian, Female I identify as what is cis- cis-

**EB:** Cisgender?

**DB:** Cisgender? Am I say that right [laughs]?

**EB:** No you're saying it right, cisgender female.

**DB:** Yes, I'm 49 years old. Yeah.

**EB:** So what are the primary things you do on a day to day basis? Like, do you have a job? Do you do any kind of like hobby stuff?

**DB:** I am a certified k-12 librarian. So, in the district that I work in, I am a library media director at this time. So, I work a full-time job and I am running a team. It's called Teen Library Council. I meet with them once a week during the school year. And usually after work, it's maybe like a quick supper and then we're taking our boys to different practices.

**EB:** So, with your employment has anything changed because of COVID-19?

**DB:** We are now working from home and we are no longer allowed to go into the buildings. So, we are doing our jobs from home which has been interesting.

**EB:** How has that affected your family's day to day activities then?

**DB:** It's been an adjustment. We are all in the same house at the same time we're all trying to do e-learning or working. Our routine is definitely off everybody is either- [thumping sound] I find that we have moved from being morning people to more of the night owls.

**EB:** [laughs]

**DB:** Because we have to be up in the morning and be out the door. I- hm, I feel like my boys are having a harder time with the e-learning. I would say the first couple weeks I really struggled with it as well just because it's- I'm at the kitchen table. So, you're never leaving your job. And it's- there's kind of always this almost like this underlying guilt like I should be doing something for my job, or I should be doing something for my family. So, it's been trying to find a balance.

**EB:** How different is like your workspace versus your home space? Like do you have an office, or do you have like nice office chairs that kind of stuff? Has that been an issue?

**DB:** I don't have like my my filing system that I have in my office is different. I don't have that here at home. So, I feel like I'm a little messier here. I did have to go in and pack up my office. They're doing construction at my job this summer. So when I was there, I actually ended up grabbing my nice office chair to bring home because the kitchen tables were not as comfortable as my office chair [laughs]. So yeah, I don't have an office I- I kind of took over the kitchen.

**EB:** Yeah. [thumping noise] What do you- what was the first thing you learned about COVID and like what were your thoughts about it?

**DB:** You know when we- when this first started coming through and we started hearing about it I think we were still under the impression that it was more like flu-like symptoms that it wasn't as serious as it is. And I think when they first closed us down, we...I guess I was under the

impression, honestly, I really thought we'd be going back to school. We had a week they- we had a spring break in there so the week before they ended up saying we're going to close we're off for spring break. And I think in the back of my head I thought we were we were going to come back after that I don't- we truly did not understand or know the extent or the seriousness of it, so.

**EB:** And has any of your, you know, as it's escalated and spread, how has your thoughts changed since when you first learned about it?

**DB:** [sighs] I think it went from being nonchalant to almost fearful. When we started finding out more of the symptoms, and we started watching the death toll go up. I think for us it really hit home when we we knew somebody personally who was hit by the virus, and thankfully they pulled through, but they were in the hospital. And I think that's- that definitely had an impact on us as a family and how we viewed the situation [clears throat].

**EB:** And so like, what are, I guess, the biggest issues to you about this pandemic as it's, you know, coming to a head?

**DB:** [sighs] I think the economy is been very difficult. My husband has been laid off so that of course has hurt us. We, I have to say I've been very, very grateful I have a job. I still have health insurance for the family. So, I feel very fortunate. And my family is is still doing okay. But I've watched other family members go through the layoffs, and that's been definitely challenging for them financially. [sighs] I'm- I have mixed feelings, I know- if economically we need to get back to work so that people can continue to survive, but I'm worried that we're going to do this too quickly. And we're gonna see a second wave and it's gonna hit really hard. So I have very mixed feelings of the direction that we're going, I guess currently. I don't know. Fear of the unknown.

**EB:** Yeah, so you mentioned that you knew someone that has gotten sick because of the outbreak. Do you feel comfortable sharing about the- you don't have to list names or anything, but just how that's affected you how that affected them and their family?

**DB:** It's somebody that we knew through sports that the boys were involved with. So we were hearing about it, we were getting updates to Facebook so we didn't, you know, necessarily talk with the family but I think just hearing the updates from them...I'm not sure how it affected their family I can- I can only imagine and it really even then I still can't truly imagine what it was like for them. But I think for us it just honed in on how serious it was and how scary it was. And we really made sure that we are very careful about who was going out to do the shopping. It was only one person. The boys weren't allowed to go out. So yeah, we- we really hunkered down at that point.

**EB:** And so, you mentioned the the economy and how you're kind of worried about that. How do you feel about, you know, the, you know, municipal leaders and government officials how they're handling it or some of the actions that they've taken during this outbreak? How do you feel about that?

**DB:** I feel that our governors have stepped up and have really looked at the big picture of the health of their constituents. I have not been as impressed with the national government. I feel like they were very late coming into it. And I think we could have seen- I think we could have seen different results had our government taken things a little more seriously at the beginning.

**EB:** And who is the governor for Illinois at this moment?

**DB:** J.P.-

**Unidentified Male Voice:** J.D.

**DB:** [laughs] Sorry, J.D. Pritzker. I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing-

**Unidentified Male Voice:** Pritzker.

**DB:** Pritzker [laughs] sorry.

**EB:** And so, what are the what are some of the actions that the Illinois government has done to handle this outbreak?

**DB:** Well, we have been- everybody has- we've been in lockdown. So everybody's been expected to stay home except for the essentials. They've had the big box stores open, which has definitely been a form of dispute for small businesses because either way we are now at the point that if you go out to a store, if you're around somebody, you have to be wearing a mask. It's still very much the social distancing. We hopefully will start to slowly reopen. Illinois has been hit hard and so we're still seeing the cases go up. I know for me personally with my job, we're looking at a very different school year coming up I- we're kind of starting to recognize the fact that we will probably be doing a little bit of distance learning along with in person and we don't know what that's going to look like yet. Yeah, so hopefully we'll- I know, they've decided to kind of start opening up the state parks as it's starting to get nicer. As long as people are still continuing to social distance, and they're just really trying to kind of keep a handle on that.

**EB:** Yeah, I know Chicago that has been a real hotspot, but you are in a further away rural area. So that hasn't been because of your small population you haven't had many cases, have you?

**DB:** I'm not sure what we are up to at this point. [sighs] We have had- it has hit some of our nursing homes here, which has been devastating. It did take it- it did take us a while for it to come out here. Although, again, with testing being so limited, we don't really know for sure when it came out to Boone County, we don't really know how many cases we have because- because of the testing being so limited.

**EB:** And so they- the social distancing, you know, six feet apart, mask, and whatnot to be out in public to see people, are those measures that you are comfortable with? Do you believe them? You know, there's been a big discourse on people not wearing masks and people getting physical with people about it or filing complaints and whatnot. What are your thoughts on it?

**DB:** For me personally, I believe in the social distancing, I believe in the wearing the mask. I have older parents. I don't want them to be getting it and it's it's still very much an airborne virus so it's you know; I don't want to see them get it. I don't wanna see my family members get it. We don't know who's carrying it. That's the other problem. You could be a carrier or not have symptoms. So, I'm really disappointed in the people that have decided to do different protests and not take this seriously because it's not just their health at risk. It's the person that they're confronting or the person they're talking to, that they're also, you know, hurting, so.

**EB:** And speaking about, you know, health concerns, you talked about elderly parents, you know- you know, besides being an older demographic, making them at risk, is there anything else that would make them more susceptible or more at danger if they were to contract COVID?

**DB:** Heart disease and asthmatic issues. So, I think that those two big- are two big factors in this.

**EB:** And then have, you know, are you worried about your own house? Are you worried about your, you know, immediate family like you've talked about sons and your husband? Are there any risks to them or yourself?

**DB:** I think there's risk to everybody at all times 'cause we don't know who it's going to affect and how it'll affect them. I do worry about myself and my husband, we're both overweight, and I have asthmatic issues. So, I- yeah, I do worry a little bit about that. But I also worry about the boys that we've seen cases with teenagers, young adults that have contracted the disease. They've had the serious symptoms; they have passed away. So, I think not knowing how it could affect us. Yes, it definitely warrants concern.

**EB:** You talked about, you know, next year, the school year is gonna be a lot different, you know, not knowing how businesses and schools are gonna reopen, what that's gonna look like, how is that going to affect your job as a librarian? Because a lot of it is, you know, kids coming into the library, checking out books, like how- how is this going to shape your employment now?

**DB:** We may- I may have to shift my focus away from print materials and start looking more at the digital. And that is definitely conversations that have been going on in the library world with different groups that I'm involved in. And depends on if students are coming into the buildings at all. If we are seeing them at all face to face, hopefully we'll be able to still get them in so that they can still get their hands-on different reading materials. And our library time will look different. Obviously, you can't have 30 all in one area. So probably more spaced out. Our programming might look a little different than it has. And we may have to rely a little bit more on the technology aspect.

**EB:** And do you worry about your job in the- in the physical sense, you know, with this call for more- more technology and whatnot? Is it going to remove or make print, you know, obsolete because everyone will be able to access things online or making you have to scan things so students can access them, you know, making books not necessary anymore?

**DB:** No, I don't believe that at all. If you were to ask the majority of the people, even our students, they would still rather have a print book in their hands. It's also I think, after being on a computer all day, if you-whether you're working or whether you're doing learning on it it's nice to take a break from it, it's easier on your eyes. And it's nice to be able to- you can't- it's harder to cuddle up with a computer in your lap than it is with a book in your lap. And I think as long as our students will have access to both formats, no, I don't see it impacting our print usage. I think in the next year, it could definitely impact my purchasing and maybe splitting that a little bit more into the digital than I have in the past.

**EB:** And so, if you know print continues to be, you know, essential to kids and their learning and whatnot, how do you plan on getting them access to them? If you have any idea what that will look like.

**DB:** We don't and that's the problem at this time, it will really depend on if we're allowed to do face to face next year. And if we are allowed to do even if it's split schedules, or this week versus next week, with our kiddos, if they're having to flip flop back and forth, but we will definitely make sure that they are- have an opportunity to get in to the library, even if it's just in small groups to come in and check out we may not have storytime at that point. But we'll do what we can just to make sure that they can still get their hands-on books to take home and read.

**EB:** And so you talked about, you know, online databases and stuff like that is- do you think your purchasing and usage of that will increase and what are some of the things that you've looked into regarding these databases?

**DB:** Yes, I do see- I do think it could definitely increase. With so many of our vendors and companies, publishers, they have opened up so many more options to the US this- for the end of the school year since we're all doing at home learning. That it's and I have placed a lot of them on our school's website, our library website, so I'm hoping that it maybe I can do like a survey our teachers and say do-, you know, just kind of find out what's being used what hasn't. Some of the databases that we have currently had, I've already seen an increase in usage since we've started this, so.

**EB:** And so being a librarian, you have a lot of contact with the kids, your engagement with them. You talked about this Team Library Council, how has that affected your engagement with the students that you work with?

**DB:** I finally- I let things go at the very beginning until they could kind of get their feet underneath them and have a better sense of how this e-learning was gonna go. And I finally met up with them. We did a Google meet. And it was just nice to be able to touch base, see faces, and just chat. We didn't really talk about anything in particular, we just kind of chatted. They have- I have a group of students that are really big on the Dungeons & Dragons. And so we kinda got talking and I think as a- as a group, I think we're going to attempt to start our own. And the kids have kinda been working with me that's been interesting. I've never played I don't know anything about it. And right now, we have not started yet. We have kids- I have a couple that are doing Running Start, which is doing Junior, like Community College for their junior

and senior year, and they've got finals coming up. So, I know it's, the kids are trying to finish up and wrap up their school year. So they're like, I think we probably won't start till the 20th but just being able to go through this, you know, they've been really good about walking me through the whole process of like, you know, building your your character and, we, you know, had to create a- there's an app that the kids said this is what we normally use to talk on. So it's been interesting.

**EB:** And so, you know, this is, you know, demonstrating you want to engage with the kids, try to find a, you know, medium for them to connect with them and whatnot. Have you seen that in the in the rest of the school district of teachers trying different, you know, forms of connecting with their students or keeping them engaged in school? What- what is some of those kind of stories that you want to share?

**DB:** I actually feel that our teachers have been amazing, both in the district where my kids attended and the district that I teach. We've seen so many different neat ideas going around you have teachers that are doing Google meets with their classroom, whether it's in real time or it might be a- I've taped myself in doing a lesson. I've had- the teachers have reached out and sent like little pictures of themselves and, you know, here's a hug for you from your teacher, we miss you. I'm just trying to find opportunities to connect to those kiddos. I know that they try to reach out and make sure everybody has touched base with them at least once throughout the week to make sure everybody's okay, see if they need anything. So yes, it's been really, really positive for our students, I think our teachers. This is a whole different realm and we jumped into it feet first and had no idea really what we were doing. And I think they've just done an amazing job.

**EB:** And so, you know, being a- working in the school system and whatnot, and talking with other educators and so forth, how has that affected them not only like in in their jobs or, you know, how do they feel the shift has affected their ability to connect with kids, to teach, do you have any connections like that, that you would feel comfortable sharing?

**DB:** [sighs] I think our high school teachers have been overwhelmed. Just because we are a one to one district where I teach for our students that are in grades six through 12. And so our students in our middle and high school are very used to being- using the technology. So, and because we have kids that need to finish and get their credits they have been introducing new-new content and information and just trying to make sure that they're meeting and meeting the needs of all their students. I think- they have been very, very busy, I know that they're, you know, getting emails from their students, or they're kind of contacting them through different methods that they might be using. Elementary's been a little different. We are not introducing new content at this time. It's more of "let's keep them moving in the direction that we need them going and make sure we're reviewing, and they are not losing out anything." And we are not a one to one and our K-2. And with our students in K-2, it's really important to be using like those fine motor skills, it's- it's- it's a different type of learning as well. And just even that attention span of sitting for that long. So, they've been trying to actually put together like physical packets with trying to keep it at a limit because teachers can't get into the school to make copies. So, it's- it's- it's definitely been a learning curve on how to do this. Some parents are, "I want more for my students or my children" and other parents are like "I can't handle anymore,

so I'm trying to work at home, and I can't keep track of my kids". So I think even from the parents point of view it's- it's- it's been very challenging. And every parent is looking at things a little different depending on their current situation.

**EB:** There's definitely been a lot of talk of people appreciating teachers a lot more and what they do and how they help kids and now with parents, you know, at home with their kids all day and helping them, you know, try to learn this content they're seeing all the effort that teachers do, so is it been- is it nice to finally get that kind of appreciation of people understanding just how much work educators do?

**DB:** Yes, I- but I also hope that it continues once we get back to face to face that they truly do understand just how much these teachers care about the kids. It's- it's not a job. It is- it's a way of who you are. It's- it's your way of life. Yeah, I just- I hope it continues.

**EB:** And so, you know, we don't know what's on the horizon, whether school will come back in person and whatnot. How do you think that's gonna affect the education system and how people are teaching with this increased usage of technology and, you know, the change to your job as a librarian, what do you what do you think's going to happen in the future?

**DB:** I definitely think with our older students, we will see more blended learning, where students could be in school once or twice a week and at home the rest of the time doing work on their own depending on if they could handle it. We have already started that in the district that I currently work at. We've had several classes that are in the blended learning spectrum. And that's what really our kids are doing now except without the face to face. I think at our elementary level, they they still very much need that face to face. They need that socialization with their classmates. That's a big part of the growing experience and it's very important. And I think just being able to make that connection with their teacher is that face to face is- yeah, I don't see it changing too much in our elementary, but I could more so with our middle and high school. And they're old enough to stay at home by themselves where elementary or not.

**EB:** So as an educator, you know, you kind of get the- and as a parent, you get the best of both worlds kind of, of, you know, understanding that difficult teachers are going through, but at the same time, you know, you're wanting your kids to learn more and be engaged. So, what has been the biggest challenges for your family, you know, facing the, you know, quarantine and social distancing and whatnot because of COVID?

**DB:** I think for my boys, it's been the work. We talked- I struggled at the very beginning of the whole, the separation between home and work and- and I think my boys are also feeling that same challenge where they're- it's really hard to actually sit and do schoolwork in a place that is normally their place to come home and relax. It's one thing to come home and do an hour or so of homework, you know, once in a while, but for them to be expected to do that- and it's really, really easy for them to go "I checked in today" but not necessarily do the work. And so I have found that I had to really kind of dig in and say, nope, we got a- you're behind, we have to get caught up. So, it's- again it goes back to that balance. That's that's been- that's been probably the biggest challenge.



**EB:** And how has that affected the communication or connection with other family members or friends like has it limited you to going to see people? What are different forms of communication that you've used to stay in touch with them?

**DB:** I have, well, I know that my boys continue to communicate with their friends, but they're so used to doing so much on the phones and they're Skyping so I- I feel like they're still seeing it. My oldest one is definitely, probably struggling the most with that connection. He has so many different friend groups and misses that interaction. For me personally, with one set of group of friends, I've actually probably talked with more because we're all home. And so, it's quick to jump out at, hey, how you doing, and we've done a Google meet. And then there's been other friends where we don't talk as much because they feel like we're both- we're busier now than we were before. So you know, I would come home and I was home and in the same with with her and so yeah, that's been definitely it's been different. It has affected different relationships in different ways.

**EB:** And you've talked about having older parents and I don't know if you have any other kids and whatnot, but how is that affected being able to talk to them like in person, or have you been using Google meets or Skyping or texting, like, how is that affected your feeling of connection to them?

**DB:** With my parents it's been a challenge although my dad is a farmer so I- he's been out in the fields working so I this is a time of year that I don't see much of him anyways. My mom's been struggling a little bit more. This has been hard on her. The isolation especially with my dad being out in the field now she's really a home alone. So usually my sister and I, and my brother, somebody is talking to her at least once a day. We have Skyped or done FaceTime a few different times. My oldest daughter and I have seen her because she does have a little one and I've had to babysit. She has picked up shifts at- at a bar where they do fr- food. So there's been times where I've- I have babysat so I have connected with them. And then my other daughter who lives away we're used to doing FaceTime any, you know, anyways, so it's that part hasn't changed too much.

**EB:** And have you ever been you know concerned with being, I guess, face to face with the little- little one or your other daughter? Do you ever worry about you know, possibility that one of you is a carrier and so forth and someone's gonna get sick? Are you ever like paranoid about that kind of stuff?

**DB:** Yes because both parents have- are still going to work. I don't know what they're being exposed to. And bringing home so yes, I do worry about that part.

**EB:** So, I guess, how do you think this is gonna change globally? I mean, how is this gonna affect the future and what's gonna out like- what are- what are some of the possible outcomes you see that are gonna come?

**DB:** I've watched the political climate change. I think it has almost become more divided. There's been so much more out there on social media. There's been a lot of misinformation. I think people are to the point where they don't know who or what to believe. And it's been

overwhelming. [sighs] I'm not sure what this is gonna look like for our country. And we do have the election coming up this year in November. I don't know. I don't know what that's gonna look like for the US. [sighs] I would like to say that as a- as a- as the world that we could come together to work on the vaccine in a way to do this and find a common ground because we're all experiencing the same thing but I don't think that is happening either. There's been a lot of this is... Yeah, I'll stop there. I just- I don't see that happening either. It's- I feel like besides the pandemic, I- I definitely feel like our political climate is also very scary. So I'm on both levels, and it continues to heighten and it's a really frightening place to be.

**EB:** And, you know, you talked about misinformation or not proper information being put out, w- how are you staying informed about what's going on? What are some of the sources that you consult to stay up to date with the pandemic?

**DB:** I hate to admit this, but I do use Facebook but a lot of the articles that come through I do my own fact checking. I don't believe everything that comes across. But then on the flip side, I'll also flip over to like the national news stations. You- you know, you can go online and read different things. Sometimes I just have to stay away from it. And there's, like I said, sometimes it's been an overload and I've had to back off, but a lot of it comes down to whatever comes out you still need to- you need to verify it. It needs- you can't just believe everything that's coming out. And people are really good at propaganda.

**EB:** And so, you know, this isn't the first pandemic that the world has experienced. You know, before or right after World War I, there was the influenza pandemic. And most people don't know about this, because it's been kind of tucked under the rug. But there is a lot of parallels to this pandemic to that one. And what are your feelings on, you know, knowing that there's a precedent and how people are reacting now or how government officials are, you know, taking steps or not taking steps?

**DB:** I were- I- I guess I worry that we're not looking close enough at our history, and not learning from it. Because there was a second wave with that original one. And we saw it after everybody kind of started coming back out and gathering again. And we know that. I mean, that's there for us to learn, but- and I know that they're trying to do things in stages. And honestly, it'll be [sighs] like having guinea pigs. It's who's going to be the first one. It's by trial and error. It's how many people can you have in one area before you see a, you know, a boom, again of it. Yeah [sighs], yeah.

**EB:** Does the- do you feel that knowing that there's a, you know, historical precedent for this, does this allow, you know, you'll be more critical of how people are reacting or behaving? Normally, knowing that there are almost mirror images of what's happening then, or what happened then what's happening now. How do you feel about the actions that are being taken right now?

**DB:** I feel for the most part, our governors have taken it much more seriously than our national government. So, this is- I feel like there's- it's been- it's the blending of our politics has- that's where we're seeing the divide. We have very much peop- like our protesters that I think one have not been personally they have not experienced it personally whether it's family members,

friends, and so I think they don't truly understand the extent of the disease or the- the virus. And I think it's frustrating that we have people that haven't done their due diligence and research and looking at the background. And so, they've jumped on a bandwagon not really understanding everything that's involved in it and- and I think that's the hard part. And I'm not- I just feel like they didn't do their due diligence. It's not because they are trying to be harmful. And it's not because they want to hurt other people. I truly don't believe there is this,- this malcontent that is being put out there, but I think they're frustrated. Some of them aren't- they're not they're not getting the money coming in, it's harder- getting harder and harder to feed their family and- and we are seeing that with the amount of people going into the food like to food banks right now. But some of that, I think is just someone put an idea in their head, and they just kind of ran with it. Yeah.

**EB:** And so there's been a lot of talk about reopening the economy and slowly opening businesses and whatnot and, you know, this might not affect you as much because you remain to be essential in your employment and, you know, you continue to have an income but how do you feel about, you know, your immediate government, the Illinois government, versus you know, the federal government, you know, the discourse on what actions should be taken?

**DB:** [sighs] I do agree that our economy in a sense has been monopolized by our big box stores. I feel like our small businesses really got the short end of that stick. And I think- I think our businesses could be open with- within limitations or within reason. I don't feel like it should be an all or nothing. I think there could definitely be and I still feel like it should be that person's decision whether or not they feel comfortable going...[sighs] Yeah, I- I'm not real sure I guess I don't- this is really hard because I'm not, I guess personally, I would not be comfortable going back into the workplace at this point. And my h- hats off to all of our essential workers, and anybody who's going in at this point, because they are putting themselves at risk every day. And I find it extremely frustrating when people don't appreciate that fact. Because they've had that ability to stay home and it- and again, some of those people are like, but I'd rather be working and I don't- it's really hard. And I'm not sure, I probably didn't answer your question on that, but..

**EB:** I mean, it's very frustrating for essential workers and there's been a lot of, you know, calling out about how people are treating them now and how they treated them before you know people are now praising them and you know, saying that they're so brave and whatnot. But before when they were asking for raises or when they were being ridiculed before because, you know, you're not- you're a janitor, or your fast food worker, you're not that important. And now it's a lot of people are frequenting stores or fast food places just to get out of the house and that can also be frustrating for essential workers because, you know, they're putting their lives at risk working. And us, you know, going out and seeing them and whatnot puts them at risk. And then there's also people disrespecting them and, you know, people- essential workers that are complaining about the conditions. Other people are saying, "well, I'd rather be working" and stuff like that. What are your thoughts on that whole discourse?

**DB:** I think that we are definitely seeing [sighs] the inequity of who's making what as far as what we consider essential workers. For many of them are not paid- they are not paid what they're worth. They don't get the benefits that they should be. And we have people who are

sitting at home that are not considered essential workers that are probably getting paid way too much. I think we're definitely seeing that disparity at this point. Unfortunately, the stigma that goes along with say our people who are at the stores has continued. We've seen that with the action of those that have been very disrespectful of those workers [sighs]. And as we start to move back to semi-normal life I don't know if we're gonna see any changes. And I think that's what's really sad. We can sit here and praise them all we want right now, but I- that doesn't mean things are going to change.

**EB:** And, you know, similar to the influenza pandemic, you know with the virus running rampant and whatnot and the ability for healthcare or businesses being open, a lot of the times you see the fissures in society and the inequity as you've mentioned. What are some of the examples of inequity that you've seen or experienced?

**DB:** [sighs] I- I think we're definitely- I- I don't think we have recognized it the way we should have how people that are living in a more- in a lower socio-economic area, how hard they have been hit. Whether it's due to proximity within the homes, it's lack of healthcare, it's- they are still forced to get out there and do the work. We definitely have not done them any favors I feel. I feel like they've been hit the hardest. And we've it with our African Americans, we've seen it with our Hispanic or Latino population, and we've definitely seen it in certain areas. So I- I- they don't have the luxury of someone who's sitting in- even my home, I have the luxury of I have multiple rooms in my house to get separated. Even if I had to quarantine one person we could- we could do that in here, I have multiple rooms. Whereas if you have somebody who's living in an apartment with one or two rooms it's- if someone gets sick in that family they're more than likely all going to get sick. There's that- that ability to separate is not there. So, I think that's probably one of the biggest inequities we're seeing.

**EB:** And, you've talked about that, you know, going back to semi-normal, do you believe that there's going to be a new normal or is it everything is gonna settle back to way it is? Are you- how are your feelings about the normal that's gonna come about after this?

**DB:** No, I do think there's gonna be a new normal for quite a while actually. We- until we can get this under control, you know, I do think we're gonna be seeing if people go back to work it will be in a mask. If you're in a restaurant it will be much less crowded. I think it will be very spread out. I think people's [sighs] I don't know, I think it will be a while before we see... [sighs] You know what, our lives will be forever changed by this.

**EB:** Awesome, well thank you so much for the interview. You had some great thoughts and your experiences, and hearing your stories has been very insightful and thank you for participating.

**DB:** You're welcome.

**EB:** Alright.