

# Sharing OUR Recovery

A quarterly newsletter published by Picking Up Pieces designed to support victims, survivors, caregivers and loved ones of motor vehicle collisions.

SUMMER EDITION 2018

ISSUE 3

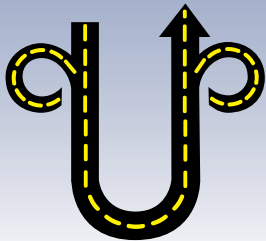
## PIECES IN THIS ISSUE:

- |  | page |
|--|------|
| * Welcome Summer .....                   | 1    |
| * Run - Hide - Defend.....               | 2    |
| * Top 7 Car Crash Checklist .....        | 3    |
| * How Do You Say "Pain?" .....           | 4    |
| * Avoiding Common Accidents at Home..... | 5    |
| * Virtual Hospice.....                   | 6    |
| * Scattered Files .....                  | 7    |

Haven't signed up for Sharing Our Recovery?

**Sign up here!**

Brought to you by:



Picking up Pieces



## Welcome Summer!

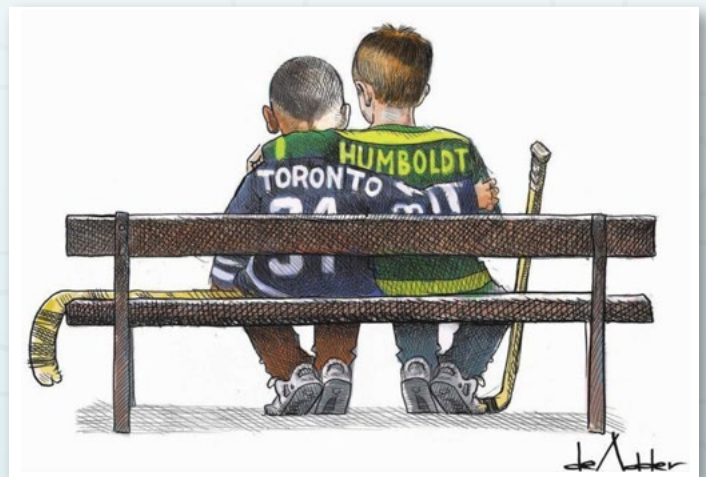
from Sharing Our Recovery

After such a long and harsh winter, it is wonderful to finally hear the birds chirping, to smell flowers blooming in gardens and to feel the flurry of activity in our communities come to life. With the start of summer season upon us, warmer weather also brings ATV's, watercrafts, golf carts, classic cars, recreational vehicles, mopeds, scooters and motorcycles which are being dusted off and taken out for a spin which increases traffic on our roadways. Schools will be ending with summer break, more people will be out walking and bicycling which means there will be an increase in pedestrians on our roads. Everyone will be out enjoying the nice weather and as a result, there will be more stop-and-go traffic as well as an increase in distracted drivers. The summer is a wonderful time of year but drivers are reminded to be extra cautious during this season.

Are you on facebook? So are we! Like or follow our page to keep up to date with resourceful information relating to motor vehicle collisions! [Click here](#). Do you know a survivor of a motor vehicle collision that could benefit from our [newsletter](#) or [website](#)? Please help us spread the word by sharing our information with them. We would really appreciate it!

We are excited to share our Summer Issue with you as it contains very informative articles including two stories written by survivors. Many thanks to our 2018 Sponsor: [Iacobelli Law Firm](#). We couldn't have done it without your support!

Picking Up Pieces would like to take a moment to grieve the loss of lives and those that were injured in the two tragic incidents that took place in April of this year. We send our thoughts and prayers to everyone that was involved in the Humboldt Broncos Bus Crash and the Toronto Van Incident.



Cartoonist Michael de Adder

Sharing Our Recovery wishes everyone a happy and safe summer. Take your time on the road as some drivers will be focused on getting to their destination quickly rather than getting to their destination safely.

Due to the recent incident in Toronto, Picking Up Pieces felt this was useful information to share. York Regional Police has created downloadable, printable, resources for members of the public and community organizations to share. For more information, or to download the following poster, please visit [www.yrp.ca](http://www.yrp.ca)

## RUN • HIDE • DEFEND

**Surviving an Active Attacker**

*Today may feel like any other, ordinary day. But a terrifying situation may happen at any time, in any place—and it could happen to you.*

*York Regional Police is committed to the safety and security of our citizens. But if you encounter an active attacker, the actions you take before help arrives could save your life. Your first thought should always be, what's important now?*  
**RUN. HIDE. DEFEND.**

<h3 style="margin: 0;">RUN</h3>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">HIDE</h3>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">DEFEND</h3>
<p><b>IF YOU HAVE THE CHANCE, RUN TO SAFETY.</b></p>	<p><b>LOCK DOORS AND BARRICADE YOURSELF.</b></p>	<p><b>BE PREPARED TO DEFEND YOURSELF.</b></p>
<p><b>LEAVE YOUR BELONGINGS BEHIND.</b></p>	<p><b>TURN OFF ANY LIGHTS.</b></p>	<p><b>TEAM UP WITH OTHERS.</b></p>
<p><b>HELP OTHERS STAY OUT OF HARM'S WAY.</b></p>	<p><b>TURN OFF PHONE SOUNDS AND VIBRATION. DO NOT TURN OFF YOUR PHONE.</b></p>	<p><b>IDENTIFY DEFENSIVE SKILLS AND TOOLS.</b></p>
<p><b>CALL 9-1-1 FROM A SAFE LOCATION.</b></p>	<p><b>BE PREPARED TO RUN OR FIGHT IF YOU ARE FOUND.</b></p>	<p><b>REMEMBER: YOUR ACTIONS BEFORE POLICE ARRIVE MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE.</b></p>

[yrp.ca/RunHideDefend](http://yrp.ca/RunHideDefend)

FOLLOW US ON:

*In an emergency, dial 9-1-1.*

*For non-emergencies, contact York Regional Police toll free at 1-866-8-POLICE (1-866-876-5423).*



# Top 7 Car Crash Checklist

Submitted by: Shelley M. Martin, Personal Injury Lawyer

Legal  
Piece

Are you ready for gorgeous, sunny days behind the wheel? Who can blame you. After months of frigid white knuckle commutes, everyone is ready for the sun. But are you really ready for those sunshine roads?



Most Canadians would be shocked to discover that our short lived summer season is also our deadliest driving season. Emergency services know it. Our ER docs know it. You can bet your insurance company knows it too. When everyone but you is in the know, it's time to level the playing field. Let's take a drive down the road to know.

When the worst happens, you need a roadmap in hand. It's a lot more practical than you might think. Let's cut right to the chase. Buckle up. Here's your Top 7 Car Crash Checklist:

1. **Get To The Hospital:** when cars collide, severe injuries are the norm and chances are your ambulance has already been called. But shock and the unwillingness to accept that a crash has actually happened, can make some victims deny obvious injuries. Immediate emergency medical attention is necessary and pretending a crash didn't happen will not make the pain go away. Getting medical attention is essential for your well being. It also documents your injury and starts a written record of your injury and treatment. It's critical. And after you get emergency treatment, follow up with an appointment to your family doctor. Your family doctor will be your key day to day treatment provider and your primary medical record keeper.
2. **Report It:** if the police are already on scene, let them do their job. An officer may also meet with you at the hospital. Ask the officer who takes your statement for her I.D. including her name, badge number and which police department she works for. Ask for one of her public information cards with her station phone number. Get a copy of the full, long form Motor Vehicle Collision Report. This is the long page that has the officer's hand drawn crash diagram on it. It will have the at fault driver's name, address and insurance information as well as critical witness information and list any charges laid against that at fault driver. Did You Know? If you think you may have contributed to the crash in any way or even caused the crash, you need to call a criminal defence lawyer ASAP. This is really important when someone has been hurt. Never admit guilt at the scene or at the hospital. You may not know the whole picture and you could be wrong. Let the officer know that you wish to cooperate but be firm about speaking with your lawyer first. Also make a call to your insurance company as admitting liability can impact your coverage. Don't waffle. Don't let anyone talk you out of it. Make those calls.
3. **Notify Your Car Insurance Company:** in Ontario, you should notify your insurance company within 7 days of the crash. Should you be in surgery, and then recovering in ICU, our Courts will understand the delay. But notify your insurer as soon as you reasonably can. If you have your own car insurance, you can notify your own car insurer. Statutory Accident Benefits (SABs) are available and, along with other benefits under your policy, may help pay for some immediate medical and rehabilitation expenses. Check with your broker to confirm that you had purchased the optional, additional SABs. If you have them, use them for your recovery.

4. **Take Selfies:** your bruises, cuts and scrapes will fade with time. If you can see them now, you can feel the pain now. Record your injuries before they are no longer visible to the eye. Ask a trusted family member to help you with the photos.
5. **Bag It:** if the hospital has not already discarded your damaged clothing, ask that it be returned to you. Carefully bag your ripped and torn pants, shirt, glasses, damaged hearing aid, watch, phone and any other clothing or personal items damaged in the crash. Don't wash those clothes. Don't iron them. Just leave them as is. Place them in a safe, easy to find spot in your home. Write a note to yourself to help you remember where you stored them.
6. **Write It Down:** set aside a quiet hour to write out in detail exactly what happened that day and how the crash occurred. Even if you have an imperfect memory or little memory of the crash, write down what you can. Try your very best to go through the happening of the crash step by step including the events leading up to it and what happened after. The details are fresh in your mind now. Take the time to do it right now before you forget those details. Your written account of what happened to you is your private property. You don't have to give this to an insurance adjuster or investigator if you don't want to. You can choose to share it with your lawyer instead and she can help you to decide when to share and with whom.
7. **Do Your Homework:** keep all your receipts for all out of pocket expenses you incurred as a result of your crash. You would be amazed how quickly expenses add up. If in doubt, keep the receipt. A simple practice is to get an inexpensive notebook and tape or staple your receipts in each day. Don't forget to use that notebook as a diary. Want to go digital? Take pics of your receipts on your phone. Use your favourite note keeper app for notes. But before you spill all your personal info, do check reviews online to best ensure that your app is actually secure. Write down what your day was like living with your injuries. Record your medical appointments including the name of the doctor you saw, what she told you and the name of any prescription. Record the impact of your crash injuries on your day to day life and your family's lives. If you can't take your kids to softball practice because of the pain, write it down. This is your diary of your pain and your loss. It is your personal property and you have the freedom to choose to share it with your lawyer.

## About That Lawyer:

Please remember to call an experienced injury lawyer to discuss your injuries. Some injury lawyers offer a free initial telephone consultation. It's worth the call for your peace of mind. Protect yourself and make the call.

Car crash claims have a limitation period - a time limit - when a lawsuit must be started or you risk losing your right to obtain compensation for your injuries and loss. Call a lawyer to get this timely information for your case. Don't put it off and risk running out of time.

Experienced injury lawyers know that our summer roads are our worst roads. Now that you know, make sure to keep these handy tips in mind. We hope you never, ever need to use them. Enjoy your summer, but never forget. Our summer roads are the most dangerous roads of all. Drive safe this summer.

For more information contact: Martin Law Office at [www.injurylawyerontario.net](http://www.injurylawyerontario.net)



Since pain is subjective- each person 'owns their own pain' and has learned to use that word through their OWN experiences (injury, disease, condition). An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage- is the definition of PAIN accepted by health professionals of all disciplines who are members of the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP).

By carefully re-reading that definition, it is evident that each person uses the word PAIN in their own way- and that their individual experience of pain can only be 'felt' by the person. It is therefore impossible to compare pain experiences. It may be more helpful to describe WHAT you are feeling rather than using the word pain.

Chronic or persistent pain is defined as 'pain persisting beyond the expected healing time of an injury or illness'. In medical conditions, 6 months is considered chronic, whereas with trauma (injury), 12 weeks often defines a chronic or persistent condition. Persistent pain is not serving a 'useful purpose' (unlike acute pain, it is NOT telling you to take your hand off the burner!). However, it is still a message though not a warning or necessarily dangerous.

Persistent pain is telling you to 'pay attention' to what your body is feeling and to 'do something' to CHANGE that feeling. Persistent pain is sometimes referred to as Non-Malignant PAIN even though the word malignant is often associated with cancer or a more dangerous reason for being in pain.

Persistent or Chronic Pain is not Benign- (and should NOT be ignored because it is not considered dangerous) - It does have an affect on our brain as well as our body. Because the word PAIN does not mean the same thing to each person- it is important for you to learn how to describe and tell yourself (and perhaps the people around you) WHAT and HOW you are 'actually' (really) feeling. You will then be better able to attach the word PAIN to a more specific problem. You may then realize, that at times, you are NOT experiencing PAIN but another sensation you do not like!

Each sensation may have to be dealt with in a different way.

This is a challenging task- you will have to learn new ways of describing the WHAT and HOW you are feeling.

Try and separate the type of feelings (sensations) you are experiencing.

## PHYSICAL WORDS

- Sharp
- Burning
- Cramping
- Throbbing
- Shooting
- Knife-like

## EMOTIONAL WORDS

- Worried
- Anxious
- Stressed-out
- Overwhelmed
- Fearful
- Discouraged
- Distraught

## OTHER WORDS

- Dizzy/ spinny
- Nauseous
- Forgetful
- Clumsy
- Feeling off-balance
- Bothered by noise
- Bothered by bright light (including sunlight)
- Sensitive to movement

Since the word pain means something only to you, (and no one can feel or experience your pain), try NOT to use the word pain. Describe the HOW and WHAT you are feeling and in time you will learn to respond to the different sensations in different ways. Tell you health provider about OTHER symptoms that do not clearly fit into the HOW and WHAT category.

ANOTHER TIP: Try not to use these words / phrases:

- Supposed to
- Should
- Ought to
- But
- It's Only
- Used to

Using words that imply that you have not succeeded in better managing or dealing with your condition, could increase your stress level- and make it even more challenging to make changes. Try not to think about how long it has been since you feel like 'your usual self'. Concentrate on TODAY!

Throughout her career, Gloria has been helping people better understand and manage the causes and impact that their 'pain' may have on their lives.

For more information please visit her website:

[www.dontgototheouch.com](http://www.dontgototheouch.com)



# Avoiding Common Accidents at Home

Survivor  
Advice  
Piece

Submitted by: Michelle Munt, MVA Survivor & Blogger



As if facing a life time with a brain injury isn't enough, you become more likely to have other accidents. Everyone will have accidents, that's just being human. But brain injury survivors are at higher risk of injuring themselves. Yesterday I did another one, that was easily preventable.

## The proof is in the pudding, or in this case the soup.

My partner James had popped out, and I decided to heat up some soup for my lunch. What happened next was a series of poorly thought through decisions.

I went to pour it into a bowl, even though I saw it was bubbling and therefore boiling. My terrible coordination meant I made a bad job of it, and it splashed back up over my hand. I went to flick it off my hand with a sharp shake, which was only partially successful. As I'd shouted when it happened, my cat Dexter woke up and decided it was time for his lunch too. I have basic first aid training, so I know speed at cooling a burn is important. However, I chose to feed Dexter first. How ridiculous is that? And as some had spilt on the work top and floor, I cleaned that up too before running cold water on my burning hand.

## Was my brain injury to blame for yet another of my avoidable accidents?

Not necessarily, but in all likelihood it probably played a role in it. We can all be careless at times, but my response at every stage was inappropriate. So now I am paying the price with my hand cringing up nicely. The back of my hand is red and delicate, but the worst is my inner wrist. It now sports some go faster stripes, complete with blisters for 3D effect.

So here's a few tips on avoiding the most common accidents at home. They might sound obvious, but train yourself into good habits. If you have good habits, you're more likely to respond in a safe way to things. Rather than try to fall back on your problem solving and decision making skills like I did.

## Tips to avoid accidents at home, with or without a brain injury:

- **Be mindful of hot liquids.** Don't place hot drinks for example on table runners which hang over the edge. They can easily be pulled accidentally, causing spillage.
- **Turn in handles of pots and pans when cooking.** A handle sticking out over the edge of the hob can easily be knocked and the hot contents to cause an injury.
- **Any spills should be cleaned up quickly.** This is to prevent them causing anyone to slip and fall. However, make sure that if the spill happened due to you causing an injury to yourself, deal with your injury first and ask for help.

- **Install grab rails.** Bathrooms are a must for grab rails as the slippery surfaces make falls all too likely. But make sure other areas of the house have been thought about too. Often I slip in the kitchen, but it's tiny so I can grab the work surfaces. If yours is more generous, think of what would help you if you lost your balance.
- **Keep electronics and water at a safe distance.** Things can be dropped or pushed accidentally into water. This can make them short out and as water is a good conductor it can result in electrocution.
- **Secure rugs.** You might remember me talking about rug grippers before in [5 steps to end time consuming indecision of brain injury](#). These simple, inexpensive items could be the difference between a nasty fall or not.
- **Best practice for your stairs.** Make sure carpets are properly installed making them secure. The hand rail should run the entire length of the stairs, and you should be in the habit of always using it. Avoid placing rugs at the top or bottom of the stairs, as they increase the risk of a fall. (Even with grippers.)
- **Don't overload sockets.** You must never be tempted to plug an extension cable into another extension cable. This could cause a fire.
- **Never leave a naked flame unattended.** Candles must be kept away from flammable objects. Curtains are a common household item that can quickly catch fire.
- **Have a plan for if there's a fire.** Install a smoke detector and regularly check the batteries. Make sure you know how to exit the building, bearing in mind the obvious ones might be obstructed by the fire. Have keys for the doors where anyone staying in your home can access them so they can easily unlock the door to exit quickly.

In December 2014 I had a car accident on my way to work. I was driving on a dual carriageway that I used everyday but I don't remember anything about it. Since I have learned that a Buzzard swooped down and smashed the windscreen of a small truck that was travelling behind me. As I was approaching queuing traffic I had started to slow down but the driver of the truck didn't see that as he was struggling with his smashed windscreen. He hit the back of the company Smart car I was driving and pushed me into the central reservation. As a result, the road was closed for hours and I was air lifted to the Royal London Hospital. I spoke in a strange high pitched voice and found I struggled to find words. Apparently, every day I was asked to remember 4 words: red, velvet, horse, church for a few minutes. But never once did I recall them all. I was in hospital for 10 days. However never within that time was I told I had a brain injury or what I should expect.

Therefore, I feel that if I can help someone by making sure they have better access to information than I did. If talking about my experience achieves this, then I will have gone through it all for a reason.

*Michelle Munt blogs about her brain injury and is a true inspiration. Please visit her site: [jumbledbrain.com](http://jumbledbrain.com) as she shares her own journey as well as insightful information.*



“When will I be over my grief?” Understanding grief and loss

“I am at the epicentre of this earthquake.” Bonnie

When Bonnie’s husband of 41 years, Ray, died in 2013, she likened the experience to an earthquake. As his wife, she was at its epicentre and her life needed the most rebuilding. Their three children, friends and others grieved, but they experienced the tremors and were less intensely affected.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I miss her so much... Sometimes I feel guilty wondering if this is how a mother takes care of a child? But I’m not a mother, I’m a father.” Hamayun

When Hamayun’s wife died in 2014, he grieved her loss while adjusting to his new role as a single parent to their teenage daughter and 2-year-old son.

\* \* \* \* \*

[MyGrief.ca](http://MyGrief.ca) is a free online resource to help people work through their grief from the comfort of their own home, at their own pace. It was developed by family members who’ve “been there,” and grief experts to complement existing community resources and help address the lack of grief services particularly in rural and remote areas.

Bonnie, Hamayun and others share their very personal stories of loss and healing after the death of a spouse, partner, child, parent or sibling. They offer practical

advice, insights and describe finding their way through grief to acceptance, peace, and newfound strengths.

MyGrief.ca consists of nine sections that people can navigate through easily to find the information they need. It covers a variety of topics including: recognizing how grief affects you before and after death; facing emotions such as sadness, loneliness, anger, fear and guilt; managing situations that trigger grief; managing family dynamics; dealing with unhelpful comments and unwanted advice; recognizing if you are stuck in grief; and re-engaging with life after a death.

MyGrief.ca answers common questions such as “When will I be over my grief?” and “What’s the right way to grieve?” (Answers: You never get over loss; you learn to live with it. There is no single “right” way to grieve.) It explains the difference between grief and depression and the signs that someone might be stuck in their grief. It recognizes that

sometimes death comes as a relief when the relationship was difficult or the dying process long and hard.

In November 2017, MyGrief.ca expanded with new sections on how to support a grieving child which can be found at [KidsGrief.ca](http://KidsGrief.ca).

Canadian Virtual Hospice is the most comprehensive online centre in the world on palliative care, loss and grief. It provides information and support to more than

1.6 million people living with a life-limiting illness, their families, health providers, educators and researchers.

---

*“They offer practical advice, insights and describe finding their way through grief to acceptance, peace, and newfound strengths.”*

---



Canadian Virtual Hospice operates:

[VirtualHospice.ca](http://VirtualHospice.ca)

[PortailPalliatif.ca](http://PortailPalliatif.ca)

[MyGrief.ca](http://MyGrief.ca)

[LivingMyCulture.ca](http://LivingMyCulture.ca)

[Methadone4Pain.ca](http://Methadone4Pain.ca)

[KidsGrief.ca](http://KidsGrief.ca)

[DeuildesEnfants.ca](http://DeuildesEnfants.ca)



# Scattered Files

Submitted by: Tammy Kirkwood, MVA Survivor

Survivor  
Support  
Piece



I am a car accident survivor and my life changed on October 24, 2008. I was on my way to work when I was T-boned by a dump truck. That was the day my life changed and my path would never be the same. Before the car accident I was working two jobs, I played recreational sports and I was a mother of three teenagers. My life was very busy!

After my car accident, the first six months involved three different hospitals for intensive rehabilitation. I had to learn to do just about everything, all over again.

An injury to the brain is like a filing cabinet in your mind where all your thoughts from the past, present and future have been knocked over and now all the files are scattered. It's up to you to put the files back together.... some might be lost, some need to be reorganized.....it's a task that you will need help with, as you recover.

Recovering from an ABI (acquired brain injury) is a lifelong process. As you are developing the new you, there are stages you will go through. It's a giant relearning curve. Car accident survivors take adaptation to a whole new level. When my Glasgow scale reached 8 out of 15, I was able to go home from the hospital to the care of my brother Mike. I could not have accomplished all that needed to be done without him and all of the other people who helped me, and encouraged me to keep going.

You will grieve your losses. Not just at first. But the grieving process is like losing a loved one. It never really ends but becomes less intense and a little easier to accept.

After my car accident, I live with fear and self doubt. I'm not afraid of the boogie man, but I am afraid of falling, forgetting things, repeating myself, making mistakes. After 10 years, do I fall? Yes..... Do I forget? Yes. Do I repeat myself and

make mistakes? Yes. It's ok though. I'm human, AND I'm living with my brain injured self! Survivors do what many people don't understand. They've survived a major trauma in their life; and they deserve a pat on the back with all their accomplishments.

The recovery of a survivor is exactly that; THEIR RECOVERY. Knowledge has been power on my journey. I own ME, and with help, I am still recovering and continue to get back as much of ME as I can. I continue to work hard to maintain the abilities I have. Through a lot of support from family, friends, and therapists, I was guided on how I could move forward. Do I miss my abilities I no longer have? ABSOLUTELY YES! But, I like the new me and I'm grateful for what I have. My positive thought has always been, IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE! I was lucky that my recovery costs were covered by my auto insurance benefits. My car accident happened before the deep cuts were made to the medical and rehabilitation benefits in 2010. My insurance company was very helpful, and the monies I needed for my recovery weren't denied. It was because of the available benefits and resources that I have been able to move forward and not be a victim! I want ALL survivors to have the same opportunities I did.

Four years after the car accident that changed my life, I started volunteering my time with a not for profit organization to help other car accident survivors with FAIR (fair association of victims for accident insurance reform). FAIR gives a collective voice to the thousands of people in Ontario who have become amongst the most vulnerable people in our province. Many MVA survivors have a acquired brain injury (ABI) and between the cuts to coverage and the difficulty accessing recovery resources I keep pretty busy at FAIR these days. If my own recovery has taught me anything, it's shown me that adaptation and looking forward are keys to success and that's something that car accident survivors need to know.

You can access my story and advocacy work at:

[www.fairassociation.ca/brain-injury-with-tammy-kirkwood/](http://www.fairassociation.ca/brain-injury-with-tammy-kirkwood/)



Would you like to be part of *Sharing Our Recovery*?  
Would you like to see something written in *Sharing Our Recovery*?

We are always looking for articles or stories, and we would love to hear from you!

Email us: [info@pickinguppieces.net](mailto:info@pickinguppieces.net)

## MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSOR!

IACOBELLI LAW FIRM

We are always looking for *Sharing Our Recovery* sponsors. Interested in sponsoring?

[Click here!](#)



Picking  
Up  
Pieces

**Picking Up Pieces**  
[www.PickingUpPieces.net](http://www.PickingUpPieces.net)  
Follow us on twitter: [@PUPieces](https://twitter.com/PUPieces)

---

All information in *Sharing Our Recovery* is not intended as medical advice or treatment. *Sharing Our Recovery* has been created for informational purposes only. Please consult with your family physician if you have concerns about your health.

---

© 2018 pickinguppieces.net – all rights reserved