

Sharing OUR Recovery

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

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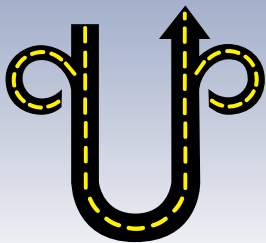
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Picking up Pieces



Seasons Greetings!

As we enter into another winter season and count down the days to a New Year, we would like to take a moment to reflect on the past year. A year ago, we introduced our first issue of Sharing Our Recovery and what a year it has been! We are pleased to announce that we have close to 200 subscribers and that number continues to grow. *Thank you!*

It has been a pleasure to connect with so many wonderful organizations and businesses this past year who support survivors of motor vehicle collisions. We are looking forward to connecting with many more in 2019!

We are excited to share with you that we recently added a "Crash Survivor Blog" where a survivor courageously shares her own personal experiences during her recovery which includes advice and tips for survivors. You don't want to miss these powerful blogs which can be found on our website at www.pickinguppieces.net.

This past year has been extremely tragic on our roads. We would like to acknowledge all of the people that were injured in motor vehicle collisions this past year and wish them a speedy recovery. Our thoughts go out to all of the families that lost loved ones due to car crashes and wish them continued strength and healing.

The Christmas Season can be a challenging time for all of us but it can be extremely difficult for many collision survivors that are recovering. As survivors, we need to acknowledge that the holidays will be different this year. In this issue, Dawne McKay shares some helpful tips to support you during the festive season.

Also in this issue, we share some great feedback that we received this year from businesses and survivors. Do you find Sharing Our Recovery informative? What do you like most about it? Would you like to see something published in Sharing Our Recovery? Feel free to drop us a line and let us know how we are doing! Email: info@pickinguppieces.net.

Many thanks to our 2018 Sponsor, [Iacobelli Law Firm](#) who sponsored all four (4) issues of Sharing Our Recovery. *We couldn't have done it without your support!*

With each New Year, brings more possibilities and we are looking forward to supporting you in 2019!

On behalf of Sharing Our Recovery we wish you a safe, joyous & healthy Holiday Season.





Getting back on the road is hard. It can be a real struggle for many car collision survivors. You are not alone.

For many survivors, already isolated from friends, family and work colleagues during recovery, it is doubly hard to reclaim their lives and get back on the road for work, medical appointments, necessary errands and running the kids to sports. Some experience panic attacks. Others have a sense of doom and fear another car crash. Still others have flashbacks to the day of their trauma.

Driving Anxiety may be accompanied by Depression, Chronic Pain and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). We know that PTSD following a serious motor vehicle collision is real and may include re-living the collision, vivid disruptive nightmares and even actively avoiding or refusing to drive.

What's the solution?

There really are no easy answers. There are no quick fixes.

Many survivors just try to forge ahead. But others seek advice and find a supportive framework to help them with their fears.

A combination of the following may help:

- **Driving Courses:** sometimes getting back to basics with a driving instructor helps get a handle on the wheel. It may also re-build confidence;
- **Self-Awareness:** you always know yourself best. Learn to know yourself better. Be mindful of the triggers and your own personal tells of anxiety. If you learn the signs, you will learn you have control. When your own personal alarm

bells start to go off, you know that today may not be a good day to safely get behind the wheel;

- **Psychotherapy and Counseling:** ask your family doctor for a referral to a specialist and ask about community resources unique to your area. Funding for therapy may be available through your Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits via your own car insurance policy;
- **Peer Support Groups:** community support groups can be as simple as an informal coffee group but provide immense support, advice and empathy. If you go to the gym or an aqua-aerobics class for rehab, you may find others who feel the same and know what you are going through. Because they've been through it, they can understand and offer common sense coping strategies to help you find your way on the road back to driving;
- **Online Support Groups & Websites:** reputable web groups via contacts on Facebook and Twitter can be a lifeline to survivors isolated by fear and location. Network with your friends, family and co-workers and find recommendations for a good group;
- **Medications:** your family doctor is the best resource. Ask them and find out what is right or wrong for you.

Remember you are not alone. Never be afraid to ask for help. Ask your family doctor for referrals and resources. Lean on your personal injury lawyer for information. When you think about it, chances are you have contacts surrounding you. Make the most of those contacts and resolve to do a little networking. Reaching out may be your first, best step to road recovery and independence.

For more information please contact: Martin Law Office at www.injurylawyerontario.net



New Solution for Social Isolation

Submitted by: Kiersten Kanaster, Founder @ Beyond High C

I presented myself at the front door of my new singing student's home, I had no idea what a sweeping change would come over my life, once that door was opened. The gentleman seeking lessons was a kind man, eager to sing, as an artistic outlet to help him cope with the challenges he was now facing.

When I sat down to teach him, I didn't understand why he couldn't follow my instructions or stay with me as we went through the music. As the lesson ended and I racked my brain about what to do next, he and his wife told me a story about a car accident, a rollover, and how he had sustained a traumatic brain injury as a result. As I began adjusting my methods to suit him, and working with him to achieve his singing goals, I saw the positive impact our time together had. His isolation was reduced, his mood improved, his anxiety lowered and his ability to handle his ongoing rehabilitation improved greatly.

I knew I wanted to work with more brain injury survivors, and began talking with them, their loved ones, and professionals all over my state of Virginia about their needs, struggles and hopes. I learned that it is easy to become socially isolated, and to get down or anxious as survivors try to navigate life after injury. I learned transportation can be a huge stumbling block in getting out to meet with people, and that meeting with other survivors, people who really

understand what they're going through is crucial. I learned too, that people often must stop therapy before they are ready.

Based on my experiences with my survivor singing student, and the survivors I work with online in a telehealth program in a rural community, I developed a program where survivors can meet together every week from their own homes. We use live, real time video conferences, so survivors can see and hear each other just as if they were in my living room with me. We talk, listen and do some fun musical activities to engage our brains, and as a creative outlet. Mics are muted for the music making to reduce auditory stimulation, and so that no one is "on stage" having to perform. I am now working with several speech and music therapists to help the content of this program serve as an extension of the types of exercises survivors might encounter in speech or music therapy that may have a big impact on the recovery process.

"As I began adjusting my methods to suit him, and working with him to achieve his singing goals, I saw the positive impact our time together had."

Survivors attend this 8 week program with me again and again. They tell me it is a huge bright spot in their week, and that they look forward to engaging with their peers and having their mood lifted.

To learn more, please visit our website at www.beyondhighc.com. We'd love to hear from you!





Introducing our Crash Survivor Blog!

Picking Up Pieces is pleased to publish a “Crash Survivor Blog” where a survivor of a horrific car crash shares her journey. Please [return to our site](#) regularly where Dawne courageously shares her own personal experiences during recovery which includes advice and tips for survivors. Are you interested in following the Crash Survivor Blog? Its easy! Just [subscribe](#) and check off “Follower” (receive our crash survivor blogs) and each time a blog post is published it will be delivered right to your inbox!

If you have a topic you would like to read, write or share, please [contact us](#). We are always looking for articles supporting survivors of motor vehicle collisions and “guest bloggers.” If you manage a business or work in a field that supports survivors of motor vehicle collisions and would like to promote your services to our readers, we welcome you to become a piece of our puzzle. [Advertise](#) with Picking Up Pieces!

Here is a glimpse of some of our blog posts so far...



Survivor Tips to help you through Christmas

Christmas can be a challenging time for all of us but it can be extremely difficult for many collision survivors ...

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15 Things Survivors of Collisions Should Know

Your life has been drastically changed in a matter of seconds. You have been in a collision and you will ...

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Feeling of Loss While Recovering at Christmas

Interrupted by another sleepless night, I find myself staring at the cursor on my computer screen in the middle of ...

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6 Years of Healing

Today is my Crashiversary. 6 years ago my life changed. 6 years ago I was in a horrific car crash ...

[Read More](#)



Financial Burdens with Recovery

As family and friends start to attend Christmas Parties, bake cookies and shop for gifts, I find myself completely and ...

[Read More](#)



When is your Crashiversary?

Crash-i-vers-ary / the annual recurrence of a date marking a notable event. We either want to forget about the crash ...

[Read More](#)



Support During the Festive Season

Submitted by: Dawne McKay, Founder of MVA Support & Recovery and Crash Survivor Blogger

Survivor
Advice
Piece

Christmas can be a challenging time for all of us but it can be extremely difficult for many collision survivors that are recovering. Everything is suppose to be happy with plenty of family and togetherness but what if you are a survivor of a car crash? As survivors, we need to acknowledge that the holidays will be different this year.

Here are some helpful tips to support you during the festive season:

- Say yes to help! There will be people who will want to help and may offer their support. Take them up on their offers. If family members or friends aren't offering, ask. If you have always been independent like me, I found this very hard to accomplish but it is so important. Asking others to help with cooking, shopping or decorating can be a big relief and can help take away some of your stress.
- Decide where you want to spend the holidays. You may want to change the location especially if you travel out of town every year to celebrate with family. Ask your family members to come see you or suggest a "skype or facetime chat" if you are unable to celebrate with them this year.
- Remember that not everyone will be feeling the same way as you. Be honest. Tell people what you want or what you do not want to do for the holidays. Let them know what will make you uncomfortable such as a drive to visit a relative. Make it clear that some things aren't easy for you.
- Take advantage of your "journal time" especially if you are having a bad day during the holidays. I not only found this therapeutic but necessary. Writing down your thoughts and feelings can enhance your sense of well being.
- Don't send holiday cards if you are not up to the task. Finding addresses and writing cards can take a lot of energy and could cause unnecessary fatigue. Your family and friends will understand if they do not receive a card from you this year.
- Make a Holiday list and check it twice. Yes another list! Surviving a collision makes it harder for us to concentrate and remember things. Once you complete a task on your list make sure to check it off as you go. Put your list in a safe spot. I always have my list on the front of my fridge so I can always find it and have easy access to it.
- If you are stressed about getting to the mall or walking around with the crowds, cut back on gifts or shop online.
- Skip (or minimize) the decorations if it is too much for you this year. You don't have to have the perfect tree, perfectly wrapped gifts, and perfect table. Accept that this year may not be perfect and that it is okay. Ask someone for help. Remember that your family and friends are there to help and they will understand.
- Remember that crying is okay. The holidays can be overwhelming even for someone that is not recovering from a

collision. If you have a house full of guests, excuse yourself if you feel a cry-fest coming on and take some time to yourself. Find a quiet spot to de-compose. Holidays can be hectic so "alone" time is necessary especially if you are recovering.

- Watch the food. Food can make us feel better in the short term. Don't deprive yourself, but be careful that you do not let food become your holiday comfort especially if you are immobile. You already have enough going on with your recovery without having to deal with a bad stomach from overeating or a sudden weight gain.
- Watch your intake of alcohol. Alcohol can become a fast friend when we are feeling anxious, stressed or simply overwhelmed. You may already be taking prescription medication for your injuries and those two substances are not a good mix.
- Splurge on a gift for you if you can. Make it small and simple. I always treat myself to a beautiful Christmas Bouquet at Christmas and place them in an area where I can always see them. When I find myself overwhelmed or frustrated, I gaze upon those lovely flowers and it helps lessen my anxiety even if its just for a few minutes.
- Limit your use on social media during the holidays especially if you are feeling frustrated, sad or lonely. When I was immobile at home recovering from my crash, I made the mistake of going online and reading numerous posts from my friends that were having a great time at Christmas Parties, shopping, decorating, ect. Seeing those posts only made me feel anxious and sad as I could barely get through the day recovering.
- Try your best to go to bed the same time every night. An hour before bed, start winding down your activities so you can set yourself up for a good night's sleep. Think of this as your time to power down: focus on relaxing your body and mind. If you are able, I will suggest some good ways to do this. Take a warm bath, do some deep-breathing exercises, practice meditation or visualization techniques, read a comforting book, or enjoy some soothing music. Think of this as a gift to yourself—after all, you deserve it!
- If you are in the hospital recovering from a crash this Christmas, it is only natural that you may be missing your family and friends not to mention all the wonderful food and festivities. Remind your family members and friends to visit you only if you feel up to it. If they cannot visit, ask them to call you at a certain time so you do not feel alone or left out. Ask a family member or friend to bring you something from home that is festive to bring some Christmas joy to your room.

Wherever you are celebrating the holidays this year, remember to *take it easy!*



Fur, Four Legs & Webbed Feet

Please join us in wishing our fur babies a wonderful holiday!



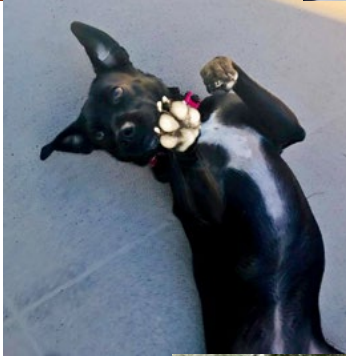
Sometimes the best therapists have fur, four legs and even webbed feet! Our pets provide a listening ear, never complain and can provide huge benefits to our health and well being. Thank you for taking such good care of our survivors during their recovery!



"My little babies make me smile everyday"



"When I am not well, my boy senses it and snuggles with me"



"They give me strength when I need it most"



"These are my 12 year old's therapy ducks. For a year he refused to go outside alone, now he plays outside with them daily!"



"My girl has never left my side since my accident"



Testimonials

Feedback

Businesses and survivors are starting to send us some great testimonials that we want to share with you. *Thank you for this wonderful feedback! It is our pleasure to support you at such a challenging time in your lives!*

Thank you for the Sharing Our Recovery Newsletter. I am a survivor of a motorcycle crash and I find your newsletters very informative and I look forward to reading them.

Sarah - Barrie, Ontario

What a relief it was finding this website. I have felt so alone and isolated since by MVA. Thank you!

Linda - Toronto, Ontario

This website is a great resource and has so many informative articles that I can relate to. As a survivor of a car crash, I am thankful to be a member and no longer feel alone. I also follow the Picking Up Pieces Facebook Page and find the posts extremely informative. Thank you so much.

Jim - Collingwood, Ontario

Having been started by a survivor of a serious motor vehicle accident, this resource is unique in that it not only provides support in the aftermath of a serious accident, but it also inspires optimism, courage and hope. That is why we are so pleased and deeply honored to be a sponsor for Sharing Our Recovery.

Iacobelli Law Firm

We've had a great experience working with **Picking Up Pieces (P.U.P.)** and **Sharing Our Recovery**. We'd certainly recommend other lawyers and businesses contribute an article to lend their support to car collision survivors. Congratulations, Dawne and team on a truly helpful, supportive and easily accessible resource.

Martin Law Office

I came across your blog this week and I can't begin to tell you how much I can relate. I thought I was all alone in my struggles after my truck accident. To share such a personal experience is extremely brave. Keep blogging!

Samantha - Whitby, Ontario



Would you like to be part of Sharing Our Recovery?

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

Email us: info@pickinguppieces.net

MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSOR!

IACOBELLI LAW FIRM

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