

Sharing **OUR** Recovery

A quarterly newsletter designed to support victims, survivors, caregivers and loved ones of motor vehicle collisions.

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Editor in Chief - Dawne McKay

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Connecting Crash Survivors
One Step at a Time

Believe You Can This Holiday Season

As we enter into another winter season and wind down on 2021, I would like to take a moment to tell you how grateful I am. I have continued to connect with so many supportive businesses, organizations and individuals that support victims of motor vehicle crashes, and I cannot begin to tell you how much joy it is to connect with each and every one of you. I look forward to connecting with many more in the future and I can't wait to see what is on the horizon for the [Crash Support Network](#) next year as we bring new projects to light!

This Winter Issue marks our 3rd Anniversary of [Sharing our Recovery](#) and I am so grateful to our 1000+ loyal subscribers. I am also extremely thankful to our sponsors for their support as their sponsorship allows me to continue to work hard at bringing awareness to the Crash Support Network and supporting crash survivors. **Thank you!**

This past year, I was invited to be a guest on two podcasts to talk about my book, "Talk Crash to Me - What to Expect After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Collision and How to Manage Your Recovery." I was given a chance to speak with two caring individuals that are supporting crash survivors in extraordinary ways. I was honored to share my perspective as a crash survivor and I thank them for such a fantastic opportunity. I also want to thank everyone that purchased my book, Talk Crash to Me and everyone that took the time to write a review on Amazon. *Your support is greatly appreciated!*

In this Issue, you will hear how critical it is to choose the right attorney, how a woman made the decision to accept and live with her brain injury which gave her a new meaning of life, you will read some great tips to prepare you for the upcoming winter holiday season, and you will hear how a woman has turned to fitness and positivity as she recovers from a traumatic brain injury.

As always, I am thinking of every crash survivor that is recovering this holiday season. Whether you are at home or in the hospital recovering this holiday, please always remember that you are not alone and to take it one day at a time.

Wishing you a safe holiday season.

- Dawne



Traumatic Brain Injury Survivor Stays Positive



On 8/23/2008, I was a passenger in a serious one-vehicle rollover accident that resulted in a severe traumatic brain injury. The driver was drunk, 6 people packed into a single cab truck (4 in front and 2 in the bed), and a story that was rumored was that we were jumping a hill. Thankfully there weren't any fatalities. There were serious injuries though. I don't remember a month before the accident until a month after. I can't say what actually happened because everyone in the accident "doesn't remember either." There is a saying that everything happens for a reason. My reason is I made a stupid decision.

The result of my traumatic brain injury was that I forgot everything and had to relearn how to do it all again. Things like walking, talking, reading, writing, swallowing, and so much more. I was discharged from the hospital 10/7/2008. I completed outpatient therapy in February 2009.

I continue to work to function everyday. I have had every feeling in the last 13 years in regards to this accident and the results. There have been lawsuits, settlements, convictions, acceptance, healing, setbacks, more healing and so much more. I have had the self-pity moments with this injury and I've realized for me that didn't help anything. It would be easy to feel sorry about what I deal with and what happened. That doesn't make anything better. I cannot change what happened. It does not help. What helped me was staying positive and finding something (can be anything) to keep myself motivated to keep doing. Following my accident I returned to college, graduated, have been employed full time, married, and have had 2 kids. Car accidents are generally unexpected and can disrupt things that had been "planned." Life has certainly not been what I ever expected, but I will always still live it the best possible.

I have since started an instagram account sharing my recovery at: [tbi_fitness](https://www.instagram.com/tbi_fitness) that I welcome you to follow.

Would you like to be part of
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The Stakes Are High: Pick the Right Attorney After a Semi Wreck

Legal
Piece

Submitted by Personal Injury Attorney, David W. Craig

Picking the right attorney to represent you when you have been injured is critical. When people have been seriously injured or family members have been killed as the result of another's negligence, their lives are turned upside down. Suddenly, they are dealing with a situation that most people have never faced. If the wreck involves a wrongful death or serious injuries such as a traumatic brain injury, spine injury, loss of limbs, or paralysis, they are forced with making major decisions. They are overwhelmed with concerns about finances, lost wages, and medical bills. Following the wreck, they are not sleeping and are struggling to function. Despite these challenges, it is at this exact moment that they are faced with making the most important decision of their lives, what lawyer should be hired.

It is the Biggest Decision You Will Make

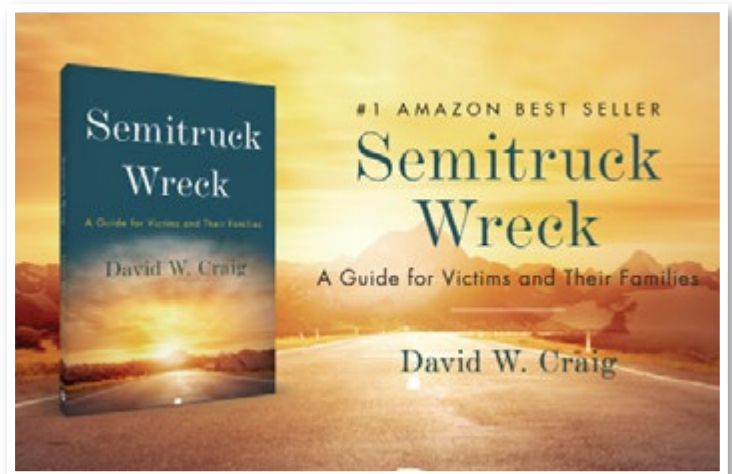
Picking the right personal injury attorney is critical. The impact of this decision will affect the victim and his or her family's future. Yet, this decision has to be made at the worst possible time. However, it needs to be made as soon as possible after the wreck. The reason that it is important that an attorney be hired quickly is because evidence must be preserved. The insurance company or trucking company will immediately start building their case. They will often have a crash response team at the scene of a semi-tractor trailer wreck while the vehicles are still at the scene. They have an entire team trying to protect the careless or reckless semi driver. The injured person and the family of someone hurt or killed needs to have someone on their side.

So, how should you pick the right attorney? Someone within the family should be selected to begin the process. That person should research several lawyers or law firms to find someone with experience handling the type of case with which they are dealing. You will need an attorney with experience, knowledge, and the finances to fight the other side. You want someone with trial experience. Although no one wants to go to trial, it is important that your attorney is known as someone who goes to and is successful at trial. I recommend narrowing your search down to two or three attorneys and then interviewing these attorneys. You will be spending a lot of time with this attorney. It is important that you feel comfortable with this person. Do not be afraid to ask them tough questions. This is a critical decision, and the lawyer should be willing to talk to you about his or her experience, trials, similar cases handled, results and the steps that need to be taken. He or she should be able to show proven results and convince you why his or her law firm is the right law firm.

Researching the Law Firm is Critical

Do not pick a lawyer just because he or she is on television, have a billboard, or do other types of advertising. Advertising does not make a lawyer good or bad. One warning that I have is to not pick a lawyer who personally solicits you and has no prior relationship with you. There are ethical rules against this, and you do not want to pick an unethical attorney. Also, be careful not to

select a marketing company that just sells your case to an attorney. There are companies out there that attempt to get people to go through them to select an attorney. They run ads on the internet trying to attract victims of semi and other serious accidents. These companies have relationships with attorneys who typically pay a fee for these leads. Often any attorney who is willing to pay the fee can get the leads. There is often no vetting process by these marketing companies to be sure that the victims get the best possible attorney. I would recommend not clicking on an ad on the internet where a law firm's name is not identified. Pick a law firm only after you have researched, vetted, and interviewed them.



David W. Craig is one of the Founders of Craig, Kelley & Faultless LLC, a personal injury law firm headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana with other offices, including one in St Louis, Missouri. We regularly represent people who are injured or killed as the result of a wreck with a semi or other commercial motor vehicles. We handle these cases throughout Indiana, Missouri, and the United States. We have lawyers licensed in Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Illinois. Check out my book, [*Semitruck Wreck: A Guide for Victims and Their Families*](#) on Amazon. I also host a podcast, [*After the Crash*](#), available on YouTube, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and Apple Podcasts.

For more information, please visit ckflaw.com.



Watch "After the Crash" Podcast Episode 11 where Dawn McKay speaks with attorney, David Craig about her book and shares her insight as a survivor.



It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Submitted by PiOT Occupational Therapy Services

Preparing for the winter holiday season has always involved anticipation, excitement of get-togethers with friends and family, office parties, gift exchanges, and other winter traditions. Trying to keep up with long standing customs or, as is sometimes the case, just managing to get through this hectic time of year, will once again be especially challenging. As if the usual amount of stress and anxiety that builds at this time of year isn't enough to deal with, the pandemic and its restrictions must also be factored into the planning. We believed that last year would be the one and only experience we would have of winter holiday time with a pandemic backdrop. Yet, here we are again, perhaps a little more confident, perhaps a little more fatigued, with the limitations that are being imposed. Our mental health may be pushed to the limits as we try our best to maintain a holiday atmosphere during uncertain times that we thought and hoped were behind us.

Support Your Well Being

It is crucial to support your mental wellness and think about ways to increase your positivity and reduce your stressors during the winter holiday season. Anxiety, depression, loneliness, low mood, worry and caregiver burnout can easily intrude or worsen if you are not being mindful of the state of your mental health and actively doing things to help you cope and adapt. Experiencing these feelings are normal from time to time. Acknowledge them, everyone is vulnerable to these feelings at one time or another, but it is not OK to allow them to take over and negatively affect your day to day living.

During the busy winter holiday season, put yourself first. Take the time to nourish yourself with exercise, proper nutrition, adequate hydration, and sufficient sleep. This is not being self-indulgent, taking care of yourself physically is a necessity to prepare you to cope with the additional demands of the season. Shopping for gifts, for example, can be an anxiety provoking activity for many. Anticipated supply chain issues this year and the added rules for shopping in person can be triggering. Plan your holiday shopping in advance, opt for online shopping and delivery services rather than venturing out to crowded malls. Make this the year that everyone on your list receives a beautiful sweater from you, this will take the stress out of decision making.



Stay Connected

The ever-changing rules and restrictions imposed on indoor gatherings does not mean that you have to be alone during the holidays. Reach out to friends, family and your community to connect via phone, text, FaceTime, Zoom or similar ways to share some stories and conversation with others. Make a point to regularly check in with other people. It will lift your spirits, and theirs, too.

When things begin to feel like they are becoming too much, take some time to center yourself by practising deep breathing, meditation and grounding exercises. For example, an effective exercise that you can do alone or with a partner is the Five Senses Countdown. Stop what you doing, then say out loud: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can smell, 2 things you can taste, and 1 thing you can feel, followed by a slow cleansing breath. Feeling better?

Reach Out for Support

Sometimes despite your best intentions, you may find yourself overwhelmed with anxiety or depression. We encourage you to reach out to your healthcare providers to direct you to resources and services to help you through your difficult times. They are trained, experienced and are happy to help you to get yourself back on track to enjoying the holidays. There are also many community-based resources available, such as [Bouncebackontario.ca](https://www.bouncebackontario.ca), which is a free online service program for youth, adults and caregivers, providing support for your mental wellness.

It can be difficult to remain optimistic when the ground under your feet is constantly shifting. The rules that were put in place yesterday may have already changed by today. Please take a moment this year to express gratitude, even if your celebration may not be what you imagined it should be. Perhaps this will be the start of some new traditions. Take this time to reflect on your abilities, and on what you will be able to do once again in the future.

For more information on PiOT Occupational Therapy Services please visit: [piot.ca](https://www.piot.ca)

We want to thank PiOT Occupational Therapy Services for their 2021 sponsorship and for their continued support.



Holiday Thoughts from One Crash Survivor to Another

Submitted by Dawne McKay, Founder of the Crash Support Network

Hello. This is your old body speaking. Listen up because I have a lot to share with you.

First off, I get it.

Ever since you were involved in a motor vehicle crash, you have missed the “old you” and I know you are bracing for the holidays. No matter what anyone says, this year’s festivities are going to be really tough. In fact, let’s be honest, you are not looking forward to this festive season at all.

The misconception about the holidays is that they are one big happy party. That’s what every song on the radio claims and every television commercial but that’s not true for someone recovering from an unexpected motor vehicle crash.

In reality, crash survivors admit to feeling severely depressed, anxious and isolated at this time of year. You probably don’t realize how much pain we are in because we have stopped talking about it and most of us are keeping our struggles to ourselves.

Right now, I know you are hurting and what you need is a hug which is why I am writing this. This is my hug to you.

Surviving a motor vehicle crash has a way of changing our life in a blink of an eye. It reorganizes the way we think and it changes you.

You may never be the same after surviving a motor vehicle crash and it disrupts your entire life but there is always something you must remember.

There is support. You are not alone. Yes, you read that correctly, it’s true.

I am in the perfect position to help you cope and to show you as much support as I can. Which is what I will continue to do, by offering tips, advice and comfort to you. You are not alone in your recovery journey as you face daily struggles and you never will be.

During this holiday season, when cheerful families are gathering together enjoying themselves, I’m going to be thinking of you in hopes that you will join our online community for crash survivors.

Join today: [Crash Support Network Group | Facebook](#)



Last month, I was thrilled to personally deliver signed copies of my book, “Talk Crash to Me” to [William J. Teggart Personal Injury Law](#). Many thanks to Bill for taking the time to sit down with me as I really resonated with his caring demeanor. Coincidentally, we recently both wrote books during the pandemic to help crash survivors and I am so honored that Bill will be handing out my book to his clients as they start their recovery.



Our Mascot, Survivor Davis is wishing you a peaceful holiday season.



You're Getting Better Every Day

Submitted by Sarah V. Jackson-Hayes

Sarah sustained a severe traumatic brain injury at the age of 15 after getting in a car with a underage drinking driver and is the author of the book, "You're Getting Better Every Day." Her writings have been published in Hope magazine and ADDitude Magazine. Most recently, she has become a yoga instructor for children dealing with those who have experienced trauma and earned her Registered Children's Yoga Teacher Certificate with a Trauma Informed Focus.

The decision to accept and live with her brain injury has opened up new doors as well as provide her with a new meaning of life. Sarah's journey guides young people through a devastating ordeal they couldn't otherwise imagine; accepting and living with brain injury, the grueling hospital stay and rehabilitation process; relearning basic motor skills (tying a shoe, buttoning pants, holding silverware) and the social challenge of resuming school life.

While it is still a struggle for Sarah to hold her breath underwater, accepting who she has now become, the withdrawals from her friends and the activities she can no longer complete are new obstacles that stand in her way. Having to take notes in school was a challenge for her, as the crash had affected her ability to write. Much of her audience becomes concerned with the fact that her friends treated her so poorly after the crash. Others comment on her strength, bravery, inspiration and willingness to teach others. Sarah is a role model for all people, as they can see the devastating struggles that she has pulled herself through.

Today, Sarah has become a leader with her efforts to promote traffic safety. She has spoken to a countless number of elementary, middle, high schools, colleges and organizations nationwide, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against Destructive Decisions, National Student Safety Program, the Governor's Youth Leadership Safety Program and the National Organization of Youth Safety.

"One Life, One Captain," is the name of her presentation as she teaches students personal responsibility, healthy choices and that



wearing a safety belt can save their life too. Speaking to people across the country is what gives her hope. Kids listen to her as she can relate to their age group.

"I have a story to tell; not aimed to motivate, inspire and/or uplift lives but rather to change via honesty and responsibility, the lives of those and those around them."

We encourage you to read Sarah's story and to visit her website at www.sarahjsspeaks.com as she continues to fight the battle of drinking and driving, underage drinking, poor choices and traumatic brain injury awareness. Sarah speaks of what it takes to overcome tragedy while dealing with a new identity.

Looking to connect with other Survivors of Motor Vehicle Crashes?

We welcome you to join our Facebook Family at [Crash Support Network Group](#)

Is your loved one, friend or colleague recovering from a motor vehicle crash or have you met another victim of a motor vehicle crash? Please ask them to [subscribe](#) to our informative newsletters and tell them about the [Crash Support Network](#).



Distracted Drivers Busted Podcast Show

Distracted
Driver
Piece

Submitted by Howard Drescher

Howard Drescher, Host of the [Distracted Drivers Busted Podcast Show](#) invited Dawne McKay to be a special guest on a 4-part series to discuss her book, "Talk Crash to Me" and to share her perspective as a crash survivor, an author and a victim of a distracted driver. Listen here: [Distracted Drivers Podcast](#).

Thanks for listening!



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What to Expect After Surviving
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and How to Manage
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S. Dawne McKay

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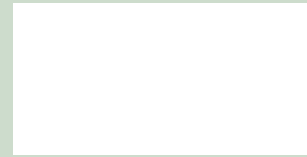
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Our Mission is to provide online support, resources and to raise awareness for survivors that have been affected by a motor vehicle crash.



CrashSupportNetwork.com

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Meet Dawne McKay – Founder

Dawne McKay is a survivor of a horrific motor vehicle crash and is the creator and editor of *Sharing our Recovery* as well as the Founder of the **Crash Support Network**. Dawne is not shy about what happened to her because she has become an advocate for other crash survivors. She had to go through her own struggles to create a community of courageous survivors who continuously fight everyday. Dawne resides in Ontario, Canada and manages both the *Sharing our Recovery* Newsletter and the **Crash Support Network Group** virtually from her home. The Crash Support Network Group consists of members from all over the globe and her highly informative one-of-a-kind website is attracting thousands of visits a day.

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