

Sharing OUR Recovery

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

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ISSUE 18

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Editor in Chief - Dawne McKay

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Connecting Crash Survivors
One Step at a Time

The Crash Support Network is Celebrating Three Years!

Next month, it will be three years since the launch of our new website and as I came across a [blog](#) that I wrote back in April of 2016 when I introduced the Crash Support Network, I started to reflect on how far I have come. I continue to meet so many brave survivors, wonderful organizations and I am pleased to donate countless hours back to my crash survivor community by sharing resources, highly informative articles and inspiring posts with survivors from all across the world. Our audience has grown tremendously and I am excited to see what is on the horizon!

I always start to feel the excitement when I start to put together a new Issue of Sharing our Recovery which is always filled with courageous stories and articles. This is the 18th Issue and I am so pleased to share with you that we have now surpassed 1500 + loyal subscribers and that is definitely worth celebrating. Thank you!

In this Issue, an Organization shares the biggest mistakes people make after a car crash, you will read how a courageous survivor works hard at raising awareness of the dangers of distracted driving through her campaign, a crash survivor's wife shares three things that are crucial to your recovery and we introduce you to an Organization that is on a mission to protect the interests of road crash survivors.

Late last year, we were able to hire a professional videographer to produce a promotional video for the Crash Support Network which has allowed us to bring even more awareness to our site to the wonderful work that we continue to do. We are excited that we now have our own YouTube Channel! [Please subscribe.](#)

This past winter has been extremely hard on many of us and as we spring forward with some sense of normalcy, we are thinking of every crash survivor that is recovering and look forward to continuously supporting you. Don't forget that every step forward in your recovery is a step in the right direction!

- Dawne





Thick, black smoke obscured a semi one inky night in July of 2012. A truck with mechanical problems crawled on the freeway. Neither my husband Derek nor his boss, the driver, saw the truck before drilling into the back of it. Nearly every bone in Derek's face and eye sockets shattered. He broke his femur in two places, broke his kneecap, and shattered the top of his tibia. Derek and his boss were both life-flighted to the University of Utah.

It took many extensive surgeries over the course of a month to piece Derek back together, and it would require many more surgeries over the next several years. After he was discharged from the hospital that first time, he required round the clock care. We only left the house for doctor's appointments and physical therapy. Life was a blur of complications, reconstructive surgeries, and pain.

Three Things Crucial to His Recovery

Sound familiar? Most of you have experienced devastating injuries too. If you're wondering whether or not life can improve, know that it can. Your body and mind are capable of great healing when you provide the right nutrition and stimuli. This includes healthy physical and mental habits. So what advice would Derek give to someone struggling to get back to normal after bad injuries? He mentioned three things crucial to his recovery:

1. **Patience.** Once when he was at rehab relearning how to walk, he insisted that his therapists hook him up to the treadmill that suspends athletes so they can practice running at high speeds. The therapists humored him and let him try. Unsurprisingly, he was unable to run. The moral of the story is that you can't run before you can walk. Healing has a natural progression. There aren't any shortcuts. You have to walk before you can run. Have patience with yourself. Derek said, "Just because you feel like the person you were is gone, doesn't mean it's the truth. You're still

who you were. Even if you can't do the things you used to, it's possible to get back to doing the things you love." Take advantage of the power of "yet." You can't do some of the things you used to—yet—and that's okay.

2. **Progress.** At first, Derek couldn't sit up without hurting. He'd practice sitting on an incline, and worked towards sitting up at 90 degrees. Eventually he could sit upright for an hour. Then several hours. Tiny successes add up to huge gains over time. As long as you're moving in the right direction, you're succeeding. They say "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Commit to progress and improvement. Celebrate your wins, no matter how small.

3. **Persistence.** The most frustrating thing for Derek about recovery was the setbacks. Whether it was surgery or crashing after activity, he felt like he had to start over from square one every time things were going well. You'll have setbacks. Sometimes it'll feel like you're taking two steps forward, and one step back. You really only have two choices: you can work to improve (even if it's only the tiniest amount), or you can get worse. We know that you're tired. We know that you're frustrated. But things can only get better if you don't give up. The journey back to health is long. It isn't easy, but it is simple. Keep fighting. Keep going. Be stubborn. Don't give up. Take a moment to write down why you want to get better. Maybe it's for your family. Maybe you have dreams you want to pursue. Write down what you want, and why you want it. It's easier to fight for something when you have a compelling why.

Derek's recovery has been a constant battle. When he first started trying to regain his health, we didn't even know what was possible—neither did the doctors. Since then, he has reclaimed his life during



Three Things Crucial to Recovery, cont.

recovery by returning to work full-time as an electrical engineer, participating in family and social gatherings, and resuming an active lifestyle. Two of our greatest triumphs are our 7 mile hike in Bryce Canyon and the 50 miles we e-biked in a single day. Derek is still working to improve his health, and hopes to be able to return to running soon.

If you'd like to learn more about Derek's collision and his journey, I encourage you to [read our story](#). If you're interested in learning

the health, fitness, and pain management principles that we used to get him where he is today, you can follow me on [instagram](#) where I have started posting weekly tips.

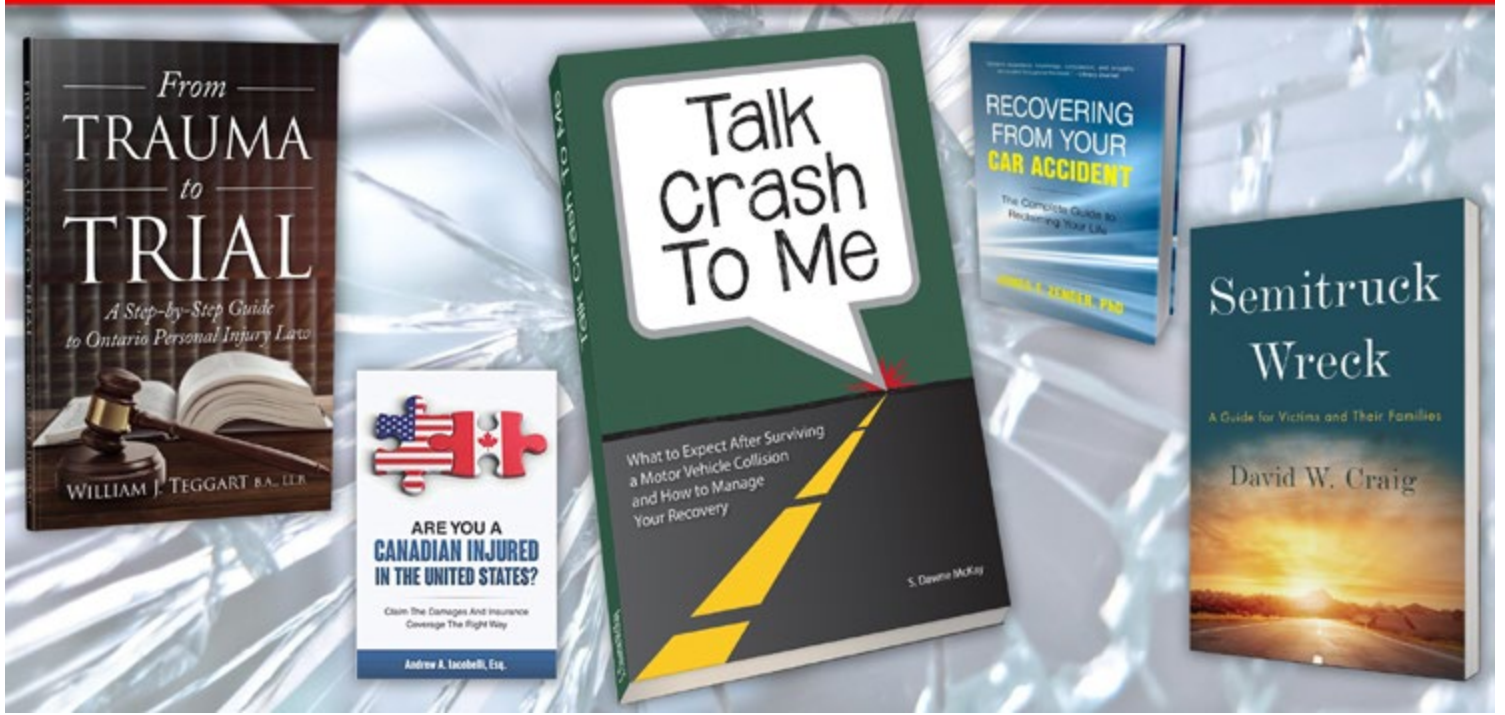
There is hope to return to the things you love. There's hope for a normal life. Derek is living proof of that. Have patience. Celebrate your wins. And don't give up.

Thank You!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Personal Injury Lawyer, Andrew Iacobelli at [Iacobelli Law Firm](#). Andrew's contribution in my book, "Talk Crash to Me" was a critical part as he outlined the legal process of choosing a personal injury lawyer and I am so grateful for his continued support. Choosing a personal injury lawyer is one of the biggest decisions that you will make as a crash survivor and Andrew takes great pride in handing out "Talk Crash to Me" to his clients as they start their recovery. "Talk Crash to Me" is available for purchase on [Amazon](#) and continues to receive positive feedback from so many survivors.



Informative Books to Help You Manage Your Recovery After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Crash



9 Biggest Mistakes People Make After a Car Crash

The minutes, hours, and days after a car crash are typically chaotic. Unfortunately, making any mistake during this crucial time can seriously hurt your chances of recovering the damages you deserve.

Below you'll find a list of the 9 most common mistakes survivors make after a car crash. If you or a loved one made any of these mistakes, all hope is not lost. Consider consulting with a personal injury attorney near you to discuss your legal options right away.

Mistake 1: Fleeing the scene

All states require drivers involved in a car crash to stop and perform certain steps at the accident scene. These steps typically include exchanging contact information with the other drivers involved in the crash and lending reasonable aid to anyone who may be injured. The failure to take these steps could result in a hit-and-run charge.

Mistake 2: Admitting guilt

After a collision, it's common to want to apologize. This is true even if the crash wasn't your fault and you're simply expressing that you're sorry the crash occurred or that the other driver was injured. Unfortunately, your apology will be seen as an admission of fault in the eyes of the insurance company. It's better to not say anything that could be construed as an admission of fault.

Mistake 3: Saying that you're not hurt

It's also natural for some people to want to downplay their injuries. However, it would be a mistake to tell others involved in a car crash that you're not hurt or "fine." Some symptoms don't appear until hours or even days after a crash. If you don't need an ambulance, simply say that you don't need an ambulance but avoid saying that you're not hurt, as insurance companies could use this statement against you.

Mistake 4: Failing to gather evidence

There is no better time to gather evidence than immediately after a collision. Witnesses are notoriously difficult to track down in the days and weeks following a crash so it's a good idea to collect their contact information at the scene. Similarly, while your attorney may hire an accident reconstructionist, there's no substitute for taking photographs of the scene and your injuries in the immediate aftermath.

Mistake 5: Not seeing a doctor immediately

A lot of car crash survivors make the mistake of neglecting to go to the doctor immediately. Perhaps you avoid the doctor because you don't have health insurance or because you didn't think you were seriously injured at first. The problem is that insurance companies and jurors are skeptical of crash survivors who wait too long to go to the doctor (or who don't go to the doctor at all) and later claim to be injured. Because serious injuries may not show symptoms for hours or even days after a crash, it's important to get checked out by a doctor as soon as possible following a crash—whether you believe you're injured or not.

Mistake 6: Believing the insurance company always has your best interest in mind

Insurance companies aren't all bad, but they're ultimately in the business of making money. When talking to a claims adjuster, avoid providing more information than necessary. Be brief and stick to the facts. What's more, if an insurance company asks you to sign something (such as a "medical authorization" or "release of all claims"), it's a good idea to talk to an attorney before doing so.

Mistake 7: Accepting an initial settlement offer

Initial settlement offers are often (although not always) low ball offers. On top of that, if you agree to an initial settlement offer, the insurance company is going to ask you to sign a "release of all claims." This document releases the at-fault driver and the insurance company from any future claims based on the crash, which means you're out of luck if you later find out your injuries cost more than you originally thought.

Mistake 8: Waiting too long to file a lawsuit

Every state has a "statute of limitations" that limits the amount of time a car crash survivor has to file a lawsuit. If you fail to file a lawsuit within this time period, your claim will be forever barred. As a result, it's a good idea to meet with a personal injury attorney as soon as possible after a car crash.

Mistake 9: Posting about your crash on social media

One of the first things a defense attorney will do after you file a lawsuit is pull up your social media profiles and look for any statements that might hurt your case. Even if your statement about the crash seems innocuous, a team of insurance lawyers may attempt to pick it apart to find out how it might contradict a statement you made in your deposition or otherwise hurt your case. The safest thing to do is to avoid posting about your crash on social media altogether to avoid any mistakes.

[Enjuris.com](https://enjuris.com) is a platform dedicated to helping people who are dealing with life-altering accidents, crashes and injuries. They support students, families, caregivers, and communities with resources, personal stories, and a national directory of injury lawyers. Visit [Enjuris](https://enjuris.com) to download free post-crash worksheets, e-books and more resources.



Organization in Uganda is a Voice for Road Crash Victims

Submitted by Sam Bambaza, Founder of HOVITA

HOVITA Championing Road safety advocacy, support and protection of road crash victim's rights in Uganda. Uganda among other countries has failed to provide effective care for road traffic victims after a crash. Thorough investigation of crash cases and provision of the after-crash care and or settlement, is near to impossible in a country alarmed by the number of road crashes within the east African region.

According to the Annual police report 2020 statistics, there were over 15,000 road crashes registered and 3500 fatalities in the country. The report reveals that crashes have left thousands dead and some injured. The consequences of crashes are many including death, injuries, loss of employment, loss of loved ones, isolation and loss of property. Many people have become helpless, traumatized, divorced, insolvent and isolated from friends. Victims of crashes are never compensated nor helped to get treatment or even legal redress by those who have caused the crashes because of failure to access traffic police reports.

Road traffic deaths and injuries are a major public health and development issue. More than 1.2 million people are killed, and up to 50 million are injured, every year. The vast majority of casualties occur in middle and low income countries like Uganda among others. It's on this background that Sam Bambaza founded Hope for Victims of Road Accidents in a move to bridge the visual realities imposed by road crashes in Uganda.

According to Sam, through HOVITA, they have been able to train 20 hospital social workers to support road crash victims, trained 50 traffic and community liaison officers on how to effectively respond to victim's needs besides, running advocated led campaigns targeting school zones with a call for reduced speed limit from 50km/hr to 30 km/hr within key centers in Uganda.



Sam further revealed that, they supported 10 hospitals that admit and receive road crash victims with medical equipment and helped provide personal protective equipment, artificial limb (arm) and above all trained over 150 bus drivers on defensive driving techniques aimed at reducing the impact of the crash on the lives of the unsuspected populace. Even then, Sam is quick to note that the challenges posed by crash incidences in the country vs. the needs, overrides their achievements ranging from issues of lack of funds to support road crash victims especially if one involved was the sole breadwinner. To the biting effect of poverty where the majority are unable to meet medical bills, hiring lawyers for civil compensation amidst the absence of a legal aid services designated for this purpose.

To sum it up Sam says, while rape and murder are considered criminal cases in Uganda with heavy sentences, victims of road crashes murdered through no fault of their own are often ignored and left out of the criminal justice system with no set parameters for compensation. "We don't have forensic investigators to bring cases to logical conclusion and this has a huge social and economic burden on victims who have failed in their quest for justice. It's one of the reasons as to why the government cannot come out straight to provide the right statistic on the numbers of orphans and widows of road crash families which has in return affected our advocacy to include a substantive number of the affected families."

However, road traffic deaths have continued to increase each year with thousands of lives lost every year with Ugandan figures standing at about 3,600 deaths per year as per the police crime report of 2020. According to WHO Report, Road traffic injuries are the leading killer of young people aged 5–29 years in Uganda and the risk of road traffic deaths are three times higher in low- and middle-income countries. To reduce the consequences of suffering posed by crash and post-crash issues, HOVITA is lending a hand in promoting road safety education, advocacy, reducing road trauma and enabling victims to become productive again in society.

At *HOVITA*, we cannot do this in isolation but seek for like-minded individuals, organizations and good will ambassadors to partner with especially as we expand and strengthen our advocacy campaign for safer roads in Uganda. Surely knowing how devastating the aftermath of a road crash is, HOVITA would like to help bereaved families cope and build resilience through peer support, local group network, and set up trauma support programs. This Organization would also like to provide information guides on navigating the justice system and help VICTIMS access fair compensation for bereaved families and seriously injured victims. Connecting victims with others in a peer-to-peer network for coping mechanisms and provide pro bono services, and legal aid to road crash victims. Set up an income generating activity (FUNDS) to support victims and finally, provide professional emotional support, practical information, and refer victims during difficult times.

continues on page 6



Organization in Uganda is a Voice for Road Crash Victims, cont.

You can support the work of HOVITA by helping raise funds for the construction of “HOVITA” a one stop center for legal aid, physical, trauma counselling and road safety training. With a focus on legacy call, all donors / donations towards this project will have their names penned on the wall in memorial. You can also consider donating an artificial limb, wheel chairs and crutches. Sewing machines for the proposed skill development centre as well as supporting the implementation of a professional driving school within the confines of HOVITA as an income generating venture while also contributing to quality and standard training of drivers in the country.

Hope for Victims of Traffic Accidents (**HOVITA**) is a registered Non-Governmental Organization in Uganda dedicated to prevention of road deaths, injuries and caring for people bereaved and injured in road crashes.

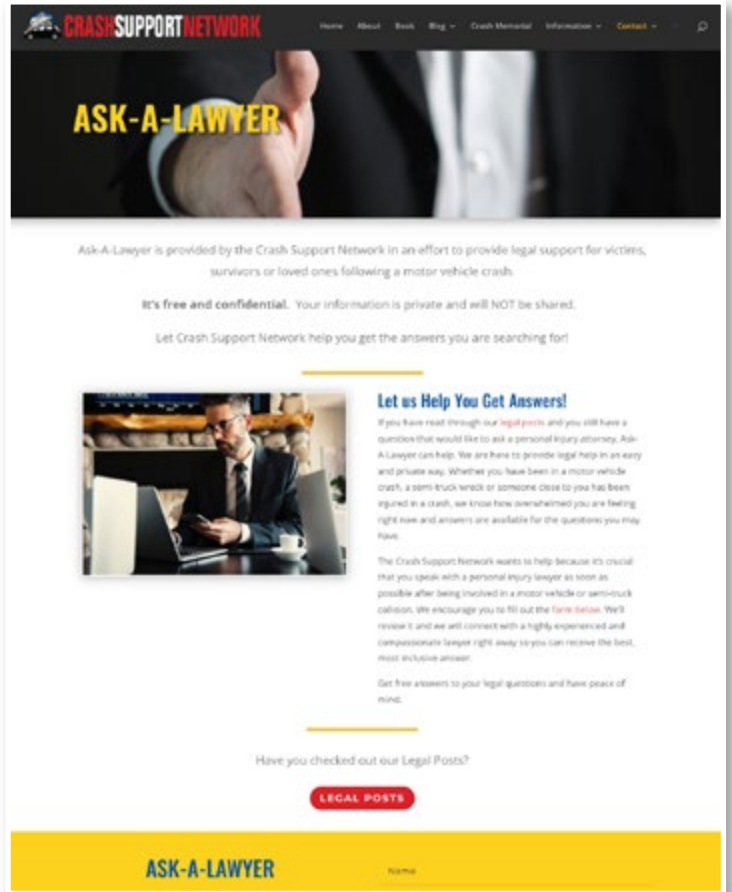
After the Crash


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.




Ask A Lawyer

We are pleased to announce that we now have an “Ask a Lawyer” Feature on our website that provides easy access to any questions you may have. **Ask-A-Lawyer** is provided by the Crash Support Network in an effort to provide legal support for victims, survivors or loved ones following a motor vehicle crash.





available at 

Talk Crash To Me

What to Expect After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Collision and How to Manage Your Recovery

S. Dawnne McKay

“As a victim of a life-changing motor vehicle crash caused by a drunk driver, I didn’t even know where to begin. I cannot begin to tell you how much this book has guided me in my recovery journey. I think “Talk Crash to Me” touches on every concern that I have as a survivor and it’s an easy read. This book is also something that I can easily look back on for direction when I may feel lost and overwhelmed. Thank you!”

– Samantha, Crash Survivor

“It’s like having someone right there beside you, holding your hand, telling you it’ll be alright and here’s what you can do. Talk Crash to Me does that and more with helpful tips and information about Ontario’s auto insurance claims system and how to navigate through it. Dawnne shows us a path to get on the way to a better and more balanced new post-accident self.” Bravo Dawnne!

– Rhona DesRoches, FAIR Association, Chair

“Dawnne writes with courage. Her book is a beautifully crafted checklist for crash survivors. It’s like sitting down for a coffee with a close friend who isn’t afraid to give you a hug and share the tips you need to survive the best way you can. It’s called support for a reason. ‘Talk Crash To Me’ is a must read for car crash survivors, their families and lawyers. Dawnne gives readers the supportive practical tools they need. Dawnne let’s readers discover how strong they truly are.”

– Shelley Martin, Martin Law Office

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A Strong Voice Campaigns the Dangers of Driving Distracted

Submitted by Linda Brown, Founder of "i Pinky Swear"

They say your life can change in the blink of an eye....

I never really understood the true meaning of this statement until I was hit by a distracted driver 6 years ago.

Looking back at the person I was, the things I could do, the plans I had for my future, you wouldn't know that I was the same person. I have always been positive, kind, and helpful towards others. My morals are the same but I am far from being the same person I was. Before, I was the strong person who lifted, carried, and dealt with tough situations. Now, I look for help.

It's Difficult to Ask for Help

Fortunately, I am surrounded by the most amazing people in the world, but it is very difficult to ask for the help or show any form of weakness. I think I am broken as I cannot cry anymore. The days I think I am doing well, a stranger will come up to me and comment on how I walk. "Cramp in your leg?" "I have a bum leg too". I laugh it off but inside I am frustrated thinking that I was trying so hard to look normal. Other days, I park in handicap parking either in my vehicle or on my motorcycle and get yelled and screamed at for parking there. I have a pass. I am disabled. They passed judgement before I can even turn off my vehicle.

I try very hard not to respond. I smile and say, "Have a nice day!" Should I have to go through all this judgement? I would rather over do myself and spend days recovering then use a wheelchair or ask for extra help. No one but my immediate family and those who have been coming to assist me for 6 years really know the effects of a "Good weekend" or "Great event". It is pretty bad that my little boy, who was 5 when I was hit, can look at me and knows when to grab the puke bucket, or your family knows you when the pack extra granola bars and anti nausea in their bag because you want to try spending the day walking/exercising as much as possible. Daily pain can be pretty extreme, but you learn to smile through it...tough it out, because the only other choice you have is to be angry, mean, or negative. Nothing about day-to-day life is normal anymore.

I Was Terrified and Frustrated

Six years ago, I was riding my motorcycle to see a client. It was a beautiful day; well at least the morning was. A car came over the



yellow line on a curve, crushing me. I flew, bounced and rolled down the highway until I landed in the gravel. My left leg was crushed, degloved and severed. I actually thought I lost it completely while on the side of the road but was airlifted to Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. This is where my mind was going crazy. I knew I was medicated but people in need were crying all around me. I looked down and saw two bumps that looked like feet, they had saved my leg...so far. An individual was assigned to stay beside me.

I was giving them trouble because someone on the other side of the room was crying and needed help. I didn't have the strength or capability to roll onto my side. I could barely move. I was terrified and frustrated.

Once I was stable enough to focus on what happened and people around me, my friends assisted me in starting my campaign. The campaign that now defines who I am, **Don't Drive Distracted - I Pinky Swear**. My riding nickname was Pinky, because of my pink bike. I Pinky Swear was a way for my family and friends to keep in touch with me to know how I was doing. Little did I know how much impact it would have on others.

People Know us in the Community

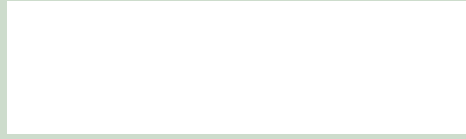
Don't Drive Distracted - i Pinky Swear raises awareness about the dangers of distracted driving. We are sponsored by a dealership in Lindsay, Ontario. We couldn't be more thankful with this partnership. Covid has made events difficult and we have focused heavily on our community, but people know us. They know what we stand for. They think twice. Individuals who are going through similar situations will reach out and want to talk. We are here to listen and assist where we can. We are currently getting ready to make short videos of others who have been affected by distracted driving and will be traveling to complete this series.

If you would like to participate in their short series, or get tools to educate others on the dangers of distracted driving, or would like to get in touch with Linda Brown, please feel free to email her at ipinkyswear2015@gmail.com or visit their website www.ipinkyswear.org.



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Would you like to be part of *Sharing Our Recovery*?

Articles/Stories:

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Want to share?

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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.

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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