

Sharing OUR Recovery

A quarterly newsletter dedicated 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

Welcoming Longer Days

As parts of Canada are off to a hot start this summer, we cannot help but think of all the families, beautiful forests and wildlife that have been affected by the wildfires. We want to thank each firefighter and first responder that have been working tirelessly and hope that everyone remains safe in this unprecedented time.

The Crash Support Network continues to work hard at bringing awareness to the struggles and challenges that crash survivors are suddenly left to face after being injured in a motor vehicle crash through our social posts that many survivors can relate to, our [Crash Survivor Blog](#) and the Sharing our Recovery Newsletter. I am always excited when I start to put together an issue of our newsletter which is filled with survivor stories that crash survivors can relate to and informative articles to help many on their recovery journey.

In this issue, we introduce you to a brave survivor that shares her challenges about pushing through the darkness every day during her recovery, we also introduce you to a strong survivor that fought endlessly with her insurance company to receive the benefits she was owed, you will also read a helpful list of items to pack your loved one when they are in the hospital recovering from a motor vehicle crash and you will hear how creeping the driver responsible for your crash can be beyond tempting. We would also like to send a special thank you to Katy at [Journeyofsmiley](#) for publishing my story where I share my personal experiences that many of us face after experiencing trauma due to a motor vehicle crash that is included in this issue.

We are always so thankful to our sponsors, followers, subscribers and members. I cannot begin to tell you how much it means to me to continuously hear positive feedback. Thank you for believing in the Crash Support Network and I look forward to seeing what is on the horizon as we continue to connect with so many amazing individuals and organizations.

As always, we are thinking of every crash survivor that is recovering this summer and we encourage you to reach out to us anytime as we are always willing to help in any way that we can!

- Dawne

Sacredness of Life After Surviving a Catastrophic Crash

Submitted by Shannon R. Eichenauer, MA

The way I move through my days now is so incredibly different and yes there is the sacredness and how I love the sacredness of my life now post-accident. My innate ability to appreciate life's little moments is the epitome of what I would call sacred. But it truly means to know joy alongside sorrow. And to know pain next to happiness. I make many daily decisions to live in the now and be present with my heart, mind, and body.

I told my trauma therapist, "I hate when people tell me I am courageous" and I imagine those who hear it understand my sentiment. We ask the world collectively, "What is the alternative option?" Sadly everyone on this side of trauma knows the answer. The answer is death. It is giving up. It is staying stuck. It is remaining in anger, fear, frustration, and overwhelm.

Lost in Anger and Despair

I look back on some of my darkest days and I remember just how much I did not even want to live. It was too much to just brush my hair. I went three whole days without a brush through it. I did not care. I remember eating saltines for a full day because the thought of any sort of food crossing my lips made me want to throw up. And do you want to know why I didn't want to throw up? Because I liked it. I liked it because I could feel something other than sadness and it gave me a sense of control. One of my first nights at home after my time in the hospital rehab center I was lost in an oblivion of anger and despair and I ended up so upset I threw up. It was the first time in a month that I felt good.

That doesn't seem all that courageous if you ask me. The courageous thing was bringing it up at my next therapy appointment and trying to not do it again. Or trying to not do it now when my days are covered in darkness. Or running a brush through my hair on one of those days. My therapist later said to me, "Maybe it's the little courageous things you are choosing to do along the way that has courage in them" I said, "Yes I choose that."

Darkness Rides Alongside Me

I call those sacred moments caring for myself though because the other version of myself scares. The one who gives into the dark. The one who can jump into the pit with a monster willingly. I won't do that to my husband and I won't do that to my children. But more than anything I won't do it to myself.



So when the shadows start threatening the light I have to choose the next courageous small thing. Some may call that courageous and yes I suppose it is in some way, but I want to remind you. It is courageous because it has to be because that is the only option. I am courageous because I decide to live. I decide every day to let the light in instead of the dark even though it rides right alongside me reminding me of its presence.

And I suppose talking so frankly about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) makes others uncomfortable and that's okay. When we let our outside begin to match what is happening on the courageous inside, I will never be ashamed of the moments that brought me to this one moment and this moment where I am sitting here telling you about being a survivor of a catastrophic car accident with PTSD.

In August of 2021 after celebrating my daughter's birthday my husband and I were t-boned by a distracted driver who was completely at fault. Our car was

"I am courageous because I decide to live. I decide every day to let the light in instead of the dark even though it rides right alongside me reminding me of its presence."

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Sacredness of Life After Surviving a Catastrophic Crash, cont.

hit so hard that it flipped the car from front to back. The hardest part of our story, the part that has caused me the most trauma, is that my newly 20-year-old daughter was right behind us in her car. She was the first on scene and the one who called 911 believing both her parents were gone. The nightmares of those screams, the only thing I was conscious enough to process as I was upside down in our car, have not left my mind since.

We Need to Shine a Light on Sacredness

It is disgusting that we are required to tiptoe around in our traumas so quietly. So when I tell my story and shine my light on sacredness or speak of my struggles with PTSD that is my little act of courage because the world will tell us we should not. But I fight back and remind you...here we do. Here we do.

For read more of Sharon's personal journey please visit: mommyrhetoricwrites.com and we also encourage you to follow her on instagram at: [mommyrhetoric](https://www.instagram.com/mommyrhetoric).



The Impact of Trauma

Trauma. You've heard of it. You may think you understand what it is. And you are sensitive to those who are experiencing it, but you don't really know until you actually face it. Only then do you really understand the impact of trauma.

“As a traffic accident survivor I can relate to Dawne's story and I'm grateful to have her on board the [PTSD: My Story Project](#). Dawne is an inspiration for others.”

Many thanks to Katy at Journeyofsmiley for including my story where I share my personal experiences that many of us face after experiencing trauma due to a motor vehicle crash.

Click on link below to read more *** may be sensitive to some readers ***

[The Impact of Trauma - Nothing Can Prepare You by Dawne McKay - Journeyofsmiley](#)



Fighting Insurance Felt Like Surviving a Zombie Apocalypse

Submitted by Brain Injury Wise

I survived a Zombie apocalypse. I used to be such a good little zombie. My car accident happened in 2014 right when my career as a nurse was going full tilt and my husband and I were launching our kids. All of a sudden, I found myself waking up in a seeming apocalyptic landscape I didn't recognize, slowly trying to rise from the dust. Car accident. Ambulance. Spinal board. CT Scans. Bright Lights. HEADACHE. Confusion. Trauma. Speech. Tears. Traumatic Brain Injury. I hired a lawyer, stumbled to appointments. What happened to me? Where am I? How could I describe it to others? I was the walking dead. But that was the easy part. As my legal case progressed, I was sent to 26 independent medical exams with strangers who procured so much information about me that it felt like complete violation.



"If you think you are fat and ugly then you are. If you think you have a brain injury then you do." "Why aren't you working?" "Tell me what you think versus what others have told you." "You would do better on some tasks if you weren't so self-conscious about your limited abilities." "Tell me everything you would like to forget." "How do you like sex with your husband the best." "She has been told she has a concussion which has a strong suggestive impact." "We will have lots of privacy for this IME right here in my hotel room."

I Lumbered Through 26 IME's

I didn't recognize this landscape. I moaned and stumbled. Arms outstretched. Is this what an apocalypse feels like? I needed help for the symptoms I was trying to understand so I could get through a day. But I was being told by professionals that I had no brain injury, that I was malingering, faking,

trying to live a carefree life on disability, cheat the system, exaggerating, entitled to no support and held to account by bizarre criteria. I had to prove beyond a reasonable doubt I had a disability?? My family and I were surveilled. We had people focusing cameras through our windows at all hours (my husband chased them away), and were followed on the street, in cars, to various destinations. Is this what society thinks people with disabilities do? That we can't be trusted because we are trying to cheat the system? I have no possible worth without gainful employment? It's an interesting narrative that keeps many people employed, and others controlled. As a good little zombie, I lumbered through these assessments.

I was a pawn in a system where insurance companies who are averse to supporting victims will go to any and expensive lengths to evade their responsibility for paying out benefits. The only problem was in my quest for disability benefits, I became infected.

I internalized this process and began to surveil myself. Was I okay to go on a walk and have people still believe I had a disability? Could I go to coffee with a friend and not be cheating the system? Could I go away for a weekend with my husband and still qualify for disability benefits? Have a social media account? Do I have to be a prisoner to my couch so as to not worry someone would see me the wrong way? Even for this piece, I was reluctant to give my name. STILL. I realized I wasn't cut out to be a zombie. As in the movie Raising Arizona, "The institution has nothing left to offer me," I began to take notes of when I was mistreated and launched professional complaints about some of my assessors. I began to feel the sun on my face as my case progressed. I realized it

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wasn't me, but the narrative about those of us with disabilities is an ableist view and is being propelled by assessors who rely on questionable research and large payouts to pay for that next vacation. In some ways, THEY are the zombies, with little feeling and empathy, feeding off these lucrative insurance funded assessments, suspending the "treatment" responsibilities of their profession, and abandoning their duty to patient allegiance.

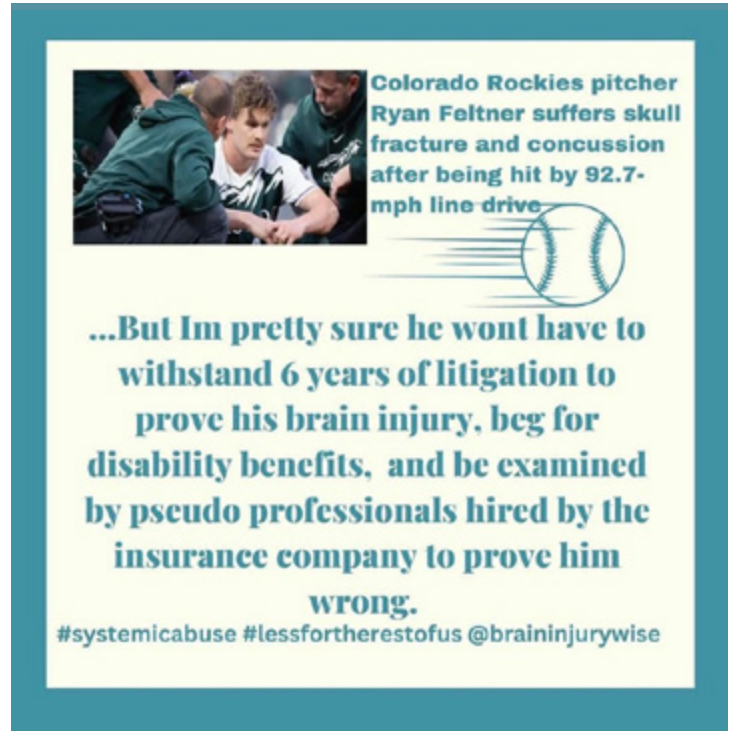
We Need More Zombies to Emerge from the Dust

Lumbering. Vacant. Unfeeling. Pale. Vacuous. Empty. Greedy. I realized that this deficit-based approach to disability was going to need some continued advocacy in order to change. What we need are many voices, and as with multiples of zombies emerging from the dust, a collective, contextual and culturally responsive approached to disability benefits determination and injury evaluation. But for now, I am in the sun, healthier, living with purpose, and no longer lumbering across a landscape that I don't recognize. I have without realizing it, survived my own zombie apocalypse,

"What we need are many voices, and as with multiples of zombies emerging from the dust, a collective, contextual and culturally responsive approached to disability benefits determination and injury evaluation."

and no one will assess (or try to eat) my brain again without my attention or awareness. I'm no longer a good little zombie.

For more information on Brain Injury Wise please visit: braininjurywise.com and we also encourage you to follow their story on instagram at [Brain Injury Wise](https://www.instagram.com/BrainInjuryWise).



Colorado Rockies pitcher Ryan Feltner suffers skull fracture and concussion after being hit by 92.7-mph line drive

...But Im pretty sure he wont have to withstand 6 years of litigation to prove his brain injury. beg for disability benefits, and be examined by pseudo professionals hired by the insurance company to prove him wrong.

#systemicabuse #lessfortherestofus @braininjurywise

Recommended Books to Read After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Crash



From TRAUMA to TRIAL
A Step-by-Step Guide to Ontario Personal Injury Law
WILLIAM J. TEGGART B.A., LL.B.

UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING WELL WITH POST-CONCUSSION SYNDROME
PRIYANKA PRADHAN AND ANNA LEGGETT

Talk Crash To Me
What to Expect After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Collision and How to Manage Your Recovery
S. Davine McKay

Unthinkable
REAL ANSWERS FOR FAMILIES CONFRONTING CATASTROPHIC INJURY OR DEATH
J. KYLE BACHUS, ESQ.

Semitruck Wreck
A Guide for Victims and Their Families
David W. Craig

STILL STANDING
WHEN YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO GIVE UP, KEEP GOING
KEVIN HEMPEL

ARE YOU A CANADIAN INJURED IN THE UNITED STATES?
Claim The Damages And Insurance Coverage The Right Way
Andrew A. Jacobelli, Esq.

available at **amazon**



Items to Bring Crash Survivors in a Hospital

From the Crash Survivor Blog

When we are seriously injured in a motor vehicle crash, first responders arrive at the crash scene immediately to assess and address any physical injuries and we could be whisked away to a hospital for weeks and quite possibly months as we face our recovery journey. Many of us may be discharged from a trauma hospital and transferred to a rehabilitation centre for extensive treatment before we even make it home.

Unlike organizing for an overnight stay at a hospital while you have surgery booked or you are expecting a child, crash survivors are suddenly brought to an Emergency Department by an ambulance or helicopter without an overnight bag.

Here are 12 things that you can bring your loved one or friend when they are in a trauma hospital.

- **Cell phone/Tablet/Laptop and chargers** - We will have a lot of down time and if we can, we want to be able to keep in contact.
- **Earbuds or headphones for phone or computer** - It may get loud in our room especially if we share a room with others. It's critical to us to be able to block out any unwanted noise and it can also be calming for us.
- **Books, Magazines and/or Newspaper** - A highly recommended book that comes to mind is: *Talk Crash to Me – What to Expect After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Collision and How to Manage Your Recovery* which is available on [Amazon](#).
- **Notebook and Pens** - There will be a lot of information shared with us daily from medical professionals and we will need to write things down. A journal would be a great idea as it's important that we start to keep track of our progress and how we are feeling.
- **Personal Items** – Personal medications in their container, contact lenses, glasses, hearing aids, eye mask for sleeping, walking aids, soap, skin care products, suitable pair of shoes -non-skid or rubber sole to help prevent falls.
- **A Small bag** – We will need something to carry around our belongings when we leave our room – either for treatment, exercise or to just sit in a tv room.
- **Cash** – There will vending machines, gift shops and a cafeteria at the hospital and we may need a break to grab a treat.

- **Clothes** – Comfortable pajamas, a robe, socks, underwear and you may even want to bring us our own pillow from home.
- **Toiletries** – We will need our stuff! Items such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, q-tips, shampoo, hair brush or comb, hair elastics, deodorant, tissues, pocket mirror, lip balm and dental floss.
- **Loose Clothing** – Button up shirts, large comfy pants with elastic waistbands, sweater and scarf as it could be cold in our room.
- **Snacks/Drinks** – It's important to find out what we can have and what we cannot have in terms of drinks and snacks as we may be highly medicated. Plain crackers are a great choice as well as juice and bottled water if you are not sure.
- **Make us Comfortable** – Soft blanket, a photo from home a plant or favourite item that will bring positivity to our room.

Much of the time, facing a hospital stay is daunting. Hospitals are not the most comfortable or private place, and the days can be long and draining. Treatment after a traumatic motor vehicle crash can range from on-site medical treatment to an extended hospitalization. How much medical care we require is highly dependent on the type and severity of injuries sustained in the crash.

The things you pack for us can make a huge difference in how our hospital stay goes. A little thought and planning into organizing a bag can be so beneficial for us after surviving such a traumatic experience.



Crash Survivor Regrets Creeping on Socials

Submitted by Susan



Last summer, I met another crash survivor for coffee. She has been a member of the [Crash Support Network Group](#) for quite some time and I got lucky. She only lived a few kilometres from me. I cannot begin to tell you what it felt like to sit with someone who could completely understand what we go through in our recovery journeys. After exchanging our stories and experiences, she confided in me that there was one thing she regretted which took place shortly after she survived a life changing motor vehicle crash. When the words surfaced, I must admit, at first, I was not sure what she meant. “I wish I didn’t creep facebook.”

I sat in silence and waited for her to explain as I was not sure if she meant that she regretted having a profile on facebook. To my surprise, she began to tell me that when she retained her personal injury lawyer and received her copy of the Statement of Claim which indicated the name of the driver of the vehicle that caused her life altering crash, she began to creep.

What is Creeping?

Creeping refers to “stalking” someone on social media, which typically means checking them out or following what’s going on in their life on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn. Creeping means browsing someone’s timeline, status updates and various online bios to find out more about them. Most social media platforms allow people to check profiles out without notifying that user that someone has looked at their timeline or personal profile data. Of course, there are limits to creeping on Facebook. Users can set their privacy profiles so that only their friends can see what they have posted. Similarly, insurance companies may “creep” a

plaintiff’s facebook profile in the same manner to search for information that they can later use against the plaintiff in litigation.

Once she was aware of the name of the driver, she started to go online through facebook to find out what this person was all about. Where did this person work? Did they post images of the crash? Has the driver ever been charged before? Were they injured in the crash or were they carrying on with their life like nothing happened while she continued to have her life put on hold for several years attending medical appointments? Legitimate questions that all of us deserve to have the answers to.

I Still Have Anger Towards the Driver

Human nature is curious and I must admit, I did the same thing. Once I read the driver’s name that caused my life to change in a matter of seconds on the Statement of Claim, I also went online to see what the driver was all about. When I came across the driver’s facebook profile, I did click on it and skimmed through a few of her posts but her profile was private so I could not see much. When I saw her happy life in a couple of images, it was very short lived for me as I realized my time would be better spent focusing on my recovery. I decided right there and then that I had to put that driver behind me and to try my best to never think about her again. The only time this driver ever pops into my mind is when I am experiencing a brutal pain day which usually comes a handful of times a year ...11 years later. The anger that I have towards the driver on my brutal pain days is real and it is justified.

My friend and fellow crash survivor recently told me that she has not crept the defendant’s facebook profile for seven (7) months and that is definitely something to be proud of. It can be destructing to our emotional well being when we creep the driver that caused our crash. She realized that by creeping, she was actually sabotaging her own mental recovery. I will even go far as to say, that if you do creep and find out information about the driver that caused your crash, you may be surprised to find out that they may live in the same town or city as you. You must never approach them or make any type of contact as it could be detrimental to your motor vehicle claim, your lawsuit and your well being.

Don’t Have Regrets

When you share information about your claim or personal injury lawsuit on social media, always remember that it



becomes public knowledge. Venting your frustrations online, providing updates about your case or sharing your anger towards the driver that caused the crash could result in the insurance company undermining your claim and it can be used against you. Being involved in a motor vehicle crash can be terrifying and the pain and emotional trauma of serious injuries can be devastating, and lifelong. I personally understand that we all want to vent our frustrations when we are injured in a life changing crash by no fault of our own and left to face a long road to recovery but if you put your frustrations in writing online or continue to creep the driver on social media, it can have serious consequences.

Trust me when I say you will have a lot of regrets which I mention in my blog [My Journey Home to Recover](#) where I talk about the “dreaded what if’s.” We have already had our lives

altered in more ways than I can count, so try not to add any more regrets. If you have hired a personal injury lawyer, you have filed a claim so let the lawyer do their job in seeking justice on your behalf so you can focus on your recovery.

This blog is dedicated to a brave crash survivor by the name of Susan who is continuing to heal after surviving a horrific motor vehicle crash. She courageously shared her regret with us in hopes that it will deter others from making the same mistake.

Post Crash Tip

Start a Journal!

Submitted by S. Dawne McKay

If you have never kept a journal before you will now! Starting a journal will allow you to write about your emotional responses that you are experiencing or you may choose to write about the appointments you attend during your recovery. Keeping a journal can not only help you cope with the stress that you may be experiencing but it's

also a great way to process what you are feeling and perhaps even explore positive outcomes. When I started my journal, I not only found it therapeutic but also necessary. Writing down our thoughts and feelings can enhance our sense of well being during our recovery journey.



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By sponsoring the *Sharing our Recovery Newsletter*, you are supporting the continued growth of this valuable free resource for crash survivors.

Would you like to be part of Sharing Our Recovery?

Articles/Stories:

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

Want to share?

Email: info@crashsupportnetwork.com

Sponsors:

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Meet Dawne McKay – Founder

S. Dawne McKay is the Founder of the Crash Support Network and continues to donate countless hours to her crash survivor community by sharing resources, highly informative articles, a quarterly newsletter and a blog that allows her to share her own personal journey as a crash survivor. Dawne works hard at bringing awareness to crash survivors through CSN's social media platforms and the online support group by sharing inspirational posts with survivors from all across the world. Dawne is also the author of the book, "Talk Crash to Me - What to Expect After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Collision and How to Manage Your Recovery."

Our Mission is to raise awareness to the recovery journey that many people face after being affected by a motor vehicle crash and to provide online support and resources.



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