

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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Brought to you by:

Supporting Crash Survivors
👉 One Step at a Time 👈

It is Time for Spring Renewal!

As we step into the gentle embrace of spring, a time synonymous with rebirth and new beginnings, we extend a warm and hopeful welcome to each of you, our resilient community of crash survivors. We believe that just as nature effortlessly moves forward, embracing change and growth, we too can find strength and renewal in the face of our numerous challenges. Spring teaches us the beauty of transformation and the promise of brighter days ahead.

We are thrilled to announce our official transition to a Not-For-Profit Organization. Being a Not-For-Profit Organization means we're committed more than ever as we continue to work hard to make an even bigger difference as every step we take is aimed at connecting and supporting crash survivors.

The Crash Support Network is dedicated to raising awareness to the recovery journey that many people face after being affected by a motor vehicle crash and to provide online support, education, connection, and resources. As a Not-For-Profit, every success of ours is a victory for our crash survivor community and every bit of support directly fuels our mission in making a tangible difference.

In this issue we introduce you to a crash survivor that has turned her healing into poetry, we explain how survivors may be left with a mix of emotions when their final settlement is reached, you will also learn how to lower the risk of a speed-related collision, a crash survivor shares how difficult it is to be a caregiver with a traumatic brain injury and you will learn why connection is so important as you recover from a motor vehicle crash.

Thank you for being an integral part of our crash survivor community. May our newsletter serve as a reminder of the strength within you and the promise of new beginnings that spring brings. With each story of courage, each piece of advice, and every shared experience in our newsletters, we continue to offer a source of light and encouragement. If you know someone that is trying to navigate the crash recovery landscape - please let them know that they are not alone. We truly care and we are here to help in any way we can!

Wishing you a season filled with renewal, growth, and peace.

- Dawne

Poetry For Healing: Making Sense of a New World

Submitted by Catherine Hannah, Author and Crash Survivor

May 22nd, 2020 was not a typical day. I was starting work late due to a routine doctors appointment and a post-op pet rabbit. I would end it in a hospital bed, with strict instructions not to move in case I ended up paralyzed.

May 22nd, 2020

*Funny all the things that
conspire to put us in that
place at that time.*

How did I end up there? Like many road crash survivors, my fate was sealed by the whim of a stranger. Someone ran a stop sign and I collided with their back door, coming to an abrupt stop from 100kmph. This particular driver admitted complete fault- they "thought they had time". Following a CT scan, I was told that I had a bilateral C2 fracture. I was somewhat alarmed to discover that this particular break has a disturbing nickname... though it did inspire verse to reflect on the early stages of my recovery.

From *The Hangman's Fracture*

... Words describe the challenge faced-Bilateral; lamina; non-displaced. Do I ignore the fear encased within the Hangman's Fracture? Thunder clouds and freezing rain. A lighting bolt ignites my brain. Time to pop a pill again to quiet the Hangman's Fracture. Take it slowly, day by day. Life is now more rest than play. 'neath every thing I do or say lurks the Hangman's Fracture.



The months passed and my fracture was healing well. Like so many other crash survivors, I had also suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and the affects of this remain to this day (now called Post Concussion Syndrome [PCS]). Unfortunately, many reading this will also be familiar with the flashbacks, disturbed sleep, anxiety and depression that all too often follows a collision. In August 2020 I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

P.T.S.D

*Prior to said disaster,
positive traits stood
dominant. Pushing
through sporadic
dismays; past troubles,
since departed. Path
took sudden diversion-
proclamation to stop?
Disregarded! Powerful
thud silenced drivers.
Present times...
somewhat different.
Pills to soothe distress.
Perceived threats
seem devastating.
Plans terminated;*

sleep disturbed. Painful triggers surface daily. Passionately tempestuous, shitty disposition-permanently temperamental. (Sometimes delightful). Psychiatrist testifies sombre diagnosis: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The PTSD symptoms, combined with the sensory processing issues I experience as part of PCS, have made my return



to driving one of the greatest challenges I have ever faced. Simply being in a car was excruciating.

Passenger

When you merged lanes without a backwards glance. I yelled and gave my driver quite the scare. When you did not give way as we advanced the tears rolled down my cheeks; you didn't care. When you approached the roundabout at speed then didn't stop; so we slammed on the brakes. I wanted to pursue you, shout and scream and punish you for all of your mistakes. When I become the passenger I try to keep myself together, slow my breaths. I know too well that none of you can drive. I hate the risks you take at my expense. Behind the fear and pain my anger lies. In truth, there's only one whom I despise.

Three years post crash, I was given physical permission to begin driving and referred to a driving specialist occupational therapist- being in a dual controlled car is helping me rebuild my confidence around other drivers. This excerpt expresses the emotional tumult I experienced in my first lesson.

From Driving Sessions

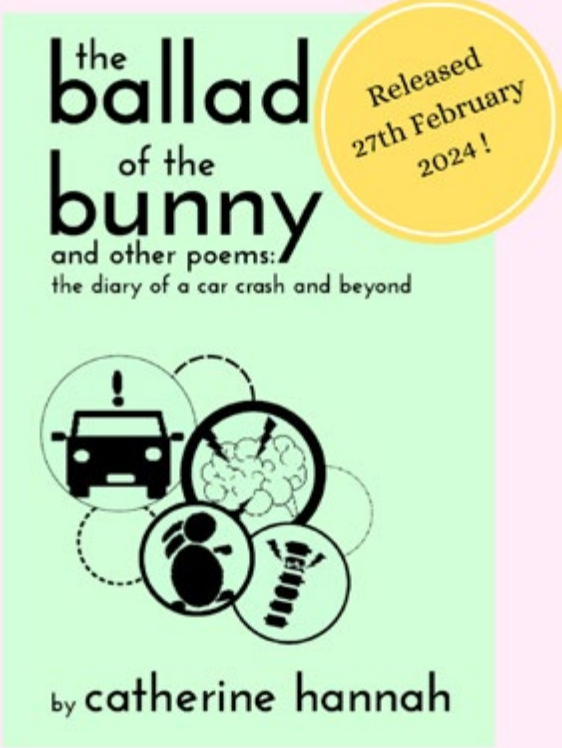
...Excitement, terror; so strong, yet vulnerable-it was all too much and after my first session the tears flowed into my smile...

Turning my feelings into a project allows me to distance myself from a difficult situation. Then, once I have a piece I am proud of, I can go back and 'feel' it in a way that now makes sense. In this way, I have allowed myself to safely feel anger and despair as well as truly recognizing the magnitude of my victories. I have explored therapies, legal proceedings, career loss, changing relationships and sense of self. I found poetry so healing that I decided to publish a collection to help other survivors of this often isolating experience feel heard. This final poem is not in the book but it is dedicated to Crash Support Network community. I wish you all the best.

Car Crash Alumni

We are members of a club we never meant to join. Car crash alumni; a family of new souls in old bodies. Our community has no white picket fence but a chain-link of hands and hearts that have rebuilt lives after the same storm. We've picked our way through twisted metal on highways and dirt roads and crossed mountains and oceans to find ourselves, the survivors, here together.

For more information on Catherine please visit:
catherinehannahpoetry.com and follow her journey on
Instagram at: [catherinehannah.poetryandmusic](https://www.instagram.com/catherinehannah.poetryandmusic).





Released 27th February 2024!

the ballad of the bunny
and other poems:
the diary of a car crash and beyond

by catherine hannah

Available from Amazon
in paperback & E-Book

 catherinehannah.poetryandmusic
 Catherine Hannah:Poetry & Music



TAG US IN YOUR SELFIE

WE CONTINUE TO CONNECT WITH SO MANY COURAGEOUS CRASH SURVIVORS THAT ARE TURNING THEIR CHALLENGES INTO TRIUMPS AND CHEERING ON OTHERS. WE ADMIRE ALL OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON A DAILY BASIS AND WE WELCOME YOU TO SHARE YOUR PROUD MOMENTS WITH US!

TAG US AT  @CRASHSUPPORTNETWORK ON INSTAGRAM AND WE WILL SHARE YOUR PHOTO IN OUR STORIES!

#crashsurvivorsrock


CRASHSUPPORTNETWORK.COM

The Need for Speed: How Speeding Leads to Avoidable Accidents

Submitted by Personal Injury Attorney, David W. Craig

In the hustle and bustle of our fast-paced lives, we often find ourselves rushing from one place to another. Whether it's commuting to work, running errands, or embarking on a road trip, the temptation to push the speed limit can be all too familiar. However, as an experienced truck accident and personal injury attorney, I know that for those who have experienced the aftermath of a wreck, the consequences of driving faster than needed are far from minor. I have seen way too many people who were killed or who suffered serious injuries as a result of speeding semis, dump trucks, garbage trucks, buses and other commercial motor vehicles.

Road safety should always be a top priority for every driver. Unfortunately, the desire to reach a destination quickly often leads to speeding, which triples the odds of crashing. Big trucks, with their longer stopping distances and limited maneuverability, are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of excessive speed. As a board-certified truck accident attorney, I've experienced firsthand that when a big truck is involved in a wreck, the consequences can be devastating, leading to severe injuries and even fatalities. Across the United States, on average, 33 people will die each day due to a speed-related crash, according to the National Safety Council.

The Need for Caution:

It's crucial for drivers to recognize that exceeding the speed limit or driving faster than road conditions permit can have severe consequences, especially when it comes to large trucks. Big trucks, due to their size and weight, require additional time and distance to come to a complete stop or make sudden maneuvers.

- 1. Reduced Reaction Time:** Driving at excessive speeds significantly reduces a driver's reaction time. In the event of unexpected obstacles or sudden changes in traffic conditions, a speeding driver may find it challenging to respond promptly, increasing the risk of collisions and semi-truck rollovers. Excessive speed is found in 45% of truck rollovers, according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. As an experienced truck accident attorney, I've witnessed how dangerous semi rollover accidents can be, often resulting in severe injuries and fatalities.
- 2. Braking Challenges:** Big trucks have longer stopping distances. Speeding reduces the effectiveness of the braking system, increasing the risk of rear-end collisions or the inability to stop in time to avoid a crash. Know
- 3. Limited Visibility:** Speeding reduces a driver's ability to assess the road environment effectively. Driving at a speed that exceeds road conditions can compromise a driver's ability to see and anticipate potential dangers. The Indiana University Public Policy Institute found that Indiana speed related crashes peak during the darker, morning hours of 1:00 m. and 3:59 a.m. when it is more difficult to see other drivers. This is particularly problematic when sharing the road with large trucks.
- 4. Increased Severity of Accidents:** When accidents do occur, the impact force in a collision is directly proportional to the speed of the vehicles involved. In Indiana truck accidents, occupants in large trucks were almost 5 times as likely to be injured when speeding (*222 per 1,000*) compared to truck accidents not caused by speeding (42 per 1,000). As a National Trial Lawyers Association Top 10 Trucking Trial Lawyer, experienced in trucking accidents, I have helped the victims of many preventable accidents caused by high speeds, which result in more severe accidents that caused greater damage to the vehicles and that caused serious injuries and fatalities.
- 5. Reduced Control:** Speeding reduces a driver's control over their vehicle. The risk of losing control and causing



an accident becomes significantly higher when driving faster than necessary. High speeds can contribute to jackknifing incidents, where a truck's trailer swings out of control. As an experienced jackknife truck accident attorney, I know that these accidents can block multiple lanes of traffic, leading to multi-vehicle collisions with serious injuries and even fatalities.

6. **Legal Implications:** From the perspective of a board-certified truck accident and personal injury attorney, collisions caused by driving faster than needed often lead to liability issues. The driver who exceeded the speed limit or drove too fast for road conditions may be held accountable for damages resulting from the wreck.

What can you do to lower the risk of a speed-related collision?

1. **Adhere to Posted Speed Limits:** Always obey posted speed limits, especially in areas where they are lower, such as construction zones or residential neighborhoods. The next time you feel the urge to speed, remember the potential consequences and the lives that may be affected.
2. **Adjust Speed for Road Conditions:** Adjust your speed based on road conditions, weather, and visibility. Reduce speed in adverse conditions to ensure better control of the vehicle. The winter months of December, January, and February consistently have the highest number of speed-related crashes due to reduced visibility in the

darker weather and obstacles like snow and ice on the roadway.

3. **Maintain a Safe Following Distance:** Keep a safe distance from large trucks to allow for ample reaction time. Remember that trucks have larger blind spots, and tailgating increases the risk of accidents.

The need for speed can have far-reaching consequences. It is our collective responsibility as drivers to prioritize safety, adhere to speed limits, and contribute to creating safer roads for everyone. Safe driving isn't just a recommendation; it's a commitment to protecting lives on the road.

David W. Craig is a board-certified truck accident lawyer and managing partner as well as one of the founding partners of the law firm of Craig, Kelley & Faultless LLC. He is also recognized as a Top 10 Trucking Trial Lawyer and Top 100 Trial Lawyer in Indiana by the National Trial Lawyers. David is the author of *Semitruck Wreck, A Guide for Victims and Their Families*, written to help victims and their families as they navigate through a terrible situation and answers the host of questions that come after a tragic wreck. He is also the host of the podcast, *After the Crash* where you can gain valuable information about the dangers involving semi and large trucks that do not follow Indiana law safety protocol on roads regarding speed, weather conditions, maintenance upkeep etc.

For more information please visit ckflaw.com.

Recommended Books to Read After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Crash



Saying Farewell to Your Personal Injury Lawyer After Settlement

Submitted by Crash Support Network

YOU WILL HAVE MIXED EMOTIONS WHEN YOUR CASE SETTLES

crashsupportnetwork.com

As the dust settles on your personal injury case and a final settlement is reached, it's often a moment of mixed emotions for us. Feelings of relief, gratitude, and closure with a tinge of sadness as we bid farewell to our legal advocate – our personal injury lawyer. While the legal journey may have concluded, the emotional journey is far from over.

The relationship we build with our personal injury lawyer is built on trust, empathy, and a shared goal of seeking justice. From the initial consultation to the negotiation table, your lawyer becomes more than just a legal representative; they become a pillar of support during one of the most challenging times in our lives. This process can evoke a mix of emotions, from relief and gratitude to a sense of loss and uncertainty about the future.

The Emotional Journey of Saying Farewell

Saying goodbye to a personal injury lawyer who has been with you every step of the way is no easy task. It's akin to bidding farewell to a trusted ally, someone who has fought tirelessly on your behalf, understood your pain, and believed in your right to justice. The settlement may bring financial relief and closure to the legal process, but it also marks the end of a significant chapter in our life. Personal injury cases

are not just legal battles; they're deeply personal experiences that often involve physical, emotional, and financial recovery.

For many of us, expressing gratitude and saying goodbye to our personal injury lawyer can be an emotional experience because it's not just about the legal victory. It is about acknowledging the personal connection forged amidst the legal proceedings with everyone that was involved in your claim from their firm. It's about closure and in the midst of goodbyes, you should take a moment to reflect on the journey. It's a journey marked by setbacks and triumphs, frustrations and moments of hope. And while the legal chapter may be closing, the lessons learned and the bond forged will endure.

Learn from the Experience

Unfortunately, crash survivors may have had an unpleasant experience with their personal injury lawyer. Take some time to reflect on the specific aspects of your experience that made it terrible. Consider whether it was a lack of communication, unmet expectations, incompetence, or ethical violations. Identifying the root causes of the problem will help you determine the best course of action. As challenging as it may be, try to extract lessons from your negative experience

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with the lawyer. Use this knowledge to inform your decisions when seeking legal representation in the future. Look for personal injury lawyers who prioritize communication, transparency, and client satisfaction to minimize the risk of similar issues arising again.

Reflect on Your Journey

Take a moment to reflect on the journey you have undergone. From the initial shock and challenges following your injuries, through the complexities of the legal process, to the relief and resolution of a settlement—take a moment to acknowledge the strength and perseverance you have shown. This reflection can be incredibly empowering, highlighting your resilience and strength to navigate life's adversities.

Share Your Experience

Sharing your experience can be beneficial for others who are in similar situations. Consider writing a review or testimonial for your lawyer or their firm. Share how they helped you, what you appreciated about their service, and why you would or would not recommend them to others. This not only serves as valuable feedback for your lawyer but also helps others make informed decisions.

Focus on Recovery and Well-Being

Continuing to prioritize your physical and emotional recovery is crucial. If ongoing medical treatment or rehabilitation is needed, stay committed to your health plan.

Focusing on your recovery even after your personal injury case closes is crucial for your overall well-being and future quality of life. While the legal aspect of your injury may have concluded with the settlement or resolution of your case, your physical and emotional healing is an ongoing process.

As you say goodbye to your personal injury lawyer, remember that this farewell is also a sign of your resilience and strength.

You've navigated a challenging period with the support of a professional who has helped you secure justice and compensation for your injuries. In the end, saying goodbye to a personal injury lawyer after settlement is not just about closing a legal case; it's about honoring a relationship built on trust, empathy, and resilience. It's about acknowledging the role your lawyer has played in your journey towards healing and justice. Use this closure as a stepping stone to continue rebuilding and moving forward with your life.

"This reflection can be incredibly empowering, highlighting your resilience and strength to navigate life's adversities."

HAS THE CRASH SUPPORT NETWORK HELPED YOU ON YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY? PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH US ON GOOGLE. YOUR FEEDBACK NOT ONLY ENCOURAGES US BUT ALSO HELPS OTHERS DISCOVER THE VARIETY OF HELPFUL RESOURCES THAT WE CONTINUE TO OFFER OUR CRASH SURVIVOR COMMUNITY.

WRITE A REVIEW



Caregiving and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Submitted by Brain Injury Wise

9 ways to tell that I am a caregiver:

1. I do not send out greeting cards anymore;
2. I am making friends with the homeless guy outside the grocery store where I shop for my elderly parents;
3. My regular hair and makeup style is: ponytail, and none;
4. I know more pharmacists, PSW's, doctors, healthcare aides, and rehabilitation specialists than when I worked as a nurse;
5. I wake up at 4am thinking the phone just rang (potentially indicating an emergency), but it's always a dream;
6. My dog is bored and overweight;
7. I used to enjoy caffeine, now it's a survival tool;
8. I have pillows on every piece of furniture in my house in case I need to lie down;
9. I always know what the adaptive device store staff are planning for the weekend and get updates the following week.

Ask anyone who is a caregiver, and they will understand this list. Now try and imagine caregiving while living with a brain injury. Its diabolical. It tests every fibre of your being. They say to never try to save someone else on an airplane before putting on your own oxygen mask first. Well as a caregiver with a brain injury, I've used up all my oxygen and need more, but it's not available. The plane is going down.

I Am Just Doing the Best I Can

Brain injury symptoms include lack of empathy, fatigue, problems communicating, lack of exertion tolerance, disorganized organizational skills, and impaired cognitive processing, to name a few, all of which are critical to caregiving. How am I doing it then? How successful am I as a caregiver? Well, I'm just doing the best that I can. At first, I thought to myself, when my parents started to ail, that **"I can do this"**.

Even though I was unable to return to my coveted nursing job after my accident, somehow, I believed I could tackle caregiving like a replacement job. But quickly I realized my limitations. They came in the form of: a short fuse, high emotionality with leaky brake, impulsive reactions, lack of

patience, martial strain, arguing with family members, little flexibility in my thinking and craving control like oxygen.

I started to think **"There is no way I can do this" and "how is it you are screwing up so badly"** and **"caregiving should be easier"**. But then I found a way to move through. I began seeing elements of my own cognitive issues reflected in my parents' cognitive decline. I understood what they were going through and was able to relate on that level. I found myself in conversations with them about loss, grief, denial, and dealing with cognitive loss.

With time the messages in my head softened and became **"you are doing the best you can"** and **"errors in communication are ok"** and **"cut yourself some slack"**. I also realized that there may be times when I was not available to able to help, or in an emergency, and that would have to be ok. Feeling like I'm on call 24/7 was exhausting and thinking I was the only solution to all my parents' problems is not sustainable for my own life.

"Finding the balance between being there for my parents regularly, but not to the exclusion of my own needs was crucial. This is still the goal and not yet the destination."

Finding a Balance is Crucial

10 years after my accident I still have all my own rehabilitation appointments to attend, a marriage to cultivate, kids to visit, friends to see, a dog to walk, a life to live. Finding the balance between being there for my parents regularly, but not to the exclusion of my own needs was crucial. This is still the goal and not yet the destination. I'm working on this every day. Perfection is out the window.

With a brain injury I'm not sure I will ever get to this destination but I'm trying to maximize my own recovery while supporting my family.

I knew caregiving was hard, but with a brain injury it's like trying to nail jello to the wall...you want to do well, provide good consistent care, be congruent in all communications, keep your eye on the ball, not miss anything, and keep your own emotions in check. It's simply not going to happen.

9 ways to tell I am a caregiver with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

1. I create worst case scenarios in my head and then work with them as if they are real.

continues on page 9



2. Once I help my parents in the morning, I need to sleep for the afternoon.
3. Once I'm tired, dizziness and nausea are close behind.
4. I make assumptions of the motives of others that are wrong about 75% of the time.
5. My anxiety is on overdrive once overwhelmed with responsibility.
6. I let down my rehab therapist every time as she encourages me to exercise in my free time.
7. Once exhausted, I cannot think my way out of any scenario.
8. As a start, I need complete silence and 10 hours sleep for several days to recover from any one busy day.
9. My friends hear a lot of complaining from me.

All you can do is what you can do. And I have stopped apologizing for my everyday errors in judgement and brain injury related behaviour and save it for when I am way out



of line only. Constantly apologizing for my behavior was eroding myself -esteem. I'm showing up for my family in all my imperfect, damaged, slow, fatigued, messy ways. That is what is available and who I am.

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).

The Crash Support Network
is a Dedicated Not-For-Profit Organization
committed to work hard and make a big difference
as every step we take is aimed at connecting and supporting crash survivors.

Connection is Important

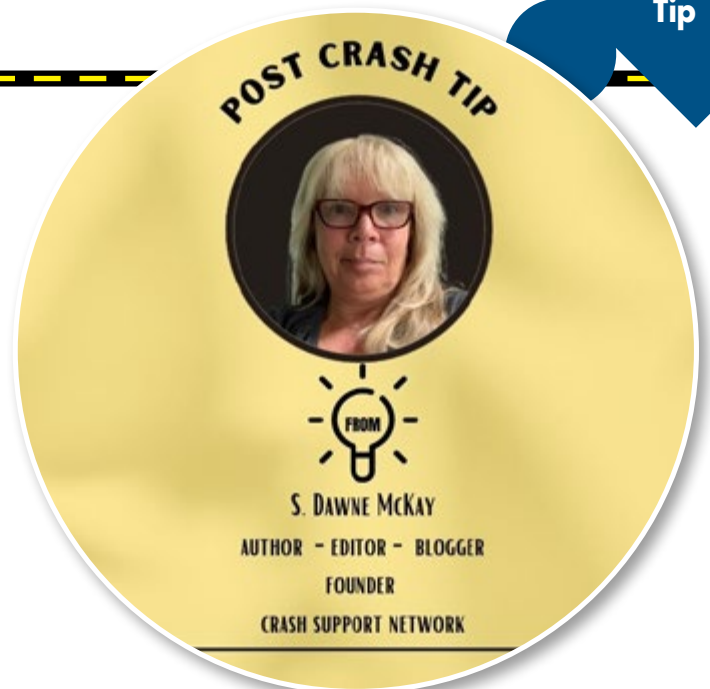
Submitted by S. Dawne McKay

After a motor vehicle crash, it's common to feel isolated or disconnected from others who have not experienced life-changing trauma.

Joining an online support group helps mitigate these feelings by connecting you with others who understand. Our [Crash Support Network Group](#) offers a level of anonymity that can make it easier to share personal feelings and experiences. Knowing that the group is a confidential space that is closely managed encourages open and honest communication which is important to every crash survivor.

Online support can provide a profound sense of belonging. Being part of our crash survivor online community with a common goal of healing and support can be a powerful experience.

Crash
Survivor
Tip



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

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Want to share?

Email: info@crashsupportnetwork.com

Sponsors:

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Interested in sponsoring?

Information:



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" which is [available on Amazon](#).

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, education and resources.



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