

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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Supporting Crash Survivors
👉👉 One Step at a Time 👈👈

Let Your Resilience Shine this Holiday Season

As the winter season settles in, The Crash Support Network recognizes the unique challenges and experiences that this time of year can bring for those affected by motor vehicle crashes. Colder temperatures, holiday gatherings, and icy road conditions often bring mixed emotions, from seasonal cheer to safety concerns. Whether you are in the early days of recovery or well along your journey, please know that every step forward matters.



Last Month we recognized *National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims*, which takes place on the third Wednesday of November. While this day is dedicated to honoring the lives affected by crashes, our commitment to supporting victims continues every day. We are always thinking of individuals who are recovering and remind them that they are not alone on this journey.

From start to finish, our **Healing Together** event was filled with moments of comfort, connection, and care. We are deeply grateful to everyone who joined us to support survivors of motor vehicle crashes and are pleased to highlight this special event, as we continue our commitment to offering support and building a stronger community for all survivors.

In this issue you will learn how Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy can help you as you recover, you will hear how a young woman went from being a student in journalism to a life rewritten by distracted driving, you will also learn about the impact social service work can have on your recovery and we discuss how important it is to be patient with yourself in our Post Crash Tip.

As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with appreciation for our incredible community of survivors, supporters, and sponsors. We are also incredibly grateful for the generous donations we received over the past year. Together, we are creating a stronger, more supportive community for crash survivors, and thanks to you, we can continue to provide resources, connections, and hope for those navigating their recovery journeys.

For many, this year might look like progress and celebration. For those healing from a motor vehicle crash, making it through each day is progress and you must always remember that you do not have to have big achievements to look back on. Your presence is a powerful reminder of your resilience. Let's keep each other warm with support, understanding, and encouragement as we head into the New Year together.

Warm Wishes,

- Dawne

From a Student in Journalism to a Life Rewritten by Distracted Driving

Submitted by Molly Welch

It was a sunny yet brisk day in February of 2008. I was a student returning back to Auburn University after a brief time spent home with a friend of mine. I had just eaten lunch with my family, waved them good-bye and started back towards campus. At Auburn, I was a Junior, majoring in Journalism, and I had recently obtained a student job at the school newspaper. Well, I was a very studious student and huge multitasker. So, I just had to catch-up on this article that was due while driving. It was a recording of a lady from the food bank that I was listening back to. I believe I dropped the recorder, reached back down to pick it up because I veered across the median and drove head-on with a pick-up truck.



Intense Surgeries with Years in Therapy

Now honestly, I don't remember the accident itself or months before, but I must have been messing with it because the entire accident was all recorded on the tape. For example, the country song I was listening to, the sound of sirens and this gentleman's voice saying, "breathe easy ma'am, help is on the way." I still have the recording today. As a result of the crash, I sustained a Traumatic Brain Injury. I had what's called [*Diffuse Axonal Injury*](#). That's where your brain sheers. I did the damage to the left portion of my brain, so my entire right side was affected. To this day, I can do minimal amounts with my right leg and nothing with my right arm.

My top three most intense surgeries were an Intercranial Pressure Monitor which reduces swelling in the brain. I also had what is called a tracheostomy where they cut a hole in your windpipe to get you to breathe. They also stuck a tiny tube down my throat three times and damaged my vocal cords. Then the last is a Baclofen Pump, which relieves spasticity. Now I could go on and on about the years I spent in speech, physical and occupational therapy. However, I'm just going to tell you that I had to relearn how to walk, talk, swallow, think, unsuccessfully use my right arm, unsuccessfully drive.

Navigating Mobility Issues

It has now been almost seventeen years and I am still working on all those things. It's kind sad to me, but it has almost become second nature. It feels just like I have been doing this forever. Currently, I spend an entire half day either in therapy, trying my best to walk or doing exercises. Also, every event that I attend I have to surround myself with the accident and I am forced to think of certain things. For example:

1. Is there going to be a bar around the toilet?
2. Are there going to be many people so no one will be able to hear me?
3. Is it one level and easy access?

There is also so much more. Although I try to enjoy myself, every event or activity that is supposed to be fun and relaxing turns out to be stressful and requires extra planning. Still with the therapy continuing, I felt I needed to complete my degree as a student. It took an extra three years, but I walked across the stage and earned my diploma. After working at a part-time job, I got the idea to use my experiences to try and warn others not to drive distracted. So, one day I took an Uber to Starbucks and started to have a conversation with the business owner. They decided to help me create a Public Service Announcement and they also helped me create a non-profit Motivational Speaking Company. I have talked on [*TEDxEmory*](#), to the legislation of Georgia, many high schools and driving schools. I have spoken outside the state of Georgia only twice and my hope is speaking at many different driving schools/high schools across the United States.

In 2017, I produced a public service announcement together with key individuals to help spread my message to drivers

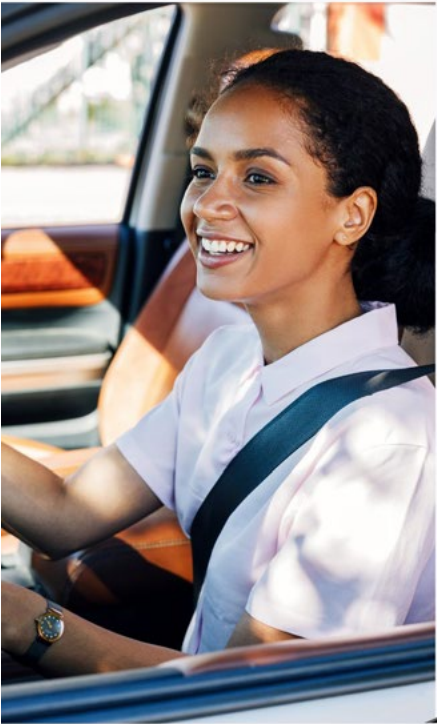
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everywhere. It aired in several states. From there, I was inspired to start my own non-profit, motivational speaking company, [A Second Later](#). Through my organization, I have been able to tell my story to schools, businesses, professional organizations, civic groups, and even legislators in the State of Georgia.

People experience so many hardships, but this is one that I could have changed. It was a very easy fix and it would have saved me a lifetime of hardship if I did not drive distracted. No one needs to be in the same predicament as me. It is not worth it.

A huge thank-you to Molly for bravely sharing her story about how distracted driving can change lives forever. Her powerful message reminds us all of the importance of staying focused on the road. For more information on Molly's advocacy please visit: www.asecondlater.com




**Take our
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Show your commitment
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and take our pledge
today.

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Safety One Pledge at a
Time!

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difference.

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Enhancing Your Recovery with Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

Submitted by Berta Solomon, Operations Manager

Motor vehicle collisions can have a profound impact on a person's body and mind, often leaving behind lasting physical and emotional scars. Whether it's broken bones, soft tissue injuries, concussions, or post-traumatic stress disorder (*PTSD*), recovery can be long and challenging. While traditional treatments like physical therapy and surgery are essential, an emerging alternative, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT), is gaining attention for its potential to support and accelerate recovery. Here's how HBOT can benefit survivors of motor vehicle collisions and help them reclaim their health and quality of life.

Understanding Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy involves breathing pure oxygen in a pressurized chamber, where the atmospheric pressure

is increased to levels higher than normal. This enhanced pressure allows oxygen to dissolve into the blood plasma more effectively, enabling oxygen to reach tissues and organs that may not be adequately oxygenated under normal conditions. HBOT is widely used to treat a variety of medical conditions, including wounds, infections, and even brain injuries, making it a valuable tool in post-accident recovery.

How HBOT Benefits Motor Vehicle Collision Survivors

Enhanced Healing of Soft Tissue Injuries

Motor vehicle collisions often result in soft tissue injuries such as sprains, strains, and bruises. These injuries, though not as immediately visible as fractures, can cause significant pain and long-term disability if not treated properly. The

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increased oxygen supply provided by HBOT promotes the healing of damaged tissues, accelerates cell regeneration, and reduces inflammation. By helping to restore the normal function of tissues and muscles, HBOT can alleviate pain and shorten recovery times, helping patients regain mobility and independence faster.

Healing Bone Fractures and Reducing Swelling

In many collisions, bone fractures are a common injury. HBOT can be a game-changer in speeding up the healing process of broken bones. Oxygen is vital for the production of collagen, which is the protein that helps in bone and tissue repair. By delivering oxygen directly to the injured area, HBOT accelerates the healing of fractures, reduces swelling, and helps to prevent complications like infections, which are common in open fractures.

Brain Injury Recovery and Cognitive Function

Concussions and other brain injuries are unfortunately frequent outcomes of motor vehicle collisions, sometimes leading to lasting cognitive, emotional, and physical effects. Survivors of accidents may experience headaches, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, memory loss, or mood swings. HBOT has shown promise in helping to treat traumatic brain injuries (TBI), including concussions, by enhancing oxygen flow to the brain, reducing inflammation, and stimulating the growth of new brain cells. This can improve cognitive function, mental clarity, and mood, ultimately promoting better long-term recovery from the traumatic effects of brain injuries.

Reducing Pain and Inflammation

Pain and inflammation are often the most debilitating side effects of a motor vehicle accident. Chronic pain, especially from whiplash or other neck and back injuries, can linger for months or even years. HBOT is known to reduce inflammation, helping to alleviate pain and discomfort. By boosting oxygen levels in the body, HBOT helps to reduce the inflammatory response and promote faster healing of damaged tissues, resulting in less pain and a faster return to normal life.

Addressing Psychological Trauma and PTSD

In addition to the physical trauma, many survivors of motor vehicle accidents experience psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The effects of PTSD can be long-lasting and severely impact a person's quality of life. Studies have shown that HBOT can have a positive effect on psychological recovery by improving oxygenation to the brain, which can reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. HBOT may help individuals process traumatic events more effectively, leading to emotional healing and improved mental well-being.

Improved Circulation and Detoxification

Survivors of motor vehicle collisions often experience circulatory issues, which can hinder the healing process. [Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy](#) improves blood circulation by promoting the growth of new blood vessels and improving oxygen delivery to the tissues. This helps in the detoxification process, eliminating harmful toxins and metabolic waste products from the body. By improving circulation and oxygenating tissues, HBOT accelerates overall recovery and reduces the risk of complications.

Why Choose HBOT?

HBOT offers a non-invasive, drug-free approach to healing that complements traditional treatments. It is a safe and effective option for motor vehicle collision survivors who are looking for additional support in their recovery journey. Furthermore, the therapy is generally well-tolerated, with minimal side effects, and can be used alongside other forms of treatment, such as surgery, physical therapy, and medication.

While HBOT is not a one-size-fits-all solution, it has shown promising results for many accident survivors who seek faster recovery, reduced pain, and enhanced overall healing. For those looking to explore alternative therapies that go beyond conventional medicine, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy may offer a new pathway to recovery.

Improved Quality of Care

For survivors of motor vehicle collisions, the road to recovery can be long and challenging. While the physical injuries may be healed over time, the emotional and mental scars may persist. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy presents a unique and effective way to accelerate healing, reduce pain, improve cognitive function, and support emotional well-being. By incorporating HBOT into a comprehensive recovery plan, survivors can find hope in faster recovery, improved quality of life, and a brighter future ahead. If you or a loved one is recovering from a motor vehicle collision, consider consulting with a medical professional about the benefits of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy. It may just be the key to unlocking a faster and more complete recovery.

Many thanks to Newmarket Health & Wellness for sharing this informative article and for their continued support.

For more information on Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and other rehabilitation services, please visit: www.newmarkethealthandwellness.ca



The Vital Role of Social Work in Recovery

Submitted by Dana Parsons, CEO

Recovering from a motor vehicle collision (MVC) involves more than physical rehabilitation. — it often requires emotional and social support to rebuild one's life. Social work services play an essential role in helping you, your family and your professional teams navigate the complex emotional journey of recovery with compassion and expertise.



navigating the social, emotional, and systemic aspects of recovery ensures that care plans are comprehensive and tailored to meet individual needs. By coordinating services and advocating for clients, social

workers promote a seamless, unified approach to care.

Supporting Clients Through Trauma-Informed Care

After an MVC, the emotional and psychological effects can feel overwhelming. Trauma-informed therapy focuses on creating a safe and supportive environment where you can process your experiences, rebuild confidence, and develop tools for resilience. Social workers provide personalized support, and education, addressing challenges such as post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and the common practical hurdles that often accompany recovery.

Empowering Families Through Education and Support

Families are an integral part of the recovery process. Social workers help families understand the impact of trauma and offer strategies to support their loved one effectively. By fostering open communication and connecting families with community resources, they help strengthen relationships and ease the challenges caregivers often face. Our team is equipped to support the whole family system, person, including their spouse, and other family members who are affected.

Enhancing Collaboration Among Professional Teams

Social workers serve as a vital link between clients, families, and professional teams. Their expertise in

The Benefits of Group Work

Peer support is another key component of recovery. Group work facilitated by social workers provides clients with a space to share their experiences, learn from others, and build a sense of community. These groups can help reduce isolation, improve coping strategies, and foster a renewed sense of hope and empowerment. Wright Rehab supports all clients with the opportunity to participate in various groups in person or virtually.

A Collaborative Approach to Recovery

At *Wright Rehab*, social work services are part of a multidisciplinary care model designed to address the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. This collaborative approach ensures that every client receives the support they need to navigate recovery, strengthen relationships, and find a path forward.

By focusing on trauma-informed care, family engagement, and team collaboration, social workers contribute significantly to the recovery journey, creating a foundation for healing and growth for all involved.

“Social workers help families understand the impact of trauma and offer strategies to support their loved one effectively.”

For more information on Social Work and other rehabilitation services, please visit: www.wrightrehab.ca.



Post Crash Tip

Submitted by S. Dawne McKay

Crash
Survivor
Tip

Be Patient with Yourself!

Being left to mend injuries after a motor vehicle crash can be one of the most challenging experiences in life. Whether you are dealing with physical injuries, emotional trauma, or both, it's important to remember that healing takes time.

Recovery is not a straight road; it's more like a winding path. Some days you may feel like you're making great strides, and other days it might seem like you're moving backwards. It's okay to feel sadness, frustration, or even anger about what happened. Acknowledging these emotions is a vital part of moving forward.

The end of the year is a natural time for reflection. Instead of focusing on what didn't go as planned, celebrate your resilience and the progress you've made throughout the year—no matter how small it may seem.



Healing Together Event

[Together We Made a Difference: [Healing Together Recap](#)] [click here](#)

Our Healing Together Event Was a Remarkable Success!

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our event, “[Healing Together](#)” in September which was dedicated to victims and survivors of motor vehicle crashes. From our generous sponsors and in-kind donations to our tireless volunteers and inspiring attendees—you are the heart of our mission. A very special thanks to our booth participants. From emotional support to wagging tails, you brought hope

and comfort to those who needed it most. To the incredible brave individuals who took the stage to share their stories, thank you! Your voices brought insight, comfort, and empowerment to our event.

A heartfelt thank you to [Iacobelli Law Firm](#), our title sponsor, for championing our event. Your generosity and commitment to supporting crash survivors made a tremendous difference. Thank you for being such a valuable partner in our mission!



Andrew Iacobelli from [Iacobelli Law Firm](#), Title Sponsor with the Founder of [Crash Support Network](#), S. Dawne McKay

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Healing Together Event, cont.



Kevin Rempel Keynote Speaker & Mindset Coach
kevinrempel.com



Alana McGuire, Our Community Outreach Volunteer
with her husband James



MANY THANKS TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS!

We couldn't have done it without your support!

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:

We are always looking for *Sharing Our Recovery* sponsors.

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 about the recovery journey that many people face after being affected by a motor vehicle crash and to provide a compassionate online community to help survivors rebuild their lives while actively promoting road safety.



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