

Acquired Brain Injury

Restarting your life with support

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Dump truck drives into car on Highway 12



Packet photo/Courtney Whalen

A dump truck turning onto Highway 12 struck a car heading west on the highway Friday morning. An Orillia woman was in critical condition when she was airlifted to Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto.

Woman critically injured in crash

Dump truck driver will face charges

By Courtney Whalen
The Packet & Times

A 41-year-old Orillia woman was airlifted to Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre after the car she was driving was hit by a dump truck turning onto Highway 12.

Around 7:30 Friday morn-

ing, a dump truck turned out of Davey Gravel on Highway 12 and into the path of an oncoming Chevy Cobalt, said Barrie OPP media relations officer George Silvestri.

The lone female occupant of the car had to be extricated by firefighters. Silvestri said she was transported to Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital

COLLISION

before being airlifted to Toronto. The truck driver was not injured.

"It must have been fairly close when he pulled out," said Silvestri at the scene Friday morning. Coloured cones dotted the highway as the OPP technical traffic collision investigators conducted their investigation.

Police had the highway closed until around 1 p.m. between Wainman Line and Prices Corners for the investigation. Traffic was being

rerouted down Division Road West and Wainman Line.

Silvestri said charges would "definitely" be laid against the 29-year-old driver of the dump truck, who was also from Orillia, but at the scene Friday morning the exact charges were still to be determined.

"Basically the dump truck is halfway through the car," he said.

cwhalen@orilliapacket.com

The Beginning

- ▶ I was on my way to work and was hit by a dump truck.
- ▶ That incident changed my life forever.
- ▶ I was in a coma for a week, I was then in a spastic condition for another 6 weeks. (this is in and out of consciousness)

Sunnybrook Hospital

My Coma



The Beginning

- ▶ I “woke” up in my second hospital around the 7th week
- ▶ I had the advantage of having family and friends coaxing me and encouraging me to do my best

Orillia Hospital (7-13 weeks)



The Beginning

- ▶ I spent 5 weeks in the second hospital and then went to a rehab Institute for another 8 weeks
- ▶ Support from family and/or friends is needed by the survivor to help them with milestones in recovery.
- ▶ Support can be in a number of ways. The therapists in your recovery can help you understand ABI (acquired brain injury) you can **ASK QUESTIONS**

The Beginning

- ▶ You are only alone if you choose to be. Allow friends and family to be a part of your life.
- ▶ If a survivor is fortunate enough to have determination, motivation and internal strength it helps them reach the milestones of recovery.

Rehabilitation

- ▶ I have learned through my journey, to accept my differences. Eg....walking, eating, drinking, endurance, working, driving, memory, concentration, reading, writing
- ▶ We learn as survivors to adapt. We can learn other ways of living our lives. We learn how to smile again.
- ▶ If I had questions, I asked. Therapists, family, friends, other survivors

Rehabilitation

- ▶ Have there been times I was angry? Of course. It's what I did with the anger. I used the strength from the anger to find ways to help my recovery. Eg. If I thought my therapy was not going as well as I wanted it to, I asked my therapists. Together we found a different way.
- ▶ All of the therapists can give you direction on your recovery journey

Rehabilitation

- ▶ **You have to do the work.** Our therapists, family and friends can only give us directions on how to improve....but **WE** are responsible for our recovery.
- ▶ A injury to the brain is like a filing cabinet in your mind with all your thoughts from the past, present and future, that has been knocked over and now all the files are scattered. It's up to you to put the files back together....some might be lost, some need to be reorganized.....with help, you can do that

Checklist

- ▶ In my journey, a list of people were important to have:
- ▶ a) **Case Manager:** the person who assists by making contact with the client and putting the recovery team together, as well as answering questions
- b) **Occupational Therapist:** Assisting the survivor by ensuring that all necessary equipment and modifications are in place to aid the survivor/caregiver to adapt to the revised version of life. Works with the Speech Pathologist by overlapping learning/relearning skills needed in day to day life.

Checklist

- c) **Speech Therapist/Pathologist:** aids the survivor in methods of remembering, reading, writing, thinking, carrying out multi tasks like walking and talking
- d) **Physio Therapist:** aids the survivor in how to get in touch with their body again and how to use the muscles and joints to move effectively.

Checklist

h)Rehab Support Worker: Assists the survivor and caregivers to understand the changes and they aid in the recovery by helping us follow through with tasks like homework, exercise

d)Doctor: Our medical help....meds, referrals, check ups

Checklist

- e) **Family:** helps bring us back to earth.
- f) **Friends:** I was lucky to get what I gave. I didn't lock myself away because of embarrassment. I realized I was the same person, but with some changes...My friends were important to aid in my recovery too!

Recovery

Recovering is a **long** process. As you are developing the new you, there are stages you will go through. It's a giant relearning curve.

- a) understanding how your injury happened
- b) Know and accept the differences in you
- c) have a good team in place. **ASK QUESTIONS**
- d) don't stop working on who you

Caregivers

- ▶ Can be family, friends, or individuals. As I said before, support is essential for us. They are extremely helpful in many ways.
- ▶ But, on occasion it's hard for the caregiver(s) to let us go, (especially people with an emotional connection) because they may have a fear of taking the chance of maybe losing us again. Nobody wants that!
- ▶ If you're a caregiver, learn with the survivor....I understand it's hard to release them, but you're not releasing them into the unknown.

Caregivers

- ▶ The **caregiver** is helping the therapists get as much of the “old” person back as they can. It is important for you as the caregiver to let the survivor grow. It’s like one does for their growing child.
- ▶ Fear is a part of us. We live with it everyday. The survivor did what many people don’t, they lived through one major turmoil in their life; pat them on the back, and acknowledge their accomplishments.

Involvement

- a) Get a knowledgeable lawyer.
- b) Let your lawyer deal with the insurance
- c) Know or have a copy of your benefits information eg. From work
- d) Try to or have someone understand the Statutory Accident Benefit Schedule (SABS)
- e) Please understand that a settlement most of the time, takes 3 to 5 years. Try not to sign a settlement too soon. Talk to your team.

Involvement

- a) Make sure you keep a file with copies of paperwork (anything) to do with the accident/situation

The recovery of a survivor is exactly that; **THEIR RECOVERY**. Knowledge has been power, on my journey. I own **ME**, and with help, I'm recovering to get back as much of **ME** as I can. I've been lucky to have help and the ability to accept it.

Journey

- ▶ I talked about a lot of things today, I just want to say **good for you**, and **keep up the good work**.

We can never expect to be the person we were before our injury, but try and look at it as a way to create a revised you. The revised you will have a new experience. One to share, or use to improve yourself or make changes, or maybe keep the same.....

Journey

- ▶ If you find a method doesn't work for you, find another way. ie: Walking, talking, sleeping, lifting etc. There's more than one way of reaching a goal.
- ▶ To optimize your goal of recovery, take the time to eat healthy regular meals, schedule nap times, schedule homework/exercise, **ME** time, schedule everything. Doing this task, helps us recover by knowing what to expect

Journey

- ▶ I'm simply making suggestions. **You** are your own boss. If something I've said today sounds at least a little interesting, give it a try. Maybe it'll work for you or maybe I gave you an idea to try something else your way

Before the Accident



After the Accident

