

SURVIVOR NEWS

Newsletter for Resilience and Rebuilding

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SURVIVOR SPOTLIGHT



Survivor Spotlight: Desiree Rosdahl

On February 19, 2019 Desiree Rosdahl was skiing at Whiteface Mountain in New York and on the first run of the day, fell into a ravine, hitting multiple trees on the way down and ultimately splitting her helmet in half. Thanks to the swift actions of the Whiteface Mountain Ski Patrol, Des was airlifted to UVM Medical Center where she received incredible care. She suffered numerous broken bones including her scapula, multiple ribs, two vertebrae, right hip, right femur and left tibial plateau. In addition, she was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury. After spending four days at UVM, Desiree was stable enough to be transferred to Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, where she is a nurse in the Operating Room.

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Study to Improve Services for Traumatic Injury Survivors

Johanna Hidalgo



Have you experienced a traumatic injury that resulted in an overnight hospital stay? What advice would you give to a friend or family member in a similar situation? Would you be willing to help other community members or providers learn what works best or how we can better support folks after a traumatic injury? If so, we encourage you to take a moment to fill out a one-time online survey that will help researchers answer these questions for community members and providers.

Currently, the UVM Medical Center Trauma Survivors Network & UVM Department of Psychological Science are researching how people recover after a traumatic injury and use health care services after their hospital stay. Your feedback will help us understand how we can best strive to provide care after a traumatic injury and address your concerns regarding the treatment you have received. If there were resources that helped in your journey to recovery, we also want to learn more about these services to expand their reach to others. (continued on page 4)

Survivor Spotlight Continued

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At Strong Desiree underwent multiple surgeries. She woke up from a coma after ten days. After two weeks in the Intensive Care Unit, Desiree was transferred to the Physical Medicine and Rehab unit, where she spent five weeks engaging in 3-4 hours daily of physical, occupational, speech, and recreational therapy. Although she was unable to walk due to the orthopedic injuries, Desiree made significant progress in activities of daily living, independently transferring into a wheelchair, and activities she could enjoy with her new physical and cognitive limitations.

Desiree was discharged from the hospital on April 19, 2019 and continued to make incredible progress in her recovery at home. She continued to participate in outpatient Occupational, Physical and Speech therapy through the U of R Integrated Cognitive Rehab Program. Desiree was able to work through the physical aspect of recovery, but acceptance of a traumatic brain injury and what that means for life long-term was a bit more difficult. Desiree loves her career as a nurse and was determined to get back to work as soon as possible. This goal pushed Des to continue to work hard on her recovery. On October 29, 2019, Desiree returned to work part-time with accommodations.



Since then, Desiree has resumed work full time. She is back to her role as Primary Service Nurse for Thoracic Surgery and now trains new orientees and nursing students.

In addition to returning to work as a nurse, Desiree's accident inspired her to live life to the fullest. She returned to skiing in the winter following her accident and in 2021 became a ski patroller. She enjoys hiking in the Adirondacks and mountain biking. She is an athlete for the High Fives Foundation, a California based organization that supports individuals with a traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury in returning to outdoor sports. Through this organization, she has been able to attend an adaptive surf camp in Santa Cruz, California as well as a two week intensive healing program in Lake Tahoe.

Though no one ever expects to go through a life changing injury, Desiree has taken a difficult experience and used it to inspire others. She is a passionate advocate for helmets in all risky sports, she openly discusses the mental health struggles with acceptance of a traumatic injury, and her positive attitude and zest for life encourage others to not let fear hold them back from living their best lives.

Holiday Stress Management

By Evy Smith, LCMHC EFAP Counselor



Just by the nature of being human, you already know about stress and the impact it has on our lives and energy. Holidays bring both positive and negative stress and superimposes these upon an already stressful life, no doubt for each and every one of us...no one is exempt from stress. How we perceive and cope with the stressful events make the difference as to whether we thrive or falter. We all face many extra pressures, expectations and demands from outside sources, family, friends, workplace...this happens alongside of the normal ups and downs of life, be it aging, financial struggles, loss, job changes, parenting issues...

Balancing the stresses of work and home life on any given day places demands on our energy ...there can be changes in sleep patterns, eating, mental focus, low mood...slight changes are one thing, but if there are frequent or long standing changes in these areas, we need to be extra aware, since it is a well-known fact that chronic unmanaged stress can have a direct correlation to increased health-related concerns.

My main point today is the importance of MANAGING OUR OWN ENERGY by:

Developing regular routines of self-care to build a STOREHOUSE of ENERGY.

- Balanced Nourishment
- Balanced Exercise or movement
- Balanced Recuperation
 - Rest, Sleep, Recreation/FUN
- This physical recharge allows for
- Balanced Thinking and Mood states & CHOICE making

One main suggestion for maintaining balanced choices and control involves situations where alcohol presents. As we know there can be a tendency to over consume during the holidays, to include overspending, over eating, over drinking, causing even more depletion of ENERGY.

So I have devised a FORMULA for MANAGING STRESS

One main component of the formula is the practice of GOING INWARD and QUIETING the mental chatter to experience the RELAXATION RESPONSE inherent in Meditation. This allows one to center and tune into the possibility and the probability of making better choices and decisions.

Try this THREE Minute Breathing Space Exercise:

Minute # 1: Focus your awareness on the present moment; notice any tensions whether physical, emotional or relational and just allow yourself to feel what you are feeling or to think what you are thinking without judging it.

Minute # 2: Focus your awareness on your breath and breathe in and out slowly, deeply and rhythmically.

Minute # 3: Expand your awareness to your body as a whole; get a feeling sense of your whole body and accept and hold onto this present moment experience.

Slow down, listen, look & enjoy...

Dietitian vs Nutritionist vs Health Coach

By Emily Clairmont, MS, RD, CD

There is great confusion over the title of someone who provides nutrition education. However, there are clear definitions, which you can reference below. A registered dietitian is the only health professional on this list that is licensed to provide Medical Nutrition Therapy, and this is related to the dietitians coursework, national board certification, and state licensure or certification. This does not mean that other health professionals will not know the same information, but it does mean that a dietitian will most certainly have the appropriate education and credential to be providing this level of care.

The best way to connect with a dietitian is to ask your primary care practitioner. They are likely connected with registered dietitians in the community and can make a suggestion based on your needs.

The resources below help to further explain the professions and the differences between them. Also listed, some local dietitians, who specialize in Trauma-Informed Nutrition and Functional Nutrition.

What is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist?

- [What is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist](#)

Vermont Dietitians who specialize in inflammation, mental health, chronic pain, chronic disease:

- Comprehensive Pain Program – contact 802-847-5550 or visit [Comprehensive Pain Program](#) to learn more
- Whole Health Nutrition – contact 802-999-9207 or visit wholehealthnutritionvt.com to learn more
- Thrive Inspired Nutrition – contact 802-236-9516 or visit thrivinspirednutrition.com to learn more

What's the difference between a dietitian and nutritionist and health coach?

- [Dietitian Vs. Nutritionist Vs. Health Coach: What are the Differences? | Institute for Integrative Nutrition](#)

Study to Improve Services for Traumatic Injury Survivors

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Ofentimes it takes trial and error to learn what works best, so we consult others to learn from their experience about which services have the most benefits. However, we may not have the time, money, or energy to endure the hurdles after a traumatic injury. Therefore, we hope to get feedback from our community about which services worked best and which are needed to help ease the pain of people who may find themselves in a similar situation. If you would like to help provide this invaluable feedback about your experience after a traumatic injury, you can participate by completing an online survey that takes approximately 15 minutes. The time and effort you take in completing the survey will enter you into a raffle to win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card.

Survey link: https://qualtrics.uvm.edu/jfe/form/SV_cOPCfbgujNVf2mi

For any questions, please email crest@uvm.edu



Meet the Trauma Team

Christine Dillon, MHS Injury Prevention Coordinator

Christine Dillon, MHS, has been working in the public health arena for 15 years and in her current role as an Injury Prevention Coordinator at the UVM Medical Center for 6 years. Christine collaborates on a wide range of injury prevention initiatives but is currently focused on the STOP THE BLEED initiative. She enjoys working with STOP THE BLEED campaign to educate the public on the proper techniques to stop uncontrolled bleeding after trauma. "Empowering Vermonters to act in an emergency situation will not only increase the likelihood that they can save a life but can provide a better mental health outcome for all those involved."



Upcoming Events

- **Brain Injury Support Groups** hosted by BIAVT on the 2nd Thursday of each month at Fletcher Free Library in Burlington from 5-6pm. The group is open to any Vermonter living with a brain injury.
- The 34th Annual Brain Injury Conference being held on Wednesday October 12th at the Killington Grand Hotel in Killington Vermont. This all day, in-person event includes vendors, speakers, lunch and a silent auction. This year's keynote speaker is Survivor & Mental Health Blogger Ariel Johnson. Other speakers include survivor Besty Dury, Barb Asen, Director of Family Caregiver Support at CVCOA (Central Vermont Council on Aging), John Raffaele LMSW National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals and other survivors and professionals who live and work with the brain injury community here in Vermont.

For more information on this year's conference please visit the Brain Injury Alliance of Vermont webpage at www.biavt.org or contact support@biavt.org Register to attend at <https://give.classy.org/BIAVTCConference2022>

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SAVE THE DATE



October 12th, 2022

34th Annual Brain Injury Conference
Hosted by the Brain Injury Alliance of
Vermont

Location: Killington Grand Resort,
Killington VT

Stay up to date on all conference information by
subscribing to our monthly newsletter and
registering with us at
<https://give.classy.org/BIAVTCConference2022>



P.S. The UVMHC Trauma Survivors Network will have a table at this conference so stop by and say hello!