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‘New Journey of Healing’ for Traumatic Injury Patients

Cedars-Sinai’s Trauma Survivors Network Connects Recovering Patients With Peers Who Have Survived Similar Injuries, Fostering Encouragement, Resilience

Danielle Brown lay crumpled on Sunset Boulevard with a brain injury, no memory, no teeth, two broken arms, a broken leg and multiple other fractures.

After her moped was mowed down by an SUV 14 years ago, Cedars-Sinai trauma surgeons spent weeks rebuilding her body. As for rebuilding her life, Brown continues to do that on her own. Brown’s role as a peer support volunteer in Cedars-Sinai’s new [Trauma Survivors Network < https://www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org/>](https://www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org/), helping others healing from physical trauma, is the newest part of that recovery.

The Trauma Survivors Network, a program of the [American Trauma Society < https://www.amtrauma.org/>](https://www.amtrauma.org/), connects survivors and educates and empowers patients and their families during recovery. At Cedars-Sinai, Brown and a team of other volunteers connect with patients to listen, share, encourage and reassure.

“It’s a community,” said trauma educator [Gregory Jones, RN < https://www.cedars-sinai.org/newsroom/a-veterans-life-of-adventure-service-to-others/>](https://www.cedars-sinai.org/newsroom/a-veterans-life-of-adventure-service-to-others/), injury prevention and outreach coordinator for the Cedars-Sinai Trauma Program. “Going through physical trauma can feel isolating. We wanted to have Trauma Survivors Network programming here so patients can feel a broader

range of support as they navigate healing and recovery, and to help them feel more connected.”

Cedars-Sinai is one of only four [Level I < https://www.cedars-sinai.org/newsroom/cedars-sinai-again-named-level-i-trauma-center/>](https://www.cedars-sinai.org/newsroom/cedars-sinai-again-named-level-i-trauma-center/) adult trauma centers in Los Angeles County, which means it provides the highest-quality care for every aspect of injury—from prevention and emergency lifesaving surgeries and clinical care, to rehabilitation. In 2024, more than 1,600 patients were treated at the medical center for traumatic injuries.



Gregory Jones, RN

A 2023 paper published in [Trauma Surgery & Acute Care Open < https://tsaco.bmj.com/content/8/1/e001068>](https://tsaco.bmj.com/content/8/1/e001068) noted that while trauma care has significantly improved survival over the past 50 years, continued struggles with disabilities, emotional challenges and brain injuries are common for many.



Jazmin Perez

With this in mind, Jazmin Perez, a clinical social worker in the Jim and Eleanor Randall Department of Surgery, ensures trauma patients and survivors are aware of Trauma Survivors Network resources—information about recovery, inpatient and outpatient support groups, and peer visitation opportunities.

“We also check in with patients after they’ve been discharged from the hospital to see how we can continue to help,” Perez said. “Healing continues long after they get home, so making sure they feel supported and a sense of belonging is vital.”

Improving the patient experience and fostering a sense of community is a key goal of the Trauma Survivors Network; another, Jones

said, is connecting survivors with the providers who cared for them.

“We want to introduce survivors to their first responders, as well as reconnect them with their trauma team,” Jones said. “We want these providers to be reminded of how much what they do matters.”

More Awareness for Trauma

Trauma Survivors Network volunteer Louise Lund experienced debilitating injuries in 2024.

One minute she was driving home from work; the next, emergency responders were removing her through her car’s roof. Lund was unconscious, with a shattered hip, pelvis and sternum, 12 broken ribs, and a paralyzed leg. A driver had sped through a red light at more than 90 miles per hour, hitting Lund directly in the driver’s side.

She had five nine-hour surgeries in five weeks and was at Cedars-Sinai nearly three months. As her body healed, there were unexpected symptoms to manage—hair loss, which she learned is normal after trauma, and the more common signs of post-traumatic stress disorder.

She recalls a lonely road to recovery filled with uncertainty and sorrow, as well as a realization that the road also represented a path toward healing and hope. Today Lund is eager to assure patients they are not alone.



Cedars-Sinai Trauma Survivors Network volunteer Louise Lund with her orthopedic trauma surgeon, Carol Lin, MD. Photo courtesy of Louise Lund.

“I want to bring more awareness to what happens to a person not only physically, but mentally,” Lund said. “Being able to say to people recovering, ‘Your resilience is your superpower,’ is part of my new journey of healing.”

Representation for Survivors

It was a full-circle moment when [Corentin Villemeur < https://www.cedars-sinai.org/blog/corentin-villemeur.html >](https://www.cedars-sinai.org/blog/corentin-villemeur.html), another Trauma Survivors Network volunteer, recently picked up his official volunteer jacket. He was hospitalized in 2018 after he was hit by a drunk driver while walking across the street. He felt well-supported during recovery, but at the same time, no one had been through what he had.



Cedars-Sinai Trauma Survivors Network volunteer Corentin Villemeur in his volunteer jacket outside the hospital room where he

“It’s comforting to know you’re not the only one,” he said.

The Trauma Survivors Network also gives Villemeur the opportunity to express gratitude.

“I’ve struggled with how to say thank you to Cedars-Sinai in a meaningful way,” Villemeur said.

“The providers don’t always get to see all the good work they’ve done. I’m back to nearly 100%, and I want them to see how my hard work and their hard work paid off.”

Jones commended the Trauma Survivors Network volunteers, saying, “They had a dynamic life before their injury, and they’re able to share how they’ve reclaimed that life. They’re even stronger now, and

recovered after a traumatic injury. Photo courtesy of Corentin Villemeur.

they've opted to come back and help us help others—which is what

Cedars-Sinai is all about.”

Stronger now, Villemeur—who once feared he would no longer be able to stand—is back to Latin dancing and distance running.

Stronger now, Lund is walking on her own again.

Stronger now, Brown can enjoy playtime with her young daughter.

“For a long time,” Brown said, “I was trapped in a body and life I didn’t recognize. Now I’m passionate about helping others also find the strength to keep going and come out on the other side with a life they love.”

For more information or to participate in the Trauma Survivors Network, contact Jazmin Perez at jazmin.perez@cshs.org.

Read more in Cedars-Sinai Discoveries Magazine: [Regenerative Medicine for Orthopedics](https://www.cedars-sinai.org/discoveries/regenerative-medicine-for-orthopedics.html) < <https://www.cedars-sinai.org/discoveries/regenerative-medicine-for-orthopedics.html>>