



# THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL CONNECTION AMONG SURVIVORS

## FIVE YEARS AFTER A BUS CRASH

Isabelle Doohan<sup>1,3</sup>, Lina Gyllencreutz<sup>2,3</sup>, Johanna Björnstig<sup>1</sup>, Ulf Björnstig<sup>1</sup>, Britt-Inger Saveman<sup>1,2,3</sup>

### Conclusion

Facilitating a lasting sense of connectedness among fellow survivors early on after a major bus crash and offering ways for them to maintain the connection throughout the years could strengthen long-term recovery. In order to create social connections it is recommended that survivors are placed together at crash site, health care centers, gathering places, emergency departments, hospital wards, and later in support meetings.

*"We sit next to each other and talk every day on the bus, and we always look at each other if there is a sudden braking or if the weather is bad. We have each other as support. It feels nice and safe, because we both know what we have been through"*

### Results

## A SENSE OF CONNECTEDNESS

**SAFETY**  
while travelling  
with fellow  
survivors

**KINSHIP**  
Comfort and  
connection

**FRIENDSHIP**  
Lasting positivity  
and support

*"We usually meet up once every year, and we're not talking about the accident, but it is still what binds us together. It's not sad at all, instead we have some type of connection and it's nice for us to meet up. This is something very positive, which is important to recognize, because a lot of the negative thoughts disappear. It is actually great to see each other"*

### Objective

To explore social connections among survivors five years after a major bus crash.

### Background

In February, 2007, two commuter buses collided nearly head on, resulting in 6 fatalities and 56 injured survivors.



Photo: Swedish Accident Investigation Authority

*"At the bus, we only need to look at each other when something happens...it's like an interactive eye contact so to speak. I think we understand each other much better because we have been through something like this. It is hard to explain to someone who wasn't there"*



Photo: Swedish Accident Investigation Authority

### Methods

Fifty-four out of 56 survivors were interviewed five years after a major bus crash in Sweden. Interviews were analyzed with qualitative content analysis. Analysis resulted in a category with three sub-categories.