THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL CONNECTION AMONG SURVIVORS
FIVE YEARS AFTER A BUS CRASH

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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.

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.

Results
A SENSE OF CONNECTEDNESS

SAFETY while travelling with fellow survivors

“...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”

KINSHIP
Comfort and connection

“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”

FRIENDSHIP
Lasting positivity and support

“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”

“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”

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.