

# RARE VIEWS

## Burn Awareness

**Amy Acton, RN, BSN**, is the Chief Executive Officer for Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors, where she has served the organization for over 20 years. She has worked tirelessly to promote the expansion of burn recovery services and resources for burn survivors and their loved ones.



Q.

### Tell us a little about yourself and what inspired you to get involved with the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors?

A.

I started my nursing career in a burn center after my own burn injury. As a survivor and nurse, I saw firsthand the benefit for patients when they could talk with someone like myself who had gone through something similar. My burn experience provided perspective and hope for a future that is sometimes unclear when you are new on this journey within the burn center.

I attended my first Phoenix World Burn Congress (WBC) in 1988 as a new nurse. At the time, Phoenix WBC had about 100 attendees, primarily survivors and their families. Their stories and my experience at the event changed my nursing practice and helped me see the common struggles, needs, and opportunities for more integrated care of those living with burn injuries. At that time, there were limited resources or programs focused on the population's life-long needs, and healthcare providers were more focused on acute survival within the burn center.

The critical work of Phoenix Society and the dedicated volunteers' efforts were happening parallel to the burn care teams, so connecting the dots from acute care to community-based services was a great place to focus. I became passionate about advancing this area of burn care, so when the founder Alan Breslau retired, I threw my name in the hat to help advance the work of Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.

Q.

### What is the biggest challenge for patients? For survivors? For caregivers?

A.

Those in our community consistently share that one of the most challenging parts of recovery and living with a burn injury is the unknown and feeling alone. From the moment you find yourself in the burn center to the moment you go home, it is all new and unexpected. One pivotal moment is the transition from acute care back into their lives and the community.

It is critical to introduce both the survivor and the caregiver with connection and relevant information. Discharges happen earlier and earlier in the recovery process, and there is an overwhelming amount of information and things happening during this time for the patient and the caregiver. So, knowing what might be coming next and having a community to engage with that helps with the simple questions about living and thriving with a burn injury helps set us up for success. As those with more severe burn injuries survive due to expert care and innovation in treating burns, the need for community-based support and resources has increased. The impact of physical, emotional, and spiritual trauma does not happen in a vacuum. Our work is focused on building a community that is there to walk alongside you to help guide and ease the road forward.

Q.

### What resources are available to burn patients and survivors?

A.

It is important that no one facing the life-changing effects of a burn injury is forced to journey through healing alone. Fortunately, there are various organizations and resources available to burn patients.

Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors is one of these organizations. It provides a connector for those affected by a burn injury, the primary resource for quality information and education, and a trusted go-to for all in the burn community. We work to connect survivors and loved ones with a network of trained peers who are there to support and walk alongside those newly adapting to a burn injury in their families. We do this through a variety of programs, weekly virtual support groups, a Resource Market Place and the Journey magazine.

*Rare Views is an ongoing spotlight series brought to you by Mallinckrodt's Patient Engagement & Advocacy Team.*