To the Editor:

I read with great interest the article, “The Neurobiology of PTSD: Implications for Nurses,” by Terese Olszewski and Jeanne Varrasse in the June issue (Vol. 43, No. 6, pp. 40-47), and wanted to let you know I found it informative and enlightening. The article was sent to me by a friend who is a psychiatric nurse because my 25-year-old daughter is suffering from this syndrome as a result of an automobile accident 9 years ago, from which she has recovered physically after 43 surgeries, but with which she still has to cope mentally. I find it remarkable that there is now so much information available to the public on the subject of PTSD.

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I found the article very easy to read and understand, and it brought to light a number of things I have wondered about in connection with my daughter’s experiences. Her avoidance/numbing routine has been expressed through substance abuse and avoidance of the entire traumatic accident. She spent 4 months in the hospital trying to physically recover from the accident, but she never recovered mentally nor dealt with PTSD, although the first thing I did was sign her up with a counselor to discuss the issues that might result from such a trauma. My daughter managed to convince not only herself, but all of us, including her doctors and counselor, that “it was just an accident—no big deal.” But here we are 9 years later with the experience being a very big deal, and one that affects our entire family.

Hats off to the writers of this wonderful article! As we become more aware of the resulting behaviors connected with PTSD, perhaps there will be more treatment centers that specialize in this problem. Unfortunately, there will always be people who do not even begin to understand that help is available to deal with this issue, nor will everyone be able to afford such treatment. I thank God that our family has the means and the knowledge to help our daughter through this terrible ordeal, and I am also thankful that she herself saw the immediate need and came to us for help at this critical time in her life.

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