

JULY
2026

STAR Project MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

IOWA
HEALTH CARE

Highlighting our Advisory Board: BROCK MILLIGAN

This week, we'd like to introduce you to one valued member of the STAR Project's advisory board: Brock Milligan.

Brock's personal story is one that many of you might be familiar with, due to his transparency and focus on reducing stigma. "For me, breaking the stigma around substance use disorder is personal because I've lived on both sides of it. When I was actively struggling with alcohol addiction, I carried an incredible amount of shame," he reveals.



"Ironically, I've also experienced stigma in recovery. There are still people who hear the word 'alcoholic' and immediately make assumptions about who you are or what you're capable of. Early in my recovery, that bothered me, but over time, I realized the easiest and most rewarding way to deal with that stigma was to lean into it."

Today, Brock serves as the Senior Development & Community Relations Specialist for ThriveNow Recovery Centers and Renewal Falls Recovery Center, where he builds relationships across Iowa and helps individuals and families access treatment. A big part of his work today is educating employers on the human and financial impact of substance use disorder. **"I'm passionate about helping [employers] understand that supporting employees in recovery isn't just the right thing to do, it's also a smart business decision.** When employers invest in treatment and recovery instead of defaulting to termination, they can improve retention, reduce healthcare costs, and change lives," he notes.

Through the STAR Project, Brock looks forward to meeting more people passionate about addiction and fostering more recovery-friendly workplaces around Iowa.

"I'm incredibly fortunate to have a career that not only allows me, but encourages me, to be my authentic self and openly share my recovery story. I want that same opportunity for others."

The STAR Project is supported by: IDHSS FY26 Opioid Settlement Funding BHTHPTR26111

Learn more about the incredible work that ThriveNow Recovery Centers and Renewal Falls Recovery Center are doing for Iowans!

Check out UI ARC's webpage:
<https://uiarc.uiowa.edu/>



INTO LIGHT Updates

UPCOMING EVENT:

A few of the portraits will be on display at a movie screening in honor of International Overdose Awareness Day, hosted by FilmScene and sponsored by Community & Family Resources and a coalition of other stakeholders in Johnson County, including UI ARC. The film being shown is "Remake" (2025), and the event will take place at **7pm on August 20th at FilmScene** at The Chauncey in Iowa City.

View the event flyer [here](#).

If you are interested in having the exhibit visit your community or event, please fill out the online form at [this link](#).

Visit the Into Light Project's homepage:

<https://intolightproject.org/>

Pressing Matters Gallery Exhibit

A collaborative project led by Dr. Nichole Nidey (UI College of Public Health), Laura Moser (Public Space One), and Dr. Alison Lynch (UI ARC), supported by the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies. Pressing Matters featured art by people in recovery alongside the Into Light exhibit honoring Iowans who lost their lives to overdose, raising awareness and challenging stigma through art.



Project iECHO and Virtual Office Hours

UI STAR will begin holding **virtual office hours** and **Project iECHO sessions** this August with UI ARC healthcare professionals to increase access to expert knowledge of addiction medicine.

Office hours will be held **August 14th** and **August 21st**.

Project iECHO sessions will be held **every 4th Monday**. This August, the session will take place on Monday, **August 4th**.

More information will be updated on our website, which you can access [here](#).

Our Leadership Team



Alison Lynch,
MD, MS



Nichole Nidey,
PhD



Heidi Wood,
PharmD, MAS

Do you know someone who would like to be added to our email list?

Please reach out to us directly, or respond to this email and feel free to loop them in!

**Interested in learning more about
this project or collaborating?**

Email us at
UIARC-Outreach@uiowa.edu