

# RISING TO THE Changing Needs of Our Community

## The CRUSH Connection

Submitted by Rod Courtney  
Executive Director

At CRUSH Recovery Community Center, the work of saving lives and building recovery happens every single day- often quietly, always intentionally, and increasingly across our entire community.

Each month, CRUSH is now reaching an average of 2,200 individuals, providing thousands of service engagements- a reflection of both growing need and growing trust in peer-led recovery support.

But behind those numbers is something even more important: connection. Timely connection. Life-saving connection.

## Meeting People Where They Are

One of the most powerful ways CRUSH combats overdoses is by going directly into the community.

Our peer recovery coaches are out every week- at places like the Salvation Army, local libraries, homeless shelters, and parks- engaging individuals who may never walk through the doors of a traditional system.

There, we provide overdose education, fentanyl awareness, naloxone (Narcan) distribution, and immediate connection to peer support.



## A Critical Reality: The Changing Face of Overdose Risk

Today's overdose crisis is more complex than ever.

While opioid use disorder is one component of the population served at CRUSH, current overdose trends show that risk is no longer limited to those who identify as opioid users.

Fentanyl contamination in the drug supply has significantly expanded overdose risk, requiring a broader, more inclusive response to prevention and intervention.

What this means is simple: You don't have to identify as an opioid user to be at risk of an opioid overdose.

CRUSH is responding to this reality by expanding education, outreach, and harm reduction efforts to anyone at risk- not just those who fit traditional categories.

## Life Saving Tools in Action



This quarter alone, the team provided 549 risk-reduction education sessions, 59 naloxone distributions, 47 naloxone demonstrations, and 419 referrals to additional services.

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## Stronger Partnerships, Stronger Outcomes

CRUSH works alongside:

- Cedar Rapids Police Department
- Cedar Rapids Fire Department Care Team
- Department of Corrections
- Local hospitals and emergency departments
- Eastern Iowa Health Center
- University of Iowa Addiction Recovery Coalition
- Linn County Public Health

These partnerships are creating a seamless system where individuals can move from crisis to care without falling through the cracks.

## From Overdose To Opportunity

CRUSH focuses on what happens after an overdose- helping people move from survival to stability and long-term recovery through peer support and connection.

## A Community-wide Response

From outreach and harm reduction to treatment access and sustained peer support, these efforts are forming a coordinated response to one of the most urgent public health challenges of our time.

## Looking Ahead

As CRUSH continues to grow, one thing remains constant: we will meet people where they are, walk alongside them, and do whatever it takes to keep our community alive and moving toward recovery.



## Meet our newest coach!

Charles Morgan  
Peer Recovery Coach

My name is Charles Morgan and I am the newest Peer Recovery Coach here at CRUSH. Alongside my responsibilities as a Peer Coach I will be taking on the Emergency Room Coordination responses to overdoses and working with Linn County Public Health for community outreach with Tiffany Dineen! Many of you know that I have been working towards this goal since the summer of 2025,

and in combination with my work at Patriot House I have been chasing purpose through service for awhile now. What many of you might not know is that the very first action of service I did at CRUSH was carrying bottled water up from the parking garage to the refrigerator, that's it, nothing fancy or over the top...just bottled water. That lead to sitting at the front desk and saying "Welcome to CRUSH!" and sharing my story to people at our public events. Eventually I found that CRUSH provided a recovery group that fit me perfectly in SMART Recovery and their belief in me has lead to me being able to facilitate these groups. I completed the CCAR Peer Recovery Coach training last fall and started my Internship here officially around the turn of the year. My personality type is that of a Peacock and I am an extrovert. I love D&D, Anime, Warhammer, and clothes...especially hoodies. The causes that I am passionate about are Veterans, Sober Living, and Elder Care. I am a cat person.

# BINGO

## CRUSH the Board!!

### Recovery Connections Challenge

Ready to mix things up and win some CRUSH gear?  
Grab a Recovery Rally Bingo card and start showing up!  
Attend different groups throughout the month and get a  
facilitator signature for each one you complete.  
Get a full line (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) and you'll  
score a CRUSH t-shirt!

Try something new, meet new people, and build your  
recovery while you play. Let's see who's getting BINGO

"YOU ARE ALLOWED TO OUTGROW THE VERSION OF YOU THAT ONCE SURVIVED."

## A Life Reclaimed

Submitted by Corrie Schiller  
Peer Recovery Coach

Working as a Recovery Coach at Crush of Iowa Recovery Community Center has reminded me time and time again that recovery is possible, even when someone feels completely hopeless.

### When Hope Felt Lost

Three months ago, I met a young woman named Jade Moliterno in the emergency department.

When I first saw Jade, she was in dire condition. Years of severe alcoholism had left her suffering from neuropathy in both legs. She was visibly defeated, emotionally broken, and had lost all hope. Her body was shutting down from the effects of alcohol. She could barely walk without a walker, had lost control of her bowels, was unable to keep down food or water, and had simply given up on life.

Jade shared that her drinking began slowly in 2022, but after the death of her father on October 29, 2022, everything changed. Grief consumed her, and alcohol became the way she coped with the unbearable pain. What started as drinking to numb emotions quickly turned into a devastating downward spiral.

### The Turning Point

In 2025, Jade first began coming to Crush of Iowa, hoping maybe something different could help. At that time, nothing seemed to click. Like so many struggling with addiction, she continued using despite wanting something better for herself.

But recovery journeys are rarely straight lines.



Corrie Schiller, Peer Recovery Coach  
Jade Moliterno, Peer

### The Person Beneath the Pain

When I met Jade in that hospital room, I didn't just see the illness or the addiction.

I saw a person underneath all the pain—someone worthy of compassion, dignity, and another chance. Sometimes people need someone to believe in them before they can begin believing in themselves again.

Over the past three months, I've had the privilege of watching Jade fight for her life. Recovery has not been easy. Healing physically, emotionally, and mentally takes time. But little by little, hope started returning. Strength started returning.

Most importantly, Jade started returning to herself.

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“Sometimes people need someone to believe in them before they can begin believing in themselves again.”

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### From Hopeless to Healing

Today, Jade is approaching two months sober. She no longer needs a walker to get around.

The woman I first met in that emergency room - defeated, hopeless, and physically broken — is transforming before my eyes.

Every time I see Jade, she is changing for the better. She is becoming healthier, stronger, more vibrant, and more full of life.

Her beauty shines from the inside out now, and it's been incredible to witness.

### Why This Work Matters

Jade often tells me that my involvement in her recovery journey helped save her life and gave

her hope when she had none left. While I am deeply honored by those words, the truth is that

Jade is the one doing the hard work every single day. She chose to fight. She chose to keep going. I've simply had the privilege of walking beside her through part of that journey.



Join us for self-care  
Saturday on May

23<sup>rd</sup> at 2 pm!

There will be a  
potluck!

Everyone is  
welcome!!



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“ALL IT TAKES IS ONE PERSON, ONE MOMENT, AND ONE DECISION TO CHANGE EVERYTHING.”

# Discernment in Recovery

Submitted by Dana Chappuie  
Operations Manager

## A Tool That Guides My Life

Recovery has given me many gifts—peace, clarity, and the ability to rebuild a life I once thought I had lost. But one of the greatest tools I have gained in my recovery journey is discernment. Discernment is more than just decision-making. It is the ability to pause, reflect, and choose wisely, even when emotions are high, stress is heavy, or life feels uncertain.

As a Peer Recovery Specialist, a recovery coach, and the Operations Manager at CRUSH Recovery Community Center, discernment has become one of the most important skills I use daily. It not only shapes the way I serve others, but it has transformed the way I show up as a mother, a daughter, and a person in recovery.

## Discernment as a Foundation in Recovery

In active addiction, I often lived in survival mode. I reacted instead of responded. I made choices based on fear, impulsivity, and emotion. I didn't stop to think about consequences, long-term outcomes, or how my decisions would affect the people around me. Addiction didn't just steal my peace—it stole my ability to think clearly.

Recovery has taught me that I have the power to slow down and evaluate. Discernment helps me ask important questions such as:

- Is this decision healthy for me?
- Does this align with my values?
- Am I reacting out of emotion or responding with intention?
- Is this choice going to move me forward or pull me backward?

Most importantly, it has helped me become a healthier version of myself—one decision at a time.

## Discernment in My Work at CRUSH

Working at CRUSH is deeply meaningful to me. Every day I interact with people who are in different stages of recovery—some are newly sober, some are struggling, some are hopeful, and some feel defeated. This work requires compassion, boundaries, and a steady heart.

Discernment helps me remain grounded in my role. As a coach, I've learned that it's not my job to rescue people—it's my job to support them. Discernment helps me recognize when someone needs encouragement, when they need accountability, and when they simply need to be heard.

As an Operations Manager, discernment is equally important. I often have to make decisions that affect programming, structure, staff, and guests. I have learned that leadership is not about emotion-based decisions—it is about thoughtful decisions. Discernment helps me stay focused on what is best for the mission of CRUSH and what will create stability for the community we serve.

It helps me balance empathy with professionalism. It helps me handle conflict with grace. It helps me determine what deserves my energy and what I need to release.

## Discernment as a Mother

Motherhood has been one of the biggest places where discernment has shaped my life. In recovery, I've had to learn how to parent with intention. I've had to break generational patterns and choose a different path than the one I was once on.

Discernment helps me be mindful of how I respond to my children. It helps me choose patience when I want to react.

It helps me choose listening instead of assuming. It helps me remember that my children don't need perfection—they need consistency, safety, and love.

Recovery has taught me that my children learn from what I do, not just what I say. Discernment helps me model healthy communication, emotional regulation, and responsibility. It reminds me that every decision I make as a mother can either build trust or break it.

And today, I am committed to building it.



## Discernment as a Daughter

Recovery has also changed the way I show up as a daughter. Healing relationships takes time. It takes honesty. It takes humility. But it also takes discernment.

Discernment helps me recognize what conversations are productive and which ones will lead to hurt. It helps me decide when to speak and when silence is healthier. It helps me forgive without forgetting boundaries. It helps me love people while still protecting my recovery. Being a daughter in recovery has taught me that I can honor my family while still choosing what is best for my peace and mental health. I can show respect without losing myself. I can love others without abandoning my own needs.



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“DISCERNMENT IS CHOOSING WHAT FEEDS YOUR PEACE OVER WHAT FEEDS YOUR PATTERNS.”

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## Discernment in Relationships & Daily Choices

One of the biggest ways discernment shows up in my life is through my interactions with others. I have learned that not everyone deserves access to the most vulnerable parts of me. I have learned that my energy is valuable. My time is valuable. My recovery is valuable.

Discernment helps me recognize when a relationship is healthy and when it is harmful. It helps me identify red flags instead of ignoring them. It helps me decide who I can trust and who I need to keep at a distance.

It also helps me manage conflict. Instead of reacting defensively, discernment helps me ask:

- What is my role in this?
- What is the lesson here?
- How can I respond in a way that reflects who I am becoming?

Discernment has taught me that growth often requires discomfort, but it does not require chaos.



## Discernment as a Form of Freedom

Today, discernment gives me freedom. It gives me the ability to choose differently. It reminds me that I am not stuck in old patterns. I am not controlled by emotion. I am not driven by fear.

Discernment is what allows me to live with purpose. It guides my choices in my personal life, my family life, my professional life, and my recovery.

It reminds me that I can be kind and still have boundaries. I can love others and still protect my peace. I can support people without carrying their burdens. I can lead with compassion without losing my strength.

*“Recovery has given me the gift of a second chance—but discernment has helped me make the most of it.”*



## Closing Reflection

Discernment is not something I mastered overnight. It is something I practice daily. Some days I get it right, and some days I learn lessons the hard way. But the difference today is that I am aware. I am present. I am intentional.

Discernment has helped guide my choices in my affairs, my relationships, and the life I am building. It has helped me become a better coach, a stronger leader, a more patient mother, and a more grounded daughter.

Most importantly, it has helped me become a healthier version of myself—one decision at a time.

## The Quiet Power of Small Kindnesses

Submitted by Amber Sheppard, Programs Coordinator

Kindness doesn't have to be loud to be life-changing. In a world that often celebrates big, dramatic gestures, it's easy to overlook the quiet power of small moments—the ones that don't make headlines but can alter the course of someone's day, or even their life. A kind word. A warm smile. A moment of genuine listening. These are the things that remind people they matter.

You never truly know what someone is carrying. The person standing in front of you may be fighting battles you can't see—grief, fear, shame, or the daily work of staying in recovery. For those navigating addiction or rebuilding their lives, even the smallest act of kindness can feel like oxygen. It can be the difference between feeling invisible and feeling seen, between giving up and holding on.

Choosing not to judge is one of the most powerful forms of kindness we can offer. Everyone's path is different, especially in recovery.

What may look like a setback to one person might actually be a step forward for another. When we lead with compassion instead of criticism, we create space for growth, honesty, and healing.

You don't have to fix someone's problems to make a difference. You don't have to have the perfect advice or the right words. Sometimes, just being present—really listening without interrupting or trying to solve—is enough. Presence says, “You're not alone,” and that message carries weight.

Be the person who breathes life back into others. The one who reminds people of their worth when they've forgotten it themselves. The one who speaks hope, who sees potential, who offers encouragement without conditions. Confidence can be contagious, and sometimes it's sparked by someone else believing in us first.

Kindness is simple, but it is never small. It ripples outward in ways we may never fully see. So hold the door, offer the compliment, make the call, sit and listen. You may never know just how much it mattered—but for someone, it could mean everything.

“KINDNESS IS A LANGUAGE WHICH THE DEAF CAN HEAR AND THE BLIND CAN SEE.” -MARK TWAIN