

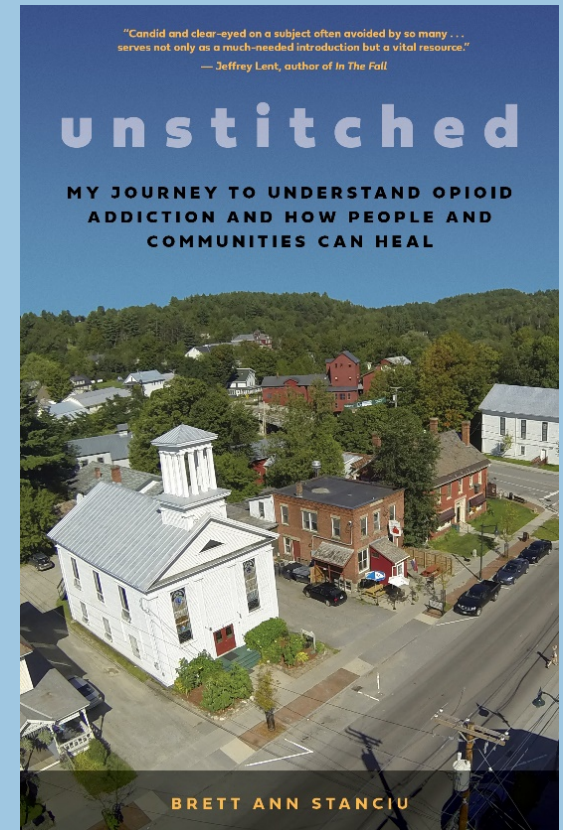


(photo credit: Molly Stanciu)

Librarian **Brett Ann Stanciu** is a graduate of Marlboro College and recipient of a Vermont Arts Council Creation Grant. Her 2015 novel *Hidden View* portrays the challenges of a hardscrabble family farm. She lives in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont with her family.

Unstitched

a discussion guide



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discussion questions

1. *Unstitched* opens when a man breaks into a one-room rural Vermont library. Readers take Stanciu's journey as she meets from strangers from medical and law enforcement workers, to people in recovery. Discuss which characters are especially resonant, and why.
2. The author asks hard questions about opioid abuse. What insight does she gain about who becomes addicted?
3. As Stanciu explores the complexities of substance abuse through hearing personal stories, the author confronts how she's stigmatized others, despite her own struggles with addiction. Has *Unstitched* made you look at others in your community in different ways, or caused you to reflect on your own particular views?
4. *Unstitched* acknowledges that fear often accompanies addiction. Stanciu's house is robbed; much worse, she meets two parents who insist their daughter was murdered by gang members when she pursued recovery. How does Stanciu battle her own fear? In what ways does Stanciu believe that fear of crime contributes to the power of addiction?
5. How does Stanciu envision lessening the stigma against people who abuse substances would aid in healing in individuals and communities?
6. As her quest unfolds, Stanciu witnesses that individual actions have profound consequences. "I want to help," Shauna Shepard insisted, "just one person." What are other examples of individual action, for good or ill, in the book?
7. *Unstitched* acknowledges that there are no easy answers to substance abuse. Addiction is braided into the multi-faceted complexities of society – the disparity of privilege and wealth, the vulnerability of childhood, a frayed spiritual and communal life. Discuss how Stanciu why emphasizes these factors.
8. How does the metaphor of darkness and light unfold in the book?
9. Stanciu writes, "In the battle against addiction, there are clear advantages, including affluence, race, and education. But the murkiness of luck, or perhaps the fickleness of fate, has its role, too." Discuss how privilege and circumstances work out for different people in *Unstitched*.
10. The book culminates when Stanciu meets a couple – Greg and Dawn Tatro – who lost their daughter to an overdose. Can you share an experience of your own, or example of someone in your community, when individual choice made a positive difference? Do individuals and communities have a meaningful role in healing addiction?