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High: Everything You Want to Know About Drugs, Alcohol, and Addiction

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Book Review

High: Everything You Want to Know About Drugs, Alcohol, and Addiction

Author

David and Nic Sheff

Illustrator

Victor Ochoa

Reviewer

Jennifer Haltli

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Rating

Excellent

Level

Intermediate, Young

Adult

.....

Pages

262

Year

2019

ISBN

9780544644342

Publisher

Houghton Mifflin

Harcourt

“Don’t do drugs.” Each teen has heard it numerous times. But when teens chose to use, what are they really choosing? The authors propose that few teens have even considered this question. However, the Sheffs answer it in a fair way through information, statistics, and personal anecdotes. The book breaks down drugs into categories and gives readers particulars about highs, likely short and long-term effects, addiction, recovery, and relapse. The Sheffs also examine abstainers and experimenters, casual users and addicts, and drug abusers and their wounded families through drug-related issues both from the standpoint of a parent and an addict child. The last sections of the book also offer sources for additional reading, phone numbers, and reference charts to spark a more detailed study and encourage action on the part of drug users and their families.

Lecturing and moralizing is absent in this book, and teens will not feel judged as they read. The authors treat addiction as a medical disease, making it appealing to adolescents who are merely curious about drugs and to those who use to any extent. The authors, a father and a son, take an accessible, matter-of-fact tone in the factual parts of the book, and they come across as heartfelt and honest in the anecdotal parts. For instance, the Sheffs kick off a chapter about the typical problems families of addicts face with a story from Nic Sheff about his parents banning him from seeing his little siblings because of his addiction. Stories from other addicts appear scattered throughout the charts, diagrams, and text. In this way, the book offers a personal touch in the middle of copious information. This approach not only engages the reader’s attention, but it demystifies drugs and destigmatizes treatments. This is an informative, empowering read for anyone who has been impacted by drugs and alcohol either directly or indirectly, which covers just about everybody.

*Contains mild language