

HIGH: Everything You Want to Know About Drugs, Alcohol, and Addiction
Discussion Questions for Middle School Students

1. What was your initial reaction to Nic's relationship with his parents and siblings?
2. What was something you learned from reading "HIGH?" How would you teach it to someone else?
3. What do you think are the most commonly used substances at school? Where/how do you think they are being used?
4. Was there anything you read that made you nervous or worried about high school or the future?
5. Is the expression "Just Say Know" helpful? Does it change how you think about substance use?
6. When does "use" become "misuse" or "abuse"? Do you think you would be able to tell if you were addicted to a substance? Do you have an adult in your life that you feel comfortable talking to about substance use?
7. What was the underlying lesson of the book for you?
8. How would you help a friend who seemed to be struggling with substance use? A sibling?
9. Do you think reading this book was helpful? Would you recommend it to other students? If not, what do you think would be a more effective way of looking at alcohol and drugs?
10. What do peers at your school think about drugs?
11. Why do you think young people start using drugs?
12. How do mental health and substance abuse relate to one another?
13. How does cannabis affect the user? Do you know anyone who uses heavily and how has it affected them?
14. The book states, "No one who tries drugs expects to become addicted, but about one in ten or so people will" (p.160). Is it worth it to take the risk? Why would someone take the risk in the first place?

15. Chapter 11 is called “Addiction is a Family Problem.” Do you think that’s accurate? How does this affect your view of addicts?
16. In his aside on page 198, Nic talks about the disadvantages of programs centered around punishment. Why do you think treatment for dual diagnosis ended up working for him?
17. On page 196, Nic mentions seeing a psychiatrist and getting a diagnosis of bipolar disorder and depression. For Nic, the diagnosis “was a huge relief.” Why do you think getting treatment for these diagnoses helped him stay sober?
18. What were your thoughts on David and Nic’s conversation at the end?
19. Out of all the substances outlined in “HIGH,” which one do you find the most dangerous? Which one do you think is the most common among your age group?