



Familial Substance Use Discussion Guide:

Hey, Kiddo by Jarrett J. Krosoczka

From the publisher... "Hey, Kiddo is a profoundly important memoir about growing up in a family as it grapples with addiction, finding the people who help get you through, and the art that helps you survive."

Why a Graphic Novel?

- Research suggests that we are better at understanding and absorbing information presented in visual forms, such as comics.
- Stories are more engaging than factual information alone. How much easier is it to remember and empathize with something a friend experienced versus hard statistics alone?
- Coined by Ian Williams, a physician in the UK, Graphic Medicine "is the intersection of the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare."
 - Graphic medicine, then, combines visual storytelling and medicine, creating a unique opportunity for readers to experience and learn about healthcare experiences through comics.

To Learn More...

- www.graphicmedicine.org – The home base for all things graphic medicine.
- *The Graphic Medicine Manifesto* by MK Czerwiec et al. Available from Penn State University Press.



Created by Sarah Levin-Lederer as part of the NNLM Region 7 Graphic Medicine Initiative.

Questions for Discussion

1. Did you appreciate the visual aspects of this book? Do you think the format of a graphic novel is more or less effective for a memoir than for a fictional account? How is it different than a memoir written in prose?
2. What do you think of Krosoczka's portrayal of his parents and grandparents? Did you find them to be likable or sympathetic? Does that matter?
3. Does the book remind you of an aspect of your own life? A particular event? Someone you know?
4. Can you point to specific passages/panels that struck you personally? Why?
5. Did *Hey, Kiddo* change your perspective on substance use and families affected by it? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. Krosoczka includes pictures of family documents, letters from his mom and old artwork at the end of chapters and at a few key moments. What effect did these have for you? Were they disruptive or did they add to the story he was telling? Did including his mom's own words change your perception of her?
7. A great deal of airtime is spent arguing about whether substance use is a disease – and if so, what *kind* of disease. But the medical consensus is that addiction is a disease, not a moral failing. Why do you think this is such a point of controversy in politics, popular media, and society? How does this controversy affect families dealing with substance use?
8. Have you read other memoirs or stories about substance use and how substance use affects families? How does *Hey, Kiddo* compare to them?
9. Krosoczka dedicates the book to his grandparents, his mom and “For every reader who recognizes this experience. I see you.” What is the significance of seeing your own story in print? What does it mean for readers who don't personally recognize these experiences to see them in print?
10. Would you share *Hey, Kiddo* with people in your life? Why or why not?

Remember: These are just suggested questions. Let the conversation flow naturally and use these questions as starting points when conversation stalls.
