

BEAUTIFUL BOY Film: A Discussion Guide for Families

“Beautiful Boy” is a powerful, poignant and heartbreaking film, combining the memoirs of David Sheff and his son, Nic Sheff. A story of addiction told through the eyes of a father, a family’s struggle driven by fear, heartache, determination, hope and unconditional love. Our hope is that this film will help to change hearts and minds and reduce the stigma and shame too often felt by families.



After viewing the film, use the questions and the resources below to spark conversation about substance use, how the characters in the movie handle it, and what you might do in your own family.

Q: In the movie, Nic’s parents are seemingly unaware of the degree of his substance use, and how serious it is, until he doesn’t come home for a couple of days. **How does a parent or caregiver know when is the right time to intervene and seek help for their child?**

HELPFUL RESOURCE: [Is Your Child Using? Look for Warning Signs](#)

Q: Finding treatment is often a daunting task, and before entering Nic into a treatment, David conducts online research and also asks questions at the residential treatment center. **How do you find the right treatment options for your son or daughter and what questions should you ask?**

HELPFUL RESOURCE: [What Are the Treatment Options?](#)

Q: David and Nic’s mom, Vicki, are seen arguing about what’s best for Nic and often blaming each other for the difficulties brought on by Nic’s addiction. **What is the best approach if parents disagree on what is the best path to get treatment for their child?**

HELPFUL RESOURCE: [What if My Spouse & I Don’t Agree on How to Handle Our Child’s Substance Use?](#)

Q: In an effort to better understand what his son is going through, David visits a doctor to learn what *exactly* is happening when Nic uses meth. **Just how addictive is meth? What does it do to the brain?**

HELPFUL RESOURCE: [Brain Development, Teen Behavior and Drug Use](#)

Q: At one point in the film, David “seems” to give up because he has tried so many different approaches and nothing has succeeded. **As a parent trying to get help for a child with a substance use disorder, what if you are at the end of your rope?**

HELPFUL RESOURCE: [I've Tried Everything to Help My Child's Addiction. Now What?](#)

Q: What should you do when your child comes home from treatment? What are some best practices for outpatient or after-care?

HELPFUL RESOURCE: [Following Drug Treatment & Continuing Care](#)

Q: What should you do if someone you are with is overdosing?

HELPFUL RESOURCE: [Reverse an Overdose with Emergency Naloxone](#)

Additional Resources for Parents & Families

[Get One-on-One Help to Address Your Child's Substance Use](#)

Sometimes you simply need a one-on-one connection. We have trained and caring master's- level specialists ready to help any parent struggling with a son's or daughter's drug or alcohol use. They are here to listen, help you find answers and make an action plan.

[Get Support from Another Parent Who's Dealt with a Child's Addiction](#)

Like David Sheff, many parents have been on this road before. While expert advice can and should be an important part of you seeking help for your son or daughter struggling with substance use, it can be life-changing to talk with someone who has been in your shoes. Learn about Parent Coaching.

[Get Messages of Help & Hope by Text](#)

Sign up to receive text messages directly to your phone, which will help you learn evidence-based skills and strategies to help you better communicate with your child struggling with substances, and motivate them to get the help they need.