



National Recovery Month Youth-Oriented Reading List

Go Ask Alice (Anonymous Diaries) by Beatrice Sparks (Anonymous)

January 24th

After you've had it, there isn't even life without drugs...

It started when she was served a soft drink laced with LSD in a dangerous party game. Within months, she was hooked, trapped in a downward spiral that took her from her comfortable home and loving family to the mean streets of an unforgiving city. It was a journey that would rob her of her innocence, her youth—and ultimately her life.

Read her diary.

Enter her world.

You will never forget her.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/46799.Go_Ask_Alice

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

The Glass Castle is a remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a revelatory look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. When sober, Jeannette's brilliant and charismatic father captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was dishonest and destructive. Her mother was a free spirit who abhorred the idea of domesticity and didn't want the responsibility of raising a family.

The Walls children learned to take care of themselves. They fed, clothed, and protected one another, and eventually found their way to New York. Their parents followed them, choosing to be homeless even as their children prospered.

The Glass Castle is truly astonishing—a memoir permeated by the intense love of a peculiar but loyal family.

The memoir was also made into a major motion picture from Lionsgate in 2017 starring Brie Larson, Woody Harrelson, and Naomi Watts.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7445.The_Glass_Castle

It's a Kind of a Funny Story by Ned Vizzini

Like many ambitious New York City teenagers, Craig Gilner sees entry into Manhattan's Executive Pre-Professional High School as the ticket to his future. Determined to succeed at life—which means getting into the right high school to get into the right college to get the right job—Craig

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studies night and day to ace the entrance exam and does. That's when things start to get crazy.

At his new school, Craig realizes that he isn't brilliant compared to the other kids; he's just average, and maybe not even that. He soon sees his once-perfect future crumbling away. The stress becomes unbearable, and Craig stops eating and sleeping—until, one night, he nearly kills himself.

Craig's suicidal episode gets him checked into a mental hospital, where his new neighbors include a transsexual sex addict, a girl who has scarred her own face with scissors, and the self-elected President Armelio. There, isolated from the crushing pressures of school and friends, Craig is finally able to confront the sources of his anxiety.

Ned Vizzini, who himself spent time in a psychiatric hospital, has created a remarkably moving tale about the sometimes-unexpected road to happiness. For a novel about depression, it's definitely a funny story.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/248704.It_s_Kind_of_a_Funny_Story

We All Fall Down: Living with Addiction by Nic Sheff

In his bestselling memoir *Tweak*, Nic Sheff took readers on an emotionally gripping roller-coaster ride through his days as an addict. In this powerful follow-up about his continued efforts to stay clean, Nic writes candidly about eye-opening stays at rehab centers, devastating relapses, and hard-won realizations about what it means to be a young person living with addiction. By candidly revealing his own failures and small personal triumphs, Nic inspires readers to maintain hope and to remember that they are not alone in their battles. A group reading guide is included.

Nic Sheff's *Tweak*, *We All Fall Down*, and his father's memoir about him (*Beautiful Boy*) are the basis of the film *Beautiful Boy* starring Steve Carell and Timothée Chalamet.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/9473116-we-all-fall-down>

Beneath a Meth Moon by Jacqueline Woodson

Hurricane Katrina took her mother and grandmother. And even though Laurel Daneau has moved on to a new life--one that includes a new best friend, a spot on the cheerleading squad, and dating the co-captain of the football team--she can't get past the pain of that loss. Then her new boyfriend introduces her to meth, and Laurel is instantly seduced by its spell, the way it erases, even if only temporarily, her memories. Soon Laurel is completely hooked, a shell of her former self, desperate to be whole again, but lacking the strength to break free. But with the help of a new friend--and the loyalty of an old one--she is able to rewrite her own story and move on with her own life.



Dreamlike in quality and weaving flashbacks to the hurricane in with Laurel's present-day struggles, this is a stunning novel that readers won't want to miss.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/11737014-beneath-a-meth-moon>

Heroine by Mindy McGinnis

When a car crash sidelines Mickey just before softball season, she must find a way to hold on to her spot as the catcher for a team expected to make a historic tournament run. Behind the plate is the only place she's ever felt comfortable, and the painkillers she's been prescribed can help her get there.

The pills do more than take away pain; they make her feel good.

With a new circle of friends—fellow injured athletes, others with just time to kill—Mickey finds peaceful acceptance, and people with whom words come easily, even if it is just the pills loosening her tongue.

But as the pressure to be Mickey Catalan heightens, her need increases, and it becomes less about pain and more about want, something that could send her spiraling out of control.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/40536342-heroine>

Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction (A Graphic Novel) by Jarrett J. Krosoczka

The powerful, unforgettable graphic memoir from Jarrett Krosoczka, about growing up with a drug-addicted mother, a missing father, and two unforgettably opinionated grandparents.

In kindergarten, Jarrett Krosoczka's teacher asks him to draw his family, with a mommy and a daddy. But Jarrett's family is much more complicated than that. His mom is an addict, in and out of rehab, and in and out of Jarrett's life. His father is a mystery -- Jarrett doesn't know where to find him, or even what his name is. Jarrett lives with his grandparents -- two very loud, very loving, very opinionated people who had thought they were through with raising children until Jarrett came along. Jarrett goes through his childhood trying to make his non-normal life as normal as possible, finding a way to express himself through drawing even as so little is being said to him about what's going on. Only as a teenager can Jarrett begin to piece together the truth of his family, reckoning with his mother and tracking down his father. *Hey, Kiddo* is a profoundly important memoir about growing up in a family grappling with addiction, and finding the art that helps you survive.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/37822650-hey-kiddo>

Recovery Road by Blak Nelson

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Madeline has a drinking problem and anger issues, so she's sent away to Spring Meadows, a rehab center in a row of rehab centers known as Recovery Road. On a weekly movie night in town she meets Stewart, who's dealing with demons of his own. It's an intense time, and the two of them come together intensely. When Madeline gets out of rehab, she tries to get back on her feet, and waits for Stewart to join her. When he does, though, it's not the ideal reunion that Madeline has dreamed of. Both of them still have serious problems. And love seems more like a question than an answer. True and insightful, *Recovery Road* is a story about finding the right person at the worst possible time. And loving that person anyway. No matter what.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8712290-recovery-road>

The Art of Losing by Lizzy Mason

On one terrible night, 17-year-old Harley Langston's life changes forever. At a party she discovers her younger sister, Audrey, hooking up with her boyfriend, Mike—and she abandons them both in a rage. When Mike drunkenly attempts to drive Audrey home, he crashes, and Audrey ends up in a coma. Now Harley is left with guilt, grief, pain and the undeniable truth that her ex-boyfriend (who is relatively unscathed) has a drinking problem. So, it's a surprise that she finds herself reconnecting with Raf, a neighbor and childhood friend who's recently out of rehab and still wrestling with his own demons. At first Harley doesn't want to get too close to him. But as Audrey awakens and slowly recovers, Raf starts to show Harley a path forward that she never would have believed possible—one guided by honesty, forgiveness, and redemption.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/35883613-the-art-of-losing>

Chaos Theory by Nic Stone

DETACHED

Since Shelbi enrolled at Windward Academy as a senior and won't be there very long, she hasn't bothered making friends. What her classmates don't know about her can't be used to hurt her—you know, like it did at her last school.

WASTED

Andy Criddle is not okay. At all.
He's had far too much to drink.
Again. Which is bad.
And things are about to get worse.

When Shelbi sees Andy at his lowest, she can relate. So, she doesn't resist reaching out. And there's no doubt their connection has them both seeing stars . . . but the closer they get, the more the past threatens to pull their universes apart.



#1 *New York Times* bestselling author Nic Stone delivers a tour de force about living with grief, prioritizing mental health, and finding love amid the chaos.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/61356487-chaos-theory>

Keesha's House by Helen Frost

An unforgettable narrative collage told in poems

Keesha has found a safe place to live, and other kids gravitate to her house when they just can't make it on their own. They are Stephie – pregnant, trying to make the right decisions for herself and those she cares about; Jason – Stephie's boyfriend, torn between his responsibility to Stephie and the baby and the promise of a college basketball career; Dontay – in foster care while his parents are in prison, feeling unwanted both inside and outside the system; Carmen – arrested on a DUI charge, waiting in a juvenile detention center for a judge to hear her case; Harris – disowned by his father after disclosing that he's gay, living in his car, and taking care of himself; Katie – angry at her mother's loyalty to an abusive stepfather, losing herself in long hours of work and school.

Stretching the boundaries of traditional poetic forms – sestinas and sonnets – Helen Frost's extraordinary debut novel for young adults weaves together the stories of these seven teenagers as they courageously struggle to hold their lives together and overcome their difficulties.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/357581.Keesha_s_House

Hooked: When Addiction Hits Home by Chloe Shantz-Hilkes with Decode

Jenny dealt with the stress by forgiving her mom—over and over and over again. This collection of ten true stories is based on interviews with people who, in their youth, lived with an addicted parent or sibling. The subjects speak honestly about what it was like to grow up with a family member addicted to alcohol, drugs, food, pills, or gambling. While describing how they managed to cope, interviewees explore the full range of situations and emotions they experienced—from denial, anger, and confusion to acceptance and forgiveness. Their maturity, sensitivity, and even their sense of humor will give teens going through similar situations the important realization that there are many ways to break free from the chains of others' addictions.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/16276843-hooked>

Twelve Steps to Normal by Farrah Penn

1. Accept Grams is gone 2. Learn to forgive Dad 3. Steal back ex-boyfriend from best friend...

And somewhere between 1 and 12, realize that when your parent's an alcoholic, there's no such

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thing as "normal."

When Kira's father enters rehab, she's forced to leave everything behind -- her home, her best friends, her boyfriend...everything she loves. Now her father's sober (again) and Kira is returning home, determined to get her life back to normal...exactly as it was before she was sent away.

But is that what Kira really wants?

Life, love, and loss come crashing together in this visceral, heartfelt story by BuzzFeed writer Farrah Penn about a girl who struggles to piece together the shards of her once-normal life before his alcoholism tore it apart.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32797614-twelve-steps-to-normal>

The Outside Circle: A Graphic Novel by Patty LaBoucane-Benson

In this important graphic novel, two brothers surrounded by poverty, drug abuse, and gang violence, try to overcome centuries of historic trauma in very different ways to bring about positive change in their lives.

Pete, a young Indigenous man wrapped up in gang violence, lives with his younger brother, Joey, and his mother who is a heroin addict. One night, Pete and his mother's boyfriend, Dennis, get into a big fight, which sends Dennis to the morgue and Pete to jail. Initially, Pete keeps up ties to his crew, until a jail brawl forces him to realize the negative influence he has become on Joey, which encourages him to begin a process of rehabilitation that includes traditional Indigenous healing circles and ceremonies.

Powerful, courageous, and deeply moving, *The Outside Circle* is drawn from the author's twenty years of work and research on healing and reconciliation of gang-affiliated or incarcerated Indigenous men.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/23130299-the-outside-circle>

Impossible People: A Completely Average Recovery Story (Graphic Novel) by Julia Wertz

In her keenly observed graphic memoir, *Impossible People*, celebrated cartoonist Julia Wertz chronicles her haphazard attempts at sobriety and the relentlessly challenging, surprisingly funny, and occasionally absurd cycle of addiction and recovery.

Opening at the culmination of a disastrous trip to Puerto Rico, *Impossible People* find Wertz standing stupefied in the middle of the jungle beside a rental Jeep she's just crashed. From this moment, the story flashes back to the beginning of her five-year journey towards sobriety that includes group therapy sessions, relapses, an ill-fated relationship, terrible dates, and an

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unceremonious eviction from her New York City apartment. Far from the typical addiction narrative that follows an upward trajectory from rock bottom to rehab to recovery, *Impossible People* portray the lesser told but more common story: that the road to recover is not always linear. With unflinching honesty, Wertz details the arduous, frustrating, and hilarious story of trying and failing and trying again.

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/62315670-impossible-people>

Sobriety: A Graphic Novel by Daniel D. Maurer

Through rich illustration and narrative, *Sobriety: A Graphic Novel* offers an inside look to recovery from the perspectives of five Twelve Step group members, each with a unique set of addictions, philosophies, struggles, and successes while working the Steps.

Larry, an “old-timer” in recovery circles, believes in the powerful, rich traditions of the Big Book in helping people reinvent themselves. Alex is a Londoner of African descent, gay and an atheist who decided to go to treatment in the States when his Ecstasy and heroin addictions landed him in the hospital. Debby, a single mother in her twenties, is on her third round of treatment. A dreamer, she’s finally owned up to being an addict and wants to live a sober life but hasn’t quite grasped how much work that’s going to take. At nineteen, Matt is what some might call a “tough case” with meth his drug of choice. He’s deeply lonely but has developed a tough outer shell for protection. Hannah was adopted as a baby and grew to be a smart, high achiever. Now a college freshman, her rebellious side has taken over, her grades are suffering, and she also struggles with bulimia.

The fact that they are all seeking help for addiction is the one thing that ties them together. But their approaches to recovery are as diverse as their backgrounds. As their stories unfold through their interactions as a Twelve Step group, we gain an intimate look at the challenges faced by those in recovery--and at the boundless power of working the Steps in helping people find strength in one another as they reach for a clean-and-sober life.

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/20702705-sobriety>

Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir by Janice Erlbaum

At fifteen, sick of her unbearable and increasingly dangerous home life, Janice Erlbaum walked out of her family’s Brooklyn apartment and didn’t look back. From her first frightening night at a shelter, Janice knew she was in over her head. She was beaten up, shaken down, and nearly stabbed by a pregnant girl. But it was still better than living at home. As Janice slipped further into street life, she nevertheless attended high school, harbored crushes, and even played the lead in the spring musical. She also roamed the streets, clubs, bars, and parks of New York City with her two best girlfriends, on the prowl for hard drugs and boys on skateboards. Together they scored coke at Danceteria, smoked angel dust in East Village squats, commiserated over their crazy mothers, and

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slept with one another's boyfriends on a regular basis.

A wry, mesmerizing portrait of being underprivileged, underage, and underdressed in 1980s New York City, *Girlbomb* provides an unflinching look at street life, survival sex, female friendships, and first loves.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/82676.Girlbomb>

Last Night I Sang to the Monster by Benjamin Alire Saenz

Zach is eighteen. He is bright and articulate. He's also an alcoholic and in rehab instead of high school, but he doesn't remember how he got there. He's not sure he wants to remember. Something bad must have happened. Something really, really bad. Remembering sucks and being alive - well, what's up with that?

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6413788-last-night-i-sang-to-the-monster>

Learning Not to Drown by Anna Shinoda

There is a pecking order for every family. Seventeen-year-old Clare is the overprotected baby; Peter is the typical, rebellious middle child; and Luke is the oldest, the can't-do-wrong favorite. To their mother, they are a normal, happy family.

To Clare, they are a family on the verge of disaster. Clare: the ambitious striver; Peter: the angry ticking time bomb; and Luke: a drug-addicted convicted felon who has been in and out of jail for as long as Clare can remember—and who has always been bailed out by their parents.

Clare loves Luke, but life as his sister hasn't been easy. And when he comes home (again), she wants to believe this time will be different (again). Yet when the truths behind his arrests begin to surface, everything Clare knows is shaken to its core. And then Luke is arrested. Again.

Except this time *is* different, because Clare's mom does the unthinkable on Luke's behalf, and Clare has to decide whether turning her back on family is a selfish act...or the only way to keep from drowning along with them.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13014522-learning-not-to-drown>

The First True Thing by Claire Needell

Claire Needell's evocative novel, perfect for fans of *The Girl on the Train*, explores the risks of substance abuse as well as what it means to take control of your life when it seems like the only path forward is the one that will take all your courage.

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Marcelle is clean and sober, attending a tough-love version of after-school rehab, and barely hanging out with her user friends. But one night she gets a text from her best friend, Hannah, asking Marcelle to cover for her.

The next morning, Hannah is missing. Marcelle was the last one to hear from her...and now she's lying to everyone—about the text, and more.

How long can Marcelle go on before she admits to herself what she has to do? If she comes clean, can she save Hannah?

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/41739026>

The Basketball Diaries by Jim Carroll

The urban classic coming-of-age story about sex, drugs, and basketball.

Jim Carroll grew up to become a renowned poet and punk rocker. But in this memoir of the mid-1960's, set during his coming-of-age from 12 to 15, he was a rebellious teenager making a place and a name for himself on the unforgiving streets of New York City. During these years, he chronicled his experiences, and the result is a diary of unparalleled candor that conveys his alternately hilarious and terrifying teenage existence. Here is Carroll prowling New York City-- playing basketball, hustling, stealing, getting high, getting hooked, and searching for something pure.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/682745.The_Basketball_Diaries

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos

In the summer of 1971, Jack Gantos was an aspiring writer looking for adventure, cash for college tuition, and a way out of a dead-end job. For ten thousand dollars, he recklessly agreed to help sail a sixty-foot yacht loaded with a ton of hashish from the Virgin Islands to New York City, where he and his partners sold the drug until federal agents caught up with them. For his part in the conspiracy, Gantos was sentenced to serve up to six years in prison.

In *Hole in My Life*, this prizewinning author of over thirty books for young people confronts the period of struggle and confinement that marked the end of his own youth. On the surface, the narrative tumbles from one crazed moment to the next as Gantos pieces together the story of his restless final year of high school, his short-lived career as a criminal, and his time in prison. But running just beneath the action is the story of how Gantos – once he was locked up in a small, yellow-walled cell – moved from wanting to be a writer to writing, and how dedicating himself more



fully to the thing he most wanted to do helped him endure and ultimately overcome the worst experience of his life. *Hole in My Life* is a 2003 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/842087.Hole_in_My_Life

A Piece of Cake by Cupcake Brown

There are shelves of memoirs about overcoming the death of a parent, childhood abuse, rape, drug addiction, miscarriage, alcoholism, hustling, gangbanging, near-death injuries, drug dealing, prostitution, and homelessness.

Cupcake Brown survived all these things before she'd even turned twenty.

And that's when things got interesting. . .

Orphaned by the death of her mother and left in the hands of a sadistic foster parent, young Cupcake Brown learned to survive by turning tricks, downing hard liquor, and ingesting every drug she could find while hitchhiking up and down the California coast. She stumbled into gangbanging, drug dealing, hustling, prostitution, theft, and, eventually, the best scam of all: a series of 9-to-5 jobs.

A Piece of Cake is unlike any memoir you'll ever read. Moving in its frankness, this is the most satisfying, startlingly funny, and genuinely affecting tour through hell you'll ever take.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/196764.A_Piece_of_Cake