CONTENTS

Foreword by Elizabeth McIngvale	ix
Introduction: Climbing Up from Rock Bottom	1
Chapter 1: OCD and Me	7
What Is OCD?	14
It's Official: I Have OCD	17
What Do OCD Symptoms Look Like?	20
Types of OCD	24
Karissa's Story: What If?	27
Josh's Story: I Had a Germ Phobia	29
Why Do I Have OCD?	29
Sophie's Story, Part 1: My OCD Started with a Dog Attack	30
What Now?	32
Sophie's Story, Part 2: I Got the Help I Needed	33
Chapter 2: Reaching Out	35
Advocating for Yourself	40
Finding a Psychiatrist or Therapist	44
My First Visit with a Psychiatrist	49
Sometimes Labels Are a Good Thing	52
Nicole's Story: Being Diagnosed Was a Relief	53
Chapter 3: How Therapy Can Help	57
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	59
Robert's Story: Exposure and Response Prevention Therapy	
Helped Me	61
Facing Your Fears on Your Own	65
"I Don't Want to Go to Therapy"	68
Chapter 4: How Medicine Can Help	71
Finding the Right Medication	72
Kiersten's Story: It Took Time to Find the Right Medicine for Me	273
Side Effects	76
Worrisome Side Effects	78

Paying for Medication79
I Missed a Dose (and a Dose and a Dose and Another Dose)80
I Took Too Many Pills!82
How Long Will I Need to Be on Medicine?83
Chapter 5: What Else Helps?85
Self-Help86
Beyond Basic Outpatient Therapy90
Rachel's Story: I Got the Help I Needed in a Residential Program91
Surgery95
Believe in Yourself
Chapter 6: I Am Not OCD:
Popular Perceptions and Stigmas99
Molly's Story: Stigma Made OCD Feel Worse100
Everyone and Their Brother Think They Have OCD102
What OCD Is Not
Using Humor as a Coping Method106
Times Have Changed
OCD and Related Disorders109
Chapter 7: Being You with OCD
Putting Yourself in Control
Building a Community of Support117
OCD and Dating120
OCD and School (and Work)121
Keeping Realistic Expectations
Looking Back124
Looking Ahead
References and Resources
Acknowledgments
Index
About the Author141