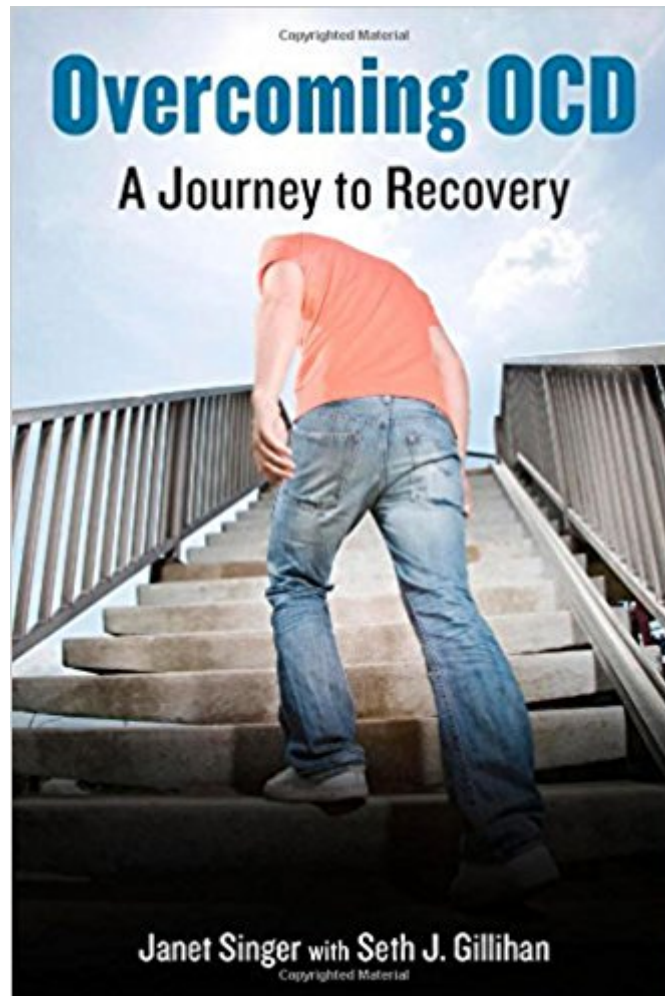




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Overcoming OCD: A Journey To Recovery



Synopsis

Daniel Singer hadn't eaten in a week. Hunched over with his head in his hands, he'd sit in his "safe" chair for hours, doing nothing but shaking, mumbling and moaning; he was in the throes of severe obsessive-compulsive disorder. Dan went from seven therapists to ten medications to a nine week stay at a world renowned residential treatment program. His parents worried he'd never again be able to function in society, or even worse, survive. *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery* is a mother's account of the courage and perseverance of a young man who at times was hindered by the very people who were supposed to be helping him. It is a story of hope and the power of family, as well as a useful guide for all those whose lives have been touched by this often misunderstood and misrepresented disorder. Weaving expert commentary and useful information about OCD and its treatment throughout, the authors are able to offer not just a personal account of how the disorder can affect sufferers and families, but also a glimpse into the possibilities for diagnosis, clinical approaches, and successful outcomes. Today, thanks to Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) therapy, one of the available treatments for OCD, Dan is a college graduate working in his chosen field and living life to the fullest. He is living proof that even those with the most severe cases of OCD can not only recover, but triumph.

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Customer Reviews

After witnessing strange behavior in her son, Dan, while visiting him at college, Singer first realized

that he had OCD. Singer, now an advocate for OCD awareness, has crafted a touching account of her family's search for treatment. Each chapter covers a separate stage of their journey, from recognition of the disorder ('Everything Is Not Fine'), to seeking different avenues of help and treatments ('Looking For Help,' 'ERP to the Rescue'), to complications with Dan's residential treatment program ('A Pothole in the Road') and departure from the program ('The Crash,' 'Picking up the Pieces'), leading to his ultimate triumph over OCD. Deftly embedded throughout the Singers' journey are informative passages from co-author Gillihan, an assistant professor of psychology, that deftly mirror Singer's memoir narrative with clinical facts. For example, Gillihan explains 'What is OCD' after Singer recounts her realization that her son had the disorder, later discussing 'Odd Behavior in OCD' and 'Medication for OCD' when Singer describes Dan's problem behaviors and struggle with various medications. Eventually, supported by his loving family, Dan was able to overcome OCD through exposure and response prevention (ERP) treatment. Singer and Gillihan's differing backgrounds and perspectives complement each other for a book that will leave readers moved, as well as educated about the nature of a disorder and how to defeat it. (Publishers Weekly)

In *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery* by Janet Singer and Dr. Seth J. Gillihan, the reader is introduced to Dan, a young man who truly meets the criteria for having OCD. . . . Being a witness to Janet Singer's story and journey will have the reader laughing, crying, and sharing in her anger in dealing with professionals who lacked compassion and judgment. . . . This book would benefit any mental health professional, medical professional, or family dealing with a loved one with OCD, any OCD sufferer, and anyone who would like information on what it means to struggle and live with OCD. . . . The book offers hope and encouragement as well as valuable information in dealing with professionals in order not to feel dismissed. The authors stress the importance of finding a doctor who understands OCD and its effective treatment options and medication management. Overall [the book is] a deeply poignant account of a young man's struggle and triumph with OCD and the support of his mother and family. (Psych Central)

Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery is her account of the courage and perseverance of a young man who at times was hindered by the very people who were supposed to be helping him. What makes the book unique is the expert commentary that is interwoven throughout. (Community Advocate)

Janet Singer has accomplished more in her book, *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery*, than a hundred scientific publications filled with facts, figures, and charts. To live with OCD yourself or in your family, the ordinary human needs lay speak. Janet does that in her book with authenticity, emotion, and compassion. . . . Janet has done a

tremendous favor for those living with OCD or with a loved one who has OCD. The picture offered is a realistic image of their family's struggles with Dan's illness and treatments. Janet does not spare anything in laying out the facts of their life, their struggles with the medical and psychological communities, their attempts to help Dan. Standing alongside and contributing to Janet's book is Seth J. Gillihan, Ph.D., a clinical assistant professor of psychology in the psychiatry department at the University of Pennsylvania. The beauty of Dr. Gillihan's contributions is found in their placement in the book. As Dan and his family face another crisis, Dr. Gillihan writes information on drugs, treatment plans, and other scientific information in lay terms. This balance between the realistic story and the medical information available provides a perfect resource based in truth for coping with and treating OCD. Janet Singer has written a poignant and powerful memoir plus a resource to guide others to an understanding of OCD and how to manage it. This book shares encouragement and enlightenment in equal measure, a powerful combination indeed. (Sherrey Meyer, Writer)

There are a growing number of OCD memoirs on the market...some of them paint astonishingly lucid pictures of what it's like to live with OCD. But until now, no one has written about what it's like to live with someone with OCD. In *Overcoming OCD*, Janet Singer has changed that. She's offered the gift of her own experience to the millions of people who love somebody with OCD and people who are scared and confused and would really like someone to talk to about all of this. Because as Singer knows, we obsessive-compulsives can't always explain ourselves. . . .How do you love a person like that? And how do you take care of yourself while you do? I'm not sure there are any final answers to questions like these and I don't think Janet Singer does either. But she loves her son and protects her family anyway and in *Overcoming OCD*, she helps others see something about how they might too. (Matt Beiber, Writer)

It takes courage for a parent to tell the story of her adult child's struggle with mental illness and his confusing, heart-rending path to recovery. In *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery*, Janet Singer shares her son's battle with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), from its onset during his freshman year of college, through senior year when he graduated. This is a story of the strong, young man, but for me, it is also the journey of a mother who refused to give up hope. . . .In *Overcoming OCD*, the author gives insight into the complexities of co-occurring disorders and the trial-and-error approach to medication. We see the tightrope Ms. Singer walks between advocating for her son and overstepping, and between following doctors' orders and questioning their methods. . . .I recommend this book to anybody supporting a loved one in managing a mental illness. The reader will discover he is not alone, there are resources and help available, and most important, there is hope. (Toss the

Typewriter)I like to think of *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery* as a love story, featuring the selfless love a parent has for a suffering and hurting child. In this case, it is the story of Janet and Gary Singer, and their college student son, Dan, who was struggling with severe OCD. . . .I love this book. I mean, I really love this book. It is very well written and flows easily through what was probably one of the most painful years of the Singer family's lives. I had a hard time putting the book down and read it in its entirety in a handful of sittings. . . .Throughout the book, Dr. Gillihan adds thoughtful and informative commentary about OCD, and more importantly, treatment, including ERP and medication. His input is spot-on and adds a critically important component to the book. These are not throwaway or filler remarks. They are filled with solid information that sufferers and their families can use to guide them forward through the maze of battling OCD. . . .*Overcoming OCD* is a big win for me, and I will gladly recommend it. (71 Å° & Sunny: One Christian's Odyssey Through Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)[The book is a] compelling and moving read, which also has dots of dry and dark humour, both from Janet and Dan - even OCD sufferers can, on occasion, see the funny side of their plight! The book is co-authored by Seth Gillihan, who provides expert commentary and background information about the condition and its treatment, which is interspersed throughout the book in bite-sized chunks easily digested by the layman. . . .At the end, I had a lump in my throat, in spite of already knowing the outcome of Dan's journey, both from the book's title and as a follower of Janet's blog. His success in reclaiming his life is inspirational and proves that, no matter how badly affected you are by OCD, you can do the same. (The Reluctant Perfectionist)I highly recommend *Overcoming OCD*, whether you have OCD, you treat OCD, or you have a loved one with OCD. Heck, I recommend it even if you've never even heard of OCD. (Alison Dotson: Author, OCD Advocate, book lover)I really didn't want to put this book down after I started it. It's inspirational, absorbing, and just a plain good story. Parents with children who have OCD would particularly benefit and would be reminded that they are not alone in their journey. The beneficial role that family support can play is well illustrated. I would also highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to know more about OCD and to those with OCD. (Bringing Along OCD)What I loved about this book: It realistically portrays the hell of OCD. Nothing is watered down in this book. Families are going to be able to recognize immediately that this family truly understands the torture of OCD. . . .[and] Janet's heartbreaking narrative is balanced with Dr. Seth Gillihan's forthright explanations. I like that readers are given both one family's personal experience, but that the book still dials back and addresses things more clinically and more generally. . . .I hope you'll read this important book. (Jackie Lea Sommers)Janet Singer's book *Overcoming OCD* is a perfect

blend of anecdote, taken from Singer's own experiences, mixed with professional advice from OCD expert Seth J Gillihan. Anyone who doesn't think that OCD is a serious illness needs to read Dan's story. . . .As the parent of a child suffering from OCD, I found the book to be incredibly helpful, affirmative and informative. The book also includes quite a bit of information about the different types of treatments for OCD including the different types of medications that are often provided, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) including the all-important Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), residential and therapeutic treatments, and other resources. This information is presented in easy to read sidebars, with lots of references and links, in a way that aligns with Dan's story. Overcoming OCD provides the full trajectory of the Singer family experience from the point they learned about Dan's OCD to his graduation from college. Though there is a wealth of OCD information and resources in the book which will be helpful to anyone with an involvement in OCD including sufferers, families, doctors, and therapists, this is really a book pitched at parents or carers of OCD sufferers, an often thankless, painful and difficult role that demands an intense learning curve. Not only does Overcoming OCD provide advice, support, and hope to parents, but it also talks to some of the struggles that OCD puts on other siblings, the pitfalls to watch out for in certain types of treatments, things (like enabling) to be careful of, and above all, the importance of remaining positive even when the situation looks intractable. Perhaps most important of all, is that this book speaks in very candid and open ways about a misunderstood and often silent mental illness. Overcoming OCD is an important book, not just because it is a valuable resource full of information on the types of treatment that can help OCD sufferers like Dan, but also because it offers much needed wisdom and hindsight to the families of sufferers. It is only through open discourse and information that mental illnesses like OCD can become understood enough so that mistreatment becomes the exception rather than the norm, and so that sufferers feel comfortable seeking the treatment they so desperately need. Janet Singer and Seth J. Gillihan are to be congratulated on producing such a unique and powerful guide that will hopefully change public perception about this illness and offer help and hope to many. (The Compulsive Reader)

This book by Singer and Gillihan is a remarkable story of a mother and son's inspiring chronicle against OCD. Singer's story clearly conveys the pain of having a loved one struggle with OCD, yet inspires those in their fight by illustrating how this family triumphed. Beyond being compelling and inspiring, this text successfully educates the reader about the nature and treatment of OCD. (Eric A. Storch, Ph.D., professor and All Children's Hospital Guild Endowed Chair, University of South Florida; clinical director, Rogers Behavioral Health - Tampa Bay)

Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery is an inspiring story of a young man's

determination and courage to free himself from the limitations and terrors of his obsessive-compulsive disorder. Whether you suffer with the condition or whether you love someone who suffers with the condition, you will find something in this book that will encourage and enlighten. (Michael A. Tompkins, Ph.D., San Francisco Bay Area Center for Cognitive Therapy; author of *OCD: A Guide for the Newly Diagnosed* (2012))

Overcoming OCD offers something new to the library by highlighting the complexity of helping a family member with the disorder. Singer and Gillihan invite us into the world of an OCD family by seamlessly combining heartfelt memories with concrete clinical facts. The book reads like a true crime novel with the hero being a mother who will stop at nothing to help her son through a maze of mental illness and those who treat it, a theme that surely resonates with more families than we know. (Jon Hershfield, MFT, psychotherapist and co-author of *The Mindfulness Workbook for OCD: A Guide for Overcoming Obsessions and Compulsions with Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*)

This book is a remarkable achievement; it is a poignant and powerful memoir as well as a valuable resource for understanding and managing OCD. (Paul M. Rosen, Ph.D., author of *TLC: Talking Listening Connecting with Your Kids*)

I learned a lot from this important book, in which we read a mother's first-person account of her anguish and eventual triumph as she attempts to navigate the confusing world of treatment options for a college-age son stricken with severe OCD. Her first-person account is beautifully balanced by the voice of Dr. Gillihan, an expert in OCD, who provides the reader with additional information on what treatments are available, which are backed by science, and what to expect when engaging in them.

There are few books in which we read so intimately of a parent's struggle to care for a child with OCD. There are fewer still that detail this struggle when the child is actually a young adult, leaving the nest, and the parent must strike the right balance between providing structure and care while respecting a son's growing need for independence. This book will benefit and educate those suffering from OCD, those who love them, and those who treat them in clinical settings. (Katherine K. Dahlsgaard, Ph.D., Lead Psychologist, ABC: The Anxiety Behaviors Clinic, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)

Authors Janet Singer and Seth Gillihan's contribution in *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery* will be both valuable and relatable to OCD sufferers and family members. The personal story of Dan's brave journey and alternating treatment information make this book inspiring and informative. (Stacey Kuhl Wochner, LCSW, psychotherapist in private practice, Los Angeles (www.ocdspecialists.com))

Janet Singer and Seth Gillihan's *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery* is a touching and valuable book. In its best moments, it captures a mother's struggles to understand her son's OCD and support him through a long and difficult journey,

with grace and forthrightness. Through a series of clear and well-referenced sidebars, the book also provides concrete information about OCD and its treatment that is of great value. Every person with OCD experiences it differently, and Dan's journey, as experienced by his mother, will resonate with some patients and their families more than with others. But the clarity and simple humanity of the story will be a great help to many individuals and many families who have been touched by OCD, and by mental illness more broadly, letting them know that others have experienced what they are going through, and have flourished. (Christopher Pittenger, MD, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry and assistant professor of psychology, Child Study Center; director, Yale OCD Research Clinic; and associate director, Neuroscience Research Training Program) This is a touching and genuine account of a family and their experience with obsessive-compulsive disorder. The book is revealing and brings the reader through a range of emotions. It is well researched and provides an informative account of how one can recover from OCD with professional treatment and the support of family. I highly recommend this book to anyone coping with OCD. (Jim Lemli, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist/Cognitive-Behavioral Therapist) Overcoming OCD is a moving account of one family's experience with obsessive compulsive disorder. From the earliest signs of illness to triumphant recovery, Singer provides a mother's perspective on the devastating impact of OCD and the inspiring nature of her son's resilience and perseverance. Gillihan's expert voice on the science and treatment of OCD adds richness and depth to this unflinching narrative. The personal and clinical perspectives on OCD are woven together to produce an intimate, informative and ultimately inspiring account of illness, love, and recovery. (Matthew O. Hurford, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services)

Janet Singer is an advocate for OCD awareness, with the goal of spreading the word that OCD, no matter how severe, is treatable. Six years ago, her son Dan suffered from OCD so debilitating he could not even eat. Today, thanks to exposure and response prevention (ERP) therapy, he is a young man living his life to the fullest. Janet writes regularly for Psychcentral.com as well as Mentalhelp.net, and has been published on many other web sites including Beyond OCD, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, and Mad in America. She has also been an invited speaker at OCD conferences. She started her own blog, ocdtalk (www.ocdtalk.wordpress.com) in 2010 and it currently reaches readers in 162 countries. She uses a pseudonym to protect her son's privacy. Seth J. Gillihan, PhD, is a clinical assistant professor of psychology in the Psychiatry Department at the University of Pennsylvania, and a visiting assistant professor of psychology at

Haverford College. Dr. Gillihan was on the faculty at the Center for the Treatment and Study of Anxiety at the University of Pennsylvania from 2008-2012. His research publications include articles and book chapters on the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for OCD, anxiety, and depression, how CBT helps people to get better, and the use of brain imaging to study psychiatric disorders. Dr. Gillihan's clinical practice is located in Haverford, PA.

As someone with a history of severe OCD who overcame it, I appreciated that this book clearly shows the seriousness of the disorder and the terrible pain that it causes. OCD is often misunderstood and people often seem to have difficulty finding the most effective treatments (especially exposure and response prevention therapy). When a family member is in crisis and treatment doesn't seem to be helping enough, it is very difficult to try to quickly learn enough to make challenging, high stakes decisions about treatment. It is especially difficult if recommendations of experts don't seem right. This book clearly shows this struggle and how the family searched for the right options while trying to prevent Dan from losing the chance to pursue his dreams.

As I read this book, I was amazed at the similarities in Dan and our son and the agonizing experiences involved in treating Severe OCD. We have been on the same roller coaster ride of meds, psychiatric hospitals and individualized treatment plans. Trying to ask knowledgeable questions in regards to treatment plans and meds and being stone walled by the experts. This book offers so much information and guidance. I highly recommend it to anyone or families battling this disease.

If you, or a loved one, is suffering with OCD, please read this book. Not only will it give you valuable information about OCD and its treatment, it will give you something far greater: hope that recovery is absolutely possible and that you or your loved one can lead a wonderful life. Despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles and dire circumstances, author Janet Singer never gave up hope that her son would get well. In *Overcoming OCD: A Journey to Recovery*, Singer and co-author Dr. Seth J. Gillihan provide unique insights into OCD from two very different perspectives: that of a mother desperate to help her son get well, and that of a clinician trained to research and treat this always confusing, often debilitating and, in some cases, life-threatening disorder. The experiences and knowledge specific to each author changed my course of action in my efforts to get help for a loved one. I am grateful for Janet Singer's determination and willingness to re-live and document the intense fear and anguish and confusion and anger she experienced while navigating a circuitous

and at times maddeningly difficult path to recovery for her son. She helped me see that where there is hope, there is great strength.

This is an inspiring story of finding a way to health and life with the challenge of OCD. Dan is a remarkable young man. The message that resonates for me is the necessity of someone like Janet to be an advocate for her son through the maze of the mental health field. Her belief in the possibility of wellness for her son, and unrelenting fighting for him kept the path open for him.

This book tells the story of a young man's brave journey dealing with OCD, from his mother's perspective. It includes anecdotal information from professionals that explain the technical aspects of the disease and treatment. Kudos to this family for their successful battle with this disorder!

I just finished reading this book. I can't begin to say how encouraging and helpful I found it to be. Janet writes with ease, humor and emotion. There is hope for overcoming OCD. Thank you for sharing your son's journey to recovery.

Excellent book providing insight into how severe OCD can actually be. It portrays a long and complicated struggle with many missteps along the way demonstrating how important it is for patients to have an advocate. The book alternates between being narrated by the mother and comments being made by a psychologist who is an expert in the field. This book is not only valuable for people who have, or who are interested in OCD, but for anyone interested in seeing how treacherous a journey through the mental health network can be.

Thank you Janet Singer for writing this book. If you have a family member or loved one suffering from OCD - this book is a must read!

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