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Divided Minds: Twin Sisters And Their Journey Through Schizophrenia



Divided Minds

Twin Sisters and Their
Journey Through
Schizophrenia

Pamela Spiro Wagner and Carolyn S. Spiro, M.D.



Synopsis

Growing up in the fifties, Carolyn Spiro was always in the shadow of her more intellectually dominant and social outgoing twin, Pamela. But as the twins approached adolescence, Pamela began to succumb to schizophrenia, hearing disembodied voices and eventually suffering many breakdowns and hospitalizations. *Divided Minds* is a dual memoir of identical twins, one of whom faces a life sentence of schizophrenia, and the other who becomes a psychiatrist, after entering the spotlight that had for so long been focused on her sister. Told in the alternating voices of the sisters, *Divided Minds* is a heartbreaking account of the far reaches of madness, as well as the depths of ambivalence and love between twins. It is a true and unusually frank story of identical twins with very different identities and wildly different experiences of the world around them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

August 23, 2005 [...] *The Nation's Voice on Mental Illness* Traditionally, twin studies have been important statistically for understanding genetic predisposition to schizophrenia, but a new book, authored by twins, provides a unique exposition of the illness. *Divided Minds: Twins Sisters and Their Journey Through Schizophrenia* is a memoir by Pamela Spiro Wagner, now in her 50s, who began hearing voices in 6th grade. Her chapters alternate with ones by her sister, Carolyn Spiro, M.D., a psychiatrist, who even with her medical training, did not recognize her sister's illness for years. Neither did their father, a professor at Yale Medical School. They also are scheduled to speak at NAMI state conferences in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania in October, as well as to NAMI

Westchester County, N.Y. This is not the first time Pamela has shared her perspective as a person living with mental illness. As part of Mental Illness Awareness Week in 1993, NAMI Connecticut and others honored her with a media award for an article she published in the local newspaper, entitled "Mentally Ill People Deserve Equal Health Insurance Coverage." It also was carried on the newspaper's national wire service. "NAMI is probably the most active and helpful group around and the award I won...remains one of my proudest moments," Pamela says. "I had barely heard of NAMI before that time, but I knew then I'd have to find out more. What I learned was that NAMI has single-handedly worked to curb stigma and fear of psychiatric patients, and to treat families and friends as allies in the struggle." "A few decades ago biological brain diseases like depression, bipolar disorder, OCD and schizophrenia were still taboo subjects," Carolyn adds.

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