INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This book recounts the journeys of thirty-five young people. The job they have given us is to share with you the information we used to help them in their recovery.

*Diagnosis: Schizophrenia* is a very special book because it is written both for people who have schizophrenia and for those who wish to understand how it feels to have the disease, including the patients themselves, family members, students, and anyone with an interest in how people sustain hope through an initially debilitating illness. This book is unique because people who have schizophrenia provided their stories and helped to design and edit much of it. A panel of highly recognized experts in the field—psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers, and psychiatric rehabilitation workers—contributed to and reviewed the manuscript to ensure that the content is both accurate and up to date. However, we want to emphasize that from its inception, our patients played a major role in every stage of this book’s development, including the writing, editing, and illustrating. Our patients were our most rigorous critics, and we listened to and acted on their comments.

In *Diagnosis: Schizophrenia* we attempt to explain how it feels to have the disease and to go through the stages of recovery using a number of first-person accounts provided by patients. These very special young women and men, all in the first five years of the illness, share their initial experiences, their changing relationships with family and friends, and their lives in treatment. Most important, they relate their newfound hope for the future that is based on their understanding of the disease and its management.

We also include useful information on medications, clinical research, social and rehabilitation services, and the cause and progression of the disease. These sections are designed to help patients understand what has happened to them and how to get help. The social and rehabilitation services chapters contain information about Medicare, Medicaid, housing, job coaching, and
many other programs, including their telephone numbers and online addresses. Chapters have been woven together from the contributions of patients, staff members, and the authors, Rachel Miller and Susan Mason, to create a book that is jargon-free and technically accurate. The organization of the book takes into account the difficulties in concentration sometimes experienced by people with schizophrenia.

We profoundly thank our patients for their help in enlightening us. We also are very grateful to the Nicholas Family Charitable Trust, which provided generous support for our project. All of the authors’ profits are being contributed to the Research Fund at Hillside Hospital of the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System in Glen Oaks, New York.

Rachel Miller, Glen Oaks, New York
Susan E. Mason, New York, New York