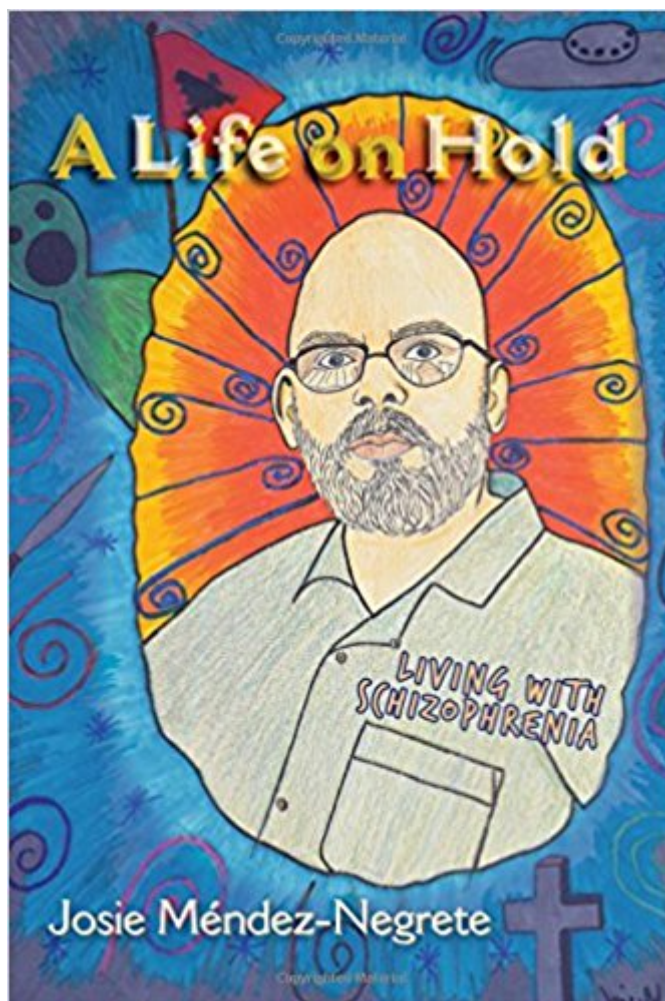


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# A Life On Hold: Living With Schizophrenia



## Synopsis

For more than twenty years Josie MÃfÂ©ndez-Negrete has endured the emotional journey of watching her son Tito struggle with schizophrenia. Her powerful account is the first memoir by a Mexican American author to share the devastation and hope a family experiences in dealing with this mental illness. MÃfÂ©ndez-Negrete depicts the evolution of the disease from her perspective as a parent and by relating Tito's own narrative, illuminating the inadequacies of the US mental health system and the added burdens of addiction and blame. Through the author, Tito paints a vivid picture of his lived experiences and everyday traumas to show how his life and the lives of his loved ones have been impacted by mental illness.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"MÃfÂ©ndez-Negrete weaves powerful accounts of her visits to her son with factual information from professional literature. . . . [A Life on Hold] will make you appreciate what is right in your life and what is right in the human race." —Story Circle Book Reviews  
"A truly extraordinary account, A Life on Hold: Living with Schizophrenia is an absolutely absorbing read from beginning to end. Candid, informative, intensely personal, detailed, and deftly written." —Midwest Book Review

Josie MÃfÂ©ndez-Negrete is a sociologist who teaches Mexican American studies in the Department of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is also the

author of *Las hijas de Juan: Daughters Betrayed*.

Josie has written one of the most compelling books about the true definition of love and resilience. Her book, written in short vignettes, acutely sheds light onto what it is to live with a family member who suffers from a mental illness. Her testimony and conversations with her son Tito, who suffers from schizophrenia, are honest and filled with insightful details about how Tito's mind suffers and works. The voices in his head are depicted vividly in a sincere and creative tone. Through her writing, Josie has given her son the platform to tell his story – an important story of courage and resilience. I highly recommend her book!

Great insight into the daily life of someone with Schizophrenia. I can't help but think how devastating, heartbreaking and frustrating it must be both for the author of this book and her son, to have to accept and live with this diagnosis. As a Licensed Professional Counselor Intern; who works with this population, I know how frightening and tragic this illness presents during a psychotic break. I have witnessed wonderful moments of lucidity in my patients clear eyes and smiling faces too. I would recommend this book to fellow interns and students going into the Mental Health field.

It came at the right time for my daughter and her husband. Very educational. Thanks.

thank you

Schizophrenia is a brain disorder or mental illness in which people interpret reality abnormally. Josie Mendez-Negrete recounts her experiences as the mother of an adult son, Tito, who is schizophrenic in *A Life on Hold: Living with Schizophrenia*. In the preface she states, "After more than twenty years of living inside mental illness as the mother of a son with schizophrenia, I continue to be in awe of Tito's ability to make sense of and deal with his life." That shows her love. Even more, though, it shows that she sees her son's strengths as well as his disabilities, and she knows that the mentally ill have a great deal to contribute, despite their conditions. Mendez-Negrete weaves powerful accounts of her visits to her son with factual information from professional literature. She shows how schizophrenia has taken a bite out of her son, leaving him incapable of sustaining normal relationships, holding a job, or living independently. She goes on to show how his condition affects the whole family. Then she adds her insights as a caring, concerned, loving, educated, intelligent mother who tries to take responsibility for her son's protection and lifestyle while living her

own life as a sociologist and teacher. In short, accessible chapters, Mendez-Negrete writes about the fractured realities that schizophrenics experience. These include voices telling them what to do, delusions, cigarettes (as both a calming tool and a type of currency), self-medication in an attempt to feel better, and the horrors of board-and-care warehousing. There is a fair amount of repetition in the stories, but there is also repetition in the life of the schizophrenic. We hear directly from Tito, who picks up the conversation in each new visit where it left off the last time he saw his mother. Mendez-Negrete is a skilled listener as well as an articulate writer. One of the best gifts she can give her son is the patience to wait while he expresses his thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams, and desires. Tito's repetitions remind me of two teenage boys in our church who happen to be autistic. One of them shakes your hand and turns you back to back so he can measure how much taller he is than you are, much like a child standing up against a wall. His brother is more verbal and more athletic, but neither one relates to the world like a normal teenager. Both of them recognize their limitations. They know they will not grow out of this. They've helped me understand Tito's limitations and their mother reminds me a bit of the author because of her patience and love. This is a book for everyone who has ever loved, taught, or lived in the same neighborhood with someone struggling with mental limitations. It will make you appreciate what is right in your life and what is right in the human race.

by B. Lynn Goodwin for Story Circle Book Reviews reviewing books by, for, and about women

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