

# The blinding lies of depression

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**N**umb and empty, I continued to drive home in a daze. My mind focused only on the light ahead changing from yellow to red. "Remember to step on the brake," commanded the internal boss to my stunned mind. No tears, I continued to drive as green blinked its eye.

Earlier that afternoon as I stepped out of my second outpatient appointment of the day, the office administrator's assistant gingerly informed me, "The guy who answered the phone for your no-show said she passed."

"Passed? Like ... died?" I asked in shock.

She nodded. "I looked her up in the system. She passed away 2 Saturdays ago."

That was only 2 days after the last time I met with her when we celebrated her progress.

"Too soon, too soon in your career," my attending bemoaned as I shared the news.

Gathering my scattered wit, I smoothed my furrowed brow and forced a smile back into my eyes. I had other patients to see.

Soothed by the hum of my car, my mind replayed our last meeting where hope and active plans had replaced broken hopelessness. For the past 2 weeks, I had erroneously dismissed her no-shows as her volatile borderline personality's decision to fire me. I was wrong.

Holding things together until a silly domestic dispute unleashed the brewing tornado inside, I stormed upstairs to contain the pain. Behind locked doors, my body shuddered from uncontrollable tears that blinded my eyes. She was the first

patient I helped through psychotherapy and the first I lost through suicide.

The news of her death triggered anguish from past suicides of dear friends. Chopper, who blew off his face during our sophomore year of high school. Chopper had already transferred to another school, but those closer to him received a surprise visit with gifts of his personal possessions when he drove up to our school that morning. Later that afternoon, law enforcement found him in a nearby park. In a graduating class of around 100 students, we all grieved.

A few years later, another classmate, Aaron, sank into depression. He, too, shot himself. Just months before I'd received the call requesting my presence at his funeral, he had asked me if I would be his Valentine. Jokingly, I agreed, knowing our paths would never cross after our graduation. At his funeral, his parents insisted that I sat as a member of his immediate family.

Oh ... the blinding lies of depression. Those who have fallen prey to suicide never knew the truth: Their lives and their deaths matter.

Even strangers weep.



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#### Disclosure

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