

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dr. Wolff is a board-certified family physician in private practice in Cornelius, North Carolina. He finished his family practice residency in 1997.

He has graciously consented to share stories from the trenches of primary care. While his practice diary is taken from actual patient encounters, the reader should be aware that some medication references may represent off-label uses.

We at the *Companion* are certain that these vignettes will inform, entertain, challenge, and stimulate our readers in their effort to address behavioral issues in the everyday practice of medicine.

## Close to Home

Christian G. Wolff, M.D.

### Sunday

That afternoon, while on call for my practice, I received a buzz from the police department—a colleague took his own life at his home. I sat dumbfounded.

He was a vibrant fellow with a booming practice who acted with no apparent warning—how could this be? I interacted with him almost daily; those who were closer to him were also at a loss to explain how someone so jovial could harbor feelings so dark.

Among the maelstrom of emotions and thoughts I have had since that afternoon, I am profoundly struck by humility. I'm supposed to be able to spot those kinds of things, aren't I? But apparently that is not always the case. This experience has renewed my empathy for those who reach out for help and reminds me to take that extra minute to ask those extra questions to take care of those patients who are hurting.

It will take a while for things to return to normalcy around here. But people continue to get sick and continue to need our help. Maybe I'll make some sense out of this someday soon. ♦