



Just another Day as a Psychiatrist

It's another day at the primary health care center here in New Orleans. A client comes in for her first psychiatric visit. She's not sure where to start. She starts with the narrative:

1. Lost a stepdaughter at age 18 to cervical cancer. She had a tumultuous relationship with my client secondary to feeling replaced. The stepdaughter displaced anger against my client because her mother allowed a boyfriend to scald her with hot water as a young child.
2. Husband of 20 years dies with her stepson in a drowning accident three days before Easter in 2001. He was a harbor policeman trying to rescue his son. Their bodies surfaced clung together miles away down the Mississippi River.
3. A brother is shot 5 times in the head for a dispute about a gun cartridge unresolved by two younger brothers.
4. At the brother's funeral, a younger sister appears on the lam from parole. The parole officer shows up with a swarm of police officers to arrest her at the funeral.
5. The two younger brothers were arrested the next day while the client's mother went to check on the burial site. It wasn't ready on the day of the funeral.
6. The younger sister does two years. The two brothers do ten.
7. Client used the insurance money from her husband's policy to put a down payment on a house. He wanted her to purchase the house. Instead she used some of the money to buy her mother some furniture and a used car.
8. Now her home and her mother's have been lost since Hurricane Katrina.
9. Last year, the client was diagnosed with bilateral malignant breast cancer. She had a double mastectomy. The surgeon made her wait four months after discovering the first tumor in part because he went to a conference and delayed the procedure.
10. The client is not sure what she needs help with at this time. She knows that she has difficulty sleeping. Reviewing her regimen I recommend that she start taking her Cymbalta in the morning to reduce insomnia.



It was hard to fit her story into the electronic record.