



Helping People Grow and Change

PORT ANGELES OFFICE

118 East 8th Street • Port Angeles, WA 98362

Ofc: (360) 457-0431 • Fax: (360) 457-0765

SEQUIM OFFICE

490 North 5th Avenue • Sequim, WA 98382

Ofc: (360) 681-0585 • Fax: (360) 681-2808

www.peninsulabehavioral.org

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Editor

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To the Editor:

Robin Williams died this week, his death an apparent suicide. Almost all of us laughed along with him in his many comedic roles, and cried with him in his dramatic roles. The roller coaster of emotions he evoked in us was suspected by many to be a reflection of the roller coaster of emotions he felt throughout his life. Tragically, it seems our suspicions are confirmed.

Mr. Williams was reported to live with mental illness, at various times said to be major depression, and at other times bipolar disorder. Both major depression and bipolar disorder are medical conditions that, at various times in a person's life, affect the body's ability to regulate emotions and other physical processes such as sleep, appetite, impulse control, and energy level. Both are associated with higher rates of suicide. Both are readily treatable.

I did not know Mr. Williams. I do not know if or how he treated his mental conditions, other than what is reported in the popular press. I do know that we are all talking about suicide right now, and so I will reach out to say this: If you are, or someone you know is, struggling with symptoms of mental illness, do not stay silent. Help is available, and it is available now. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline (1-800-950-6264) and our local Crisis Line (360-452-4500) are good places to start.

Joshua Jones, M.D.

Medical Director