The Burden of Lingering Empathy: A Creative Writing Experience for Counselor Debriefing

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After spending most of a day helping students and staff deal with the apparent suicide of a popular member of a school community, I was left with disturbing words and pictures. I simply began to write down the images until they stopped and I had gained some relief. The product of this experience follows.

The Face

I keep seeing the dead man's face
Slain by his own choice
Carbon Monoxide

The tears
the words
the pain
of all the remaining casualties

Their faces
blend and disappear
into the image of his face
alive and well, smirking

The face of the man
I didn't really know
haunts me

The face of the man
no more alive
lives on in the scars
in the faces of the survivors
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