**Loss History/Personal Awareness Paper**

Each of us develops our own unique style of coping with grief and loss. The purpose of this assignment is to assist students in developing an awareness of the many faces of loss, and the very unique, personal and changing responses each of us has to loss throughout our lifespan. It is critical that we recognize the ways in which our own experiences and style of dealing with loss influence our clinical practice. Understanding your attitudes, values, and reactions surrounding loss will be an important part of the work that you will do with students, staff and community members experiencing grief.

**Papers submitted prior to class-time of Week 3 will have an opportunity for resubmission after receiving feedback.**

**Part I: Loss Time Line**

Draw a timeline, representing your life span up to your current age. Label the time line with the various losses you have experienced throughout your lifetime (both death and non-death losses).

Indicate:

1. Your age at the time of each loss

2. Nature of the loss: move, pet death, parents divorced, etc.

**Part II: Autobiographical Reflection on Your Loss(es)**

In this portion of your paper, you will select ***the most significant loss*** from your timeline so that you can address the following in depth:

1. Circumstance of the loss:
   * What loss have you experienced that you would consider the most significant? Why?
2. Effect and impact of the loss on your life:
   * How did you respond to the loss?
   * What defense mechanisms did you use as you faced the experience?
   * What personal strengths helped you? What personal limitations may have hindered your process?
   * What patterns do you notice as you reflect on your response to various life losses on your timeline?
   * How have the following influenced your coping style and defensive structure:

-people around you?

-your cultural background, ethnicity, religion?

-your personal values, attitudes, and beliefs?

3. Lessons learned from your experience:

* How have this significant loss along with those on your timeline impacted your response to later loss?
* How does your loss history impact your life choices today?
* What major factors did you learn as a result of the loss?

4. Impact of loss on counseling others:

* How might your loss history strengthen your work as a professional counselor? How might it limit your work?
* As you reflect on the impact of your own loss history, what concerns do you have?
* Are there any specific issues or situations that might be challenging or difficult for you?
* How might your own coping style influence the way you work with others?