

OUR RESPONSES TO PERSONAL LOSS AND GRIEF

The clients with whom we work have experienced profound losses. It is important for us to recognize our own grief and loss issues. Our personal experiences with loss can be useful in understanding the grief process that accompanies any loss. A review of early loss can also shed light on our later responses to other losses.

The following exercise is not easy. It forces you to relive experiences you may wish to forget. Completing it however may help you to identify possible sources of conflict that affect your approach to loss and grief. Take your time to consider the following steps. For each one, try to recapture the experience and describe your feelings as well as possible. You will not have to share your loss with the group, only the parts of steps 2-6 that you wish to share.

- Step 1: Identify a significant loss. Describe it in the space below.

- Step 2: Identify your emotional process in working through this loss.

- Step3: Identify the physical symptoms you experienced.

- Step4: Identify the behavioral/social reactions you had.

- Step 5: Identify what outside yourself happened during the process. For example, what did people say/do?

- Step 6: Identify how your life was changed and continues to be affected by this loss.