This semester I will be co-leading a grief and loss group for seventh and eighth grade middle school students. My co-leader and site supervisor is an 8th grade school counselor in her tenth year of practice. All students in the group have recently (within the past several years) lost a parent or guardian. Due to attrition the group has fluctuated between six and seven members. There are currently two Caucasian females (one is a seventh grader and the other is an eighth grader), two African American males (both seventh graders), and two Caucasian males (both seventh graders).

The main intervention being used with this group is bibliotherapy. In each group session the group members take turns reading aloud passages from the book *Help for the Hard Times: Getting Through Loss* by Earl Hipp. In addition to reading passages from the book we also facilitate group discussion about grief and do several hands on activities. My hope is that by incorporating these different techniques in our group we will be able to provide the students with a variety of ways in which to process their grief.

My co-leader and I met twice with this group before our schools winter break however due to the record breaking snowfall this winter we were not able to meet with hold our third group meeting until March 23rd. I anticipated that the large gap in time between our second and third group sessions would present a large challenge and that it would feel as if we were starting the group from scratch again, however to my delight this did not prove to be the case. Most of the group members were eager to get back on track with our meetings and the three members that were able to attend the March 23rd meeting participated in group without skipping a beat.

One issue that has recently come up for my group is the loss of one member and the possible addition of another member. An eighth grade male student has left the group because he was moved up to the high school and we have not met as a group since his departure- this issue will need to be addressed in out next meeting to clarify any confusion or concerns that the remaining group members may have. One of my seventh grade students unexpectedly lost his father last month and I have offered him the opportunity to join our group. If this student does decide to participate in group we will need to help him, as well as the other group members, with this transition.

Grief is not an easy issue for me to deal with as a counselor. While I have experienced the loss of several family members and friends in my life I have not experienced a loss to the degree that the students in my group have and because of this I do sometimes feel as though I do not deserve to help counseling the students through the grief process because I have not had to feel the weight of a loss like they have. I also sometimes feel the desire to want to heal their pain and end their feelings of loss, but I know that this is all based on my own selfish discomfort with grief and supporting them, not fixing them is what I need to do. I am glad that I am cognizant of this desire to want to end my students hurt because it is the awareness of this desire that allows me to rein myself in and focus on what is best for the them rather than me.

This is the first time I have led, or co-lead, a grief and loss group and so far I have found it to be an immensely powerful experience. I am glad to be co-leading the group with the other counselor (she did not appear in this group session because she was called to deal with an emergency) so that I can process with her any concerns or feelings that come up for me as a result of leading this group.