

Essentials of Stepfamily Coaching

Unpacking the Complexity of the Next-Time Family

Presented by Karen S. Bonnell, MS

Consultant · Writer · Mentor

Guiding Parents to Divorce Well, Co-Parent Strong, and Step-Wise

Please join in for a high-paced training that will prepare you to understand the underlying complexities of working with stepfamilies. Karen will skillfully guide you through the key considerations in working with stepfamilies – whether smooth sailing or struggling with adjustment post-decree/post re-coupling. We will keep children front and center as we discuss the five challenges of stepfamily – developmental considerations from little ones to adults as well as when a co-parent has started their new relationship as an affair or when a co-parent has died. This training is for mental health and legal professionals. Recommended reading: “The Stepfamily Handbook” by Bonnell & Papernow as well as “Surviving and Thriving” by Patricia Papernow.

This training includes a 40-page comprehensive syllabus and an additional PDF of articles/resources.

Let’s take a look at a proposed day-long schedule. Tailor these topic areas to your group’s needs and interests.

Continue next page.

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Day One

1:30 - 2:00 Log-on, Get Oriented and Acquainted

This training is set up in three distinct two-hour modules in an attempt to prevent ZOOM fatigue. Please bring your water and snacks, sit-back and enjoy learning with your colleagues! There will be additional opportunities for informal Q&A.

2:00 – 4:00 Module I

The Structure

From One Home to Two Homes to Stepfamily

- Families don't "blend" ... stepping into stepfamily
- Original family structure – next time family reality

The Adults

From Parenting to Co-Parenting to Step-Parenting

- Skillful parenting is key
- Insiders and outsiders ... the nature of the beast
- Secrets to successful discipline in stepfamilies

Day Two

9:00 - 9:30 Log-on and Enjoy an Informal Q&A with Colleagues

9:30 – 11:30 Module II

The Kids

More on the Five Stepfamily Challenges

- Children are challenged by losses, loyalty binds, and change
- When children end up on the "outside"
- Culture: the invisible influence that results in the big "Ooops"
- Growth and development implications for adjusting to stepfamily
- What our families teach us about children's adjustment

11:30 – 1:00 Lunch, Leg Stretch ... Informal Q&A at 12:30

1:00 – 3:00 Module III

Coaching Co-Parents and Stepparents

...Into a Skillful Parenting Coalition

- Co-parents are part of the stepfamily
- Affairs delay adjustment
- When a co-parent is deceased
- Gray re-couplers ... what's adult children got to do with it?

3:00 – 3:30 Debrief and Closing