

# Help and Hope for Step-Families

10-PAGE HANDOUT – Event: D. Stankovich / L. Bush

## STATISTICS

---

- \_\_\_% of adult Americans (\_\_\_ million adults) have step-relationships
- \_\_\_ million Americans are currently remarried
- \_\_\_% of all weddings form step-families
- The overall divorce rate is \_\_\_-\_\_\_%
- The remarriage divorce rate is at least \_\_\_%
- \_\_\_\_\_ of all people experiencing divorce are actually re-divorcing
- It is predicted that a full \_\_\_% of people born after 1970 will marry, divorce, remarry, and re-divorce.

**KEY POINT!** Because of the sheer numbers of people impacted by step-relationships, many coaches and counselors are already working with people dealing with those complications by default. It's high time help arrives!

## CHARACTERISTICS OF STEP-FAMILIES

---

All step-families were created out of \_\_\_\_\_. At least one of the parents has lost a partner to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.

There are unlimited \_\_\_\_\_ of step-families.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of step-families is more complicated than traditional families.

Step-families vary in \_\_\_\_\_ and are \_\_\_\_\_ from day to day.

## UNIQUE NEEDS OF STEP-FAMILIES

---

The need to deal with \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the unique needs step-families have.

Sometimes people attempt to restore \_\_\_\_\_ prematurely by marrying again before they are emotionally prepared to do so.

Step-families also need support in setting \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Since the only reference point most people have is a traditional family, step-parents make some \_\_\_\_\_.

Expecting children to \_\_\_\_\_ adapt to their new family is unrealistic.

Most new step-families underestimate how \_\_\_\_\_ their new life will be.

Another issue step-families deal with is the need to juggle the  
\_\_\_\_\_ they have.

NOTES:

## MYTHS ABOUT STEP-FAMILIES

---

One myth is that \_\_\_\_\_ occurs instantly between the child and step-parent.

Children don't get to \_\_\_\_\_ their step-parents.

Relationships take time to develop, and it is neither \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to assume love will occur instantly between the child and the step-parent.

Another myth is that step-mothers are \_\_\_\_\_.

Research tells us that \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ have the most difficult role in the step-family.

The third myth is that \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ step-families are easier.

While it may be true that there are periods of \_\_\_\_\_ from the stress of relationships still under construction, there are no \_\_\_\_\_ to building healthy relationships.

Step-families need to find ways of making the \_\_\_\_\_ from part-time to full-time to part-time again as easy as possible.

NOTES:

## NEEDS OF STEP-DADS

---

Step-dads are said to be climbing \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Step-dads are also \_\_\_\_\_ by choice who volunteer for a responsibility, and usually with little \_\_\_\_\_ from the children who benefit the most.

More often than not, they are viewed as the \_\_\_\_\_ instead of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Sometimes it is hard for men to step away from a situation and allow their wives to assume the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ role for the children.

There are so many reasons why this is a good idea, but the best one for men is that it \_\_\_\_\_ them from \_\_\_\_\_. Plus, doing so also shows the children that he \_\_\_\_\_ their mother's \_\_\_\_\_.

## NEEDS OF STEP-MOMS

---

Step-moms tend to see themselves as being responsible for the \_\_\_\_\_ of everyone in the family.

Those unrealistic expectations make these women vulnerable to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Plus, step-moms are oftentimes at odds with the biological mother of her step-children – particularly if the step-mom has greater responsibility for the care of those children due to \_\_\_\_\_.

Dad after day, step-moms are fighting gravity and trying to navigate over rough terrain in hopes of reaching the summit where \_\_\_\_\_ in family life is restored.

Achieving such a lofty goal is only going to be possible for the woman who \_\_\_\_\_ her mindset and finds \_\_\_\_\_ from others.

## HELPING CHILDREN CONNECT WITH STEP-PARENTS

For children, multiple transitions in and out of family contexts have cumulative negative \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ impact.

The child's loyalty will nearly always be to the \_\_\_\_\_ parents.

Smart step-parents move in to their step-children's lives with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## HOW CHURCHES CAN MINISTER TO STEP-FAMILIES

Churches are \_\_\_\_\_, not just buildings.

Like the congregational members, churches have been applying the same traditional family \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to step-families.

Leaders need to understand that children who alternate weekends with their parents can never achieve a goal of perfect attendance in Sunday school due to no \_\_\_\_\_ of their own.

If the pastor prays a special blessing on all the moms and dads on Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day, an \_\_\_\_\_ to all people who fulfill that role should be included.

Pastoral counselors need to be \_\_\_\_\_ of the impact of stressful step-relationships in the lives of their parishioners.