



JULY 2008

Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

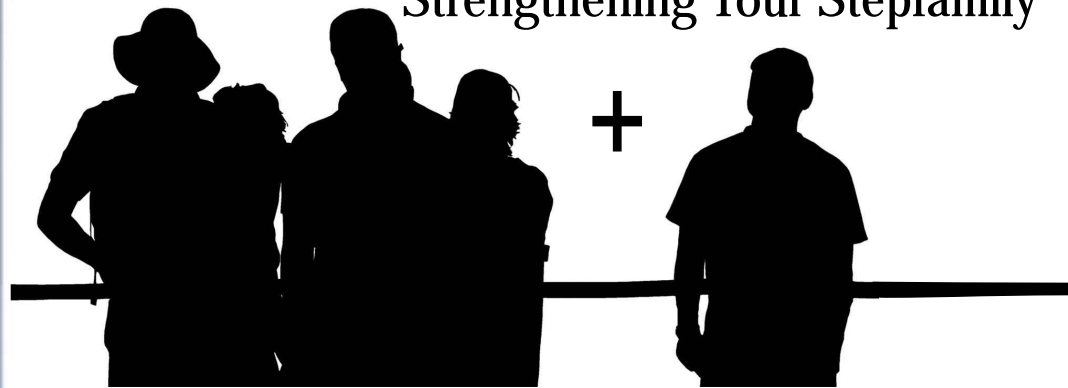
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Air Travel Security Guidelines

- ❑ Be ready to put your baggage and coat through the X-ray machine.
- ❑ Cooperate with the airport personnel. You will be asked to have additional screening if the metal detectors are set off or if randomly chosen for this process. If you set off the metal detector, you will have a hand-wand screening and/or a pat down.
- ❑ If your bag is chosen for additional screening, don't try to help or grab the bag before security personnel are done.
- ❑ Only bring one carry-on and one personal item on the plane. Check all other luggage. Acceptable personal items include purses, laptops, or briefcases.
- ❑ Passengers ages 13 to 17 unaccompanied by an adult must have a parent or guardian's written permission to travel.
- ❑ If you bring something on the "banned" list, you have broken the law and you can be prosecuted. Banned items may vary with airlines; however, some illegal items include: pocket knives, scissors, razors, manicure sets, and even corkscrew wine bottle openers.
- ❑ If there are questions about an item, don't bring it. If it is important for your trip, put it in checked luggage.
- ❑ If you have something considered threatening, you have three options: Take it to your car, put it in checked luggage, or leave it with security officers (you won't get it back).
- ❑ Have picture identification, boarding pass, and ticket with you at all times.

Source: Teen Consumer Scrapbook, Washington State Attorney General's Office. Website <http://www.atg.wa.gov>

Strengthening Your Stepfamily



What is a stepfamily? You are in a stepfamily if you or your partner has children from a previous relationship. Half of all Americans are now a member of a stepfamily, including over 20 million stepparents.

Guidelines for stepfamilies

Most parents and stepparents who form stepfamilies are unprepared for the tangle of painful and confusing emotions that arise. Beginning their remarriage with the belief that their love and commitment can be more than a match to any obstacle, within a short time they find themselves reeling from the challenges imposed on them by forming a stepfamily. Tragically, 60 to 70 percent of all stepfamilies end in divorce within ten years.

Long-term re-marital and stepfamily success is possible, however. Educating yourself about stepfamilies and developing your relationship and conflict resolution skills are the key. The following guidelines will help you strengthen your stepfamily:

1. Put your relationship first. Developing and enjoying yourselves as a couple is of prime importance, not only for you, but also for your children. In a stepfamily, as in any two-parent family, the strength of the couple's relationship is crucial for the continuing existence of the

stepfamily, and therefore, is vitally important for the children as well. A strong adult bond can protect the children from another family loss, and serve as a positive example for the children when they form their own couple relationship. Vital: Arrange time alone, away from the kids, to help nourish your important couple relationship. Remember, when parents are happy, children feel more secure.

2. Be realistic with your expectations. Expect conflict and difficulties within your stepfamily. Blending the lives and emotions of several people into a new family is immensely difficult and complex. Parents, stepparents and their children are typically struggling with disappointment, guilt, divided loyalties, jealousy, rejection, fear, anger and their resulting negative behaviors. Acknowledging that conflict within your stepfamily exists is the first step in finding ways to solve problems and begin healing complex emotions. It will also lower your stress and result in less disappointment and more stepfamily enjoyment.

3. Define parenting roles clearly. Step parenting is usually more successful if stepparents carve out a role for themselves that is different from, and does not compete with, the biological parents. Until children and adults have developed a rapport, most couples find it best for each biological parent to handle primary discipline issues with his or her own children. It can be made clear, however,

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that both parents are in charge and the stepparent has the right to discipline in the parent's absence.

4. Remember, children may still be grieving. Whether the marriage ended through divorce or death, you have all experienced a serious loss. It is normal that you should all grieve. But children may feel it for a long time to come, since kids recover at a different rate and express the loss in different ways. Expect that your children may have sad, angry, or depressed feelings following the divorce and allow them to tell these feelings to you without criticism. Just being able to talk about what they are feeling will go a long way in helping your child adjust to the changes in his/her life. Helpful: The single most important factor in the positive emotional adjustment of children following a divorce is a stable, loving relationship with both natural parents. Arrange time to spend alone with your biological children, in addition to stepfamily activities. Encourage your ex-spouse to do so as well.

5. Learn to problem solve effectively. Yes, conflicts are inevitable. The key is whether these conflicts get resolved positively and amicably or whether stepfamily members argue destructively,

hold on to resentments, become emotionally distant and/or leave. People who create successful stepfamilies are skilled at managing conflict. Check your communication skills. Are you listening to the things your spouse considers important, or are you tuning them out? What about the feelings or important issues of your children? stepchildren? ex-spouse? your spouse's ex? Very Important: Make a commitment to improve your communication and conflict resolution skills and model and teach these skills to other stepfamily members.

6. Understand that caring relationships take time to develop. Insist that new "parents" and "kids" treat each other with courtesy and respect, but let go of the need for an instant happy family. Children and adults need time to adjust and get to know one another. If stepfamily relationships are allowed to develop as seem comfortable to the individuals involved, then friendships and caring between step-relatives has the opportunity to evolve. Researchers in the field of stepfamilies report that it takes two years or more for a stepfamily to feel like a "family."

7. Get good information and support. There are numerous sources of information and support for stepfamilies: Read stepfamily and step parenting books, participate in stepfamily workshops or classes, or join a support group for stepparents.

HMS is here to support you

If things get really bad, call Human Management Services (HMS) for help: If there is chronic fighting or hostility in your stepfamily, then a workshop, class or support group may not be sufficient. Talking to a person who is trained to help stepfamilies work out their family relationships can be extremely valuable. If you need help, contact HMS for information, counseling or referrals. Remember, HMS is here to help you and your dependents with any personal, family or work-related concerns. Why not call an HMS counselor today?

Do You Know The Signs Of An Anxiety Disorder?

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), anxiety disorders, as a group, are the most common mental illness in America, affecting more than 19 million Americans each year.

Anxiety disorders can affect anyone. Anxiety often comes when people hold in their fears until they begin to feel anxiety. What are the different kinds of anxiety disorders and their related symptoms?

Generalized Anxiety Disorder – Constant, exaggerated worrisome thoughts and tension about everyday routine life events and activities, lasting at least six months. Almost always anticipating the worst even though there is little reason to expect it; accompanied by physical symptoms, such as fatigue, trembling, muscle tension, headache, or nausea.

Panic Disorder – Repeated episodes of intense fear that strike often and without warning. Physical symptoms include chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, abdominal distress, feelings of unreality, and fear of dying.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder – Persistent symptoms that occur after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event such as rape or other criminal assault, war, child abuse, natural or human-caused disasters, or crashes. Nightmares, flashbacks, numbing of emotions, depression, and feeling angry, irritable or distracted and being easily startled are common.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder – Repeated, intrusive and unwanted thoughts that cause anxiety, often accompanied by ritualized behavior that relieves this anxiety.

Social Phobia – An overwhelming and disabling fear of scrutiny, embarrassment, or humiliation in social situations, which leads to avoidance of many potentially worthwhile activities.

Getting help

According to the NIMH, ninety percent of people with emotional illnesses will improve or recover if they get treatment. If you suspect that you or a family member may be suffering from an anxiety disorder, contact Human Management Services (HMS) for confidential counseling, referrals, or information. Contacting HMS can be the first step on the road to recovery.

**HUMAN
MANAGEMENT
SERVICES (HMS)**

800-343-2186

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