



## Healthy Relationships in Blended Families

In today's modern society, 1/3 of all families are blended families, made up of stepparents, stepchildren, half siblings, children from previous relationships, co-parenting with ex-spouses and many more dynamics. Some of the challenges that our blended families face include:

- Relationships being born out of loss
- Children coming first in relationships
- Spouses having to be accepted by each other's children
- Complicated financial situations
- Former partners and parenting styles
- Unrealistic expectations or assumptions

Children are greatly affected by these challenges and can struggle with their feelings. Some children believe they need to hide their feeling in order to be strong for their parents. YOU play a critical role in helping your children grieve the loss of the original family. Children may resent what he or she views as a “replacement” of his or her other parent. They may be hesitant to trust their stepparent, especially those who may feel abandoned by a biological parent following a divorce. Some children have a hard time with loyalty, feeling that they may be betraying their biological parent with feelings of love toward a stepparent. And in families with stepsiblings, sibling rivalry can take on a new meaning. Children may compete for attention and try to take over, dominating their new stepsiblings.

Counseling will support you and your children through the transition of becoming a blended family by helping you to sort out the roles family members have, setting clear boundaries for parenting and discipline and allowing everyone to have their own voice in a safe environment