

BLENDING FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MATRIX

PURPOSE

This tool can help counsellors and families map a more complete picture of the life cycle stages and tasks a family is navigating and help prioritize the challenges.

	BLENDING FAMILY TASKS							
LIFE CYCLE STAGE	Potential dissolution of previous adult relationship	Dating and partnering	Establishment of new adult relationship identity	Introduction of children and partner	Joining between stepparent and children	Emergence of blended family identity	Development of stepparent identity	Transition to cohabitation
Launching single young adult								
Joining of families								
Families with young children								
Families with adolescents								
Launching children								
Families in later life								

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is it like to be navigating all of these challenges at the same time? What's the biggest challenge?
- How have you navigated previous tasks and stages? What strengths did you use?
- Of the intersections your family is currently navigating, which are the most straightforward? Which are the most challenging?
- Is there an earlier stage or task that hasn't been fully completed that is adding to the current challenges?
- Which family members are trying to push forward? Which ones aren't? How well does each member understand what is behind their choices?
- Whose priorities and voice are being heard in these challenges? Whose are missing?
- Are there changes or losses that need to be acknowledged before people can move through a stage or task?