

A close-up photograph of a round wedding cake with white frosting. On top of the cake are two wooden figurines of a bride and groom. The bride is on the left, wearing a white lace dress and holding a bouquet of colorful flowers. The groom is on the right, wearing a blue suit and a green tie. Behind the figurines is a decorative arch made of greenery, pink and white flowers, and white ribbons. The background is a bright, out-of-focus window with greenery outside.

WEDDING PLANNING WITH

Reconstructed Families

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Wedding planning in general is an overwhelming experience, and with a reconstructed family it can feel even more stressful. As a wedding planner, I've worked with couples who have had two sets of divorced parents, one set, parents who were divorced and remarried or dating, etc. We've seen it all, and we've helped our clients through the difficulties that those relationships can bring to the wedding planning process.

Our hope is that by reading through this guide to Wedding Planning with Reconstructed Families, you'll feel more confident in approaching some of the situations that the planning process and day-of will throw at you.

Some parents are divorced or separated and not on speaking terms. Some parents are divorced and separated and might not like the other's new significant other. Some parents are divorced or separated and simply disagree with everything the other says out of spite. It goes on and on.

The key to handling these dynamics is to plan ahead and have open discussions with all affected parties.

You've got this!

xoxo Alexandria Proko | Alexandria Catherine Events

THE
Ceremony

Let's start with the most important part of the day, your ceremony!

If ... your mom is remarried and is walking down the aisle.

If you are looking to do things more traditionally, it is custom that the Mother of the Bride is the last one to be ushered down the aisle before the formal start of the ceremony. If your parents are on good terms, you can go ahead and still have mom walk down the aisle before the bridesmaids and if she's remarried then your stepfather would be her escort.

If ... your mom is walking down the aisle, but isn't remarried.

Do you have a brother that is in the bridal party? Have him escort her down the aisle and then join the groomsmen up front in his place in line. No male siblings? Talk to a cousin or if there's an uncle available who might be free. Regardless, it should be someone in the family and that mom feels comfortable with.

all



If ... you want your stepfather to walk you down the aisle, but your Dad is also going to be at the wedding.

In some instances, we've worked with brides who have felt closer to their stepfather's than their biological father's and would prefer that they walk them down the aisle. If your father is going to be attending the wedding as well, it is custom that he still walk down the aisle with an escort {again, his new wife or family} behind your mom and her escort.

If ... your father is remarried and walking you down the aisle, but you also want your stepmother to walk down the aisle.

You have a few options here:

1. Have your stepmother ushered informally down the aisle before the parents are formally ushered in.
2. Have your mother and stepmother walk down the aisle together {if they are on good terms} without anyone ushering them down the aisle.
3. Have your stepmother ushered down the aisle just before the Mother of the Bride.

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If ... your father and stepfather are both really important to you.

Ask them {separately} if they'd be comfortable walking you down the aisle together.

If ... your parents can't sit near one another without arguing.

Plan to have your mother sit in the front row on the chair all the way to the left with her immediate family in the seats beside her.. Plan to have your father sit in the second row on the chair all the way to the right with his family in the seats immediately beside him.

How do we get our parents up the aisle without awkwardness post-ceremony?

If either of them is remarried or dating, they should walk down the aisle with those folks. The Mother of the Bride is always the first of the parents to walk out followed by the Father of the Bride (if they aren't married and walking together). If it's the Groom's parents that are divorced/separated, they should do the same thing except they need to let the Bride's parent's out first.

How should we handle a receiving line with divorced parents?

The receiving line is for the family that is hosting the wedding. If the bride's parents are both hosting, despite not being married, they should both be standing up there; however, shouldn't be placed together. If one parent is remarried and hosting {ex. Mother of the Bride and Stepfather}, they are both expected to stand in the line, with the Father of the Bride {and his wife, if applicable} beside him.

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If ... your mother raised you alone, and you've always wanted her to escort you but you don't want to exclude your father.

Talk to your mom to see if she'd be OK with having both of them walk you down the aisle, one on each side. This is only recommended if they are cordial with one another.

THE

Reception

if ... your parents won't be able to sit at a table together.

Go ahead and have a table for each parent to "host" with their own immediate families at it and/or closest friends. When putting your floor plan together, these tables should both still sit somewhere near you; however, it's OK to stick a table between them if need be.

If ... you want to dance with both parents.

Talk to your parents ahead of time to see if they would be OK with splitting the dance in half so that you would have an opportunity to dance with each of them and share that special moment.

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If ... your family doesn't get along and you are concerned about how to get through the photographs.

This is where careful planning in advance will keep any potential tensions under control. Make a list of all of the photo groupings that you would like for your photographer and their relation to you. Let your photographer know what the family dynamics are so that they can be prepared and know who to pair beside one another and who not to!

If ... you have a stepfather/mother that your biological father/mother doesn't get along with.

We recommend taking a variety of group family photos so that some include just the bride, groom, and their biological parents and other group shots with stepparents included as well.

If ... your mother/father is dating, but isn't remarried.

In the instance that a parent has included a date in the wedding, but they aren't married or engaged to them, you do not have to feel obligated to include them in all of the family portraits. If you'd like to keep mom/dad and their date from having their feelings hurt, you can ask the photographer to take one or two pictures with them in it as a courtesy.

alex



If ... your parent's are divorced and are both hosting the event.

It is customary that the Father of the Bride would stand up and make a brief welcome speech and thank you to the guests. He should mention the Mother of the Bride in this speech and thank her as well. If he's remarried, it's OK for him to mention his new wife as well because she's technically also hosting {and if your mom is remarried, her husband should also be included}.

If Dad isn't in the picture at all, Mom should feel comfortable standing up and making this speech herself!

If ... you do not want either parent to make a speech.

Ask the Best Man to make a welcome speech that acknowledges the family of the bride and groom and thanks them for hosting the occasion. This welcome speech then segues into his toast to the newlyweds.

Should we include step siblings in the wedding day?

The short answer is yes. If you really feel that it wouldn't be appropriate or that your bridal party is already full, try to incorporate them in another way and extend invitations to special gatherings so that they feel included. You can even assign them special tasks to be on top of for the big day so that they still have a role.

alex



At the end of the day, the best thing that you can do in these situations is to communicate openly with both sides of the family and all parties involved. Not only does communicating and getting input {hopefully reasonable} help in establishing what people feel comfortable with, but by opening the conversation you're showing them that it's important to you and that you want to come up with a resolution.

If you offer up a solution that they don't like, but that they can't find a reasonable alternative solution to, don't stress. You won't be able to please anyone! The good news is, you'll have voiced all of your concerns and plans and so nobody will be caught off guard.

We hope that this helps you in moving forward in a positive direction with your wedding planning!

Questions or concerns? Feel free to connect with us, assistant@alexandriaprevents.com.

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