



# Developing Healthy Stepfamilies: Twenty Families Tell Their Stories (Haworth Marriage & the Family)

*Patricia Kelley, Terry S Trepper*

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## **Developing Healthy Stepfamilies: Twenty Families Tell Their Stories (Haworth Marriage & the Family)** Patricia Kelley, Terry S Trepper

View the inner workings of healthy stepfamilies through the stories of twenty families as they discuss how their households operate. This enlightening book takes a deeper look at what adults and children in stepfamilies say about such issues as discipline, money, family roles and relationships with ex-spouses, and the development of new traditions and rituals. Incorporating actual words of family members, *Developing Healthy Stepfamilies* shows many ways in which stepfamilies function well through adapting new and different “rules” to fit their circumstances. The book concentrates on positive rather than negative aspects of stepfamily life to help dim the image of stepfamilies as problematic and also to instill hope in would-be stepfamilies by normalizing their differences from biologically based families. Written with the intention of disseminating information and increasing understanding about stepfamily functioning, this book is useful for stepfamilies, their friends and relatives, and professionals such as teachers, clergy, physicians, and counselors. *Developing Healthy Stepfamilies* draws a colorful picture of the creativity and flexibility such families have brought to their lives and relationships. Emphasizing what works in stepfamilies instead of what does not, the book illustrates the process of integrating a stepfamily, the value of humor and patience, and the richness that can unfold for all members of the family. The author, a family therapist and educator, has drawn together information direct from stepfamily members themselves, providing readers with first-hand knowledge of the daily workings of this fast growing family form. A showcase of stepfamilies that are functioning well, *Developing Healthy Stepfamilies* helps show would-be stepfamilies that “it can be done.” This is not a book of instructions; it illuminates the many ways in which stepfamilies can and do function. Some of the topics covered in the book include:

- definitions of a stepfamily
- a historical review
- demographics
- suggestions for new stepfamilies from established ones
- genograms of the families participating in the study As a group, stepfamilies are different from biologically based families in form and function. These differences are important for the families, and for those working with them, to recognize and accept as normal. Although intended to be an informative text for professionals and students in fields such as counseling and social work, this book also serves as a source of hope and encouragement for stepfamilies and prospective stepfamilies themselves.

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