



SSC # 78 – INSURANCE & TAX PLANNING FOR BLENDED FAMILIES: NAVIGATING COMPLEX FAMILY STRUCTURES WITH CONFIDENCE

This course is eligible for:

2.5 Life & A&S CE Credits for BC, SK, MB & ON.

2.5 Life ONLY CE Credits for AB.

Target Audience

This course is intended for the following categories of licensed financial professionals practicing in Canada:

- **Financial Advisors and Investment Advisors** regulated under CIRO, including those holding the CFP, CIM, or PFP designations, who serve clients with complex personal circumstances;
- **Insurance Advisors and Life Insurance Agents** licensed under provincial insurance legislation who advise on life, disability, and critical illness insurance solutions for personal and business clients;
- **Estate Planners and Trust Officers** who coordinate testamentary planning, trust administration, and beneficiary designation reviews for remarried or re-partnered clients; and
- **Any financial professional** who advises remarried clients, common-law spouses with children from prior relationships, clients subject to support orders, or multi-generational family structures involving stepchildren, half-siblings, and complex inheritance arrangements.

No prior specialized knowledge of blended family law is assumed. However, participants should possess a working knowledge of Canadian income tax principles, basic insurance concepts, and foundational estate planning terminology.

Course Overview

The purpose of this continuing education course is to develop and deepen the professional competence of Canadian financial advisors in the identification, analysis, and resolution of the insurance and tax planning challenges that are specific to blended family structures. This course seeks to bridge the gap between general financial planning practice and the specialized demands of a rapidly growing client demographic, ensuring that advisors possess the technical knowledge, ethical awareness, and practical skills necessary to deliver planning recommendations that are legally sound, tax-efficient, and equitable to all parties within the blended family unit.

In fulfilling this purpose, the course also reinforces the regulatory obligations incumbent upon advisors under the frameworks of the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization (CIRO), FP Canada Standards Council, and the Chambre de la sécurité financière (CSF), with particular attention to conflict of interest management, scope-of-practice boundaries, and the duty to refer clients to qualified legal and tax professionals where circumstances require.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. **Define** the characteristics and legal status of blended family structures within the Canadian planning context, including the rights and limitations applicable to stepchildren, common-law partners, and stepparents under provincial intestacy legislation and family law statutes;
2. **Identify** the principal planning conflicts inherent in blended family arrangements — including competing beneficiary designations, unintended disinheritance risks, and the tension between spousal protection and preservation of children's inheritance — and apply a structured family-mapping process to surface these conflicts at intake;
3. **Design** appropriate life insurance solutions — including individual policies, joint life policies, trust-owned insurance, and insured inheritance structures — that equitably address the financial interests of both the current spouse and children from prior relationships;
4. **Explain** the application of key federal tax provisions — including the Tax on Split Income (TOSI) rules, the attribution rules, RRSP/RRIF spousal rollover provisions, and RESP eligibility for stepchildren — to blended family structures, and identify opportunities for tax-efficient planning within those constraints;
5. **Describe** the principal estate planning tools available to blended family clients — including testamentary spousal trusts, testamentary trusts for children, domestic contracts, and will co-ordination strategies — and articulate the risks associated with inadequate or outdated estate planning documents; and
6. **Apply** the compliance and ethical obligations of CIRO, FP Canada Standards, and CSF guidelines to the management of joint-client advisory relationships involving potential conflicts of interest, and demonstrate appropriate documentation, referral, and scope-of-practice practices when serving blended family clients.