Final Session Handout

Bringing Your Estate Plan Together

This worksheet is meant to help you organize your thoughts before meeting with your attorney or advisor. It is educational only and should be tailored to your state and your situation.

What the series covered

Topic	Main point
1. Foundation documents	Wills, revocable living trusts, powers of attorney, and health care documents
2. Funding the trust	A trust only works if assets are moved into it or coordinated to it
3. Beneficiary designations	Retirement accounts, life insurance, POD/TOD accounts, and title need to match the plan
4. Beneficiaries and fiduciaries	Who gets what, when, and how - and who carries out the plan
5. Review and implementation	The plan must be signed, funded, coordinated, organized, and reviewed

Five questions every plan should answer

1) Who speaks for me if I cannot act? 2) What controls my assets? 3) How are assets titled and who is listed as beneficiary? 4) Who gets what, when, and how? 5) When will I review this again?

Quick-start checklist

Use these lists to gather the basics before your next planning conversation.

Core documents to locate or review

☐ Revocable living trust (if you have one)

☐ Pour-over will or will

☐ Financial power of attorney

☐ Health care power of attorney

☐ Living will / advance directive

☐ Asset list or personal property memorandum

Implementation items

☐ Make a one-page asset inventory

☐ Confirm which assets are titled in the trust

☐ Review all primary and contingent beneficiaries

☐ Confirm fiduciaries and backups

☐ Write down where originals are stored

☐ Give copies to the people who should have them

Location of originals	**People who have copies**
____	____
____	____
____	____
____	____

People to name

Choose people who are capable, willing, organized, and able to follow instructions under pressure. Name a backup whenever possible.

Role	Primary choice	Backup choice	Notes
Executor / personal representative			
Successor trustee			
Financial power of attorney			
Health care agent			
Guardian (if applicable)			

Practical tip
Tell the people you choose that they have been named, and let them know where the originals are stored.

Asset and beneficiary review

If an account has a beneficiary form, the form may control that asset. Review primary and contingent beneficiaries and make sure the whole plan tells the same story.

Asset	Titled in trust?	Beneficiary reviewed?	Notes
Home / other real estate			
Non-retirement investment accounts			
Bank accounts			
IRA / 401(k) / 403(b)			
Life insurance			
POD / TOD accounts			
Annuities			
Business interests			
Other			

Remember

A trust only controls what is actually in it - or what names it as beneficiary.

Questions for your next meeting

☐ Which assets should be moved into the trust?

☐ Which beneficiary designations should be changed?

☐ Are any beneficiaries better served by a trust instead of an outright gift?

☐ Do I need updates because of marriage, divorce, death, or major asset changes?

☐ Where should I store originals, and who should have copies?

☐ What should I review first if my plan is old or incomplete?

Review triggers

• Marriage or divorce

• Birth, death, or a new dependent

• Move to another state

• Sale or purchase of major property

• Health changes or long-term care concerns

• Business, retirement, or large beneficiary changes

Advanced topics only after the foundation is in place

• Charitable planning: beneficiary gifts, donor-advised funds, qualified charitable distributions, charitable trusts

• Protective planning: special needs trusts, spendthrift provisions, irrevocable trusts when appropriate

• Income and care planning: insurance reviews, annuities, long-term care planning

Notes / questions you want to bring

____

____

____

____

____

____

____