



Preparing a future surviving spouse

Situation

A Greenwich, RI-based couple in their early 70s, with \$3.5 million in investments, had spent the last 15 years as a wealth management client of a large bank.

While the first 10 years of the couple's relationship with the bank were positive, the past five years had their share of ups and downs. Notably, the couple was assigned three different relationship managers over this period due to staff turnover.

The husband felt that this instability negatively impacted the investment performance and oversight of his accounts. He was also concerned that if he predeceased his wife, the lack of stability at the bank could jeopardize her long-term financial security. As such, he decided it was time to find a new financial advisory firm to manage their investments.

When he discussed making a change with his wife, they both came to the conclusion that it was critical, among other criteria, for them to enter into a new advisory relationship where

- They felt a high degree of confidence that the new provider would be there for them over the remainder of their lives, and
- The wife would be 100 percent comfortable working with the new firm if she were to become the surviving spouse.

During their search, their accountant suggested they contact Blue Fin Capital because of the firm's stability, expertise in investment management, and reputation in the local Rhode Island community for working with multi-generational families.

Approach

During the couple's initial discovery meeting to evaluate the Blue Fin team, the following areas were discussed:

- The couple's reasons for seeking to change wealth managers and what was important to them in a relationship with a new provider
- The couple's goals, values, and priorities for the remainder of their lives
- How a potential restructuring of their current investments from proprietary bank investments to Blue Fin's separately managed account structure would provide greater transparency, lower fees, tax efficiency, and ultimately better investment performance than what was currently in place



- Ways to maximize gifting opportunities to their two adult children and three grandchildren, while also deciding the level of ongoing financial support they could comfortably provide for a grandchild with a disability
- The importance of establishing a financial organizer to store important documents and contact information so that the surviving spouse and any designated family members could easily manage the couple's affairs when necessary

The Blue Fin team also discussed the type of support they provide surviving spouses to help settle an estate when the time arises, along with the ways they would work with the surviving spouse over the longer term.

Outcome

The couple, impressed with the scope of topics covered and depth of conversation in the first meeting, decided to transfer their wealth management relationship to Blue Fin. Within the first three months of the relationship, they experienced the following positive outcomes that validate their choice:

- Management of their investments in a manner that protects purchasing power over the long term, while also aligning with their goals and objectives
- A formalized income plan that supports their needs
- Creation of a detailed annual budget that a surviving spouse or adult child can rely upon for the day-to-day management of the couple's financial affairs when the time comes
- An update of their estate plan and all beneficiary designations, coordinated by Blue Fin
- Coordination of initial discussions about establishing a trust for their disabled grandchild
- Development of a financial organizer that contained copies of all important documents including estate plan and insurance policies, as well as contact information of all other service providers
- A meeting with the couple and their children at the Blue Fin offices to introduce the firm to the broader family, so that the adult children feel confident their parents have a trusted partner to help manage their financial affairs

This initial experience validated the couple's choice to work with Blue Fin Capital. As they tell their friends, they found a "partner for life" that gives them the financial peace of mind they had been longing for.

This case study is for illustrative purposes only.