Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

# Financial health: how your finances affect your mind



Finances can cause a lot of stress and anxiety for people. Whether you are living paycheque to paycheck or are concerned about setting enough money aside for retirement, this stress can add up and negatively impact your mental health. If this is your experience, you are not alone. A recent study revealed that 39% of those surveyed felt financially stressed multiple times per day and 38% lose sleep over financial worries. If you find that worries about money are starting to cause anxiety or depression, consider the following tips.

**Understand the importance of budgeting**

When setting up your financial plan, you need to start with a budget. This means making note of all of your take-home income and all of your non-negotiable expenses, such as rent or mortgage, food and utilities. You also need to list your debts – how much you owe for credit cards, loans and lines of credit. Once your 'needs' and 'debts' have been listed, you can then list your 'wants' or 'nice-to-haves', create an action plan to regain control of your finances, and determine how much you need to save to turn your wishes into reality.

*Discover more budgeting tips, tricks and resources here >*

**Manage your debt**

Did you know that 60% of people surveyed report their debt as a major personal problem? If you are in debt, your goal should be to get out as soon as possible. Setting a goal to get out of debt will help you envision a different, more positive future for you and your family. This can help relieve stress and motivate you toward positive change.

Paying each creditor the minimum each month may be tempting, but it comes at a huge cost in terms of interest paid and the time needed to repay the funds owed. Experts suggest that you work first at paying off the higher interest debts, such as credit cards. If you have more than one, see if you can consolidate them into a lower interest option through a line of credit.

*Want more information? Visit our credit and debt management section >*

**Take advantage of financial planning resources**

If you are not in debt, or if you are already working your way out of debt but feel like you are not in control of your finances, you probably would benefit from some financial education and planning advice. Our online financial planning program consists of:

- Interactive worksheets and calculators
- Customized goal-setting

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- Library of resources

This program is mobile-friendly, so you can participate on your desktop computer or mobile device(s) - anytime, anywhere, with the My EAP app.

**Consider investing**

Whether you are saving your money in a savings account or are investing in the stock market, you are allocating your money with the hope that it will grow. But to invest wisely, you must do your research carefully and consider your comfort level for different degrees of risk. Get rich quick schemes often add to stress and anxiety, and they usually do not work.

If you are not sure what approach is best for you, speak to a trusted financial advisor or contact our financial experts today.

*Read more on investment anxiety and how to cope with a volatile market >*

Concerns about money and financial stressors are strong triggers that can negatively affect mental health. By being proactive and taking control of your financial situation, you may decrease that anxiety, giving you more peace of mind to enjoy life.