

Dealing with holiday money stress

The holidays can put a strain on the wallet. Between gifts, parties and travel, many people spend more this time of year.

It's easy to become overwhelmed. In the process, you may even forget to enjoy your holidays. If money worries are causing you stress, try these strategies to help.



AVOID DECISION OVERLOAD

Are you faced with multiple questions about spending? Try to tackle just one at a time. For instance, today you decide on a gift for a friend. Tomorrow, start to think about your travel plans.



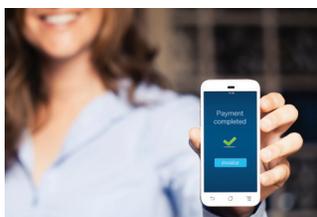
TRACK IT

It can be painful to see how much money you're spending. But tracking it can help you gain control over spending. When you see how much you've spent on gifts or eating out, you may be motivated to cut back.



MAKE A PLAN

Think about ways you and your family can spend less. Write down a few ideas and commit to trying one or two of them. Include your children in the decision-making to help make the changes easier for them to accept.



ASK FOR HELP

If you know you need help paying a bill, call the company or your bank. Sometimes they can work with you to set up a payment plan that fits within your budget.



THINK ABOUT HOW YOU DEAL WITH FINANCIAL STRESS

Some people try to escape stress through unhealthy activities. Overeating, alcohol use, gambling and smoking are a few examples. If you struggle with this, seek help from your doctor or a counselor.



GO SHOPPING WITH A PLAN

Before you head to the mall or shop online, have a set dollar amount of what you will spend. Whenever possible, have a list of what you plan to buy and stick with it. This can help you avoid impulse purchases or overspending.



REMEMBER THE VALUE OF YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The holidays aren't about money and gifts. Your relationships are important. Spend time with people who matter to you. This is one of the best gifts you can give to another person — and yourself.

Source: American Psychological Association