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symptoms and causes



3000 Westhill Drive ~ Suite 305
Wausau, WI 54401

715.847.2772

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Financial Stress

financial stress

If you are bothered by financial problems, you are not alone. More than half of all U.S. families are having a difficult time making ends meet. Most are gainfully employed. Taking a financial inventory to determine if you are just a little behind or if you are in serious debt is the first step in regaining control of your finances. When looking at your total financial picture, you might also want to consider the following:

symptoms of compulsive spending

If you live from paycheck to paycheck with little or no savings, and only pay the minimum amount due on any charge accounts, you may have a "spending" problem. Compulsive shoppers experience a "rush" when making a purchase. They find spending thrilling and exciting and experience a "high" when shopping followed by a "low" after their purchases are made. They oftentimes suffer from depression and guilt after a shopping spree but find the behavior difficult to change.

consider the following:

- Is shopping your primary activity of choice?
- Have you hidden or lied about your purchases?
- Do you frequently put friends' purchases on your credit cards and collect the cash?
- Have you ever felt nervous or guilty after a spending spree?

- Do you often charge groceries and toiletries because you're low on cash?
- Would others be alarmed if they knew your spending habits?
- Have you felt hopeless or depressed after spending money?

If you have answered "yes" to several of these questions, you may have a spending problem.

credit card mania

For some individuals, just saying the words "charge it" has become more a problem than a convenience. Plastic money becomes fantasy money which then can become a financial nightmare at month's end.

the credit quiz

- Do you limit yourself to no more than three credit cards?
- Do you pay more than the minimum credit card payment each month?
- Do you know, fairly accurately, how much of your monthly income is required to meet your monthly home, food, transportation and health bills?

A negative answer to any of these questions may be a warning that revolving credit is taking you 'round and 'round and you may need to stop the buy-now, pay-later cycle in order to deal realistically with your finances. Just as shopping with cash can become a serious problem, so can shopping with credit cards.

determining the cause

Most financial binds are caused by one of three reasons. Firstly, rising expectations cause us to want more and expect more for ourselves and we give in to those expectations. Secondly, inflation saps away the value of our dollars and we can never seem to earn enough to keep up or get ahead. Lastly, financial stress can be caused by something beyond our control, like an illness or layoff. In most cases, a well-planned, workable and realistic budget can work wonders to get us back on track and stay on track.

If, however, your financial problems are a result of something more serious such as compulsive spending or misuse of credit, you may need professional help. Compulsive shoppers often have low self-esteem and harbor pent-up feelings, especially anger, and need to find other ways to express these emotions.

help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

**715.848.4357 ~ 800.236.4457
TDD# 715.845.4928**

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