



Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

February 2015

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Budgeting Basics

Money is a part of life every day. What you wear, what you eat, where you live, and the fun things you do are only a few of the money-related decisions you make.

For some people, having a million dollars wouldn't be enough to satisfy their wants. Millions of other people manage to pay their bills, save for the future, and enjoy life while still living within their income. Managing money takes time and effort.

The way you spend or save money today will help determine what you have and whether you can pay your bills in 6 months, a year, or many years from now. For example, if you spend your money as fast as it comes in, you may find yourself in debt when unplanned expenses occur.

Do you have control over how you spend money? Can you live within your income—meeting expenses and putting some money into savings?

Budgeting is a way to get the most out of your dollars. It is not just about saving money, being a tightwad, or doing without. Budgeting is about deciding where your money will go and making a spending and savings plan.

Money Management Skills:

No one is born with natural money management skills. You may have learned some money management skills from your family, but you may want to manage your money differently than your parents managed theirs. You also may have learned some of these skills at school or through life experiences. Developing good money management skills takes time, practice, and patience.

Budgeting:

If you run out of money before all the expenses are paid, you are not alone. While people work hard to earn an income, they often do not work at planning how that income will be spent. There are steps you can take to make a budget work for you. The basic steps in successful budgeting include:

- Track how your money is spent for 1 month.
- List all income for the month.
- Compare expenses to income.
- Determine what changes need to be made.
- Make a spending and savings plan.
- Try to follow the spending and savings plan, adjusting it as necessary.
- As money is spent, record all expenses on an expense work sheet.

Online Seminar Reminder

Financial Fitness: Living Within a Realistic Budget

When:

February 17, 2015

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Webinar Times (CST):

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Public Employee Benefits Alliance



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Budget Basics

continued...



Budgeting Basics: Getting Started

1. Get organized. Get your bills and financial records together. Have a designated box, basket, or file where bills are placed when they arrive. Open the bill and mark on the outside of the envelope the date the bill should be paid. If you are going to mail the payment (rather than pay it in person), the date noted should be 4 or 5 days before the due date (to allow the payment to arrive before the due date and avoid a late fee). After paying a bill, mark it "paid" and put it in a large envelope, box, or file marked "paid bills." Keep receipts for cash payment of bills in the same place.
2. Track spending. Keep a folded sheet of paper or small notebook with you at all times to track all of the money you spend for 1 month.
3. Record spending. Record your spending on a budget expense work sheet, adding categories if necessary to fit your spending pattern.
4. Record all income on the income work sheet.
5. Compare expenses to income.
 - If your expenses are more than your income, look for what you can cut.
 - Determine what expenses are absolutely necessary, such as housing, utilities, and food.
 - Decide which other expenses can be cut to meet the necessary expenses.
 - Look for ways you can increase your income.
6. Make a budget (spending and savings plan) for next month.
 - Fill in planned expenses and expected income on a budget sheet.
 - As it is received, record income on an income sheet and monthly calendar.
 - As bills arrive, list them on the monthly calendar on the date they should be paid. Also record other monthly expenses if no bill is received (such as rent).
 - Plan what bills and expenses will be paid out of each paycheck or other source(s) of income, as well as how much of the income must be saved to pay expenses later in the month.
7. At the end of the month, subtract expenses from income and determine if you have stayed within your budget.
8. Review expenses and income to determine what needs to be changed. Do you need to cut some expenses or increase income?

Don't be discouraged. The first few months that you try to follow your budget will be a learning experience. You may need to make changes in your budget. Remember, a budget is a guideline for spending and saving money. It helps you identify where your money goes and helps you plan how to use your money to get the things you need and want.

Odle, M.L. (Revised 2006, April). Budgeting basics. In Basic money management (Pub. No. S-134g, pp. 25-27). Retrieved January 20, 2014, from the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service Web site: <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu>

11 Ways to Improve Heart Health (with ingredients in the foods you already eat)

Poor diet increases the risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and poor circulation—3 major factors that affect overall heart health.

Know which nutrients and foods in your diet may decrease risk for heart disease—the number one cause of death in the U.S.



Phytosterols: Compounds similar to cholesterol that are found in all edible plants. They help reduce low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, which is a main source of heart disease.

Cocoa flavanols: Can help maintain the elasticity of blood vessels, which contributes to normal blood flow. Quite simply: chocolate.

Omega-3 fatty acids: Primarily found in fish. Have been shown to decrease triglyceride levels, potentially lowering blood pressure.

Hydroxytyrosol: An antioxidant found in olive oil, protects blood lipids (fats) from oxidative damage.

Blueberries: May reduce high blood pressure.

Oat beta-glucan: Daily consumption of at least 3 grams (your morning cereal) effectively lowers cholesterol.

Grape seed extract: Shown to support blood pressure within a normal range. This is ground up seeds from red wine grapes.

Vitamin K: Helps to keep excess calcium out of blood vessel walls and improve cardiovascular health. Found in green leafy vegetables.

Dairy: Daily consumption of low-fat milk products decreases the risk of high blood pressure.

Almonds: Improves serum fatty acid profiles and decreases the overall risk of heart disease (a handful a day).

Walnuts: Like almonds, walnuts are good for reducing the risk of heart disease due to their alpha linolenic acid (ALA), content.

Health-e headlines™

If you're driving, drive

Don't text. Keep your eyes on the road, and now one study says don't even talk to your voice-activated smartphone or dashboard infotainment system. Hands-free is still loaded with distraction and requires more attention from drivers than less, says the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and the University of Utah. Say good-bye, Siri.

Health-e headlines™

Think cool.

Stand as tall as possible throughout the day by pretending that you're getting ice water poured down your back. Makes you shiver just thinking about it, huh? This position will help not only by strengthening your core muscles, but also by boosting your caloric expenditure, forcing your body to maintain this position, said fitness expert Jay Cardiello, editor-at-large at *Shape*.

Health-e headlines™

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.



DEER OAKS EAP SERVICES



Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

Financial Fitness



On the heels of the holidays, a season where we often are faced with extra expenses comes tax season, another point of pretty significant stress for most of us. In addition, some of us are also faced with renewing deductibles around this time of year. The overwhelming burden of these stressors can lead to increased stress that may inadvertently tempt us into either avoiding the stress, or engaging in unhealthy coping mechanisms. There are a few behavioral steps you can take to help ease anxiety and proactively handle your financial issues:

1. **Avoid avoidance:** As tempting as it is to stick your head in the sand, avoid bank statements, credit card bills, and insurance websites, you are not only delaying the inevitable but possibly increasing stress by leaving important decisions to the last minute. If you find yourself becoming easily overwhelmed, break your overall financial tasks into smaller goals. Write down due dates and make a plan to set aside time prior to those dates.
2. **Communicate:** Money can be one of the biggest hot button issues for couples. If finances are becoming an issue, set aside extra time on no less than a weekly basis to talk to your spouse about your financial circumstances. Even if one of you is primarily responsible for the bills and payments, both parties should be aware of the current situation. That way, it can make planning and budgeting easier, and take the burden off of both of you.
3. **Take advantage of resources:** Through Deer Oaks EAP Services, you have access to free, unlimited, telephonic financial consultations. If you have been completely overwhelmed, or are looking to start the year off by proactively monitoring your finances, rely on free, confidential and professional resources. Our financial consultants can advise on issues such as debt, budgeting, and planning for college or retirement.

By:
Kira Rogers, Psy.D, HSP-P
Regional Clinical Manager
Deer Oaks EAP Services, LLC



Forget Shouting

While many people try to steer clear of arguments with family members, two Vanderbilt University philosophy professors offer a better solution.

Scott F. Aikin and Robert B. Talisse co-wrote *Why We Argue (and How We Should): A Guide to Political Disagreement*.

The trend to avoid arguments with loved ones has more to do with how bad we are at arguing than how strong our beliefs are, according to Aikin. "The better solution would be to improve our skill at making arguments in ways that allow for better, more reasoned exchange."

Aikin and Talisse suggest the following:

- Remember that reasonable and intelligent people disagree about important matters. Keep this in mind even when your relative says something appalling.
- When arguing, be sure to acknowledge your family member's good points.
- Be prepared to say what it would take for you to change your mind. Consider what evidence would make your view wrong.
- Know the weak points about your view. Be able to articulate what the best arguments against your view are.

"Acknowledging the opposition's good points and seeing troubles for your own side are too often taken to be a sign of weakness," Aikin said. "But it's that attitude that actually makes us bad at argument and makes argumentative exchange so unpleasant and dogmatic. Instead, these habits make exchanges more reasonable and productive."

Winterize Your Body

"Traditional Chinese medicine teaches us to live in harmony with the seasons to protect our health," said Dr. Aaron Michelfelder, a family medicine and integrative medicine physician at Loyola University Health System. "Making certain adjustments to our diet, sleep regimen and lifestyle will make us more in sync with nature and better equipped to cope with the plunging temperatures."

You can follow Eastern medicine to "winterize" your body and protect your health this season:

- Eat warming herbs and foods. Warming herbs and foods include cinnamon, ginger, garlic, spicy foods, sweet potatoes, squash, meat, and nutrient-dense soups and stews. Save raw, leafy greens for the summer.
- Eat less. We typically are not as active during the winter so we require less food. Cut down on your caloric intake.
- Sleep more. Traditional Chinese medicine recommends following the sun and sleeping more in the fall and winter because we have fewer hours of daylight. It is best to get 9 to 10 hours of sleep as opposed to the recommended 8 hours in the summer and spring.

Health-e headlines™