



## Thriving in Uncertainty

The last few years have been a reminder that no matter how hard we try, it's impossible to predict the future. Sometimes our hopes and dreams are overtaken by larger world events.

Whether you are worried about how to make ends meet during a time of inflation or are struggling to adjust to life changes or anxiety about the future, these steps may help:

- ▶ **Be honest.** Many of us are taught to put a positive spin on tough times. While there are many benefits to positive thinking, it's okay to admit that you are feeling scared or uncertain. Talk to a friend or counselor or express your feelings in a "worry" journal.

- ▶ **Let go.** "Radical acceptance" is the process of letting go of how you wanted things to be and accepting what actually is. Mindful meditation may be helpful in becoming more adept at staying grounded in the present.
- ▶ **Stick to a routine.** Maintaining a daily schedule will help you stay on task and keep worry at bay.
- ▶ **Surround yourself with positive people.** Life is easier with friends who make you laugh and support you in difficult moments.

- ▶ **Skip the mental rehearsal.** It's easy to fall into the habit of jumping straight to the worst-case scenario. Instead, focus on what you can control. If you're feeling overwhelmed, make a to-do list and prioritize it in order of importance.
- ▶ **Avoid negativity.** If you are feeling stressed because of the news or what is on your social media feed, step away. Instead of "doom scrolling," devote that time to exercise or a relaxing activity.

Uncertainty and rapid change are often overwhelming. LifeMatters can help you cope with your reactions. Call anytime.



### Inside:

- ▶ Helping Children Cope with Divorce
- ▶ Inflation-Busting Strategies
- ▶ Minimizing Money Stress

## Helping Children Cope with Divorce

Divorce is not just difficult for adults, but for children, too. Most parents going through a separation or divorce search for ways to minimize its impact on their children.

While every child's reaction is unique, many children will grieve a divorce as they would the death of a loved one. Common responses include:

- ▶ A pervasive sense of loss that may linger past childhood
- ▶ Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- ▶ Regression in toilet training (for younger children)
- ▶ Acting out, tantrums, or rebelling against discipline
- ▶ Sadness or depression
- ▶ Difficulty trusting others, both as children and into adulthood

These reactions may be influenced by how a child's parents behave. For example, children who have been exposed to fighting or bitterness may struggle more than those whose parents are respectful toward each other.



As a parent, you can take an active role in easing any worries your child may have. Steps to take include:

- ▶ Frequently reassure your child that you love them and that their other parent does as well. Remind your child that they will always have two parents.
- ▶ Make it clear that the divorce was not your child's fault.
- ▶ Create a schedule that outlines when they will be staying with either parent, who will be driving them to school, and other practical details. It may be helpful to post a calendar on the wall or set one up on their phone.

Other ways to create a healthy environment for your child include:

- ▶ Establish a cooperative relationship with your former partner. Avoid open fighting or acrimony in front of children.
- ▶ It's okay to admit that you are sad or stressed. However, avoid sharing details with your child or making your former partner the "bad" person in the relationship. If you need to vent, talk to a friend or counselor.
- ▶ Ask your child about their feelings. Encourage young children to process their emotions by drawing or writing stories.

LifeMatters is available to help you cope with your own or a child's reaction to a separation or divorce. Call 24/7/365.

# Dollars & Sense: Inflation-Busting Strategies

Inflation is a major challenge to personal finances. When prices go up, it reduces a consumer's buying power. Every dollar is worth less, resulting in stressed budgets — and people.

If you are struggling with the impact inflation is having on your finances, these tips may help:

- ▶ **Minimize fees and interest.** Look for ways to cut back on service fees, particularly at your bank. Plan ahead so you are only using an ATM at your financial institution. Determine what terms you need to meet (such as maintaining a minimum balance) to avoid service fees on your accounts. Cut back on your use of credit cards or pay your balance in full each month to avoid interest charges.
- ▶ **Eliminate food waste.** The only thing worse than paying higher prices at the grocery store is letting the food you've purchased go to waste. Plan ahead so you only buy what you will

use in a given week. Stretch your food budget by making large batches of favorite meals that you can save as single-serve portions for later.

- ▶ **Hold off on major purchases.** Consider if you can live without that big ticket item for a bit longer. Inflationary patches are often cyclical, and some costs may come down after pandemic-related supply chain issues have improved. If you can, save a small amount each month toward the purchase so that you don't have to rely on credit or can make a big down payment when you do finally buy.



- ▶ **Reevaluate savings and other investments.** Review your savings vehicles and divert cash toward products that benefit from inflation. Talk to your financial advisor or use the LifeMatters Financial Consultation Service to identify effective ways to minimize inflationary losses.
- ▶ **Maximize fuel economy.** High gas prices are one of the hardest things to manage during a time of inflation. Consider if there are alternate ways to get where you need to go. Can you walk, bike, or use public transportation more often? Can you combine errands? Would flying to your summer vacation destination be cheaper than driving to it?

Inflation is frustrating, but it often subsides when the economic conditions responsible for it have changed. Making smart changes to how you shop, drive, cook, and invest will help you stretch your dollar further, both now and into the future.

The LifeMatters Financial Consultation Service can offer more suggestions for how to mitigate inflation's impact on your finances. We're here to help!

## Minimizing Money Stress

Are your finances a source of stress? Struggling to keep up with your bills may impact your ability to focus on your work or maintain stability in your personal life. If money is a constant worry, these tips may help:

- ▶ **Create a budget.** List how much cash you have, how much you earn, what you owe, and what revolving bills are due each month. If you are paid on a regular schedule, make a list of when your bills typically arrive each month and allocate them to a specific paycheck (when possible). Factor a regular savings deposit into your monthly budget.
- ▶ **Set priorities.** If your budget doesn't add up, it's time to make some cuts. List all of the things



you pay for each month and determine what you could live without. Cutting unnecessary spending may free up money that you could put toward savings or set aside for a vacation or big-ticket item.

- ▶ **Get creative.** If there are items sitting around your house unused, could you have a yard sale or sell them online? Other sources of extra income include setting up an online shop for a creative hobby. Even a few extra dollars a week will add up over time.

- ▶ **Decrease debt.** Debt is one of the biggest sources of money stress. If you owe money on credit cards or other loans, pay extra as often as possible to speed up the repayment process. A good rule is to first pay down unsecured debt (such as credit cards), starting with the account that has the highest interest rate. After paying off your credit cards, put extra money toward secure debt (such as a car loan).
- ▶ **Look for deals.** Coupons, discount codes, and apps that offer extra savings may help cut expenses. If an item you buy frequently is on sale, consider stocking up (within reason) to save money over time.
- ▶ **Rethink your goals.** Money stress often happens because we're trying to do too much at once. If you are constantly overloaded, it may be time to review your goals and set priorities.

LifeMatters offers professional financial consultation that can help you better manage your finances. Call anytime.

Source: Life Advantages

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