

Keeping the Lid On Financial Stress

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I don't know about you, but I'll admit I'm worrying more about money lately. If your money pressures were already steaming and approaching the boiling point, today's economic climate will surely make your pot boil over. How can you turn down the heat? Are there ways to increase your resistance if you can't cool things off? If things are boiling out of control what can you do to keep from getting burned?

Staying with the metaphor, this boiling cauldron of troubles in the kitchen of our lives will touch most every other room in the house, including the bedroom. It will be there when we leave the house, it will be with us when we go to work and it can even affect our ability to bring home the bacon (even though that is exactly what we need more of!).

Several things may have contributed to our money woes:

- ▶ **Not planning ahead** – life happens, as they say and inevitably it will cost you, whether it's unexpected home or car repairs or medical/dental expenses not in the regular budget.
- ▶ **Spending too much** – in our world, it's easy to overspend, isn't it? We may feel pressure to buy things we don't really need and we may equate acquiring things with happiness. This can quickly get out of control, especially if one person in a relationship is overindulging. Remember, "The best things in life are not things."
- ▶ **Spending to satisfy self-esteem needs** – buying things sometimes makes us feel better, especially if we're feeling a little down or empty. Retailers don't help much as they tempt us in various ways.
- ▶ **How does all this affect us?** Well, first of all, money stress could be the proverbial straw that breaks the camels back. We're hearing more of this at the EAP.
- ▶ **Research shows** that over half of workers have money problems and they are linked to depression, anxiety and other emotional reactions.
- ▶ **Sleep disturbance is common**, which can easily affect daytime functioning, especially if chronic.
- ▶ **Relationships suffer** – problems paying bills tied with in-law troubles as the number one source of stress on couples.
- ▶ **Poor coping behaviors**, such as, smoking, overeating, drinking and drug use may increase.
- ▶ **Lowered productivity at work** – 80% of financially stressed workers spend time at their jobs dealing with or worrying about money issues. Absenteeism increases also. Financial stress affects all income levels.
- ▶ **Medical and health issues** increase such as high blood pressure, weight gain, digestive problems, back and neck pain.

Let Solutions EAP help you turn the heat down, or at least vent some of the steam so you figure out your best plan of action.

Next week we'll discuss some specific financial warning signs and take a look at what to do if you're getting behind in your mortgage.

Call Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485 for assistance for all of life's challenges.

It's free, confidential and open to your family members.

Check us out on-line at www.solutions-eap.com