



Financial **PROTECTION**

FINANCIAL STRESS



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Are you feeling financially stressed? ●

Read the statements or questions and then select the answer that you think is the most true for you (1, 2 or 3).

	1	2	3
<p>When I go to bed at night, I:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sleep very well. 2. Sleep fine, but I sometimes toss and turn. 3. I dream of not paying my bills and getting paid too little. 			
<p>The thing I worry about most, is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Global warming. 2. Not achieving my goals. 3. Losing my job. I'm barely getting by as it is. 			
<p>Paying my bills is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quite fun! I like managing my own finances. 2. Not my favourite part of the month, but at least everything gets paid. 3. Something I put off for as long as I can and often don't even open my bills. 			
<p>How often do you check your bank balance?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once a week or so, just to make sure there aren't any errors. 2. Whenever I need to know how much money I have. 3. I try not to. Just thinking about it makes me feel sick. 			
<p>How often does money cause fights in your personal or romantic life?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never. There's no reason to fight over it. 2. Sometimes, but arguments get sorted out quickly. 3. It's probably the only reason I argue with my partner. 			
<p>In the last six months, I've borrowed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nothing, I've got savings. 2. A few Rands here and there, just to get by. But I always pay it back. 3. So much that I'm afraid that I won't be able to pay it back. 			
<p>Have you ever missed work because of your financial issues?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. I handle my finances in my own time. 2. No, but I've spent some company time on the phone sorting out my finances. 3. Yes. I've taken time off a few times this year to pay bills in person or because I can't afford to get to work. 			
<p>Do you have any stress-related health issues?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No, I am very healthy. 2. No, but I'm sometimes tired and do have a sleepless night now and then. 3. Probably. I think that's why I have headaches all the time. 			



Add up your scores by adding all your answers together to get a final score. Find the description that fits within your final score and read it.

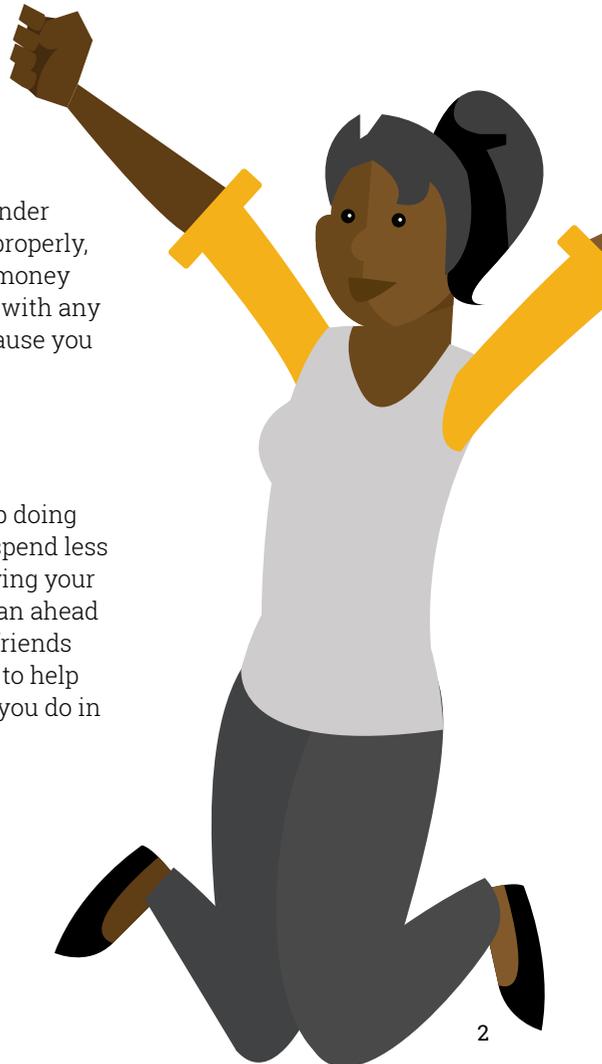
If you scored **8**

Your financial stress is totally under control

Well done! Your financial stress is totally under control. It is probably because you budget properly, you have savings and you handle all your money problems responsibly. When you are faced with any unexpected expenses, you don't panic because you have planned ahead.

What do you need to do?

You are on top of your finances so just keep doing what you are doing. Remember to always spend less than what you bring in and focus on achieving your financial goals. Stay flexible and always plan ahead for any unexpected expenses. If you have friends that are suffering from financial stress, try to help them by sharing some tips and tricks that you do in order to stay on top of your finances.



Are you feeling financially stressed? ●

If you scored between **9 & 16**

You can feel the stress of financial pressures



You get stressed sometimes, but your worries aren't too serious...yet! Most of your stress probably comes from a lack of planning on your part. You may not be paying enough attention to your spending and sometimes make impulse purchases rather than thinking cleverly about how you should manage your money.

What do you need to do?

Make a budget and stick to it so that paying your bills becomes less stressful. This will give you a better view of what money you are spending compared to the money that is coming in. Set financial goals, make plans on how you will achieve these goals and then track your progress. Don't pay your bills in a hurry, rather set some quiet time aside so that you concentrate on what you are doing.



If you scored between **17 & 24**

Financial stress is taking over your life



Your finances probably aren't in very good shape. This is causing you a huge amount of stress and probably negatively affecting your close relationships. You don't budget, and you most likely don't have any savings to fall back on. That means that you come up short with paying your bills often and you are unable to deal with unexpected expenses.

What do you need to do?

The level of financial stress that you are dealing with is a big warning sign. It is probably time to speak to an authorised financial advisor that can help you manage your money and feelings of anxiety. If you have a lot of debt, find a way to pay it off by creating a budget and a plan. Paying off your debt will help you to get back on track as well as manage your stress. Call the organisations provided in this booklet and ask for assistance as you go through this journey.

How do I deal with Financial stress? ●

Signs of financial stress

Financial stress can affect your life and your health:

1. Unhealthy coping behaviours:

People may try to forget about their stress by:

- Drinking
- Smoking
- Overeating
- Gambling



**This doesn't help!
It only leads to more stress.**

2. Less self-care:

People under financial stress often cut corners in areas like healthcare to pay for basic needs such as food.



Take care of yourself now!

3. Avoiding reality:

Sometimes people feel like the best way to deal with financial issues is to ignore the situation.



**Never ignore financial
issues, deal with them!**

4. Unhealthy emotions:

Debt can cause you to feel many negative things which can affect your health. People can feel anxious, frustrated, angry and hopeless. As debt increases these feelings can get worse!



**Do your best to take
control of your emotions!**



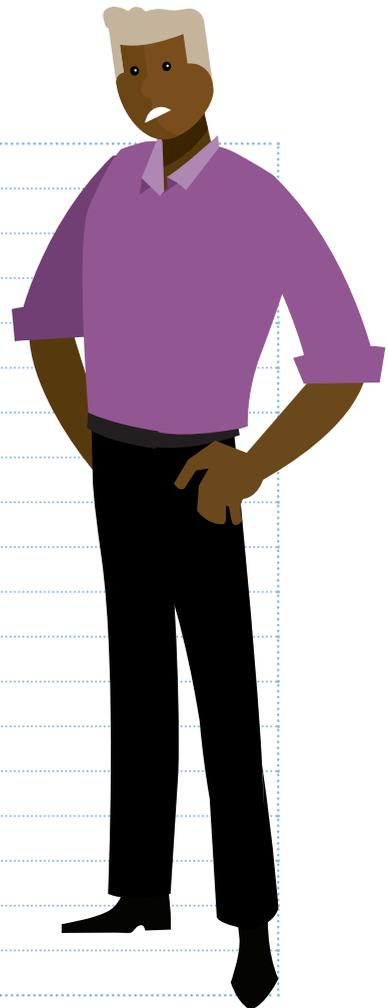
How do I deal with financial stress?

Letting financial stress affect you and the people that are close to you can be terrible.

Think about how you cope with financial stress.

Write down a few things that you know you do when you are feeling stressed, for example, do you fight with your partner?

A large rectangular area with horizontal dashed lines for writing, intended for the user to describe coping strategies.



Coping with financial stress

Here is what you can do to handle your financial situation and feel more in control of your life, ease your stress, and build a more **secure financial future**:



Understand the debt cycle

How did you get into debt and how can you get yourself out? Understanding this debt cycle is the first step towards getting yourself out of it.

Be patient! It is easy to get into debt but can take a long time to get out of it.



Know when you need money and how to get it

Look at ways to get more money in. For example, getting a second job, selling things that you do not want or need or sharing lift clubs.

Go back to basics by looking at spending money on needs and not wants.



Learn to live on less

Get comfortable with cutting your expenses and freeing up money to pay off accounts rather than spending it on things you don't need.

Plan to cut expenses, it will help you feel more in control of your finances.



Stress management

As you work on improving your financial situation, you can ease stress by practicing stress-reducing techniques and making other changes to create a low-stress lifestyle. Remember, it is ok to say 'no' to demanding children and other family members.

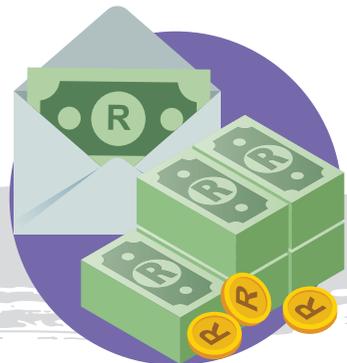
Manage your work-life balance and find things to do with your family that do not cost money.



Don't make desperate decisions

Think every financial decision through carefully. Take your time and do plenty of research before you commit to anything that can affect you, financially, in the long-term.

*Remember that every decision that you make has consequences
– Think before you act!*



What to do differently to cope with financial stress ●

What am I going to do differently to cope with financial stress?



- i. What causes you stress?
- ii. Try and think positively.
- iii. Set realistic goals.

- i. Get the best deals possible.
- ii. Lean on someone, don't do it alone.
- iii. Overcoming financial stress is difficult **but not impossible**.

What do you think you can do **TODAY** to deal with your financial stress?

today

What can you do within the **next 6 months** to help ease your financial stress?

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Where can I go for help? ●

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)

Phone 011 234 4837 | 24Hr Helpline 0800 456 789

Debt counsellors association of South Africa

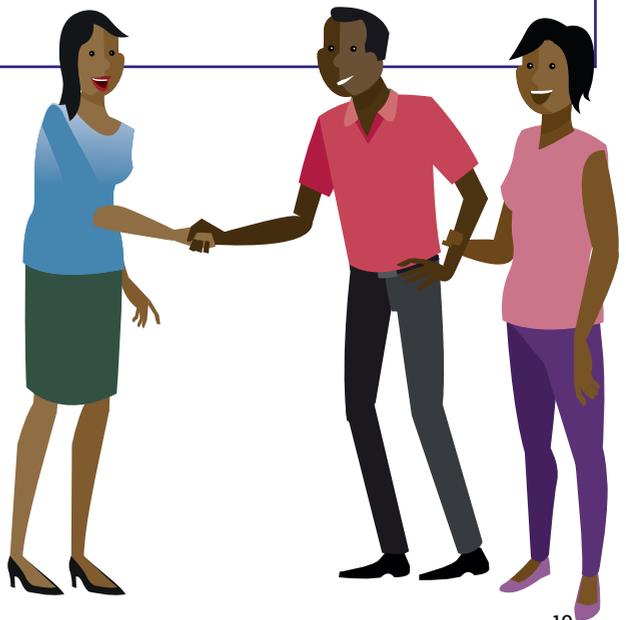
Phone 0861 432 272

National Credit Regulator (NCR)

Phone 0860 627 627

Office of the Credit Ombudsman

Phone 0861 OMBUDS (0861 662837)





Financial Stress

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The purpose of this booklet is help you to identify if you are feeling financially stressed and give you tips on how to cope with your stress.

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