The markets have been greatly fluctuating. The news reports are disconcerting. There are many questions about the bail-out plan on Capitol Hill. No matter the circumstances, for most individuals, the topic of money can generate stress. In uncertain economic times, feelings of fear, panic or anxiety are not uncommon. While the situation locally, on Wall Street, and in Washington, DC, may not be in our control, there are many things we can do to cope effectively with stress and financial uncertainty. The following is a list of suggestions:

- **Talk With Others**
  Share your feelings with family, friends, and colleagues with whom you feel comfortable.

- **Moderate Your Exposure to the Media**
  Continuous media coverage of the financial crisis can feel overwhelming. Be aware of your reactions and decide when to turn off the TV or switch to less intense programming.

- **Maintain Perspective**
  Distinguish between what has actually happened and what might happen. Keep your concerns in proportion to the actual situation. Avoid catastrophic thinking.

- **Practice Positive “Self-Talk”**
  When you have negative thoughts, challenge the logic of those thoughts. Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

- **Prioritize**
  Clarify your concerns. Identify what you have control over and what you do not. Act on what you have control over.

- **Limit Major Life Decisions**
  The more changes and challenges in our lives, the greater the stress level. If you have any influence over the timing of upcoming changes, you might consider delaying some of them. Best-made decisions are not made uncertainly. Delay major decisions until more certain times.

- **Use Humor**
  Remember to laugh. Humor can provide relief even during the most stressful times.

- **Remember the Basics: Nutrition, Rest, and Exercise**
  Eat a balanced diet. Sleep eight hours at night. Exercise regularly; walking and other physical activities will help. Keeping yourself healthy is the best way to stay resilient.

If your reaction to current financial events is interfering with daily activities, or if you would simply like to talk with a counselor about everyday stress, call your Employee Assistance Program. We can provide financial resources and confidential services, at no charge to employees and dependents. Licensed clinicians are available 24/7 for crisis intervention and support.

1.800.451.1834
Helpful Resources

Related websites

- www.practicalmoneyskills.com/english/at home/consumers/budgeting/: resources and articles on budgeting and getting out of debt
- www.bankrate.com: interest rate information
- www.betterbudgeting.com: tips on budgeting and getting out of debt
- www.fool.com: The Motley Fool newsletter
- www.balancepro.net/education/publications.html: information on how to manage income and achieve economic goals

Organizations

National Foundation for Credit Counseling: 1-800-388-2227

Books

- Managing Debt For Dummies by Ventura and Reed, 2007

A financial plan is vital to financial health. The following tips will help you manage household finances in uncertain times.

1. Take Inventory
   List what you spend now and identify expenses that can be reduced or eliminated. See how much you can save.

2. Set aside Money for Savings and Emergencies
   Regularly deposit money in a savings account. Financial planners recommend that you set aside enough money for three months of bills.

3. Reduce and Limit Debt
   Stop using credit cards. Buy only what you can afford.

4. Prioritize Spending
   Distinguish items you need now from those items that can wait. Prioritize spending and saving efforts. Some larger ticket items, like vacations, require thoughtful planning over time.

5. Involve the Entire Household
   To be successful, all family members need to be involved in the financial plan. Children, too, can contribute to savings and set financial goals.

6. Include Fun and Relaxation
   Fun and relaxation are essential to the overall success of a financial plan. If monies are limited, be creative about ways to enjoy yourself on a limited budget or for free.

7. Review and Evaluate
   Review financial plans regularly. Be flexible and reprioritize as needed. The goal is to develop life long habits of smart spending and saving. Consult with a financial professional as needed.

Important Notice: Information in this flyer is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns contact Health Resources EAP. Health Resources is not responsible for the content of the materials provided on the Internet.