

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS AND MONEY

Developing a financial strategy is key to maintaining a healthy relationship.

Money is a difficult topic for many people to discuss. Individuals in a relationship are seldom on the same page when it comes to attitudes about spending and saving money. However, if people can come to agreement about shared financial goals and priorities, differing opinions about money do not have to derail the relationship.

Why is money such a touchy subject? It can bring up feelings of fear, stress, insecurity, and control, to name a few. Beliefs about money can be formed in childhood and influence a person's views and behavior throughout life. Ways to have healthy conversations with your partner about money include the following: asking clarification questions, and providing feedback to show that the message was understood.

- **Explore what money means to each of you and the emotions it brings up.** Is one person a saver and the other a spender? What did you learn about money when you were growing up, and are those beliefs and values still relevant for you today?
- **Discuss short- and long-term goals and the financial sacrifices you're both willing to make to achieve those goals.** Prioritize the most important things and set goals in writing, along with timelines. A regular review of your progress can keep you motivated even if achieving the goal is years in the future.
- **Investigate ways to manage debt and maximize savings.** Set up a schedule for paying off debt as well as setting aside money for an emergency fund. Many people find that following a monthly budget helps to keep them on track and identifies expenses they can reduce.
- **Identify each person's strengths and challenges when it comes to money management skills.** Capitalize on each other's strengths and look for opportunities to learn more about finances. Education on smart money management can help people make important financial decisions, whether it's buying a house, starting a business, planning for college, or investing for retirement.

