

Creating a Financial Crisis Plan

Before creating a financial crisis plan, it might be helpful to first identify the ways you are affected by financial issues. Then identify the ways your finances are affected by mental health, physical health, addiction and substance abuse, or treatment issues.

How financial issues affect me	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
I experience anxiety.				
My sleep is interrupted.				
I feel hopeless.				
I can't purchase needed medication or access services.				
I can't buy the things I want.				
I do without necessities.				
I feel shame.				
I worry about my future.				
My relationship with my partner is strained.				
I dread (or avoid) opening mail or answering the phone.				
I feel out of control with my spending.				
I have to work more than I would like just to pay my bills.				
I can't go out with my friends or take a vacation.				
I feel powerless over my finances.				

How mental health, addiction and substance abuse, and physical health issues affect my finances	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Important bills don't get paid on time.				
I go on rampant spending sprees.				
I spend money I can't really afford on unnecessary things.				
I avoid opening my mail.				
I have a hard time writing and signing checks.				
I have a hard time using ATMs or debit card machines.				
I let my finances go unchecked.				
I can't physically access my finances.				
I lose important financial documents.				
I stop caring about keeping a budget and start making poor financial choices.				
I sabotage my own financial situation.				

Once you have identified how your mental health, addictions and substance abuse, and physical health issues impact your finances, you can begin to create a plan that will work for you. Your plan may only need to include something in writing that you keep for your own records.

Here is an example of a completed plan:

When I do this (or experience this):	I will do this:
My medication makes it hard for me to read the fine print on contracts and bills.	I will have a friend help me read my bills and contracts.
When I get depressed, I stop caring about my finances.	My friend will support me while I write checks for my bills.
When I am hospitalized, I can't access my finances.	My friend will bring my billing statements, my checkbook, and stamps to me in the hospital.
Rather than doing this:	I will do this instead:
I lose my bills in piles of paperwork throughout my apartment.	I will keep my unpaid billing statements in one place where I can easily find them.
I avoid opening my mail.	I will have my friend sit with me twice a week while I open my mail.

When I do this (or experience this):	I will do this:
Rather than doing this:	I will do this instead:

Another tool that might be helpful is to make a list of all your expenses and when payments are due. This is slightly different than a budget, in that it is meant to be a reminder for expenses only. This is something you can also share with a friend that you have asked to help you with your finances in times of crisis. If you decide to use this tool, it's a good idea to keep it with your other financial tools, like your checkbook. For your financial safety, you might also decide to give your friend an edited copy of this form without the account information.



It might be helpful to identify someone you trust to assist you during times of crisis, such as during hospitalizations or altered mental states. If you decide to have someone assist you with your finances, you should keep some important considerations in mind:

- ✓ Is this someone you know well and trust?
- ✓ How reliable is this person?
- ✓ How much assistance do you think you will need?
- ✓ How will you relay what you need from the person?

Keep in mind:

The more information your support person has from you about your finances, the greater your risk of fraud or identity theft. Because of this, it is vital that the person you identify for support is trustworthy. If the nature of your relationship changes or if you start having reason to distrust the person, change account information right away on anything you think may be at risk.