

Workshop 4: Financial Pressure



U OK? is a series of workshops, co-produced with students. They aim to support student mental health through the transition out of further education, into higher education, the world of work and training.

Each workshop is led by two student facilitators, Mental Health Ambassadors.



FINANCIAL PRESSURES WORKSHOP

The purpose of this workshop is to explore the financial pressures faced by students, look at some practical ways to manage these pressures, and learn from each other. Students will reflect on what works for them, and think about how to build new habits into their own lives.

You're not expected to have all the answers, but to help start the conversation that will get them thinking about how to navigate different situations and manage their mental health, and to signpost them to where they can go for support should they need it.

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Timings

We give you an indicative timing for each activity. You might find this needs adjusting slightly as you prepare. We suggest an optional task that you can run if you have time. If you don't have time, skip the optional task and move on to Reflection & Close.

How to do it

The instructions for each activity are split into steps, which you should either: DO (handing things out, putting up slides), SAY (the key messages and instructions for the activity) or ASK (prompt questions to extend the discussion or gauge understanding).



Discussion based
activity



Activity



Break

Notes and troubleshooting

We provide extra information that may be helpful when you're running the activity, such as adaptations you could make, considerations about managing the class, or key preparations for the lesson.

Read the lesson plan in advance

As part of your preparation, you should read the lesson plan in full.

You'll need to decide with your co-Mental Health Ambassador who will deliver each section of the lesson.

It's not a script:

The session plan provides sentence examples, but it's not a word-for-word script that you can simply read out. It may be helpful to make key notes about what you're going to say but avoid writing full sentences.

Try and practice beforehand so you feel more confident and less likely to read from the page.

Workshop aims

- ✓ To recognise how financial pressures can impact mental health.
- ✓ To discuss and share tips for managing financial pressures.
- ✓ To improve understanding of how to maintain good mental health in relation to finances.
- ✓ To signpost to services that can support mental health needs.
- ✓ To signpost to services and advice that can help support financial needs.

Resources you will need

In Person:

- ✓ Pens and paper
- ✓ Signposting resource

Online:

- ✓ Jamboard
- ✓ Signposting resources

Preparation Checklist

- ✓ Meet with co-facilitator(s) and decide who will run each section
- ✓ Check you can access all resource materials
- ✓ Make sure you have the Zoom link for the call (if delivering online)
- ✓ Read the session in full



OVERVIEW



Workshop aims:

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Financial Pressure Workshop



TIMETABLE



Workshop Duration: 2 hours

Introduction

- Icebreaker
- Welcome
- Ground rules

20 mins

Our Relationship with Money

- Feelings around money
- Why spending can feel good

35 mins

Break

10 mins

Coping Strategies

OPTIONAL

- Different perspectives on spending
- Finding strategies that work for you

30 mins

Reflection and Close

15 mins

Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Welcome

5 minutes



HOW TO DO IT

SAY:

Thank the group for attending, explain that yourself and the other MHAs will be facilitating this workshop.

If comfortable sharing, tell the group why you are passionate about mental health.

Explain:

- Mental health is something we all have, and we all have pressures that impact it in different ways. Some of these pressures increase or change when we start school, college or university.



INTRODUCTION

Ice-breaker

10 minutes



HOW TO DO IT

SAY:

Explain that you will spend a few minutes on introductions and learning a little about each other.

ASK:

Starting with MHAs, ask everyone to share their;

- Name, pronouns (if comfortable) and course
- To share the last 'essential' purchase they made and the last 'luxury' purchase they made

VARIATIONS:

Feel free to swap the icebreaker out for one of your own or use one of the alternatives on page 19

Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Ground rules

5 minutes



HOW TO DO IT

SAY:

"To make sure we get the most out of this session, together we will create a list of ground rules"

ASK:

Ask everyone to share rules that would help them feel safe, supported and get the most out of the session. Examples include;

- Treating each other with respect
- Not interrupting
- No phones

DO:

Add "be aware of triggers" if it is not mentioned by participants, and explain:

- That talking about mental health can be personal and sensitive
- That you want everyone to feel free and open to share, but that they should consider how sharing their personal experiences might make others in the group feel.
- If it could be triggering but it is something they would like or feel like they need support with, they should message one of the MHAs who will be able to signpost them to the appropriate person or organisation.

VARIATIONS:

You can create this list by asking people to call out, or anonymously using post-it notes or online using the jamboard



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY

Feelings around money: discussion
10 minutes

HOW TO DO IT

SAY:

There is a lot of shame attached to money. People can be embarrassed to have too much, or too little. This leads to the attitude that it's rude to talk about money – this is particularly common in the UK. Not talking about money can make it harder to be aware of options for looking after your finances, and it can lead to feelings of stress, shame, and discomfort.

ASK:

- Do you talk openly about money with anyone?
- How does it make you feel when people talk about having lots of money or not enough money?

SAY:

Whether we have enough or could do with more, money impacts our mood.

ASK:

How it feels when;

- you have just been paid
- you have birthday or pocket money

Ask how it feels when;

- you owe someone money
- you can't afford to go to an event all your friends are attending
- you overhear your parent/guardian worrying about money

Ask a few participants to elaborate on their answers.

Our Relationship with Money

SAY:

Money worries and mental health problems can create a cycle; worrying about money can impact mental health and poor mental health can make it harder to manage money.

A small amount of worry can help us to focus on the problem and take steps to address it. But sometimes worry and anxiety can be overwhelming, and when that happens, it can prevent us from acting.

An overwhelming amount of worry about finance can impact in one of two ways:

- Thinking about the problem makes us anxious, so we avoid thinking about it at all and pretend things aren't that bad.
- We worry so much that we can't think rationally. The worry paralyses us, we struggle to decide on a way forward, and don't tackle the problem.

All people, regardless of what they earn, can have worries about money, and our relationship with money can impact our mental health.



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY

Why spending can feel good

25 minutes

HOW TO DO IT



ASK:

With a show of hands, does anyone get a bit of a buzz when they buy something?

Ask a few people to elaborate, what was the last thing they bought that gave them this feeling?

SAY:

Endorphins and dopamine are released when we spend, which makes us feel good and reinforces the behaviour. Spending gives us a short term high or buzz that can be followed by feelings of guilt.

We can get into a cycle of spending and feeling guilty, and this can be connected to "emotional spending". "Emotional spending" is buying something you don't need as a means of making yourself feel better, or "treating yourself".

Our Relationship with Money

This can be an unhelpful coping strategy. (Unhelpful coping strategies are things that you might do to make you feel better in the short term, or help you deal with a situation in that moment, but in the long term could make the situation worse.)

This can be a difficult habit to break when we think of all the companies, products, and services designed to tempt you.

ASK:

participants to write down on sticky notes or index cards the different ways spending can make you feel good.

DO:

Put the examples up on the wall and ask everyone to discuss the results.

ASK:

- Ask participants to write down on sticky notes or index cards the negative feelings that spending can bring.
- Encourage participants to think about their personal experiences or observations. e.g. It may be that they feel bad in the long term, or they don't have money to do the things they want.

DO:

- Collect the sticky notes or index cards and group them into common themes on the wall.
- Facilitate a group discussion on the identified themes, allowing participants to share their thoughts and experiences.
- Explore the emotional and psychological effects of financial stress, such as anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and relationship strain.

Themes may be:

Health

Personal pressures versus social commitments

Relationships (friends/family)

Impact on studying

Coping Strategies



BREAK

10 minutes



COPING STRATEGIES

Role playing Activity
20 minutes

OPTIONAL



HOW TO DO IT

RESOURCE: Character Resource

SAY:

With the current cost of living crisis, it is more important than ever to take control of our finances and understand that your peers might be in a different position to you.

We will now do a role-playing activity to explore different perspectives on spending.

DO:

- Hand out a character brief to each person
- Explain to the group that these are a group of friends from college who have gone their separate ways and are together over the summer
- Ask the group to read their character brief and reflect on it personally for 5 minutes paying attention to how much money they have to spend a month
- Bring the group together and explain you will now ask them a series of questions and they need to answer as their character

ASK:

The group to plan a day out together. Decide between you:

- Will you get a taxi or public transport?
- Do you want to do a paid activity or do something free?
- Do you want to buy lunch out or bring food with you?
- Do you want to go to the cinema or watch a film at home?
- Do you want to stay out for the evening or go home and chill there?



COPING STRATEGIES

Ranking Financial Pressures

15 minutes

OPTIONAL



RESOURCE: [Financial pressures ranking resource](#)

DO:

- Show the group the list of situations and ask them to rank the situation from easiest to hardest to find a coping strategy/ solution.
- The group will likely disagree on the order a bit so use those opinions to open up a discussion and start thinking about strategies and solutions together.

ASK

- Once the group has agreed on an order, go down the list and ask the group why they ranked it that way.
- Ask them what they think a good coping strategy is for each situation.

SAY:

Once you've finished your discussion and come up with some strategies together, you can share any below strategies that have been missed.

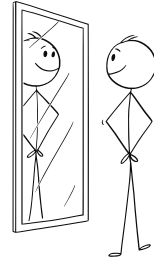
- Tell someone you trust when you feel an impulse to spend.
- Don't save your card details into websites, entering them in each time will make you stop and think before purchasing.
- Delete apps where you usually overspend, or apps which encourage spending
- If you get tempted by adverts on social media, limit how much time you spend on it.
- Find ways to delay purchasing. Create wish lists rather than buying immediately.
- Create a values based budget - prioritise spending on the things that make you feel good, but only within your budget.
- Encourage participants to identify areas where they have control over their financial situation and take action.
- Highlight the benefits of gaining financial knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and feel more empowered.

Reflection & Close



REFLECTION & CLOSE

Reflection
10 minutes



HOW TO DO IT

RESOURCE: Rose, Bud, Thorn exercise

ASK:

Participants to think of a rose, bud and thorn that they have thought of today.

- Rose = A highlight, success, or something positive that you do in relation to your mental health and finances (e.g. you talk to someone when you're worried)
- Thorn = A challenge you experienced or something you can use more support with (e.g., you do too much online shopping)
- Bud = New ideas that have blossomed from today or something you are looking forward to knowing more about or experiencing. (e.g. you will start creating a budget)

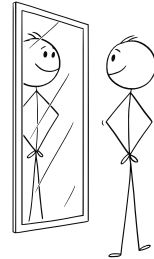
VARIATION:

If you are online then share the online PDF of the worksheet



REFLECTION AND CLOSE

Close
5 minutes



HOW TO DO IT

RESOURCE: Tips and Signposting Handout

DO:

Share the link to the Tips and Signposting Handout and explain that it covers some of the topics we have looked at in the session, and signposts for more information and resources.

DO:

Share the link to the feedback sheet and ask everyone to complete it. The more feedback we have the more we are able to evidence the use and impact of workshops like these, and encourage more institutions to run them.

Ask the group to complete the feedback survey before leaving the session. The link and QR code to access it are below.

Feedback is vital to the success and expansion of this project.

<https://linktr.ee/mhfuok?>





ALTERNATIVE ICEBREAKERS

There are suggested icebreakers for each workshop, feel free to swap these out with one of your own, or one of the ideas on this page.

You can add icebreakers into the session to boost energy, after the break can be a good time for this.

High to low

Ask the group organise themselves in order, start off with quick easy ones like height or birthday and then move onto some that involve more conversation, you could even theme them for the workshop you are running.

E.g. for the Academic Pressure Workshop, ask if they thrive under pressure, or prefer more time and preparation to complete an assignment. Ask them to place themselves in order from Less Pressure to Most Pressure.

Desert island

Ask the group what three items you would bring on a deserted island. Then ask them which three items they would bring on an Island paradise. Are they similar or drastically different?

Word Association

Ask everyone in the group to say the first thing that comes to mind when asked the word "health" and again with "wellbeing". Can start off with a less obvious word to encourage creativity e.g. "Tasty"

Visualisation

- If your day/ week was a film/ book/ song, which would it be and why?
- If you or your day/week/life were an animal/ character/ condiment/ meal etc, what would you be and why?

Lucky dip

Everyone in the group has to write out a random word, they then muddle the words up and pick one out at random. They then have to speak about this topic for 30 seconds to one minute. Can be used to represent how social situations might make it difficult for someone to communicate.



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