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ABOUT THE CFPB

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is a government agency built to protect consumers. Our free resources help you have the information you need to make informed financial decisions.



WORKSHEET

Who shapes my money choices?

prototype only— not for distribution



This tool will help you:

- **Think** about your everyday money choices
- **Recognize** how family members influence those choices
- **Plan** for small changes that could make hard choices easier

Think about this:

Families make money choices together and separately. Each person may have different ideas about what's important and why. Inside are questions that will help you see who makes money choices, and consider what makes those choices easy or hard.

Start with one question:

How did I make my last money decision?



1. In my family, money decisions are made by:

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2. When I make a money decision, I tend to talk with:

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3. Growing up, money was:

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4. At home, decisions about money are hard when:

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5. It could be helpful for our money decisions if we:

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Who shapes my money choices?

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

Financial decisions are never made in a vacuum. They are influenced by our feelings and attitudes toward money, and—whether we recognize it or not—by the financial feelings, attitudes, and behaviors of the family members around us.

This worksheet is intended to guide a conversation between you and your client about the role family members play in influencing financial behaviors. By making those connections visible, this 10-minute exercise may spark a new awareness of their own behaviors and choices, which can lead to new ideas or strategies to achieve their financial goals.

This worksheet is intended to be completed as part of a conversation between a practitioner and a client. It is designed to start a conversation and **is not meant to be completed alone.**



1. In my family, money decisions are made by:

Encourage your client to list everyone in the family who makes decisions about money. This may include a spouse, children, or others living within or outside the home like a parent or grandchild.



2. When I make a money decision, I tend to talk with:

Encourage your client to think about their own behavior and why it's so. Does s/he make financial choices on his/her own, or consult with a spouse or friend? By exploring "why," you may discover feelings that s/he may not have realized.



3. Growing up, money was:

This is another way to uncover feelings your client may have about money. Rather than a conversation about family history, which may be uncomfortable, encourage your client to write down one or two adjectives or descriptive phrases. For example, tight, stressful, not talked about, etc.



4. At home, decisions about money are hard when:

Work to pinpoint what's hard about money conversations. Encourage your client to focus on actions or behaviors, rather than individual people. Ask open-ended questions ("How did you handle that?") and focus on strengths ("What did you learn?").

5. It could be helpful for our money decisions if we:

Encourage your client to think of one action they can take, that could help address a challenge or idea raised in your conversation together. For example, ask your client, "Think of a money goal you could achieve in the next few weeks." Then guide your client to break that goal into small steps.

RESOURCES

Is this a good tool for your client? This tool is for use with clients who are ready to explore their relationship to money. It is not advised to use the tool with clients and families in the middle of crisis, or with families where there is a high level of tension, or risk of conflict.

Need to make a referral? Money arguments can be a sign of much deeper issues. If you are in a situation where you feel unqualified or uncomfortable, refer your client to a licensed mental health professional or, if feasible, to one with specific training in financial planning. Please consult with a peer or supervisor right away if you have questions. One example of a website that may be helpful is the Financial Therapy Association Network: www.financialtherapyassociation.org/find-a-ft

Want the theory behind this worksheet? Read the literature review upon which it's based. www.SonyaBrittPaperTBD.gov

Want more exercises like this? Check out the CFPB's Your Money Your Goals toolkit for more resources and conversation starters. www.consumerfinance.gov/your-money-your-goals/