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**Budgeting for the Holidays:  
Managing Personal Finances**

Presentation by:  
MHN Training & Development

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## *Participant Handbook*

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## Learning Objectives

- Discuss how to budget holiday spending
- Create ideas for non-monetary or low cost ways to enjoy the holidays
- Present guidelines for creating a holiday budget
- Describe how to communicate with family members about holiday expectations

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## Holiday Stressors

- Focus on material things and spending
- Too much responsibility
- Too many activities
- Commercial or family pressure for the “perfect” holiday
- Social pressure to feel “happy”
- Disappointments
- Unfulfilled resolutions

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### Budget Concerns at the Holidays

- Financial pressures, and/or feeling unable to give as desired for loved ones
- Spending temptations while shopping
- Traveling to be with family
- Increased expenditures for holiday meals and parties
- Holiday extras, such as sending holiday cards and packages
- Personal financial uncertainty
- *What else?*

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### Beat the Holiday Budget Blues

- Set manageable expectations
- Keep a sense of humor
- Say “no” to excessive demands
  - Time
  - Money
  - Other Resources
- Spend time with those you love

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### Change the Focus of the Season

- Savor the “little things” this year
  - People smiling
  - Beautiful music
  - Good food
- Start a new tradition
  - Make the tradition low- or no-cost
- Volunteer
- Be generous with compliments and smiles
- What else?

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### Avoid Holiday Debt

- Define your limits
- Plan ahead
- Make a list, check it twice
- Think outside the (gift) box
- Get creative
  - Crafts
  - Cookie exchange
  - “Coupons” for services and favors
- Choose your stores wisely
- Seek assistance

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### Holiday Budget Preparation

- Re-examine the year's income and household budget
- Review last year's holiday expenses
- Determine last year's outcome
  - On target?
  - Too much indebtedness?
- Create expectations & get family buy-in
- Make the budget
- Decide how to pay
  - Cash
  - Credit

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### Creating that Holiday Budget

- Set a *total spending limit* for the season
- List categories of holiday purchases
  - Gifts
  - Charitable contributions
  - Decorations and cards
  - Food and beverages
- Create a budget worksheet
  - See the "*Holiday Spending Worksheet*"
- Track your spending
- Say "no" to last-minute temptations
- Tweak your budget to cover any overspending

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### Cash versus Credit for Holiday Budgeting

<u>Cash</u>	<u>Credit</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep budgeted amount in cash</li><li>• Pay everything with the “holiday cash”</li><li>• Shopping is complete when money is gone</li><li>• Debit cards can also help keep you on target; payment is by cash in your account</li><li>• Do not use your ATM as a “piggy bank”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can make purchase and return process easier</li><li>• Using only one card helps track purchases</li><li>• Plan to pay off immediately for maximum benefits</li><li>• Keep the holiday balance on the cards for <i>no more than 3 months</i></li><li>• If you have a current running balance, then use cash</li></ul>

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### Reducing Family Financial Holiday Stress

- Set financial goals for the holidays
  - Visit progress weekly
- Avoid relying on credit cards
- Discuss goals with your spouse/partner
  - Individual comfort levels with spending
  - Amount in savings and “emergency” funds (3-6 months pay recommended)
  - Handling unplanned expenses
- Stick to your budget
- Look to creative non-monetary solutions

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### Talking to Children About Holiday Finances

- Keep discussions age-appropriate
- Model behaviors you want to see in your children
- Let the children feel helpful to the family situation
- Discover cost-savings creative gift ideas
- Do things that are important as a family

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### Manage Holiday Stressors

- Modify Your Behavior
  - Use Humor Appropriately
  - Get Organized
  - Vent in Emotionally Healthy Ways
- Create Social Support
  - Identify Your Needs
  - Volunteer
  - Communicate
  - Use Your EAP
- Enhance Your Lifestyle
  - Good Nutrition
  - Exercise
  - Get Plenty of Sleep
  - Use Relaxation Techniques

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## Declare Your Rights

- You have the right to relax
- You have the right to set spending limits
- You have the right to take care of yourself
- You have the right to say “No thank you”
- You have the right to stay at home
- You have the right to your own beliefs
- You have the right to turn down invitations

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## Resources

- Your bank or financial institution
- Financial advisors
- Who else?
  
- MHN On-line
  - [www.mhn.com](http://www.mhn.com)

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## **Handout A. Low-Cost Holiday Gift Ideas**

Here are some creative, low cost holiday gift ideas:

- For young children: create a gift box of “dress up” clothes. Collect scarves, jewelry, hats, shoes and old clothes or uniforms. Most kids can have hours of fun playing dress up.
- For children’s toys and clothing: Check out thrift stores, discount stores such as Big Lots and Dollar Stores, secondhand stores, flea markets, pawn shops, garage sales, going out of business sales, etc.
- For a teenage girl: a cosmetic box might be appropriate. Look for sales at drug stores or discount stores like Big Lots or “dollar stores” for hair accessories, nail polish and makeup; buy beads and string at a craft store to make a variety of bracelets and necklaces.
- If you have sewing, knitting, crocheting, woodworking, quilting, etc. skills: make hats, mittens, sweaters, Afghans, a decorative shelf, cabinet or a quilt that compliments the recipient’s décor.
- If you have handyman skills: a “Gift Certificate” offering needed home improvement or repair service provided by you.
- Make a coupon book including things that the person likes. For example, a coupon for their favorite home-cooked meal; free night of babysitting, laundry or housecleaning service; baking cookies together; going to the park; a back rub or just spending the day together.
- Put together a gift basket with homemade baked goods or bath items.
- Homemade gifts and ornaments are an inexpensive alternative to the shopping mall and are often the most treasured by family members.
- Give the gift of time. Check with your local Parks Department, libraries and County extension offices. They offer a wide variety of family activities that are either free or inexpensive.

## Handout B. Holiday Spending Worksheet

### *Gifts*

Name	Gift Idea(s)	Budgeted Spending	Actual Spending	Amount: Over or Under

**Budgeted Total:** \_\_\_\_\_    
 **Actual Total:** \_\_\_\_\_    
 **Amount +/-:** \_\_\_\_\_

### *Charitable Contributions*

Name of Charity	Budgeted Spending	Actual Spending	Amount: Over or Under

**Budgeted Total:** \_\_\_\_\_    
 **Actual Total:** \_\_\_\_\_    
 **Amount +/-:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Handout B. Holiday Spending Worksheet (continued)

### *Food and Beverages*

Item	Budgeted Spending	Actual Spending	Amount: Over or Under

**Budgeted Total:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Actual Total:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount +/-:** \_\_\_\_\_

### *Decorations*

Item	Budgeted Spending	Actual Spending	Amount: Over or Under

**Budgeted Total:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Actual Total:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount +/-:** \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR HOLIDAY STRESS-LESS “BILL OF RIGHTS”

**I have the right to enjoy the holidays:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will look past the parts of the holidays that are less than perfect and look for those parts that can bring me joy.

**I have the right to mixed emotions:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will accept those feelings of happy, sad, frustrated, guilty, frightening, thankful and peaceful, which all emerge during the holidays, and deal with them in a healthy manner.

**I have the right to say NO:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will not hesitate to decline too much food or alcohol, some or all invitations, people and things that bring me down, and riding with someone who has had too much to drink.

**I have the right to design the holidays that I want:** \_\_\_\_\_

I will plan in advance how I want my holidays to be and make choices that will increase the likelihood of that outcome.

### *My Personal Holiday Commitment to Me*

**This holiday season I will initiate this new way of doing things (differently than in the past):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**In *future* holiday seasons, I may want to do this differently than in the past:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_