bankwest

Addressing financial abuse

What is financial abuse?

Financial abuse occurs when money is used as a means to gain power and control over another person. Financial abuse can trap people in an abusive relationship, and may also impact on their ability to stay safe if they decide to leave.

How common is it?

In Australia, up to 16% of women* will experience financial abuse in their lifetime, and people of all genders can be affected

People with disability may be at greater risk due to reliance on others, reduced access to financial resources, barriers to accessing social security entitlements, and limited experience in managing finances.

It's common for people to feel embarrassed and overwhelmed when talking about financial abuse.

It's important to learn the signs of financial abuse, where to go for help, and how to support a family member or friend who may be at risk. This can help victim-survivors to recover and regain their financial independence.

Recognising financial abuse

Despite its prevalence, financial abuse can be difficult to recognise:



Many find it difficult to see that they are in a financially abusive relationship.



Financial abuse may begin subtly and progress over time.



In some cultures, it may be considered acceptable for one person to control all household finances.



Sometimes, money is seen as a private, family matter that is not openly discussed.

* Kutin, Russell, Reid (2017), Economic Abuse between intimate partners in Australia: prevalence, health status, disability and financial stress, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health

Some signs of financial abuse.

Not sure whether you're in a financially abusive relationship or not? Ask yourself the following questions:



Has your partner ever prevented you from getting a job or going to work?



Have you ever been prevented from contributing to the household income?



Have you ever been pressured to stop earning or spending your own money?



Have you been asked to perform tasks or 'sexual favours' in exchange for money?



Does your partner refuse to pay child support or help with childcare?



Have you been forced to take out a loan or credit card in your name?



Does your partner control how all of the household income is spent?



Does your partner keep their finances or the family finances secret?



Does your partner monitor what you spend or ask you to show them all of the shopping receipts?



Is your opinion ignored on major financial decisions?



Are you ever denied access to money or do you have to ask for money for basic expenses for yourself or your children?



Are you pressured to work in a family business without pay?

How to get help

- If you or someone you know is experiencing financial abuse, or remain unsure, there are free services you can access.
- As a first point of call we recommend calling **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732**. This is a free and confidential service.
- If you need an interpreter or translator, you can use the telephone Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450**, specify your required language and ask them to contact **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732**. TIS National is available free of charge.
- Alternately, you can call **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732** and ask for an interpreter. The counsellor will make the arrangements.
- We're here for Bankwest customers experiencing financial abuse - if you're a Bankwest customer call our **Community Assistance Line** on **1800 433 932.**
- If you're worried about your own behaviour, there is free and confidential support available.
- Call No to Violence on 1300 766 491 or chat online ntv.org.au

View our comprehensive Recognise and Recover guide here

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