



COVID-19

HOW TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONES DEAL WITH FINANCIAL ISSUES

In a world where financial security can never be taken for granted, checking in on your loved ones is more important than ever. Dr. Peter Mills, Medical Director of Cigna Europe and Paul Lewis, financial journalist and presenter of BBC Radio 4's *Money Box*, offer their advice.

Dealing with your finances isn't easy at the best of times and, as we all emerge from lockdown with greater insecurity over employment, for some this will become too much. "There are many people who have lost their jobs," explains Paul Lewis, "there are people whose pay has been reduced and there are people in small businesses whose business is struggling to survive, even failing to survive, in some cases.

"That your job will be there as long as you turn up and you do the work can no longer be taken for granted.

"There are certainly people in my country, and around the world, who do not know if they can carry on feeding their families, because their income is so low. Now, that is stress."

Even if you don't fall into this bracket, someone you know, a family member or friend could be, and the advice from the experts is that you need to face up to the reality. "Don't just feel frightened," says Paul. "Look at what's happening, look at your income and the prospect of your income, look at your debts, your bills; be honest with yourself.

"And, of course, if you have a partner, if you live in a family, talk to the other people in the family and find out their position as well, so you know as a household where you are," adds Paul, "because only if you face up to it, can you try and deal with it. It might be a very frightening picture, but at least you know the facts."



A good way to start the conversation, is to talk about your own experiences of stress and anxiety or fear around the current situation.

How we see our friends and family has also changed, which makes it even harder to spot the usual signs. "We might not see our friends as we normally do," explains Paul. "We might see them on Zoom, or FaceTime, or something like that, or talk to them on the phone.

"We might think, they sound okay; they are coping'. They are probably not."

At this point, it's also important how you broach the topic. "It is a difficult conversation," acknowledges Dr. Peter Mills. "Sometimes it's a difficult conversation to have even with yourself or with your loved ones, it can be quite daunting, talking about such a personal thing as stress.



"We might think, they sound okay; they are coping'. They are probably not."



“A good way to start the conversation, is to talk about your own experiences of stress and anxiety or fear around the current situation. Being open and honest can really kickstart the conversation and makes it less like an interview or an interrogation.”

When the floodgates open, you’re then able to offer more tangible solutions to your loved ones. “There are a lot of good resources available online,” says Peter. “but the science behind it is something called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), this teaches you the understanding of how your thoughts impact on your emotions and then, in turn, how your emotions impact your behaviors.

“Once you understand that in the different elements of your life, it is then possible to start to unpack that, and start to do things differently, so you feel less stressed.”

While CBT can help you deal with the stress, that acknowledgement of your own financial situation can also stand you in good stead not just for better stress care, but for a better future. “There will be a time when we get back to normal, and I would like to think, financially, it will be a better normal,” says Paul. “It’s hard to imagine that when you are struggling to feed your family, or you are worried about your job being lost, but the techniques that you can use to look at your finances will stand you in good stead in good times, as well as bad.

“So, let’s look forward, if we can, to a better normal when we are more in charge of our finances, more aware of it, when we don’t hide things from ourselves and our loved ones. And that could make our lives better, when this dreadful problem is behind us.”

If you’d like to find out more about how to check-in on friends, family or colleagues or just discover new ways to help manage your own stress care, watch the video below.

[Watch the video here](#)



“There will be a time when we get back to normal, and I would like to think, financially, it will be a better normal”

Together, all the way.®



All Cigna products and services are provided by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation, including Cigna Global Wellbeing Solutions Limited, and other contracted companies. The Cigna name, logos, and other Cigna marks are owned by Cigna Intellectual Property, Inc. Products and services may not be available in all jurisdictions and are expressly excluded where prohibited by applicable law. This material is provided for informational purposes only. It is believed accurate as of the date of publication and is subject to change. Such material should not be relied upon as legal, medical, or tax advice. As always, we recommend that you consult with your independent legal, medical, and/or tax advisors. © 2020 Cigna. Some content may be provided under license.