

Financial Crunch May Isolate Friends and Family

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People who lose a job or who are in the midst a financial crisis often are reluctant to talk about their struggles and may isolate themselves from friends and family.

"In the U.S. talking about personal financial matters is taboo. Facing a financial crisis often adds layers of shame and guilt," explains Denise Krause, LCSW, clinical associate professor and associate dean for community engagement in the University at Buffalo School of Social Work.

"Many of us who know these people are unsure how to reach out to them," Krause says.

For anyone interested in reaching out to friends and family members who are dealing with financial crisis, Krause offers these tips:

- Make yourself available to listen and give support. "Sometimes people just need to talk out their feelings of grief, fear, resentment, anxiety, depression, failure, loss, to name a few," Krause says.
- Listen without making a judgment, giving advice or offering sympathy. Instead, validate the other's feelings; acknowledge how difficult the situation is for them and listen with empathy.
- Ask them what would be helpful coming from you.

- Agree to help in ways that are realistic for you.
- Avoid sharing information about your friend or family member's situation with others unless they give you permission.
- Sometimes facing a financial crisis creates angry and frustrated feelings. Expect these feelings to surface and avoid taking them personally.
- Include these family members and friends in gatherings, plans and typical activities. Also be accepting that they may decline your offers.
- When possible, offer reassurance that you will stick by them through the crisis.
- When you feel "over your head" let your friends and family know this and suggest they may benefit from professional help.

Provided by The University at Buffalo

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