

Healthy ways to cope with financial challenges

Interviewee1: I spent money like crazy, I just went wild. I was like, “Whatever, I lived through that.” Like, I deserve this, I deserve spending, you know, this money.

Interviewee2: So, I got certified as an X-ray technician and then there I was again making loads of money and not putting it to good use, you know, and so at some point it all caught up with me.

Interviewee3: We were surviving on what little pennies we had, and I remember the number of pennies we did have, which wasn’t very much because it went quick.

Interviewee4: You know, you have to have something steady to be able to afford your own place. You need steady income, you know, and I just didn’t really have that all the time. I made good money as an ironworker and as a welder and then you’re out of work and you’re broke, you know it’s feast or famine.

Interviewee5: I just went with a neighbor to the casino. I would go down there every day and I would spend all my money, and I would still have people helping me out, but I got into debt with the gambling. Then I ended up with the neighborhood loan shark, you know, he would help me get money, but he would also charge a lot.

Interviewee6: I just felt useless, and the store wasn’t making any money, it was slowly rotting away, eating away at any money that we had saved up and we ended up having to close the store.

Interviewee3: I had been having these dreams, and more like nightmares, and then one day when I woke up from one of these nightmares, I woke up I was not feeling good. I just felt stressful, I was a little angry, I was sad. But I knew I needed to get to work, so I’m driving to go to work and I realize, “No, you’re not going to work today.” I drove myself to the VA and I sought assistance. I talked to a gentleman there and he facilitated the entire process until I got to talk to a doctor.

Interviewee1: So, I set up an appointment with the VA, and I thought it was actually gonna take a really long time and it was pretty quick. Went in and the guy who I saw was a Vietnam Vet who was a) really cool, like he was easy to talk to. When you can talk about an experience that really bothered you and just lift that burden up off your shoulders and just suspend it out there for a little bit. I would walk out and take a breath of fresh air and feel good, and I was like “Okay, I didn’t really want to talk about that, but I feel better.”

Interviewee6: One of the biggest things I’ve learned is that there are ways to combat those feelings of isolation. There are ways to combat those feelings of lack of motivation. Ways to combat the depression or anxiety in general.

Interviewee5: The VA also gave me a budgeting class, and that has helped me tremendously. Now I’m paying my bills, I’m all right now.

Interviewee7: I just decided one day I’m not going to let the bastards beat me, and the bastards are the bank that’s foreclosing on me and my own worst enemy, myself, because I was down on myself and I just said “I’m gonna fight this.” And with the coping



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skills that I was given from some of the doctors there, and still talking to 'em, that's how I did it.

Interviewee2: I wouldn't trade this feeling for the world. You know, I've got my health. I'm taking care of my health issues as they come up. I'm not ignoring anything. I got a roof over my head, you know, I got money in the bank, I've got food in the refrigerator, I've got a steady job, and I work with people who like me.

Interviewee1: The physical responsibility aspect of it and not drinking so much which was where most of my money was going. Realizing that and being able to suddenly like have a little bit of money so that I can, you know, take a vacation or not have to worry at the end of every month as whether or not I can eat or not was nice to say the least. But also, to feel... it was part of the moving on process of like, I'm moving from this phase in my life to the next.

Interviewee4: It's given me some strength and confidence, and I know some things to work with a little bit. I know I can go on and go forward.

Interviewee3: We got training, and we welcomed it. Let's get the help and welcome it.



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