



How to deal with money worries

brainstrust information sheet

Know Hows are published by *brainstrust* to help people living with a brain tumour to understand current topics. They are produced with input from relevant scientific and clinical experts and are written in a way that should help you to understand often complicated topics.

If you have an idea for a Know How, then please let us know.

If you have any queries, don't forget you can talk to one of our support specialists on **01983 292 405**, or email **hello@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Why do we need this Know How?

This Know How provides you with a framework so that you can deal with money worries. When you are diagnosed with a brain tumour, you may find yourself worrying about finances. You may be worrying about losing your job, about being on reduced pay, about running your own business and being unable to work. Or perhaps you are a caregiver, and you are not sure how you are going to manage being a caregiver and also keep working. And this can be more than just financial security – work can be an anchor in times of upheaval. You can suddenly find yourself in financial difficulties for any number of reasons.

What can you do?

The law of sowing and reaping

When you are overwhelmed, it is sometimes easier to turn away from doing anything, but this just prolongs the stress. Financial difficulties, of course, make you feel stressed. We might experience emotions of uncertainty, fear, stress, anxiety. You might find our Know Hows on [how to deal with the overwhelm](#) and [how to live with uncertainty](#) helpful here.

But let's just step back a little. You are dealing with a double blow: a diagnosis of a brain tumour and everything that this brings with it. Money worries will be just one of the many things that you are dealing with. Furthermore, the chances are that any money worries have come suddenly, so it might be helpful to remember the Kübler-Ross grief cycle.

Stages of the grief cycle

'Normal' functioning



Shock and denial

- avoidance
- confusion
- fear
- numbness
- blame

Anger

- frustration
- anxiety
- irritation
- embarrassment
- shame

Depression and detachment

- overwhelm
- blahs
- lack of energy
- helplessness

Return to meaningful life



Acceptance

- exploring options
- a new plan in place
- empowerment
- security
- self-esteem
- meaning

Dialogue and bargaining

- reaching out to others
- desire to tell one's story
- struggle to find meaning for what has happened

Adapted from Kübler-Ross, 1969

We go through phases as we are dealing with a new situation. Seeing this cycle can bring some structure to what you are going through, at a time when you don't know how things will pan out and when income is a big part of the anxiety. It's important to emphasise that going through this cycle is normal, and your feelings can vary from day to day. It's about helping you to get back into the now, to be mindful and present so you can begin to focus on moving forward. As long as you take steps to move forward each day on income-producing activities and not on time-wasting, any negative feelings will pass. It's key to focus your energy, as worrying about money does not help. It's the law of sowing and reaping. The more you sow, the more you will reap. It may not improve in the following week, but it will eventually. As long

as you get feedback from experts, know who is in your team, fine-tune what you are doing and keep working on your goals, you will return to new beginnings, opportunities and be back on track.

How do you deal with money worries?

1. Shift to a better place

Accept where you are in this – there is no right or wrong or judgement. It might be an emotional roller coaster, making it difficult to think logically and rationally about how to move forward. You may simply need to download and already have some positive actions in place, which may or may not come to fruition. Who is in your team who can help? Have a look [here](#) at our Know How on building a team around you.

Many people have an ‘unconscious bias’ related to gender roles and money. Historically, women have often left family financial planning to the man in the family, and if this is the case, you may struggle with even talking about money, let alone have details about any financial situation. You may feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the terms, concepts and marketplace; even just going online can suddenly seem a huge barrier. The password will be your first hurdle. Men also may feel responsibility to provide for the family and feel guilty if they are suddenly not able to. These are stereotypes from years ago, and nowadays it may be the other way around – one partner has the larger income, the bigger role at work, and the other partner’s focus is more on the home. What is important is to be open and accepting that the worry may be from different perspectives.

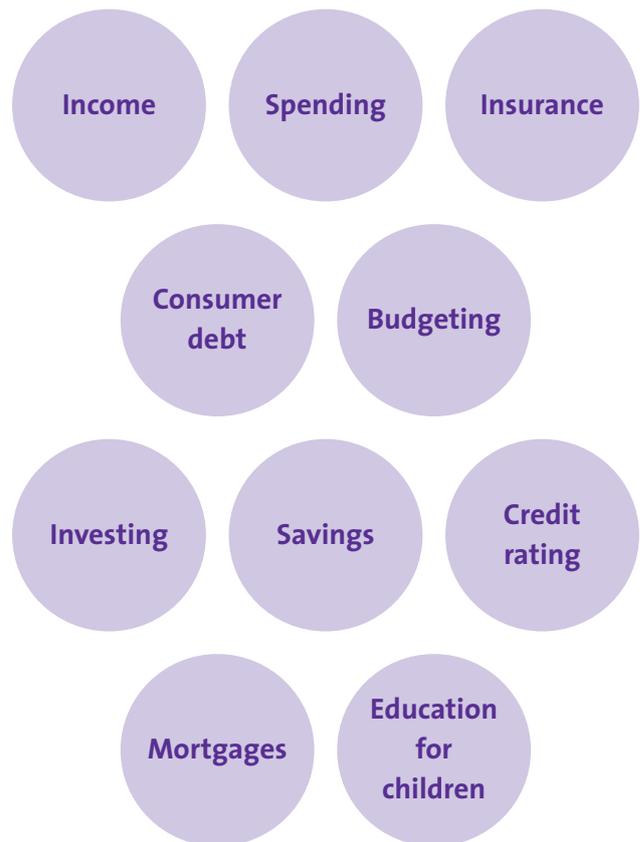
The old saying of ‘opposites attract’ seems to apply in partnerships when it comes to relationships with money. Often one person in the partnership is a spender and one is a saver; this behaviour deepens and widens with time, causing a lot of stress. Again, awareness is the first step. Reflecting on whether this is true in your case may be helpful in understanding where you are, your challenges, and in finding ways forward.

Many of us are not trained in or aware of how to make a financial plan or even a household budget. It will feel scary. What with that and the internet and clever marketers, we often spend money to feel good and buy things that are not essential. Becoming aware of and understanding your spending habits will be enormously helpful in devising a way forward.

2. Identify – chunk down the anxiety

Only when we use the executive brain and find the motivation to move forward can we try to understand more specifically our financial worries.

Some possible areas for worry are:



If it is appropriate, have an open, honest discussion with your spouse/partner about the state of shared finances. This may be something you have never done before, and it could be very uncomfortable. Agree the shared purpose in having this conversation, and know that this is probably the first of many conversations – this isn’t going to be fixed here and now. You can find out more about how to have a difficult conversation [here](#).

For preparation, you need to:

1. Gain an understanding of your current income versus spending. Write it down, preferably in a spreadsheet.
2. Identify where you can stop spending immediately. Work on what challenges you may have with new decisions.
3. Consider what debt you are paying off. What level of payments can you manage? Step Change is a fabulous charity that helps with budgeting: stepchange.org/debt-calculator.

4. Build a budget for the new situation.
Great advice about budget planning can be found [here](#).
5. Track spending in a tool or app. Most bank apps now offer this.
6. Identify where you can get help. Some governments are offering help, as do charities. More information is available in our Know How on [finance and benefits](#).
7. Understand what loans and other debt you have, and investigate ways to reduce or consolidate.
8. Make a financial plan for the future. Start saving for the big things in life – pension, kids' education, new housing, etc.
9. Investigate whether you can get help by a reduction in council tax or extra benefits, such as working tax credit or universal credit. You can find out more about benefits and financial support with our [Know How](#).

With thanks to MyThrive coaching.

Contact

Talk to *brainstrust*. We can help. You can call, write, type, text. Email for help and support:

hello@brainstrust.org.uk.

Telephone: **01983 292 405.**

Helpful links

- [brainstrust Know Hows](#)
 - [How to deal with the overwhelm](#)
 - [How to live with uncertainty](#)
 - [How to build a team around you](#)
 - [Know How on finances and benefits](#)
- [How to hold a difficult conversation](#)

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Production of *brainstrust's* information is supported by the Anna Horrell fund. Anna, wife and mum, tragically passed away in August 2017 after a valiant fight against a glioblastoma. Throughout her life and her illness, she was an inspiration to us all, fighting bravely and cheerfully in the face of adversity. She was the beating heart of our family, and her loss left a hole in our lives that can never be replaced. In her incredible memory, we are passionate about helping others diagnosed with a brain tumour to navigate this most difficult of journeys.

Mike, Tom, Rebecca, Charlie & Sophie