

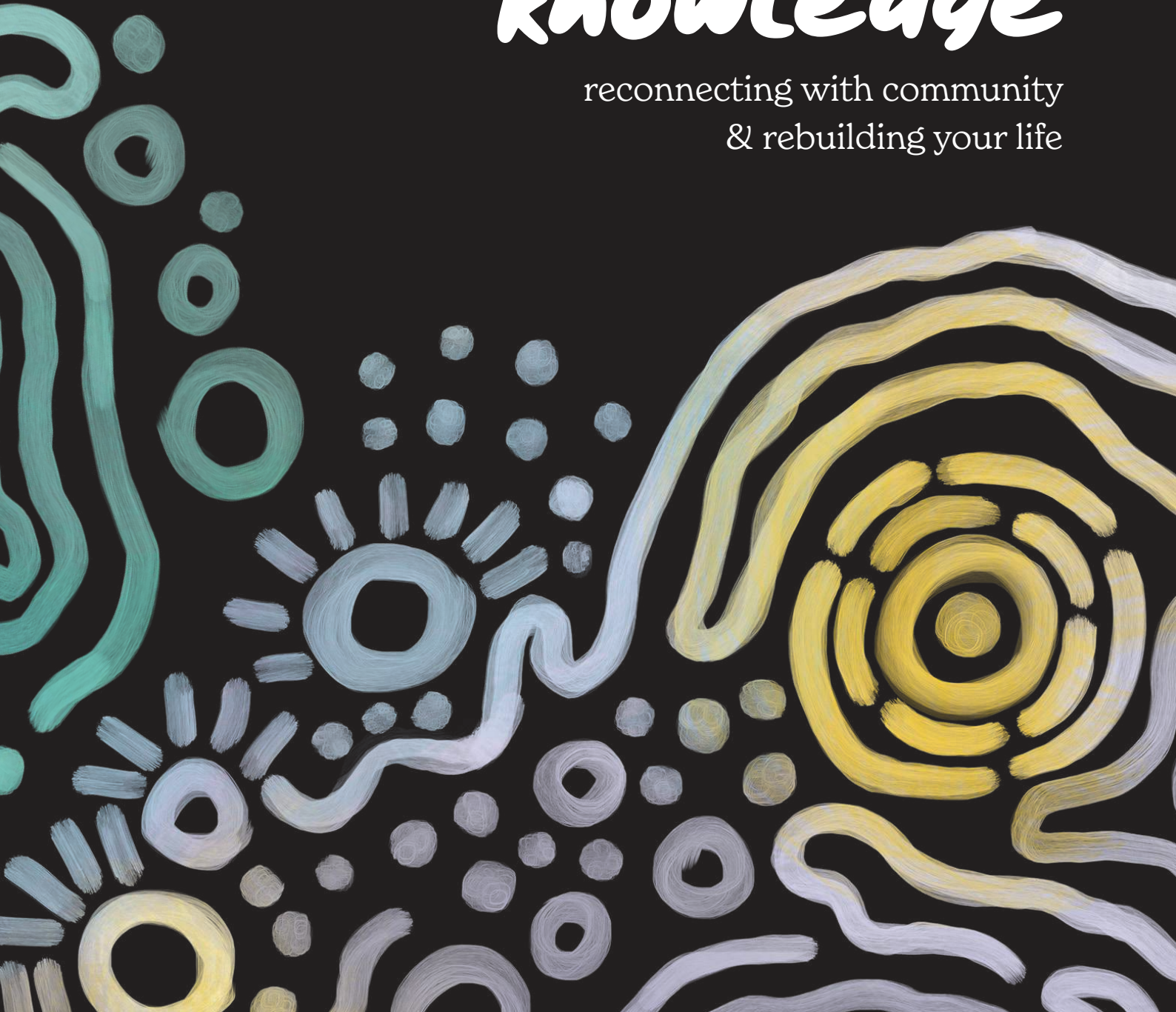


First Nations
FOUNDATION

for Mob, by Mob

Empowerment through knowledge

reconnecting with community
& rebuilding your life





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Are you ready to take the first step?

Starting again isn't easy. You may feel disconnected or detached from your cultural identity, unable to easily access help or lost when it comes to building a support network.

This guide is designed to give you direction about how to reestablish those fundamental ingredients to rebuild your life. It starts with recognising your cultural strengths, the support around you and how to foster new connections. It also features a toolkit to help you open a bank account, start budgeting and develop a healthy relationship with money.

Are you ready to begin?





Coming home

Coming home after being in jail can be tough. You might come across a lot of challenges and obstacles that other people don't have to face.

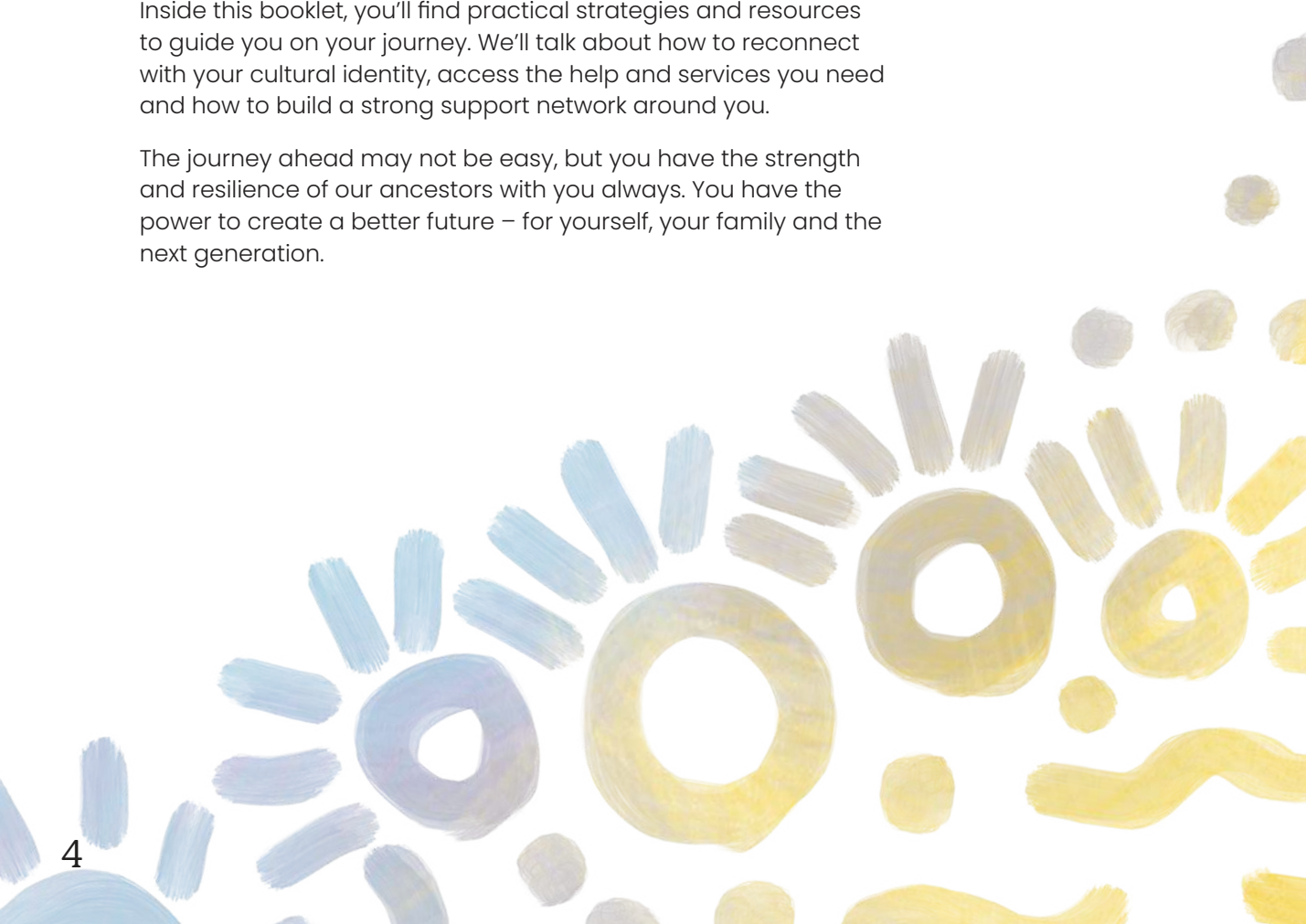
Although we, as First Nations people, have a history of injustices and unresolved traumas, it's up to us to gain the knowledge and strength to rebuild our lives and reintegrate back into our community. Remember, support is always available to help us through this journey.

Examples of challenges:

- ★ **Cultural disconnection:** You may feel detached from culture, tradition and family, leading to a loss of self-identity.
- ★ **Intergenerational trauma:** The impacts of trauma can weigh heavily and make it hard to move forward. These challenges can be tough, but with the right support and understanding, you'll find your way forward.

Inside this booklet, you'll find practical strategies and resources to guide you on your journey. We'll talk about how to reconnect with your cultural identity, access the help and services you need and how to build a strong support network around you.

The journey ahead may not be easy, but you have the strength and resilience of our ancestors with you always. You have the power to create a better future – for yourself, your family and the next generation.



Cultural obligations and responsibilities

First Nations people often see wealth differently from the broader community, prioritising sharing resources with their community over personal savings or their own interests.

FNF's 2019 Money Stories Report highlighted the financial challenges faced by First Nations people, showing that 52.5% of Indigenous respondents had no savings, compared to 13.5% of the general population. This suggests that managing immediate financial and family needs can be more important than planning for future financial wellbeing.



Reconnect with your roots

As First Nations people, our culture and traditions are a huge source of individual strength and determination. Through them, we feel grounded, resilient and connected to something bigger than ourselves.

When you're trying to rebuild your life, tapping into cultural identity can make all the difference. It reminds you of who you are and where you come from. Your culture is a gift. Embrace it, nurture it and let it empower you on this journey of rebuilding and reclaiming your life. It will provide the sense of belonging you truly need to thrive.

Tips for reconnecting with culture and Mob

- ★ Reach out to Elders in your community and family. They can share their wisdom and possibly help you to rediscover your cultural strengths and values, which can offer comfort, guidance and a sense of belonging.
- ★ Join in community events – even if it feels uncomfortable at first. It's normal to feel nervous, but the more you go, the more comfortable you will feel.
- ★ Spend time On Country or in nature. Go for walks and enjoy the quiet. Allow the land to rejuvenate your spirit.
- ★ Build connections with others on the same journey or those who have been through it and share your experiences and knowledge. Start small and be patient – this isn't something that happens overnight. Focus on what feels most meaningful and authentic to you and over time, your sense of culture and belonging will continue to grow.



Money matters and mental health

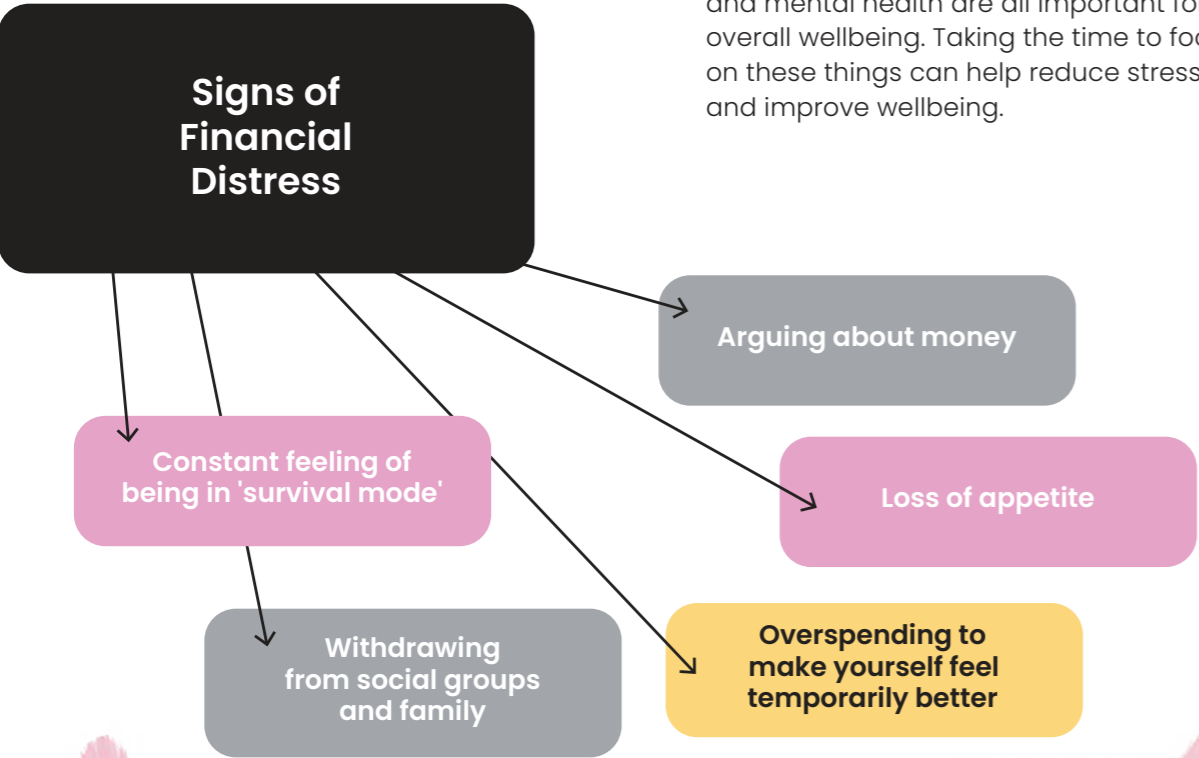
Money and financial security are closely linked to mental health and wellbeing.

Having enough money to get by can provide a sense of security and stability – which can help to reduce stress – while not having enough money can increase stress, pressure and anxiety. At the same time, having too much money can also lead to feelings of anxiety, depression and guilt, which may be due to family and community pressures to share your money. This scenario leaves some First Nations people feeling less of a connection to culture if they are not sharing with family and community. For many, the key is finding the right balance, maintaining boundaries and seeking support.

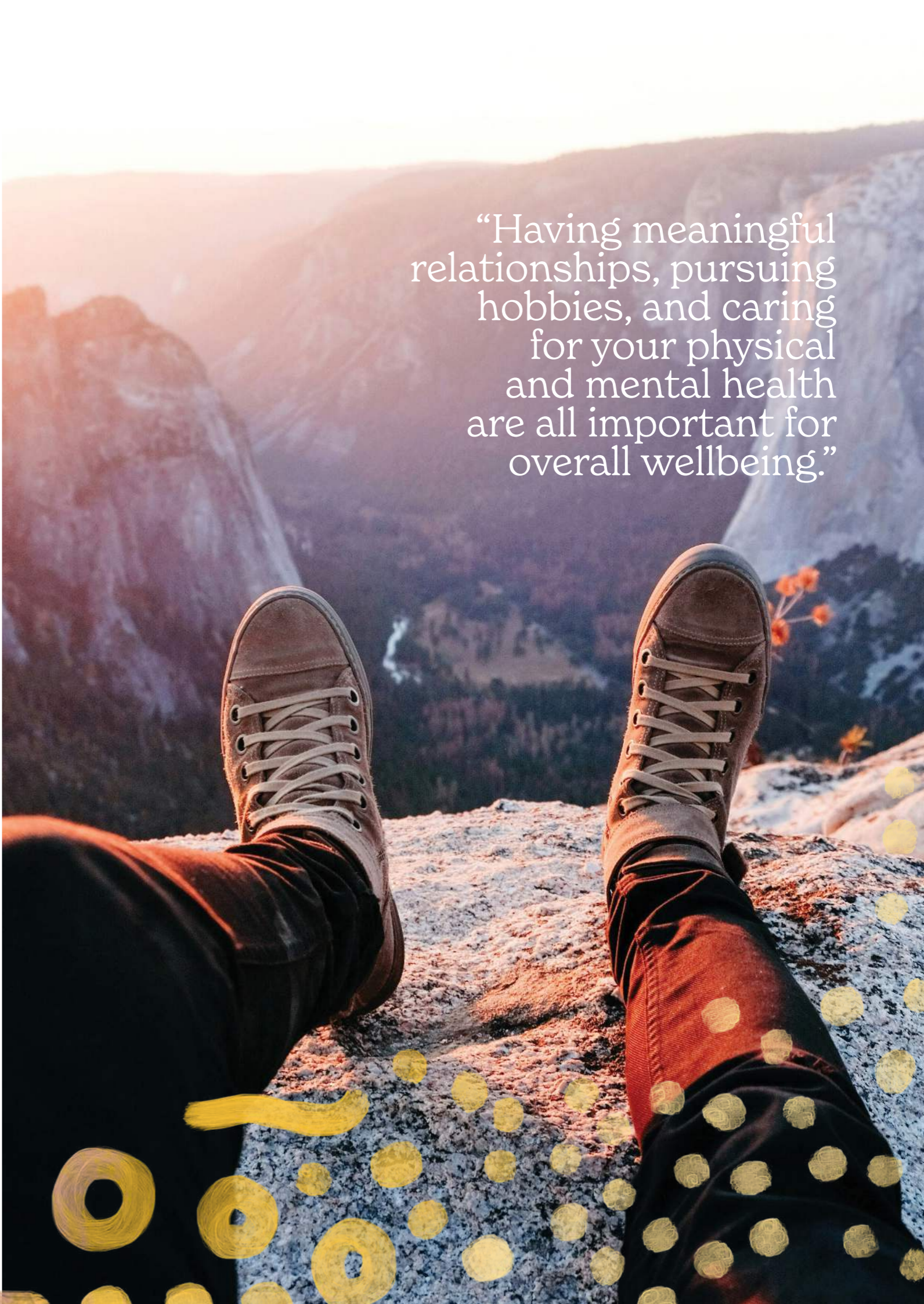
Financial Stress

Does talking about money and your own financial position fill you with anxiety? It's important to recognise when financial stress is becoming too much and take steps to reduce it. This may include talking to a financial counsellor or advisor, creating a budget, or seeking professional help. Money stress is common, so there's no need to feel shame or embarrassed to talk about your financial situation. Many resources are available to help people manage their finances and improve their mental health.

Remember, money is not the only source of happiness, and financial security does not guarantee mental health. Having meaningful relationships, pursuing hobbies, and caring for your physical and mental health are all important for overall wellbeing. Taking the time to focus on these things can help reduce stress and improve wellbeing.



“Having meaningful relationships, pursuing hobbies, and caring for your physical and mental health are all important for overall wellbeing.”





Healthy relationships and money

If you have a partner, part of rebuilding is finding common ground on money. Let's overcome money shame and build our confidence by having tough conversations about finances.

Talking to your partner about money

Talking about money can be overwhelming, but having these conversations can help you to understand each other's financial situation, short-term and long-term goals, and overall attitude towards money.

Remember, it's important to feel safe before going down this path. Regardless of anyone's financial situation, being honest, open, understanding, and respectful of each other is key.

Three steps to a healthy and abundant relationship:

1. Determine where you both are financially

To understand each other's starting point, create a budget. Look at your:

- ★ **Income** (include Centrelink payments and Child Support Payments)
- ★ **Expenses** (include both needs/wants)
- ★ **Assets** (e.g. cash, house & car)
- ★ **Superannuation & investments**
- ★ **Debts & loans** (e.g. credit card, Buy Now, Pay Later, car loan or personal loan.)

2. Align your long/short-term financial goals

This is an excellent opportunity to agree on your relationship and financial goals. Do you want to buy a house? Start a family? Get married? Go on a holiday? These are things to consider while determining your financial goals.

Use a savings calculator like [MoneySmart.gov.au](https://www.money-smart.gov.au) to plan how to achieve these. Be realistic, and do not overcommit.

3. Do a budget & savings plan

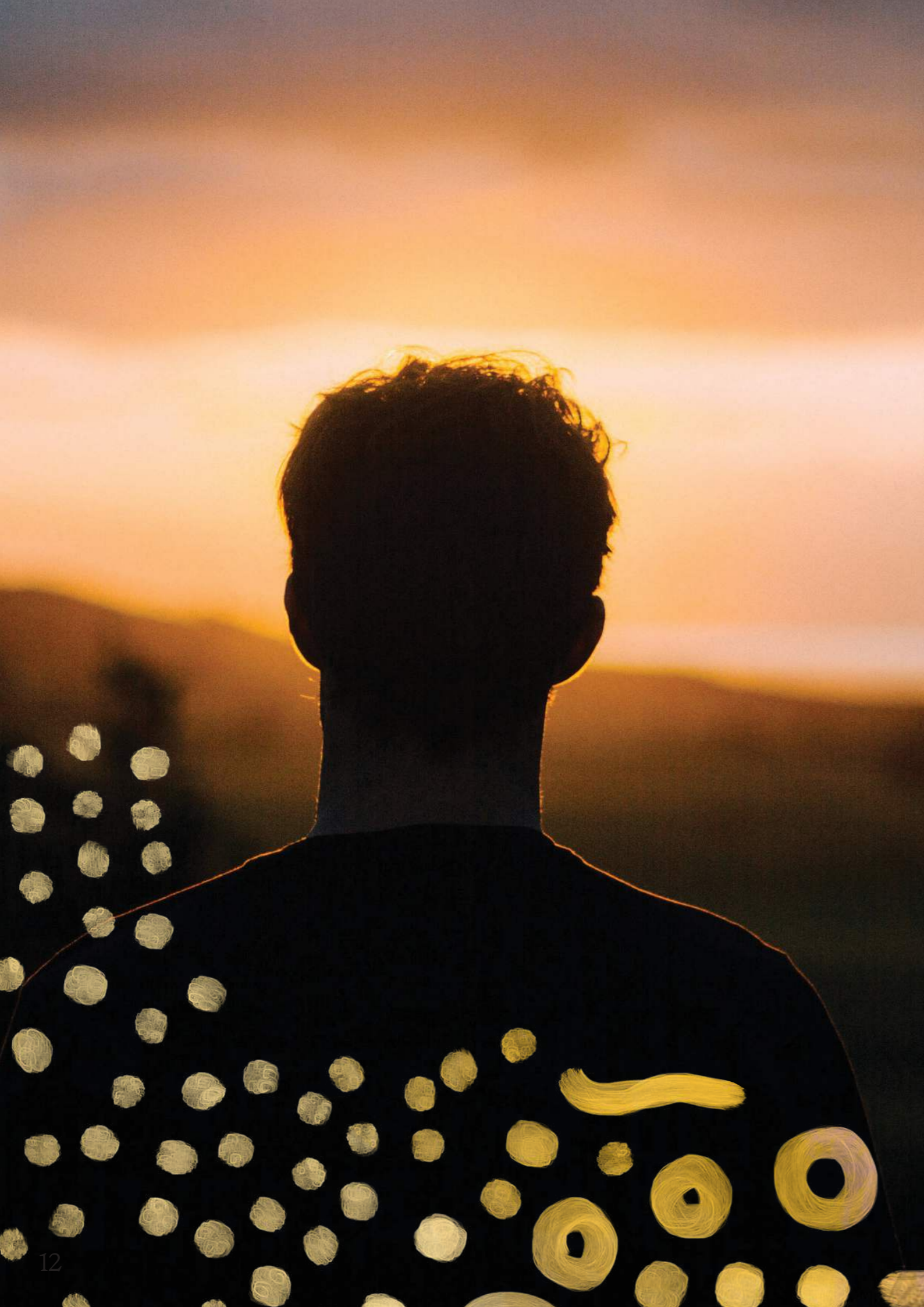
Now that you've determined your financial position and goals, it's time to create a realistic and comfortable plan to get there.

Tips to remember when doing a budget:

- ★ **The 50/30/20 Rule:** Spend 50% of income on needs, 30% on wants, and 20% on savings or paying off debt.
- ★ **Automate everything:** Determine if you can afford to prepay any bills, consider a separate account for bills only, optimise due dates for all bills and schedule payments.
- ★ **Track your progress:** Be realistic – do not over-commit.

Other ideas

- ★ **Icebreaker Questions**
What would you do if you won the lottery? What was your greatest childhood gift?
- ★ **Set up a Date Night**
Set a regular time to sit down and talk about money, bills and what else is coming up.



Dealing with humbugging

We've all been there: we've worked hard, finally got paid and then Mob ask us for a loan that sometimes we'll never get back. How do we honour our boundaries, while upholding cultural obligations to take care of our Mob?

Honouring your boundaries means being treated the way you want to be treated and getting reciprocated respect. Sometimes, it's hard and in some cases it's non-negotiable, but by honouring your boundaries, you empower others to do the same.

Nine ways to honour your boundaries

1. **Realise** it's OK to say no.
2. **Create a realistic budget** that works for you first. If you have enough in your budget for others after your bills are paid and money is saved, then work it into your budget.
3. **Be honest** with yourself and others.
4. **Set goals** that will benefit you in the long-run and find ways to work towards them.
5. **Have discipline** – Hold yourself accountable, along with others – sometimes we may be the ones who humbug.
6. **Be patient** – Sometimes these lessons take time to learn and there are setbacks. That's OK.

7. **Practise self-care** – You work hard, you deserve to reap the rewards too, even if it's just treating yourself once a week.

8. **Be consistent** – Follow through with what you say you're going to do.

9. **Flexibility** – Be prepared to adjust when necessary.

How to protect yourself

- ★ Don't share your card or PIN.
- ★ Choose a PIN or keyword that you can remember, but others don't know.
- ★ Check your bank statements via online banking regularly, so you know what's going in and out.
- ★ Set up a savings account, a secret account, or put aside a certain amount that you can afford to lend.

Recognising financial abuse

Financial abuse is when someone controls another person's access to money or resources. Here's how to recognise the signs and seek help.

What is financial abuse?

Financial abuse is when someone controls another person's access to money or resources. It could be someone telling you how to spend your money or taking it away from you, but there are also many other ways people financially abuse others.

Financial abuse is not OK and help is available if you are experiencing it.

We often see financial abuse in intimate partnerships, but it can also happen in other types of relationships, such as parent/child relationships, grandparent/child relationships or friendships. It can also happen in a broader family by several people who've learnt the behaviours from others.

Examples of financial abuse

- ★ People humbugging you or telling you how to spend your money.
- ★ Not paying child support.
- ★ Making you ask for your own money.
- ★ Making you take out cash or a loan, even if you say 'no'.
- ★ Someone taking out a loan in your name or spending money on your credit card.
- ★ Removing cash from an older person's wallet.

Spotting the warning signs

- ★ Has someone told you they need to look after the family finances because you're 'no good at it' or 'can't be trusted'?
- ★ Has someone asked for receipts showing how you spend your money?
- ★ Have you been given an allowance or 'pocket money', even though you're an adult?
- ★ Has someone threatened to take away money if you behave in a certain way?
- ★ Has a partner told you to quit your job, when you don't want to?
- ★ Have you been excluded from planning the family finances?

How to seek help

While sharing has always been a core part of Indigenous culture, sometimes things can go wrong.

Financial abuse can happen to anyone, but in our experience, women or older people tend to get targeted more often.

Remember, help is always available if you or a loved one may be a victim of financial abuse:

- ★ Call 1800 RESPECT: **1800 737 732**
- ★ Call the CommBank support team: **1800 222 387**
- ★ Call the Elder abuse phone line: **1800 353 374**

"Remember, help is always available if you or a loved one may be a victim of financial abuse."





Banking basics

We understand it can be overwhelming when thinking about opening a bank account. With so many different types of account, it can be hard to figure out exactly what you need.

We have put together a basic guide to everyday banking.

Opening a bank account

You can open a bank account in a branch, online or over the phone. When opening your bank account, you may need to take your identification into the branch to verify your account.

Some examples of identification are:

- ☐ School photo ID
- ☐ Driver's licence
- ☐ Birth certificate
- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Medicare card
- ☐ Centrelink pension and health care cards
- ☐ Community ID card.

Types of bank accounts

Everyday banking:

An everyday account is usually a low or no-fee account that you can have your income paid into. There are multiple ways of using your money in your everyday account, such as:

- ★ Paying for things using your debit card
- ★ Online banking
- ★ Telephone banking
- ★ Withdrawing cash from an ATM.

Savings:

A savings account is a place to set aside money to save towards a goal that you may have. A savings account will often offer interest on the money that you save. Your savings accounts aren't usually linked to a debit card, and you will need to transfer the money to your everyday account to spend it.

Ask your bank about student accounts or concession accounts if applicable - they may be fee-free!





Spotting financial scams and fraud

Scammers target people to steal money and personal information. Here's how to protect yourself.

What is a scam?

A scam is when somebody steals your money or personal information using tricks and lies.

What is fraud?

Fraud is when somebody uses your money without you knowing or saying that they can. You might not even know that they have taken money from your account until your bank tells you.

Why are scammers and fraudsters so good at what they do?

- ★ They play on emotions, such as fear or excitement.
- ★ They take notice of and prey on vulnerabilities, such as money struggles or getting older.
- ★ They may threaten or try to scare you and rush you into making decisions.
- ★ They try to confuse you with jargon and unusual or unknown requests.

Common scams

Relationship and dating scams –

The scammer might start a relationship with you to gain your trust. Once they have it, they may ask for gifts or money they say they urgently need.

Post-natural disaster scams – Scammers will pretend to be organisations or government agencies offering money for those affected by natural disasters.

Investment scams – The scammer may try to talk you into giving them money for a fake investment opportunity.

Buying and selling scams – The scammer tricks you into paying for products that you won't get or are not what was described to you.

Threat and penalty scams – The scammer makes threats (such as arrest or fines) to force you to give them money. They may pretend to be law enforcement or government agencies.

Job scams – The scammer offers you a quick and 'guaranteed' way of making money with little effort. If it seems to be good to be true, it probably is.

Identity theft – The fraudster uses your identity or personal information to pretend to be you. They apply for credit cards or open accounts in your name and which they can then use to commit financial crime.

Stolen mail – Mail can often include important private and personal information. If stolen, this information can be used to access your money, commit crime or be sold to others.

Phishing – The scammer tricks you into giving them your usernames, passwords or credit card details by posing as someone you can trust. They may contact you by phone, email or SMS. They often provide a link that leads to a fake website. Never share your passwords or cards with anyone else.

Remember: Anyone can be a victim of a scam or fraud; you don't have to be embarrassed or feel shame. Scammers are incredibly clever and are always

thinking of new ways to trick and take advantage of us. If something doesn't feel right talk to friends or family about it.

Think you've been scammed?

If you have been a victim of a scam or fraud, you need to act quickly. Here are actions you can take straight away:

- ★ **Contact your bank.** They may be able to stop the money transfer or close an account if you believe that the scammer has your details. CommBank customers can contact ICAL on **1800 700 682**.
- ★ **Change your passwords and PINs straight away.** You should regularly change your passwords and PINs to protect yourself.
- ★ **Report the scam** to the ACCC Indigenous Info Line on **1300 303 143**. This can help them prevent the scam from spreading. For fraud, if you feel comfortable, you can contact the police on **131 444**.
- ★ **Mob Strong Debt Help** is there to help if you have been affected financially by scams or fraud, you can call them on **1800 808 488**.
- ★ **13YARN** can help if you have been affected by a scam or fraud and need to talk to someone, you can call them on **13 92 76**.

Protect yourself by remembering three simple steps:

Stop – Does a call, email or text seem off? The best thing to do is stop. Take a breath. Legitimate organisations won't put you under pressure to act instantly.

Check – Ask someone you trust or contact the organisation the message claims to be from.

Reject – If you're not sure, hang up on the caller, delete the email, block the phone number or change your passwords.

What's gambling really costing you?

Have you ever thought about tracking your spending?

Try writing down how much you spend on gambling over a period of time (week, fortnight, month, etc.) and see how much you have actually won/lost/spent. You may be shocked at the results!

Why it's important to invest in the future

- ★ Gambling can be seen as a 'get rich quick' fix, but it usually leaves you worse off. Good investments can last you your whole life.
- ★ Learning to invest in things like stocks can allow you to create a better future with a second income (e.g., dividend payouts, etc.)
- ★ You might have future plans (buying a house, starting a family). Would you ever gamble the outcomes of those goals?
- ★ If something happens and you're unable to work, will you be able to support yourself? What if something happens to a family member?
- ★ **A nest egg** – no one knows what the future will hold, so it's important to have a little savings nest egg to help cover life's little surprises!
- ★ **Interest rates** – where you put your savings matters too. Consider a high interest savings account – the higher the balance of your savings, the more money you can earn in interest payments.
- ★ **Big purchases** – savings aren't always for things you need, sometimes they can be for things you want, like a new car, or nice relaxing holiday.
- ★ **Children** – having kids can be expensive, but by having savings you can make sure they have everything they need to succeed in life.

Important tip!

Whether gambling or investing, the goal is to minimise risk while maximising profits. However, remember when gambling: the house will always have an edge!





Building good money habits

Having a budget can be the key to financial security, freeing yourself from debt and creating the life you want.

How a budget can help

- ★ You can save for something you'd love, like a car, a holiday or a home. You can take control of your money.
- ★ You can put money aside for an emergency.
- ★ You can see where you may be overspending – and stop it.
- ★ You can reserve money to help family or friends with money if they need it.
- ★ You can prepare for a nice retirement.

How to get started

- ★ **Create a goal or goals:** What would you like to do with your money? Whether you'd like an overseas holiday, a new TV or a computer, setting your first goal is the number one step.
- ★ **Track how you spend your money:** For the next month, work out what you spend your money on. Keep all of your receipts and keep a list of direct debits.
- ★ **Work out the difference:** between what you earn and what you spend each month: This is the money that you'll be able to save. Put this money away somewhere safe for your goal.
- ★ **Remember:** If you realise you're spending a lot of your money, you can reduce non-essentials to help get you to your saving goal.
- ★ **Keep a record:** Continue to track what you are spending each month. You can do this on a piece of paper or with an online budget tracker. The online version may give you an idea of how long it will take to reach your goal.



Goal setting

Goal setting is the process of deciding what you want to achieve over a certain period of time. Be very specific and realistic about the goals you have and the time frame you'd like to reach them in.

Decide on a set amount for each goal and work out how much that would be weekly or fortnightly. This helps make the goal more realistic. For example, if you wanted to save \$5000 for a holiday over the next year, then you'd need to divide \$5000 by 52 to figure out that you would need to save \$96.15/week to reach your goal in time. Use this planner to set and track the progress of your goals.

Goal 1

Action Steps

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Progress

Goal 2

Action Steps

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Progress



A simple budget planner

INCOME	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY	TOTAL WEEKLY AMOUNT
Your pay after tax			
Other income (dividends, interest etc.)			

Total income:

EXPENSES	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY	TOTAL WEEKLY AMOUNT
Housing (rent or mortgage)			
Bills			
Insurance			
Transport			
Phone and IT			
Food and drink			
Lifestyle			
Children			
Health			
Other loans			

Total expenses:

Income – Expenses = **Savings:**



Extra resources

Where to find out more

- ★ **My Money Dream** – A program for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Learners aged 16–60 to increase good money habits and build financial prosperity. Visit mymoneydream.com.au
- ★ **TomorrowMoney** – A hub of articles, guides and podcasts for young First Nations people. Tomorrowmoney.co
- ★ **Rich Blak Money** – An inspiring podcast featuring interviews with prominent First Nations women who generously share their money lessons. tomorrowmoney.co/women/rbw/



Get support

13 YARN

13 92 76

National crisis support line for Mob feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. Lifeline-trained Crisis Supporters are available 24/7.

Mob Strong Debt Help

1800 808 488

Free nationwide legal advice and financial counselling service for First Nations people.

National Debt Helpline

1800 007 007

Trained financial counsellors offering free advice. Live chat available.

Lifeline

13 11 14

National charity offering personal crisis support & suicide prevention. Available 24/7 via SMS on **0477 131 114** or live chat.

CommBank Next Chapter

1800 222 387

Free confidential referrals and support for people experiencing financial and/or domestic and family violence.