

How to manage financial distress in 2026

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As inflation and the cost of living rise, money has quietly become a major source of stress for many households. In essence, many people struggle to meet basic needs such as school requirements, daily transport, meals, and other necessities. This growing financial pressure has inevitably trickled down to young people, as they too must find ways to cover daily needs.

Whether you are following a vision board filled with big dreams or simply trying to get through each day without falling behind, managing financial distress in 2026 requires more than just hope, it calls for practical choices, resilience, and self-awareness. The good news, however, is that even in tight seasons, there are smart ways teens can embark on to cope, grow, and prepare for a better future.

Explore job opportunities

In today's fast-paced world, exploring job opportunities at an early stage can play a crucial role in helping teens navigate financial pressure. This, thus requires you to move from the comfort of your home, and look for a job that cannot only just be a source of income, but also provide valuable exposure to real-world environments.

For many teens, considering part-time work can help you meet immediate needs such as transport, Internet access, or basic personal expenses, to reduce the burden on already stretched households. Part-time jobs can offer practical experience in responsibility, time management, and financial planning, even if the tasks themselves seem simple. On the other hand, seeking internships whether at a factory, showroom, carpentry workshop, or other professional setting provides hands-on experience in areas of personal interest. These opportunities help teens understand workplace expectations, develop practical skills, and gain a clearer sense of what different careers involve. Over time, such experiences not only build confidence but also strengthen résumés, laying a foundation for future professional opportunities.

Similarly, volunteerism has emerged as a key pathway for building skills and creating opportunities among youth. Seeking volunteer roles, though often unpaid (sometimes with small facilitation), is equally important. These experiences enable teens to build confidence, expand networks, and develop a sense of purpose and social responsibility. Over time, they also make young people more competitive for scholarships, training programs, or employment opportunities.

Therefore, engaging in such opportunities, you are not only responding to present financial realities but also investing in long-term growth. Each role, no matter how



small it may seem, becomes a stepping stone toward independence, resilience, and a clearer sense of direction in an increasingly demanding world.

Adopt skills

In a world that is increasingly competitive, having practical skills whether technical, creative, or practical is more than just a way to earn money. It sets you apart and provides a sense of control over your own future thus being a tool for independence and self-reliance. For teens, developing skills early provides opportunities to explore interests, build confidence, and prepare for future careers while navigating financial pressures.

Skills can range widely, from coding, graphic design, and digital media to carpentry, tailoring, baking, language proficiency, or even beauty services such as makeup artistry. The key is to identify what excites you and what aligns with your strengths, as passion often leads to persistence and mastery.

Today, adopting a skill does not necessarily require expensive tools or formal training. With advancement in technology, many people are opting for online tutorials, others are joining community classes, youth programs, and mentorship initiatives, areas that provide accessible platforms for learning. For example, a teen interested in coding can start with free online courses or join school tech clubs, while someone drawn to carpentry or tailoring can seek guidance from local workshops or family members experienced in the trade.

Beyond the immediate ability to earn small incomes, skill development

helps teens understand discipline, patience, and problem-solving. Each project or assignment, however small, becomes an opportunity to improve, innovate, and take pride in tangible results. Over time, the accumulation of skills and experience can open doors to internships, freelance opportunities, scholarships, and even entrepreneurship.

Get involved in community programmes

Community programmes are a great opportunity for teens to grow, learn, and navigate life's challenges while contributing to their surroundings. They range from youth clubs, local NGOs, school initiatives, church groups, or volunteer campaigns offering spaces where young people can gain exposure, develop leadership, and acquire skills.

Participation in such programmes encourages teens to step outside their immediate circles and interact with diverse groups of people. It provides a platform to practice communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, skills that are highly valued both in education and in the workplace. For many, involvement in these programmes also builds confidence and resilience, as they learn to take initiative, handle responsibilities, and overcome challenges in real-world settings.

Community programmes often present opportunities for mentorship, connecting with adults who are experienced in various fields. These provide guidance, advice, and encouragement that may shape your career aspirations and personal

Key tips for teen saving culture

Discipline and control

Saving teaches young people discipline, foresight, and a sense of control over their future.

Small steps, big impact

Even modest, consistent savings from allowances or part-time work can cover everyday needs and hobbies.

Preparedness and creativity

A savings cushion helps teens handle emergencies while encouraging resourcefulness in reaching their goals.

growth. These mentors often open doors to internships, scholarships, and training programmes, offering a pathway to opportunities that may otherwise feel out of reach.

They also allow teens to make a positive impact by contributing time and energy to causes such as environmental initiatives, literacy campaigns, health awareness, or local events that builds a sense of purpose and social responsibility.

Explore financial aid options

Navigating daily life and school responsibilities can be overwhelming when resources are limited. However, exploring financial aid options allows you to not only receive money, but also access opportunities, reducing stress, and staying focused on personal growth and education.

Financial aid can come in many forms. These include local non-profit organisations, government programmes, youth initiatives, and educational foundations that often provide support for school fees, learning materials, extracurricular programs, or skill-building activities. Some programmes may require applications, interviews, or proof of need, while others may offer stipends, grants, or sponsorships to help cover specific costs. Understanding the terms, requirements, and deadlines is crucial as careful planning ensures that teens can take full advantage of these opportunities.

For teens, this financial aid is not just temporary relief, but a stepping stone to independence and self-sufficiency. It allows young people to continue their studies, pursue skill development, or participate in programmes that might otherwise be inaccessible. Accessing financial aid also encourages responsibility, as applicants often need to meet certain expectations, maintain performance, or demonstrate commitment.

Develop a saving culture

Learning to save money is not just about putting aside money; it is about cultivating discipline, planning for the future, and gaining a sense of control over one's own life. As a teen, saving does not require large amounts. Even small, consistent contributions from allowances, part-time earnings, or gifts can eventually cover transportation costs, internet access, or materials for a hobby or skill-building activity. Over time, these habits grow into a mindset that values preparation, patience, and financial foresight.

Furthermore, saving money equips teens to respond to unexpected challenges. Emergencies, sudden school expenses, or opportunities that require a small investment become more manageable when there is a financial cushion. It also encourages creativity as teens find ways to make the most of what they have while steadily working toward their goals.

Other strategies in managing financial distress include exploring scholarship opportunities on both national and international levels, building meaningful networks from school and other social programs engaged in, and practising self-care through taking care of your mental health.