Fair Share Finances Household Costs Worksheet

A trauma-informed educational wellness worksheet for reflection, choice, self-care, and support.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

This is a reflection tool, not a test. One honest sentence, one checked box, or one small next step can be enough.

A printable reflection and practice resource

Fair-Share Finances

Household Costs & Money Conversations Worksheet

For couples building a transparent and sustainable financial partnership Purpose: Help both partners understand the full financial picture, choose a fair way to share household costs, prevent one person from carrying every bill, and create a plan that can change when life changes.

How to use this worksheet

_____
_____ (cid:127)
Complete the reflection and income sections separately, then compare without judgment. (cid:127) Use take-home income for household planning unless you intentionally agree to another measure. (cid:127) Distinguish shared household costs from personal expenses and pre-existing individual debts. (cid:127) Choose a trial plan for 30-60 days, then review actual results together. (cid:127) Revisit the agreement after income, employment, caregiving, housing, or family changes.

Partners: _____ and _____ Date started: _____ Review date: _____

Important Disclaimer

This worksheet is for educational and discussion purposes only. It is not individualized financial, tax, legal, investment, credit, or mental health advice and does not create a professional-client relationship. Laws, account ownership, debts, taxes, benefits, and property rights vary. Consult qualified professionals for advice about your circumstances. If money is being withheld, monitored, or used to threaten, control, or prevent access to necessities, prioritize safety and seek confidential support.

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Michelle Elder, MSW, LMHC Crisis support: Call or text 988. Immediate danger or urgent medical emergency: call 911.

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1. What Does Financial Fairness Mean to Us?

Fairness may involve equal dollars, equal percentages, comparable sacrifice, shared security, or recognition of unpaid labor. Define it together.

Question Partner A Partner B

What did money mean in my family ____________________________________

____ ______________________

____

growing up? ____

____________________________ ____

____ **What makes me feel secure**

with money? ____

____________________________ ____

____ **What makes me feel**

controlled, judged, ____

__________________________________ ______________________________________

____ **or alone?** ______________

____

____

_____________ **Which expenses do I consider shared?** __________________

____ ____

____

__________ **What would show me that we are a** __________________________

____ ____________

____

_ **financial team?** ____

_______________________________ ____

____

Our shared definition of a fair contribution is:

____

____

____ Listen for values: Security, independence, generosity, predictability, privacy, equality, and flexibility can all matter. Name the value before debating the method.

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2. Common Ways Couples Share Household Costs

No single method is right for every couple. Compare the tradeoffs, then choose or combine approaches.

Method How it works Can work well when... Watch for...

Each pays half of agreed Incomes and financial Equal dollars may create Equal split (50/50) shared costs. obligations are similar. unequal hardship.

Each pays the same Define which income Income differs and both Income-proportional percentage of combined counts and update want comparable burden. take-home income. changes.

Each takes responsibility Bills are predictable and Totals can drift; invisible Expense categories for specific bills. categories total fairly. costs may be missed.

Income goes into shared accounts; shared and Both want high integration Account access, autonomy, Fully pooled personal spending comes and transparency. debt, and legal effects. from one plan.

Separate personal Agree on deposits, Both want teamwork and Yours, mine, ours accounts plus a joint personal spending, and personal independence. household account. shortfalls.

Contributions reflect Circumstances are Avoid vague or permanent Needs/capacity based income, debt, caregiving, substantially different. assumptions; review often. disability, or other capacity.

The couple combines One formula does not fit the Complexity; document the Hybrid methods by expense or whole household. plan clearly. season.

Methods we want to explore and why:

_____

_____

_____

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3. Our Monthly Financial Picture

- Use current take-home amounts. Do not count hoped-for overtime, bonuses, or support unless both agree it is reliable.

Monthly resources Partner A Partner B Take-home pay $ $ Reliable benefits/support $ $ Other reliable income $ $ Total monthly resources $ $ Personal minimum obligations $ $ Amount realistically available for shared $ $ goals Financial context that affects capacity

Question Partner A Partner B

Debt payments or legal obligations Child-related or caregiving costs Health or disability costs Income variability or job risk Savings needed for near-term stability Transparency without shame: The goal is an accurate plan. A lower income or different capacity does not make a partner less valuable to the household.

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4. Shared Household Cost Inventory

- List the real monthly average. For annual or irregular costs, divide the yearly estimate by 12.

Shared cost Monthly amount Current payer Proposed payer/account Rent or mortgage $ Electric/gas/water $ Phone/internet $ Groceries/supplies $

Transportation $

Insurance $

Childcare/child costs $ Debt jointly agreed as shared $ Subscriptions/entertainment $ Household/pet care $ Other shared costs $ Shared savings contribution $ Total shared monthly costs: $_____

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5. Compare the Numbers

Run more than one option before choosing. A trial calculation can reveal whether a method feels sustainable.

Option A: Equal split

Total shared costs ÷ 2 = each partner's monthly contribution:

_____

_____

_____

Option B: Income-proportional split

(cid:127) Partner A share = Partner A take-home income ÷ combined take-home income. (cid:127) Partner B share = Partner B take-home income ÷ combined take-home income. (cid:127) Multiply each income share by total shared monthly costs.

Calculation Partner A Partner B

Take-home income $ $ Income percentage % % Proportional household contribution $ $ Money remaining after contribution $ $ Fairness check (cid:127) Can each partner cover necessities and agreed personal obligations? (cid:127) Does either partner have no reasonable personal spending or emergency margin? (cid:127) Have we acknowledged unpaid caregiving and household labor? (cid:127) Would this still feel fair if incomes changed?

Adjustment we want to test:

_____

_____

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6. Accounts, Access, and Bill-Paying Workflow

- Choose a system both partners can understand and manage. Shared responsibility does not require every account to be joint.

Account approach Benefits to us Concerns/safeguards Separate accounts Joint household account Fully joint accounts

Hybrid: joint plus personal

Decisions to make (cid:127) Which account will receive household contributions? (cid:127) Who schedules each payment, and who verifies it? (cid:127) Will both partners be able to view shared bills and balances? (cid:127) What requires discussion before spending from shared funds? (cid:127) How much personal spending can each partner make without consultation? (cid:127) Where are account, insurance, and emergency-access details stored securely?

Our payment workflow:

_____

_____

_____

_____ Account caution: Joint account holders generally have access to the funds. Discuss ownership, access, survivorship, creditor, benefit, and legal implications with appropriate professionals before combining accounts.

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7. Savings, Debt, and Irregular Expenses

A bill plan is incomplete unless it addresses emergencies, future goals, and costs that do not arrive monthly.

Goal or obligation Target amount Monthly contribution Who contributes/how Emergency fund $ $ Home/vehicle repairs $ $ Medical or insurance costs $ $ Holidays/travel $ $ Children/education $ $ Retirement or long-term savings $ $ Joint debt payoff $ $ Other planned expense $ $ Debt discussion (cid:127) Which debts existed before the relationship? (cid:127) Which debts were taken on for the household? (cid:127) Are payments shared, separate, or partly shared? (cid:127) What new debt requires agreement first? (cid:127) How will we respond if either partner cannot make an agreed payment?

Our first shared savings or debt goal:

_____

_____

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8. Conversation Starters

- Choose two or three prompts at a time. Stay curious, reflect back what you heard, and postpone decisions if either partner feels flooded. (cid:127) "What does a fair contribution mean to you, and why?" (cid:127) "Which bills have you been carrying that I may not fully see?" (cid:127) "What amount can you contribute consistently without falling behind?" (cid:127) "Would equal dollars or equal percentages feel more sustainable?" (cid:127) "How should unpaid caregiving or household work affect our plan?" (cid:127) "Which money decisions should always require both of us?" (cid:127) "How much personal financial independence does each of us need?" (cid:127) "What would make our system feel transparent without feeling controlling?" (cid:127) "How should we handle bonuses, refunds, gifts, or irregular income?" (cid:127) "What will we do when an unexpected expense arrives?" (cid:127) "How can we talk about a missed payment without blame?" (cid:127) "What would help both of us feel appreciated for our contributions?"

The conversation we most need to have is:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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9. Our 60-Day Fair-Share Agreement

- Write a specific trial plan. The agreement can be revised; avoidance and hidden assumptions are harder to repair.

Agreement Partner A Partner B Shared/automatic Monthly household contribution $ $ $ Deposit/payment date Bills each person manages Shared savings contribution $ $ $ Personal spending agreement Unexpected expense process Monthly 20-minute money check-in (cid:127) Review account balances and bills due. (cid:127) Compare the plan with actual spending. (cid:127) Name one contribution you appreciated. (cid:127) Raise one concern without accusation. (cid:127) Adjust for income, caregiving, or expense changes. (cid:127) Confirm one action and who owns it.

Our first review date and the change we will test:

_____

_____ Partner A: _____ Partner B: _____ Pause and seek support: If either partner hides debt, takes money without agreement, blocks access to necessities, threatens consequences, or uses finances to control the other person, this is more than a budgeting disagreement.

Prioritize safety and seek qualified confidential support.

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