



Media release

New free toolkit helps Australians manage their money and support their mental health this festive season

With the festive season approaching and cost-of-living pressures continuing to affect households across the country, Beyond Blue and Financial Counselling Australia have launched a new free resource to help people manage their finances and look after their mental health.

The *Money and Mental Health Toolkit* includes practical tips for managing thoughts and emotions, budgeting, having conversations with banks or utility companies and finding the right support when you need it.

Its launch comes as demand for financial support via the National Debt Helpline phone service remains high, with almost 170,000 calls and chats in the 12 months to the end of October.

Recent results from Beyond Blue's *Australia's Mental Health and Wellbeing Check* found financial pressure was the leading cause of distress for nearly half (46%) of all respondents.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO said the festive season could be a particularly challenging time for many people, when financial and emotional pressures often intensified.

"There are so many expectations around this season and that can bring added pressure, especially when money is tight," she said.

"Financial stress and mental health are closely connected.

"Financial stress can affect how people feel, think and act. It can lead to sleep issues, relationship strain, and a sense of hopelessness. But it also works the other way – when someone's mental health is impacted, it becomes harder to manage money, make decisions, or seek support. It's a two-way relationship."

Financial Counselling Australia CEO Dr Dominique Meyrick said the Toolkit was a timely and practical resource for people who may be feeling overwhelmed.

"Financial stress can be isolating. People often feel ashamed or unsure about where to turn. The Toolkit offers a starting point – it's about helping people take small steps, reflect on their situation, and feel more confident reaching out for support.

"Silence and avoidance are common reactions to financial stress, but they can make things feel even more overwhelming. Financial counselling through the National Debt Helpline is free and confidential, and it can make a real difference. We want people to know they're not alone and that support is available."

Beyond Blue speaker Megan Barrow knows what it's like to have financial stress impact her mental health.

The 54-year-old Melbourne woman and small business owner has lived experience of depression, PTSD, anxiety and agoraphobia. Ten years ago, she faced a difficult period trying to manage her mortgage alone.

"I became overwhelmed and started to sink backwards in my finances – going deeper and deeper into debt," Ms Barrow said.

"This fed into my mental health, and I started to spiral. I lost all hope and couldn't see a way out."

With encouragement from her mum, Ms Barrow contacted her bank and asked for financial assistance.

"I was incredibly nervous and embarrassed, but I discovered people were there to help," she said.

"The weight of the world lifted off my shoulders and I could work on both my finances and mental wellbeing. It took a while to get back onto my feet, but I did."

The *Money and Mental Health Toolkit* is the latest in a series of resources produced by Beyond Blue and Financial Counselling Australia, including the *Money and Mental Health Quiz* – a five-minute online tool that helps individuals reflect on how financial stress may be affecting their mental health and directs them to useful resources. Since its launch last November, more than 11,500 people have completed the quiz, with 74% falling into the 'struggling' or 'critical' categories, indicating high levels of financial stress and mental health symptoms like feelings of defeat, exhaustion, anxiety, and hopelessness.

Ms Harman encouraged those experiencing distress not to wait.

"We talk a lot about downward spirals, but upward spirals are possible too. Small steps in the right direction can lead to big changes over time," she said.

"You don't have to wait until things feel unmanageable. Taking that first step can help you feel more in control, whether it's visiting our website and downloading the Money and Mental Health Toolkit, or calling the Beyond Blue Support Service or the National Debt Helpline.

"There's always a way forward. Talking to someone can help lighten the load and give you hope that you can get through this."

The [Money and Mental Health Toolkit is available now on the Beyond Blue website](#).

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For more information or to schedule interviews, contact

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