

Counting the Cost: Understanding Financial Abuse

FACILITATION GUIDE

Description: As a part of Alpha Chi Omega's domestic violence awareness initiatives, this program will explore the prevalence of financial abuse for victims of domestic violence. Participants will define financial abuse, learn the cost of financial abuse on a victim, identify components of healthy financial relationships and, finally, explore ways they can prevent the issue and spread awareness on the topic.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop knowledge of how financial abuse coincides with domestic violence (Sense of responsibility for others)
- Reflect on the impact financial abuse has on a victim (Honest conversation with others)
- Identify how to stay financially independent in a relationship (Intention and self-direction)
- Determine signs of a healthy financial relationship (Self-awareness)
- Identify commitment to financial abuse awareness and prevention (Network of support and learning)

Facilitator: Vice president philanthropy, philanthropy committee member or an experienced facilitator

Audience: Members of the collegiate or alumnae chapter

Space: A room large enough to comfortably hold the chapter size and allow for large group discussions.

Duration: 40 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Computer and display with A/V
- Participant Guide
- Writing utensil for each participant

Preparation:

- Get familiar with the facilitation guide and concepts discussed
- Print participant worksheets for each participant
- Test the video to ensure it is displaying properly and the volume is appropriate
- Research your local domestic violence resources and support services

Follow-up: Be sure that every facilitator and participant of this program completes the Programs with Purpose Feedback survey!

It is very important that we receive feedback for each of our Alpha Chi Omega programs in order to continue to improve our resources. This survey is designed to lead the facilitator and participant to questions relevant to their own experience, so the same link can be used for both parties.

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/D9BSHRS>

Note: In the left column of the facilitation guide below, the number to the left is the amount of time the facilitator will spend on that section of the program. The number on the right is the amount of time that has currently elapsed in the entire program.

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2/2	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>Welcome to our Program with Purpose, Counting the Cost: Understanding Financial Abuse!</p> <p><i>Facilitators should introduce themselves to the participants if not already acquainted.</i></p> <p>Before we get started, I'd like to provide a content warning to let you know we will be talking about domestic violence, financial abuse and barriers that exist that perpetuate violence against women. If you need to step away from the program, feel free to do so. The intent is to provide insight into the warning signs and experiences of victims and survivors of domestic violence and specifically financial abuse, not to cause additional harm. Your well-being is important, so please do what you need to do to take care of yourself. You will find national resources on the last page of your participant worksheet.</p> <p>Now, let's get started.</p>
2/4	<p>WHAT IS FINANCIAL ABUSE?</p> <p>According to the United Nations Women (UN Women), an entity dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment, one in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual abuse, primarily inflicted on them by a romantic partner. While many of us may already be familiar with that statistic through our philanthropic work, what most aren't as familiar with is that financial abuse is present in 99% of domestic violence situations. I'll repeat that ... 99%.</p> <p>This often hidden form of abuse is harrowing for victims and is cited as one of the most common reasons a victim stays in an abusive relationship.</p>

	<p>So, what is financial abuse? The Center for Financial Security defines financial abuse as “controlling a person’s ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources.” This can specifically look like controlling how money is spent; withholding money or giving an allowance; withholding basic living resources, medication or food; not allowing a partner to work or earn money; and/or stealing a partner’s identity, money, credit or property.</p> <p>Much like the other forms of domestic violence, financial abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, socioeconomic status or education level.</p>
20/24	<p>THE COST OF FINANCIAL ABUSE</p> <p>Financial abuse can have far-reaching and devastating effects on individuals. To better understand the true cost and impact of this issue, we’re going to watch a brief video that sheds light on the experiences of those impacted and the larger implications it has in our society.</p> <p>Play video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4j606F6mvo</p> <p><i>Allow time for an initial video debrief and then spend time asking and allowing participants to converse about the following questions.</i></p> <p>What is your initial reaction to the video?</p> <p>In the video, we learned the cost of domestic violence on a female survivor was \$104,000 over her lifetime. Were you surprised by that fact? Did you expect it to be more or less?</p> <p>Did anything else from the video catch your attention or was there anything you felt surprised to learn?</p>

	<p><i>Allow participants time to respond. Responses could include how survivors who experience financial abuse only have on average \$288.90 that they alone can access or how on average survivors need \$783 per month to stay safe.</i></p> <p><i>Thank participants for sharing.</i></p>
5/29	<p>TAKE ACTION AGAINST FINANCIAL ABUSE</p> <p>One way to act against financial abuse is to understand how you avoid financially abusive relationships. Even the early stages of a dating relationship offer the opportunity to set the stage for financial security and independence. Here are some tangible ways to set a strong foundation. I encourage you to follow along in your participant guide and fill in the blanks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your personal <u>credit score</u> and keep it in a good range. • Have a credit card in your name, and build up credit history by using and paying <u>in full</u> and <u>on time</u>. • Keep copies of all <u>bank account</u> and <u>credit card</u> numbers in a safe location. • Put two-factor authentication on your banking information or credit cards. • Keep copies of your birth certificate and social security card in a safe location. • Have a <u>budget</u> and stick to it as best you can. • Have independent control of <u>cash</u> (not after approval of your partner). • Ensure your paychecks go into your own personal account or a joint account you can access. • Keep copies of documents proving <u>ownership</u>, like of a car or home. • Have your own <u>passwords</u> for all online accounts and don't share them with anyone.

5/34	<p>HEALTHY FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>Having discussed and seen signs and examples of financial abuse and learned tips for financial security and independence, let's now shift our focus to understanding components or "green flags" of a healthy financial relationship.</p> <p>What do you feel are signs of a healthy financial relationship?</p> <p><i>Allow two or three participants to share. Thank participants for sharing.</i></p> <p>As some of you have mentioned, healthy financial relationships look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both partners having access to all financial information • Working together to develop and achieve joint financial goals • Understanding and respecting equal decision-making regardless of income differences • Both partners having access to their money and not needing to ask permission or hide day-to-day spending • Large or long-term financial decisions being made jointly • Both partners knowing where and how their money is spent
4/38	<p>FINANCIAL ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION</p> <p>Although financial abuse is not always easy to spot, it impacts most individuals experiencing abuse. Understanding the prevalence and nature of financial abuse is a crucial step in preventing it. Other ways we can prevent financial abuse include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness: Domestic violence awareness campaigns, education programs like this and other community initiatives help shed light on the signs and consequences of financial abuse. • Financial literacy: Equipping individuals with financial education enhances their ability to manage money independently, thereby reducing vulnerability. While some of us learn financial literacy in school, there are many free online programs as well.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support services: Promoting shelters, agencies, hotlines and counseling can help those affected by financial abuse. <i>Facilitator should share information about local resources/support services.</i> <p>Are there any other ways we can help prevent financial abuse?</p> <p>Thank you for sharing. I encourage everyone, even after today, to consider what role we can play in bringing awareness to this topic and what we can do to support survivors.</p>
2/40	<p>CLOSING</p> <p>Our philanthropic initiative is a key part of the Alpha Chi Omega experience, so I want to thank you all for participating in today's conversation about financial abuse.</p> <p><i>Send out the Programs with Purpose survey and allow participants 1-2 minutes to provide feedback on their experience.</i></p>

RESOURCES:

[MOVING AHEAD: A FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT RESOURCE](#)

[NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE \(NNEDV\)](#)

[NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE](#)

[UN WOMEN](#)