

CFS Intro: Welcome to training. Today we will have a conversation about handling finances in marriage. The goal of our discussion is to improve your understanding of personal finance as newlyweds. Together we will be watching videos to aid in the facilitation of sharing information and creating dialogue to ensure a financially healthy relationship.

Play Video 1



Introduction

CFS Intro: Honesty and communication are key when the topic of money arises. Keep in mind that you and your spouse may have differing views on how money should be spent, saved, and invested. The worksheets you have been provided are very useful as a guide to clarify and understand each other's perspectives on money management.

Play Videos 2 & 3

Discussion Questions



2. Communication

1. What are some aspects of money management you believe couples have a hard time discussing?

CFS Talking Points: Examples include: shopping, gambling, secret savings, joint vs. separate accounts, spending habits, or giving to family/charity

2. What are good practices for having positive, productive financial conversations?

CFS Talking Points: Monitor emotions as they can quickly go into overdrive, honesty, don't press blame, focus on solutions, listening actively, compromise willingly



3. Transition to Documents

3. What would be a good setting or time for couples to discuss their finances?

CFS Talking Points: The ideal environment is when both parties are relaxed and not under stress. Be intentional about setting time aside on a regular basis to discuss finances, such as a weekly or monthly meeting time. Try to avoid times when emotions are elevated.

Knowledge Check

Question: Where can new spouses get information on understanding and integrating into the military lifestyle?

Answer:

- Air Force: New Spouses should visit their local Airman & Family Readiness Center and sign-up for the Heartlink workshop. General information about services can be found at: <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Benefits-and-Entitlements/Personal-and-Work-Life/>

- USMC: Visit Marine Corp Family Team Building (MCFTB). Other programs including Family Member Employment Assistance Program (FMEAP), Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and Information & Referral (I&R) provide great information for spouses. The L.I.N.K.S. for Spouses Workshop. Marine Corps provides information and opportunities for networking, information about local resources and opportunities.
- Navy: Applocker.navy.mil will help spouses gain valuable apps to navigate Navy Life. MyNavy Family 2.0 is the first tool by the U.S. Navy developed for Navy spouses and Sailors' families that combines authoritative information from about two dozen websites into a single application. Go to https://www.navy.mil/cno/docs/NO_Family_Framework_2019.pdf for the complete manual.
- USCG: A USCG spouse can contact their unit ombudsman for information. A spouse may submit a "contact your ombudsman" email to cgombudsmanregistry.org or contact their local HSWL ombudsman coordinator.

PART 2: Marriage Documents

CFS Intro: Marriage comes with paperwork. Now that you've made your nuptials official it's time to take the next step. This section will explain the documents required to enroll your new spouse and dependent children into the military network.

CFS Info: Have current Bldg. #, POC, and office hours for DEERS office and Military Personnel Office

Play Videos 4 & 5



4. Marriage Documents, Pt.1

1. What are ways to keep important documents organized and available when needed?

CFS Talking Points: Ensure you have original copies; have a file folder to store documents; label documents accordingly in file folder; immediately return documents to folder after use; keep in a safe or secure location at home while not using; be sure not to pack in unknown boxes when moving — carry with you.

2. How can you be proactive in keeping records up to date and who can help when you as the Service member has to deploy?



5. Marriage Documents, Pt.2

CFS Talking Points: Use the marriage checklist as your guide of what you need to accomplish to incorporate your new spouse into the military system. Take the time after getting married to update documents. Follow up with the organization if you don't receive documents in a timely manner. Don't use the excuse of, "you'll get to it later," as time goes by quickly. You will get busy with your new life and work. Communicate with your immediate chain of command if you have a need during work hours to take care of these administrative tasks.

Being prepared can eliminate a lot of stress for the Service member and spouse. You won't have to rush around last minute trying to finalize everything before you leave. You can mentally prepare for leaving and spend quality time with your spouse.

Knowledge Check

Question: What documents are needed to enroll your new spouse and dependent children (if applicable) into DEERS?

Answer: Marriage certificate, birth certificate(s), Social Security cards, adoption court documents, two forms of identification

Question: What are official documents that may need to be updated after marriage if either spouse changes their names?

Answer: Military ID, driver license, Social Security card

Question: At what age do dependent children need a Military ID?

Answer: 10 years old

PART 3: Financial Planning

CFS Intro: Financial Planning as a new couple will include managing credit, budgeting, and banking. Remember the communication tips we discussed earlier as you dive into these topics together.

Play Videos 6, 7 & 8

Discussion Questions

1. How does being on the same page with your spouse financially benefit your relationship?



6. Transition to Financial Planning

CFS Talking Points: Being on different pages financially can cause stress, hardship, and lead to mistrust and create arguments in the marriage. You want to minimize these misfortunes in your marriage. You are two potentially very different people combining your lives. You will have differences and disagreements but having open communication will help you reach agreements with the ultimate goal of creating a financially secure future for your family. When a couple works together as a team instead of against each other they realize their goals and are able to achieve them in a shorter time period. Have regular conversations to keep each other accountable and on track. Adjust as necessary and keep moving forward.



7. Spending Plan

2. What are ways that you and your spouse can track expenses?

CFS Talking Points: Keep receipts, budgeting app (shared or separate), envelope system using cash, notes app, bank account software, spreadsheets



8. Emergency Funds

3. What spending items do you and your spouse currently have where you feel you will need to make adjustments/compromises while building your family financial plan?

CFS Talking Points: Personal shopping to include: clothing, shoes, electronics, video games, in-app purchases, alcohol, cigarettes, vapes, dining out, energy drinks, coffee, supplements, etc. Large expenses: car payment, mortgage, rent, boat, family support, storage unit, etc. Other expenses: subscriptions, gym membership, child allowances, entertainment, etc.

4. Who will pay the bills in your relationship? How/why did you come to this decision?

CFS Talking Points: This is one part of the conversation of basic household logistics. This also includes things like taking out the garbage, cleaning the bathroom, and grocery shopping. Sit down and discuss who will pay the bills or if this will be a combined effort. One recommendation will be to automate bill payments to ensure they are made by the due date to avoid late payments and fees. If one partner has a history of money mismanagement, clarify the importance of bills being paid on time and decide if the other partner should take on this responsibility.

5. What are the pros/cons of opening joint accounts?

CFS Talking Points: (Pros) transparency in spending, one main account to monitor (simpler), requires discussions on spending items and amounts, can build trust
(Cons) two people spending from same account can cause problems if not communicating, arguments may arise from disagreements on spending, feelings of loss of independence

Knowledge Check

Question: What are examples of cash inflows?

Answers: Paychecks, gifts, proceeds from sales, and tax refunds

Question: What are general recommendations for saving and investing, housing expenses, and vehicle expenses in relation to your income?

Answer: Saving and investing at least 10%-15% of pretax income; housing no more than 25% of pretax income; vehicle expenses no more than 15%-20% of pretax income

PART 4: Credit Reports and Scores

CFS Intro: Working to understand credit reports and scores always brings up questions. Let's take a closer look at the video which addresses common misunderstandings and need-to-know information.

Play Video 9

Discussion Question

Why should you still be concerned about your partner's credit information since credit reports and scores are not combined when you get married?



9. Credit

CFS Talking Points: Examples may include: if you apply for a vehicle loan together; if you apply for an apartment or home loan together the lender will want to check both parties' credit reports and scores. If you or your spouse has a poor credit rating it can affect approval as well as the interest offered. Creditors may have access to joint accounts to collect past debts. Wages can be garnished for certain debts owed.

Knowledge Check

Question: Which credit reporting agency is required by law to provide you a copy of your report each year?

Answers: All three credit reporting agencies — Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian. Order at annualcreditreport.com.

Question: The FICO score, which is the most commonly used credit score, ranges from 300 to 850. What do lenders generally consider a good score?

Answer: Above 660

Question: What part of your FICO score has the largest impact?

Answer: Payment history which is 35% of your score

PART 5: Bank and Estate Planning

CFS Intro: Continue the money conversations. You and your spouse will want to discuss your retirement accounts by discussing beneficiaries and updating as necessary. Additional considerations for discussion include credit card accounts, and assets such as vehicles and other property. You will want to decide if combining them is possible and/or makes good financial sense. Additionally, you will want to protect your valuable assets including yourself, and property through different types of insurance.

Play Videos 10, 11 & 12

Discussion Questions



10. Banking

1. What are ways to approach the beneficiary conversation with your spouse?

CFS Talking Points: Set up a specific time when you and your spouse can review all accounts. Set the expectation that this is specifically what you will be talking about so it will not be a surprise to either person. Minimize distractions. Have an open, honest conversation when deciding together who will be beneficiaries for retirement accounts, life insurance, investment accounts, etc. Keep in mind that for some it is culturally expected to have family members such as mom, dad, brother or sister as beneficiaries. You or your new spouse may have to have this conversation of whether this will continue or change now that you are married.



11. Financial Plan Wrap & Transition to Insurance

2. What examples in the video made you consider if your insurance coverage was sufficient?

CFS Talking Points: Remember to review/update policies: homeowners/renters, property insurance, liabilities that may need an additional policy such as umbrella coverage



12. Health and Property Insurance

Knowledge Check

Question: TRICARE offers what other type of insurance — in addition to health coverage — for your spouse and dependent children?

Answer: Dental insurance — has a monthly premium and shared cost on some dental procedures. Enrollment is not automatic.

Question: From the video, what was the recommendation for life insurance coverage?

Answer: Remember the acronym LIFE (Liabilities, Income, Final expenses, Education). Your coverage should equal more than these things combined.

Play Video 13



13. Life Insurance

CFS Conclusion: Remember that you can speak with a Financial Counselor on base if you have questions or concerns regarding the financial considerations of your new marriage.

CFS Info: Will need contact information for Financial Counselor and other available resources relevant to married couples