

- ♪ So here we go again ♪ ♪ Here we go ♪

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- [Vivian] Welcome, everyone, to today's presentation: Navigating Your Finances In Unpredictable Times. It has definitely been that for the last couple of weeks and we have all felt it. And in the last couple of weeks, we've been talking about just what's been going on with the CARES Act and giving everyone insight. So today we're just gonna talk a little bit deeper around navigating your finances to help you to get through the next upcoming weeks, as we all know, things keep changing. So as everything is changing, we need to change course too. So before we get started, just wanna quickly introduce myself. My name is Vivian Perez. I am one of the MSA money coaches and I've been in financial services close to a decade now, certified financial educator and credit counselor, licensed financial professional. And ultimately, I love helping people get from where they are to ideally where they wanna be and these are one of those times. We've all seen breakdowns in our own finances where we can kind of take a look and see like are there opportunities to grow here? So I'm excited to share today and some of the tidbits that we have to cover in today's presentation and I'm actually joined by one of my favorite colleagues, Tiffany, Tiffany, you're on.

- [Tiffany] Thank you, Vivian, and as well same for me I love presenting with you. Good morning or afternoon depending on where you are in the United States. My name is Tiffany Willis and I'm a financial wellness specialist with MSA. I began my financial career in 2001 working in the federal funds market where banks trade money with other banks every day, and then I became a college professor in economics and personal finance for 11 years before becoming a money coach. It is my joy to bring these presentations. Normally, Vivian and I are on-site, we come and visit you one-on-one, you see us in person and this pandemic has kind of restricted us to home so we hope that eventually we'll be able to see a lot of you face-to-face in the future after things calm down. Really excited about this presentation today because we talk more about the qualitative aspects of managing your money, and we're gonna get started shortly but just a few housekeeping items to start out with. If you have any questions during this webinar, please feel free to type them into to the chat box there. Do know that this webinar is given to many different employers across the United States and unfortunately, we cannot answer extremely personal questions, we would encourage you to make an appointment with a money coach to discuss that and we cannot give an investment advice, we can't make recommendations like that. But general questions we definitely will try to answer on this webinar. And if it's the case that since we have so many people on if your question isn't answered, go to the MSA website and there is a COVID-19 banner there. We post the most frequently asked questions and you may just see your answer there. Also, if you've missed something, don't worry about it. In the next 24 hours, you're going to receive an email that has a recording of this webinar so that you can go back and listen to it at your leisure. I think with this webinar, you might play it back for a spouse or significant other, or maybe your kids who have missed it. I like this one. So you'll be getting that by email within the next couple of days there. And then last, what's so important is your opinion matters to us. We are going to continue this series of weekly webinars every Friday throughout the month of May, and we take your survey answers, and we take your opinions and we use that to incorporate into the next week's webinars. So at the end of this webinar, you're going to get a survey, please fill it out, please be honest and we'll make sure to incorporate what you need for the webinars coming up in May. Now, to preserve the audio quality, 'cause a lot of people are working from home of this presentation, we're going to close down our webcams and we'll come back on at the end but do know that you'll see us again and we wanna make sure that you hear us more than anything. Vivian's gonna walk us through the agenda.

- [Vivian] Yes, thank you, Tiffany. And so let's get to the nitty gritty today. So the agenda for today is we're going to talk about using ACT to create a plan. So you're probably wondering what is ACT? What are they talking about? So, ACT is the acronym that we use which breaks down into assess, communicate and track. So we're first gonna talk about assessing your situation and just kind of looking at the scope of the setback, what has actually happened in the last couple of weeks for you? And then I'm gonna cover communicate, just pretty much looking into resources and ways that you can communicate with your closest ones, everything having to do with communication, and then we're gonna talk about tracking. So basically making

adjustments as necessary. And then from there, we're gonna wrap up with an actual action plan so that we can use the tools that we've covered today to help you to move forward. And so Tiffany is going to start off with the assessments and assessing your finances. So let us know

- [Tiffany] Thank you so much, Vivian. So the first step in ACT is to assess and as you see there, it's we want to identify the problem and then we're going to branch out from there. So when we say assess here, we're going to explore the impact to multiple parts of the budget and in essence what we want to do is identify the part of the budget that has been impacted the most by this crisis and then address what can be done in that area first. Now, what have we been hearing from our clients? Where is the impact for a lot of people? These are the terms that we've been hearing throughout this crisis. Lack of government programs is huge, I know Vivian is in New York and I am in Florida, and our home office is in California and we've been sharing some things about what we're seeing on the news in terms of impacts of unemployment, and stimulus checks, and furloughs and pay cuts and we've heard from a lot of our clients and we've experienced also personally how this pandemic has affected our budget, and our clients budget. So, while one impacts can be on the income side, some people are having impact on the expense side and here's what we're going to do throughout this assess process. We're going to find out where you're financially hit the hardest, or you want to assess where you're financially hit the hardest, and then measure the impact on income or expenses and by that I mean by how much has it impacted your finances and what you can do about it. So diving in a little deeper, like I said, we look on the income side first. So if this pandemic has affected your income, you wanna start the process of asking yourself some questions. And for me I think, and Vivian you might say the same, is when it comes to impact instead of just thinking, oh my goodness like this is scary, it's rough, I think starting a process for how you break it down could be a lot easier.

- [Vivian] Right.

- [Tiffany] And for income, we wanna figure out what is the timeframe of this setback? So, is it going to be for a while? Is it going to be for a month? Is it going to be for two months? Is it going to be for three months? The toughest thing about this pandemic is we don't know when it's going to end, yesterday was April 30th and we were told a lot of states would start opening up and I know in my state, they said, ah, just a little bit, it's not a full reopen and here's some of the constraints. So, when it's unclear in terms of the timeframe, I think the best thing to do is plan for a multiple case scenario. What happens in the next month, maybe what happens in the next 90 days, what happens is this spans six months from now? Where is the timeframe of the setback? And then you also wanna think about where, if any income, can be replaced. So, we'll talk about a little bit later stimulus checks, unemployment insurance, there's been some changes in the CARES Act with the 401 withdrawals, are there personal loans that you can utilize? Where are the sources of income that you can draw on to help fill in that gap? I know I'm a parent and I have two children and we're about to end the school year here so the next thing that I know I'm thinking about is, oh, what am I gonna do with the kids if we have to stay quarantined in the summer? Because, right? Oh my goodness, even thinking about that I'm like, okay, all of their person to person contact summer activities will be canceled. I'm not going to have them on the computer doing schoolwork, so what will I do with the kids and how is that going to impact my finances? On the other side with expenses, and that leads us right into expenses, we've heard a lot about how expenses have changed. Our manager this week told us a great story about how he had a child come home, and she came with their significant other and a dog, and everybody's eating three meals a day in the house. And he said, look, we're gonna have to have some type of way to exchange things and do some type of barter because this is a lot to feed more people. So, when it comes to expenses you wanna ask yourself, is this a one time expense that I need to pay attention to that's been affected by this pandemic, or do I expect this to be ongoing? Again, multiple case scenarios. Is there any payment options available? So for example, I use this example a lot during these weekly webinars but I had technology in the house, I had laptops but when the kids were sent home, I did not have enough laptops for everyone so I needed to buy an extra laptop for my daughter and the first thing I thought about was, oh, that's expensive. Thinking about that what payment options are available to me? Can I defer interest? Can I spread out the payments? But if you do that, please get that in writing so that you're very clear on when repayments begin and what type of interest accrues, if it accrues, or sometimes I've heard where people will buy something and they're not able to pay it off within a certain timeframe and if it's not paid off, the interest accrues on the total balance not just the remaining balance. So I always want you to be careful when you sign up for those type of programs. How much do you have in savings and is there any loan options that you can use to pay for this expense? I think this pandemic has really shown us how important

liquidity is and having emergency savings, and then make sure that you are aware of any deferral options. There's a lot of deferral options going on and people are calling it payment relief but I think what's clear about this is that the payment isn't going away, it's just being kicked down the can kind of down the line until the end of the loan, or at some future point. So make sure you understand the full implication of these various deferral options that are available right now. It's great that businesses understand that many workers have been affected by this pandemic however, each one of those deferral programs can have a different impact on your finances. So it's not really payment relief, it's payment deferral. Again, make sure you get that in writing, that you know the implications on your credit, make sure that you know the implications on when that needs to be repaid. And then we can get into the planning and evaluation of the assessment. So, with planning and evaluation, what we want to know is what is available to you and how are you going to utilize it. So I call this kind of apply, plan, evaluate. Here's all of the programs that have been implemented as a result of this pandemic. We're not going to go over each and every one because we've gone over them for the last couple of weeks in the Friday webinars. So if this is your first time, please make sure you go to the MSA website, all of our previous webinars are uploaded there so that you can hear the details of each of these. But for the most part, all of our clients and including ourselves, have one of these that is going to affect our finances. So, the difficulty is that some of these programs are having a lot more stress to them as opposed to others. So for example, a lot of stimulus checks have gone out, but it was kind of tricky about how people got them and what the updates were, and who was to file and how much. Unemployment has been tough as millions of people have filed for unemployment at the same time and systems have crashed. So we need to figure out which one of these applies to me, how am I going to plan for it, and how will I evaluate the impact to my finances? So, quick example, the 401 withdrawal or loan provision and I'm gonna emphasize the withdrawal provision. If this is an option that you have chosen to get you through this time, you need to evaluate the impact that this can have on your taxes because those ordinary taxes, the taxes on ordinary income, can be spread out between the next one one to three years. So it's not just taking the withdrawal, it's figuring out, okay, I'm going to take this withdrawal, I missed the 10% penalty because of the pandemic however, I've got to evaluate by how much is this going to change my taxes? That would be a wonderful question for one of our tax team members to kind of help you evaluate that impact. Student loans are another big one. If I take part in this six month forbearance period, is it the case that I can then take money that I was spending on student loans and do I cover my expenses with it? Or do I pay other high interest debts because I'm not being penalized in interest and in terms of missed payments and penalties on my student loans? Or maybe my federal student loans were so big that this is the time I'm gonna really keep on making those payments and all of that's going to go to principal? So it's really an evaluation of how it's going to impact you That being said, let's look at the cash flow. We wanna figure out, okay, once I've got the application, the planning and the evaluation, how does this fit into the overall picture? So, once we do that, we're looking at my set expenses first. What are the expenses that I have to pay to make sure that I have food, shelter and water? So with those set expenses, those are usually given some examples there, mortgage, rent, insurance and groceries? Do you have enough to cover your set expenses? And if not, like I said, you go back to that planning and evaluation where am I going to pull from? Now with the variable expenses, what I like about variable expenses is that you've got some control there. And with this pandemic, some of the variable expenses are taken out of the picture such as eating out, a lot of restaurants haven't reopened, salons and spas are closed, traveler entertainment has decreased greatly. So you've got some control there but what can be changed? And I don't know about you, Vivian, sometimes I need some of those variable expenses for my sanity. What do you think?

- [Vivian] Oh, absolutely . I don't know how I haven't gone crazy without my massages, I need at least once a month .

- [Tiffany] Right? So the qualitative part of finance is figuring out okay, what aids into the quality of my life? It's not always just about the numbers, but what aids into the quality of my life and how do I incorporate that in without breaking the budget, right? And then figure out what you're still paying that can be discontinued, membership, subscriptions, I've heard a lot of gyms are going to be closed for the foreseeable future. Ask yourself if you were on an automatic, monthly payment for the gym, is that still being taken out and what can they do about that to stop those payments? Vivian and I love to travel as I said, that was part of our job before this pandemic. So, Vivian, I know that you've had some vacations that have had to cancel, and what have they been saying about the refunds versus the credits there?

- [Tiffany] So funny too 'cause today I woke up to actual refunds . But before they were pretty much

offering credits and some were offering refunds but not all, but it seems like the refunds are starting to come through probably taking a little longer 'cause today is the first day of May. So probably see more people that are getting refunds over the next couple weeks off of vacation packages that they had purchased for this time.

- [Vivian] Oh, good. That's good 'cause at first I heard they were just offering credits and I'm like, well, we don't know when we'll be able to travel again, or who knows if I wanna go to that same place at a different date? So, that's good to know. And then payroll deduction. This is something that I encourage people to do not just in terms of the pandemic but also in terms of just regular times. What payroll deductions do you have that you don't know what they are on your paycheck, or you're not fully utilizing? That's another way to bring some cash back into the budget, is figure out, okay, what am I paying for am I really utilizing it? Or is it a source of protection for me? So that being said, one of the most important parts of finances is being able to communicate and Vivian's gonna walk us through that.

- [Vivian] Yeah, those are so many good points as even as you were speaking, I was like, yeah, I need to revisit some of my stuff as well because we get so busy working and just household, family that we don't really check in to see all these different expenses and things that are going out so that time to really assess everything is great. So thank you for that. Now, when it comes to communication, it's so important to have everyone on the same page. So we're gonna talk about just ways to communicate better so that as you're navigating your finances, everybody can get on that same page with you and you can actually have some success with it. So the first things first, you gotta start with the closest people to you, right? So that would be typically your spouse, significant other, if you have one, your household, then family. But typically, when it comes to our significant other a lot of times we have what kind of like that opposites attract where there may be one that likes to spend and the other one that is more of a saver, we see that more often than people that are kind of two of the same. So it's important to really have that conversation and just how Tiffany was talking about just really assessing your situation to say like, okay, this is where we're at and this is where we wanna go, right? And then just talking about what that bigger picture is. A lot of times when there's challenges financially between spouses is always talking about the bigger picture so you could get back on the same page. So really look at that so you can work together on your finances and really start breaking everything down and see how you can even give each other some roles and tools and things that can make both people active in your actual finances, okay? And the same thing with household, I know that Tiffany and I were talking about just how the family, your little ones, how they're looking at this whole situation. We were actually laughing the other day because we were talking about how the stimulus check and how kids are hearing that there's \$500 that come per child and I know with Tiffany's children, they were like, "Where's my money?" Right, Tiffany?

- [Tiffany] Right, they were. They were like I heard that there's \$500 per dependent and my daughter, especially she's the little mini me, so she planned out and budgeted the \$500, she called other family members and told them what she was gonna purchase for them and I was like, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, that's my \$500, you're my dependent, it goes in my account. And I ward with it because they know, it's been all over the news and we've got the TV on, they know and I've kind of figured out like, okay, I'm not giving them the whole \$500 like that's out of the question, but I'm relaxing as a parent a little bit there's some wiggle room, there'll be a couple of dolls purchase and whatnot but it's made me really wanna sit down and say, look, this is what we're dealing with here. Fortunately, mom and dad still have a job but listen, we still want to utilize this for planning purposes. You can have a little bit but this is what we're dealing with so you're right, Vivian, it opened up the conversation for all of us.

- [Vivian] Right. And so it's important you don't have to give all your details to your children but just kind of letting them know what is the bigger picture, what are we building for, because at the same time, one thing that I've seen is that children are like sponges. So ultimately, if you tell them like, hey, this is what the plan is, we're gonna save this just in case if we need it, or we're gonna utilize this money for XYZ, a lot of times if you don't do that, they'll hold you accountable to it. So it's always good to keep it on the surface level of what the actual goal is for the household so that everybody is kind of doing their part, and even thinking about just how are ways and things that the household can pitch in to see here to contribute to that bigger picture, right? And then outside of that looking at other family relatives to ask them what did you experience over the last couple of decades that was similar to this, and how did everybody cope? And how did everybody deal with the situation? I know for me I was born and raised in New York City and I remember

being in New York in 2008 when 9/11 happened, and I remember how that whole process went and pretty much how it took some time for everybody to just kind of get back to the norm and it just was a very interesting time here in New York City. So, always asking and kind of having that open line of communication with elders and other people that can relate, just to have someone to bounce ideas off of 'cause sometimes too some people may have said, there are actually great opportunities in this time when there is breakdown. So, depending on just who you're talking to, it's always good to kind of share those ideas because it ultimately can help you moving forward too. And so then outside of communicating with your closest people, from there now you start looking into more prioritizing, right? Looking into the next things like just kind of Tiffany mentioned, thinking about the next 60 days, 90 days, and what the short-term is looking like. And for a lot of us, the short-term is really having us focus on those necessities. First and foremost, we wanna let people know that you wanna give yourself some grace. No one was really expecting this but hopefully from this situation, you can say to yourself and be honest with yourself and say, you know what? There were things that happened because I wasn't properly prepared but now because of this situation, I've learned that I do wanna have these things in place. I do wanna cut certain things out. So this is a great opportunity to sit here and bounce back into what exactly it is that you wanna do moving forward. So first, we wanna talk about just having that no-frills budget. We talked about it a couple weeks ago where basically is just kind of like the skin and bones of your budget, really the necessities, right? Having that so that you can focus as much as you can on whatever's left over to go to those emergency fund savings that you have, right? From there is then communicating with your lenders, your creditors, having a conversation with them about what alternative payment plans or just what options that they have, every creditor and lender is different. Tiffany mentioned some in regards to the student loans but a lot of the federal student loans, they're giving you a lot of flexibility where some of the private student loans are not giving as much but they still may have some resources and options that could help you to cover your student loans, okay? Now, everything that you decide to do, or work out with your lender or creditor, you wanna get that in writing. They're dealing with a lot of people right now and things can fall through the cracks so if you can get what you agreed to in writing that would be ideal. So that if anything does come up in the next couple of weeks after you set up whatever arrangement, then you have something to fall back on, try to get at least the person that you spoke to, usually sometimes they have like some type of code number or something, try to get as much information and have it all in writing, okay? Now, if you've been dealing with a tight budget, you may wanna look at disconnecting your automatic payments, okay? Now we say that so that you can have a little bit more control because if your income right now is fluctuating maybe because you're on unemployment benefits or just not your typical regular monthly income, you wanna have a little bit more control about what's going in and out of your budget, right? So, take a look at what automatic payments that you have and just like Tiffany mentioned before, if you have automatic payments that you don't necessarily need or you could cut back on, do those adjustments so that I can help you out, okay? Now lastly, you wanna be aware that when you're talking to a creditor, and you make an arrangement plan with them, you wanna make sure that you communicate with them about not having any credit damage. So what that looks like is that you would talk to them and say, like how are you reporting this to the credit bureaus that I am not making payments over the next couple of months? Or maybe that there's a lower monthly minimum, or whatever the arrangement is. Talk to the creditors, and if you can get that in writing, get that in writing as well, but try to avoid any credit damage in this period. Obviously, you wanna maintain things so that if there are opportunities and something comes up that you wanna jump into that your credit doesn't affect you moving forward. So take a couple of those considerations when it comes to communicating and another thing before I forget, is that how I was mentioning a lot of people are trying to communicate with their creditors and lenders and things so you have to be very patient right now. Sometimes these holds and has even happened to me where the hold time is very long, right? And so just practice patience and try calling them first thing in the morning, or towards the evening before they close, those tend to be like some little tactics. But ultimately, you wanna keep the lines of communication open with everyone that you're typically paying just so that everybody knows that you're at least as involved as you can be. One of the things that creditors don't like is when people sweep things under the rug, and they just kind of disappear and then it winds up escalating. So, if you can communicate with them and let 'em know just where you're at financially and that you're wanting to work with them, they will work with you too, okay? And so that kind of leads into what we were talking about just opportunities and talking to your family, your spouse, about okay, this is what happened but this is now where we need to focus, okay? So the first things first like we've talked a lot through the slides is building the emergency fund. And we say this often because unfortunately a lot of people across the United States don't have enough to sit here and cover just four tires that go out. This was definitely a pandemic that no one was expecting but different things come up throughout our lifetime it's just part of life

unfortunately, right? I wish I could say everything's gonna be peachy and wonderful forever but that's just not reality, right? And so building an emergency fund always takes the first is that the top thing that should be on everybody's mind right now, right? And then from there looking at okay, we have some debts in place. We need to create a game plan. Does that look like we do some snowball method, or does that look like maybe we get a some credit counseling but looking at your debt strategies and opportunities to sit here and cut out that debt, so then you can free up as much money as you can to again start putting to work for you, building up that emergency fund or maybe investing, okay? Now, also funding irregular expenses because once we start getting back into quote, unquote, the norm, certain things are gonna come back up again, right? Part of what Tiffany was talking about, I love massages, and it's just a way for my own self care but that's a little bit of irregular, it doesn't happen all the time but it happens here and there. So getting into the, all right, I'ma start taking this extra money and start funding my regular expenses so that ultimately as things start getting back to normal, have that extra money and cushion to work with, okay? Now if you feel that you haven't really had much of a financial impact, you definitely wanna take advantage of funding your retirement accounts. The more that you can fund the better because ultimately right now we are dealing with a lot have low prices on stocks and things like that. So you wanna leverage your accounts and start funding them as much as possible or opening and funding a brokerage account as well, because those are opportunities that we can take advantage of and if you wanna learn more about that, we have our next, which I'll talk about that in a little bit, but we have a presentation coming up just about investing and putting money into your account so that they continue growing and working for you, okay? But pretty much from there now that you've kind of assessed your situation and just kind of saw what the breakdown was now you could start focusing on that breakthrough. So whatever it is that you feel like you need for your household, you can kind of look at these pictures, and then you can start saying, okay, this is what's gonna be the next focus for me 'cause I already have an emergency savings, I don't have any current debt. So I'm gonna sit here and focus on that irregular expense account and maybe adding to my retirement because maybe you don't feel that you're on track for retirement, whatever that looks like for you, use this opportunity to start rebuilding, okay?

- [Tiffany] And Vivian I love that you said breakthrough because there are opportunities here to make this your financial springboard. So that is great.

- [Tiffany] Absolutely, yeah. I mean, that's probably one of my biggest mantras, breakdowns lead to breakthroughs and we don't learn the lessons, unfortunately, sometimes kind of things hit the fan, right? And things have definitely hit the fan over the last couple weeks but it's a great opportunity now that we're in quarantine to really kind of get to the nitty gritty of our finances and be authentic with ourselves. There's no judgment, a lot of us are on the same page, so it's more of looking at how can I be better and more proactive in my finances so that if something else comes up, I'm not in this position again, right? And so that kind of leads me into the next conversation about just reaching out, leaving no stone unturned. There's some resources that Tiffany mentioned but one of the first ones that we have is going to the HR department and just kind of seeing what resources that we have, whether that's an employee assistance program, the EAP, that offers the money coach program like we're talking about now in addition to things that could be if you're dealing with maybe some landlords that are not working with you maybe you can utilize their legal services. There's so many different benefits that the EAP has that maybe this is a good opportunity too to kind of revisit what do I have and what is part of my assistance program? Or if you're needing to tap into your 401 , as we said, it should be last resort but if that's needed, you can talk to your HR department to take a look at who's your administrator and your retirement plan and reaching out to them, maybe even revisiting your retirement plan to see where you're at. So those are a couple of first places that you wanna try and then some of the more general national programs like the unemployment benefits which would be the usa.gov, or the IRS website, if you still haven't received your stimulus check, they do have a section, a tab that's called get my payment, where you can see just where your stimulus check is right now depending on if they have your direct deposit information or if needs to be mailed out, typically you'll put your information in there and they'll be able to tell you when your stimulus check would arrive, okay? And then on more of a local level, you have a lot of church organizations, community service organizations that are also helping with no food. The other day I passed by a church and they were giving out just some regular basic things to families. So you wanna see what tools and what programs are out there, what they're helping with, United Way is a great resource as well that you can reach out to them and they'll give you a breakdown around what's closest to you and the type of services that are available as well. And then outside of that, if there's a need where you feel like you know what? I wanna just work a little bit deeper on my finances and

maybe you wanna go over your retirement plan, or go over some debt management strategies, then you can utilize your money coaching program through your EAP, right? So these are all opportunities, don't feel embarrassed to reach out or because there is some need, I mean, like I said, no one was expecting this so ultimately, whatever you can utilize to help you right now with your budget is where you would wanna go, okay? So that's that when it goes to communicating. So now that now that we've communicated now let's really quickly kind of tracking and making adjustments as necessary. First things first, like Tiffany mentioned, we wanna jump into the next slide into the tools. So basically, what are the tracking tools that could help you to adjust right now? Some people like apps and fancy things, me and Tiffany like just a plain old paper and spreadsheets but whatever works for you, you wanna utilize those tracking tools so that I could help you right now to just manage your finances a little bit closely, right? First thing is looking at your income and just how Tiffany mentioned just reviewing all of your payroll deductions. If there's things in there that you're like, I don't know what this is, or are you even utilizing it, maybe it's time to make adjustments there. Then from looking at your income, you wanna start playing into your expenses, right? So looking at your expenses and taking a look at what can you cut there, right? So on the next slide cutting out the expenses, you're looking at what's actually been happening over the last couple of weeks versus what you actually have in your budget, right? And so the good thing right now is that a lot of us because we're quarantined like Tiffany said, we've been able to cut out a lot of discretionary expenses. So it's a good opportunity to sit here and start rebuilding and really having that as a focus so that moving forward, you have something good to fall back on. I know even for me personally, once I started building up my emergency fund, I started walking taller, I started feeling more confident, right? It feels good. We realize just how much stress that that brings onto us by not having our finances on track, right? So that's why this stuff is so important because ultimately, everything that we do on a day-to-day has somewhat to do with our finances and for the long-term especially, if we sit here and we wanna purchase a home, if we wanna retire comfortably, if we wanna make sure that our kids don't have student loan debt in the future, these are all things that are all is stemmed from how we manage our money and having a budget in place. So it's so important to track everything and just be more closely knit to your finances as possible because the more, I always say this, the more attention that you pay to your money, the more attention your money pays to you, right? There's a lot of times, aha . But a lot of times, like I said, we're so busy in life and we're kind of moving through that we kind of push things to the side and we're not really paying attention. But now that we're paying attention, we're like, oh my God, we've been paying so much money on all these subscriptions like why? When we could use that money and start funding and making that money work for us instead, right? So, like I said, these last few weeks for me have been great because I've been really just clear on, okay, this is what I need to do, this is where I wanna go, and I encourage the same, I encourage you to think about what are your financial goals, what are the bigger pictures that you have for you and your family? So that then you could start working towards them. So, you definitely wanna track everything, be a little more mindful of everything's moving forward so that it can really start working for you.

- [Tiffany] Wow, Vivian, that is excellent. You just helped me realize something that I wasn't paying attention to. Yesterday I went to the grocery store to buy some groceries and usually I tell myself there's some parameters around that for me, don't shop when hungry you tend to buy more. What I recognized after I checked out 'cause when they told me the total, I was like, "What?" "What do you mean it's that?" I never spend that much on groceries, but what I wasn't paying attention to is that I think some of the feelings that I feel about the quarantine are kind of coming out in my grocery shopping 'cause that's the one thing I do, going outside during the week and I'm kind of just like mindlessly trying to figure out okay, what to buy and I'm gonna want this and I'm gonna want that, and I don't wanna come back here and all of these different feelings and emotions just being at the same place that I go to all the time. Yeah, and I was just kind of mindless and not paying attention and then I got shocked at the checkout and I'm like, okay, you need to go back to being attentive about intention here. What do you really wanna do here and not spending that much money at the grocery store? Yes you'll be inside but listen, it's not gonna be this much. You don't spend 200 bucks on cheese's . So what's the action plan? What can you do next? Like we've been trying to emphasize here, money is not just about running numbers it is also about quality of life, it's also about supporting your goals, a lot of times we hear from clients, I just wanna be rich and I just wanna be wealthy. Well, what does that mean for you in terms of quality of life and how do you communicate that right, Vivian? To your spouse and to your family?

- [Vivian] Right.

- [Tiffany] Yeah. So we wanna again assess the scope of the setback, evaluate the impact, was it on your income side and what are the available resources there? Was it on the expense side and if so, how long is it going to last? What are the payment options? Do I have it in writing? Do I know the terms? And can I plan for it just in case a lump sum payment is due maybe in four months? Do I have the appropriate budget and parameters in place in an effort to make sure that I can handle that when it does come up? I really do think Vivian did such a great job on communication. I think communication to outside resources, as well as internally is so crucial. Vivian and I were both in-office money coaches and I'm pretty sure Vivian you too had a lot of calls with husbands and wives.

- [Vivian] Oh, yeah.

- [Tiffany] And like Vivian was saying, you just tend to go with the marrying for some reason, the financial opposite of who we are and it can be tough sometimes to communicate. I mean, if my husband gets the stimulus check and he's like, "I want to buy a boat," and I'm like, "No, we need to save." I always asked my couples, I say, oftentimes conflict arises when we attach a different meaning to the same idea. And oftentimes, I would ask couples, what does financial security mean to you and what does financial security mean to the other spouse? Oftentimes, the right principles are present it's just technique and communication that needs to have it come together. I had this couple one time where the husband, he wanted liquidity, the wife wanted debt paid down, who's wrong or who's right in that situation? Technically, they're both right. Those are great financial principles, they just attach different meanings to financial security. So when you can figure out what's financial security to myself significant other, what's financial security to me? How do we merge the two? And what's one technique on each side that we can do to help support that financial security as a couple? I think that that can help alleviate things a bit. And then like Vivian was saying, track, make sure you track whatever tool works for you and make adjustments as necessary. I think before this pandemic, I had always heard and done this plenty of times where I'd have three to six months of emergency expenses, three to six months, three to six months. I was like, okay, okay, I know three to six months, but oftentimes, my emergencies I would dip into that and pay it but it didn't take up the whole account. Now, this time in this pandemic, we're actually looking at something that may stretch for that period of time. So, use your money coach and all of the resources that Vivian mentioned earlier so that you can use it as a financial springboard to propel yourself forward. Money coaches have a lot of different resources and tools to kind of help you think about well, this is how you can make sure that you save for three to six months of emergency expenses. I'm a known at all and my colleagues, Vivian included, it's like every time I talk to them, it's like, ah, I could have thought about that in a different way. So how do you get started? Give us a call. You can either if you have this benefit through your employee assistance program, call your employee assistance provider, get a referral, and then they will patch you through to us and we'll connect you with a money coach given your concern, all of our money coaches specialize in different areas. So you'll get somebody that knows the situation and can help you out there. If you have access directly to the My Secure Advantage benefit, you can just go on the website, you have a login and a password, and you can go ahead and make your appointment directly there, or you can give us a call and we will set up that appointment with the money coach that can tailor to your needs. All right, we've got a lot of good stuff coming up in May, Vivian. What's happening next?

- [Vivian] So we're gonna continue the conversation and we're gonna actually go over four ways to rebuild your money confidence and it's pretty much a four part series where the first part we're gonna talk about controlling spending. So this is gonna be really good 'cause we're gonna talk about just that whole rebuilding phase, like just getting back to your money confidence, right? So I'm really excited about that as well. But for those that are either for later today or next week, we have the investor education today, later today, and then next week as well we have investor education, where we're choosing investments after assessing your goals and risk tolerance. So that'll be the conversation for next week. So you definitely wanna take advantage of these events so that you could keep learning and just rebuilding and getting to a better place moving forward. I personally love these classes, and it's even been helpful for me as I've been delivering them .

- [Tiffany] Yeah, I know, right? It's funny. What is that saying you learn better when you teach it or something like that?

- [Vivian] Something like that, yeah.

- [Tiffany] So, and don't forget, everyone, please, if you have a question, go ahead and start typing those questions into the chat box 'cause we're getting ready to start our Q&A here. And we're just gonna finish up this presentation. If you miss something, you'll be receiving an email very soon of a recording of this webinar so that you can go back and hopefully maybe think about listening to the webinar with your household and talking about some of the tips mentioned. Also, do not forget, we are continuing these webinars throughout the month of May, your opinion does matter to us. We take that information and we build it into the next webinar for next week and give you something to come back to, we've had a lot of people kind of stay with us through this process and we would encourage you to do that and you let us know through this survey and letting us know how you feel and we'll incorporate that into the next week's webinar. And if you have any questions that aren't answered here, don't worry about it. There is a COVID-19 banner on our website and there's a frequently asked questions blog there, you may just find your question answered there. Alright, Vivian, what do you think about some Q&A?

- [Vivian] Yes, I mean, everybody waits for this special time. So we're gonna open it up for Q&A right now and some questions have been coming in. Just wanna remind you like Tiffany said earlier that we're not gonna be answering any specific investment questions or any questions are too personal, this will actually be a good opportunity to talk to a money coach but unfortunately we won't be able to answer them. So anything that's general, we definitely will. So let's take a look here and see what kind of questions we have coming in. I have a question here looks like a question around the stimulus check. So I have a question here from Mellisa and it says, will we have to pay back the relief payments we have received, and will the relief payment be a credit on taxes for 2020? So, the beauty is that no, you don't have to repay anything. And yes, it is considered a refundable tax credit for 2020. So you don't have to pay taxes on the money that you get on the stimulus check nor do you have to pay it back for the next tax season. So that's pretty much 'cause I have been hearing a lot of people saying like, oh, nothing's for free, we're gonna pay this back. But actually with a stimulus check, there's no repayment and no taxes it's a tax credit for 2020.

- [Tiffany] Right, right and it's a non renewable tax credit, I believe so. You don't have to worry about that. Another question from Beverly, do you have any tracking programs or tools you recommend? Good question. This is a very good question 'cause we hear this a lot. If you decide to work with a money coach, we have several tools that we use in house through applications and in budgeting programs to help you. We also have spreadsheets, so we have a little something for everyone in house. I'm a big fan, especially during times like this, sometimes it's good to change things up a little bit and for me, like I talked about that grocery shopping and I tend to be kind of mindless and non-attentive when it comes to food. So the normal tracking that I would do, maybe I need to start writing it down because things have changed, my emotions have changed. So like Vivian and I were saying earlier, we're kind of big fans of writing it down. For me, there's some connection with once I write it down it goes into my brain a little bit better than typing it out or clicking it for some reason, I don't know what that is though. So if you know what that is let us know but I think for me, it's writing it down. So like I said, working with a money coach, you've got budgeting spreadsheets that we'd get you. We also have an application there that we can use with you. But I say use what works best for you. What I don't like is a lot of programs that ask for a ton of information from you just to be able to track the budget. That to me is really just an advertisement. So if it works for you, great, but just be aware of all of the information you're putting out there.

- [Vivian] Yeah. And a lot of times with with your own bank, they typically have online banking and in the online banking some of them do have tools so you can check with your own bank and see if they offer those type of tools so that you can track your expenses as well. I know I've seen them a lot with a lot of the traditional banks and credit unions. So, check there first and see.

- [Tiffany] Right, exactly.

- [Vivian] So I see a question here, Tiffany, I see a question here. What about in the case of low debt? What is the best place to start saving? And so a lot of what we have been talking about was that emergency fund, right? So typically, an emergency fund should be liquid meaning that you should have access to it right away not something that has any type of penalties or is kind of locked down where you don't have access to it. So you just wanna look for just a regular old savings account. If you can find a high yield savings, that would be ideal. But pretty much you wanna find a savings account that's liquid that you can just start putting your

funds in there. I'm a big fan of online banks, just because there's less fees and things or sometimes they don't have minimums where you have to actually have a certain amount just to open the account. So, do a little bit of research and see what kind of accounts are available for savings that you feel comfortable with that brand to actually start saving into that account. But it should be nothing more simpler than just a savings account. As long as it's liquid, that's where you wanna put it. Usually the banks have lower interest rates so it's not about really growing your money, it's really more about having liquidity. If you're able to find the high yield savings accounts then that will probably be your first choice. But it's more really focusing about having an account that has full liquidity for you because that's what you're gonna need when emergencies come up.

- [Tiffany] Yeah, and the definition of liquidity is the ability to access cash with little or no loss in value, and that's the emphasis on savings accounts. What you also wanna make sure is you have FDIC insurance, right? This is a different time than it was in 2008 but if you lived through 2008 and banks failing, so you wanna make sure you also have some FDIC insurance there as well.

- [Vivian] Yes, that's true too, which most banks do but you always wanna make sure .

- [Tiffany] Right.

- [Vivian] Absolutely. I've got a question here from Joel. There's a 401 , it's at a previous employer, how do you access it? All you do is contact the service provider. So and this question is when I was in the office and coaching on retirement and investments it's a very common question. I have an old 401 what do I do about it? There's definitely some options and make an appointment with one of our money coaches to figure out what they are, but usually you cannot go into those types of accounts and take a loan because it's an old employer, you're not with that employer currently. So you would just contact the 401 service provider and see what your options are. There's multiple options, see what your options are about accessing, rolling over, and all of that. Now, I would say too before you say yes or no to anything, make sure you understand the impact of each option. If I roll it over, what is the impact? If I take cash out, what is the impact? Make sure you understand each one of those options with the previous 401 definitely has an impact on your finances. So talk with one of our retirement or investment money coaches to see how that can impact you.

- [Tiffany] Awesome. And I have a question here, I don't wanna butcher the name. So I will say the question is I have student loans and they deferred my payments until November. How do I tackle the interest that I know is accruing at this time? So, if there are federal loans, you shouldn't have any interest that is accruing at the time. If it's private student loans, and let's say that that's what they said to you that yes, you can defer, but there's gonna be interest that is accruing then you wanna find out what that actual interest is, and at minimum make those payments so that you can kind of cover that basis. But I would just first confirm if they're federal or private loans, if they're federal, then no, actually any payments that you make is going straight to principal. So first, clarify that and then you should be able to know just how to tackle down the interest if that's what you wanna do. If you wanna pay more above above everything to help you, then you certainly can. They're just giving people the flexibility that if they can't pay it, because student loans is a big challenge for a lot of Americans, that is an option that you have. It's not mandatory that you don't pay anything, they're just giving you that break. If you can, do as much as you can, especially if they're saying that there's no interest on it if it's a federal loan. So just clarify those things and that could help you tackle down your student loans.

- [Vivian] Yeah, yeah, that's a big question that we get a lot of the time is how to best pay down your student loans. So that is a great question. I'm gonna try to knock out two really quick. We've got a question from Durant, will the stimulus check be considered income? The answer to that is no, it will not. It's actually a credit, an advance on the next year's taxes. So no, it is not considered income. And then we've got a good question about homes, with everything happening right now what would be the best options for home ownership or moving in general? Well, it is true home mortgage interest rates are at some all time lows. A lot of times people think that they're at zero and they're not at zero. Wouldn't it be nice to get it at zero?

- [Tiffany] We all wish. Zero percent like you--

- [Vivian] I'm buying every house .

- [Tiffany] Right? Exactly . I'm buying everything but they are low. I say the best options would be first to look at your overall financial picture because when it comes to lenders, they wanna see a period of stability so they want stable employment that you've got access to cash. So they ask you to list everything, what's in all types of investment accounts and cash accounts. So you wanna first look at your financial picture to see and assess how would you qualify? Do you qualify? What is the potential interest rate and how do you look from an overall standpoint? And do you have enough liquidity to handle anything that could come up during that process? So yes, home mortgage rates are low but how do I look in terms of my overall financial picture in order to be approved for a mortgage? So again, employment stability, financial stability are probably the two biggest things, and then just kind of moving in general. The tough thing is that for health purposes, it's tough to figure out, okay, do I move, do I not move and so it's a little bit about exposure. I would say do what's best for you and stay safe more than anything. I think our mortgage coaches are the best. I recently bought a home before this pandemic and I was on the phone with, it's really our assistant manager, but she's a wonderful mortgage coach, asking the same questions. So I would suggest you call in and talk with one of them and have them assess credits for how long have you been working? What is the cash in your accounts look like? So that they can give you some really helpful tools on what the best options individually for you are.

- [Vivian] Yes, good nuggets. And it looks like we're up on time. So let's open up our webcam really quickly just so that we could say our goodbyes for the day. But I hope that you got some good nuggets and things to think about. Like I said before, give yourself some grace because ultimately, it's been an interesting one for all of us these last couple of weeks. But utilize this time, utilize this time to bounce back and to learn those lessons so that now you can propel yourself moving forward. Thank you so much for your time and thank you Tiffany for joining me today.

- [Tiffany] Always, you're the best. And remember, everyone, finances are not just about the quantitative numbers it's also about the quality of life. So utilize the tips that we've given you, call and talk with one of our money coaches and make sure that your financial success is you accomplishing what you want for your life quantitatively and qualitatively so that you can move forward with confidence. We so appreciate you just taking the time out of your day today and we hope you stay safe and healthy. We'll see you soon. Thanks.

- [Vivian] Bye.