

Debt Know How



www.debtknowhow.com

Tips and Information for Hosting a Successful Debt Education Session

Introduction:

Debt Know How is a partnership between MasterCard Worldwide and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The purpose of this debt education program is to help consumers across the country understand and begin addressing their personal debt issues. The curriculum is designed to assist educators, service providers and community leaders who plan to teach a debt education workshop. The curriculum consists of a PowerPoint presentation, worksheets, handouts, case study, marketing ideas, resources and participant evaluations.

Target Audiences for Train-the-Trainer curriculum training:

- Cooperative Extension Educators (especially those teaching financial management education topics)
- Public and Non-Profit Service Providers (especially case managers working with clients on financial and other consumer issues)
- Adult Educators
- Faith Community (especially those providing pre-marital classes and financial counseling services)
- Financial Assistance Counselors/Financial Institution Personnel (especially those providing community education on credit and debt issues)
- Legal Services (especially those involved with bankruptcy education)

Suggested ideas to market the program to consumers:

- Direct invite letter
- Newsletter article
- Email invite (short paragraph)
- Table tents
- Poster/Flyer

Things to consider when offering or providing consumer classes:

1.) Take time for introductions.

- This provides you an opportunity to learn more about class participants and how to best tailor the class to meet their needs. Recognize that if the class is large, this may not be possible due to time constraints.
- If the class is large, ask participants to identify themselves by the agency type they represent, such as: Cooperative Extension, Teachers, Financial Counselors, etc.
- If time does permit, ask each to give their name, agency they represent and role within the agency or how they plan to use the information.
- It is also a good idea to have participants respond to a question or statement relating to the topic. For example: What do you think of when you hear the word debt? Did you learn anything from your parents or another significant adult about managing debt? Share a strategy you have used to pay off debt.
- If you do not have pre-registration, as participants arrive ask them to sign in providing a mailing address and email address if available. If possible, send the list out after the class so participants may contact one another at a later time to share best practices and resources. If you do have pre-registration this list may be provided along with other class materials.

2.) Be sensitive to cultural differences.

- Different cultures play a role in how we spend and manage our money. Recognize there are two main cultural and family structures that interface with the American financial systems. They are Collectivism and Individualism.
- Those within the “Collectivism System” share more of their resources within their culture or family group; they give priority to the group’s goals rather than to their own personal goals; they work to maintain harmony, cooperation and in keeping the group first; and they have a deep obligation to the group whether that be through blood relationships or social hierarchy. For example: If a young person in the Hmong culture needs a car to get to work, others within his extended family or group would pool their money to get the down payment for a car. The young person would then be expected to help provide transportation and financial support for their extended family and/or group. Another important aspect for many new immigrants living in the United States is to send money or a remittance to family members left in their home country. Sending a remittance payment is very important to those operating in the collectivism system.
- Those within the “Individualism System” are characterized by personal independence, standing on our own and taking care of self first. This is done by financially taking care of yourself, advocating for yourself and usually not being willing to risk your personal resources to help others. Most of our financial systems in the United States assume the individual culture structure.
- It’s important to remember that cultural and family structures are life long, that decisions about finances are culturally based and collectivism and individualism structures are inside of families and other systems that influence how families live and spend their money.

3.) Keep in mind how adults learn.

- Adults will not learn until they are ready and motivated to do so. They must see a clear need for the information.
- They must be able to use the information immediately and apply it.
- Adults tend to learn more when they are involved in the educational process.
- Adults learn best by utilizing the three primary information processing modes, those being: Visual (images), Auditory (sounds) and Kinesthetic (feeling or action).
- Individuals may be reluctant to attend a debt education class. By offering debt education as part of a financial management class series, providing incentives such as child care, door prizes, etc., and promoting the personal benefits in marketing messages, it may increase the program’s appeal.

Teaching the curriculum:

- The curriculum is adaptable and designed to be interactive and generally will take 60 – 90 minutes to teach.
- The materials may be used in one-to-one or group settings.
- Recognizing that individuals learn differently, these materials are developed to address several learning styles, including visual, auditory and kinesthetic. For example to become more familiar with the worksheets a case study has been developed for use in a class or one-to-one setting. Participants will be encouraged to complete the worksheets with their own personal financial information after class.
- Those that have computer access may choose to use MasterCard’s Debt Know How on-line tools to input their financial information plus use their on-line educational materials and resources.

Evaluations:

- Train-the-Trainer Evaluation
- Learner Evaluation

Sources:

Bird, C.L., Bauer, J.W., Anderson-Porisch, S.A., Jokela, B.H., Hendrickson, L.A., Croymans, S.R., and Bruin, M.J. Building Awareness of Culture and Resources Training Manual, St. Paul, MN, University of Minnesota Extension Service, 2005.
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