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than it is for homeowners (52 percent).

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In the year since the COVID-19 Pandemic began impacting all facets of American life, new data shows young adults are three times more likely to say they are experiencing pandemic financial stress compared to older adults. Three in four younger Americans ages 18 through 34 (75 percent) say they have been at least somewhat stressed about their financial situation since the pandemic began, compared with about 1 in 4 (27 percent) older Americans ages 65 and up. This according to new research conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA).

“Financial stress at any age can have a negative impact on a person’s wellbeing. For many younger Americans, this is the first time they have experienced this level of

economic uncertainty, whereas older generations have already lived through

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has been major or moderate. For older adults, the prevalence of financial stress having a major or moderate negative impact on their mental wellbeing is less by nearly half (33 percent).

The study found that among young adults who said that they experienced stress about their financial situation, nearly all of them (91 percent) have had it impact their everyday life. This most commonly manifested itself as feeling sad or down more often than normal (52 percent), frustrated more often than usual (49 percent), or having trouble sleeping at night (48 percent). Lack of interest or enjoyment in normal hobbies (45 percent) and changes in eating patterns (44 percent) are also prevalent symptoms of financial stress in young adults.

Younger Americans consistently show higher rates of psychosomatic symptoms, like feelings of sadness and frustration, or lack of interest in normal hobbies, compared to older Americans. Among older adults who have experienced stress about their financial situation, about two-thirds (68 percent) have had it impact their everyday life, most commonly having trouble sleeping at night (41 percent), feeling frustrated more often than normal (40 percent), or feeling sad or down more often than normal (31 percent).

Steps to Help Manage Financial Stress

The good news is you don't need to be held hostage by financial stress. There are several steps Americans can take to help reduce financial stress and anxiety. The AICPA's National CPA Financial Literacy Commission recommends these three steps as a starting point.

1. Keep perspective and know what you can (and can't) control

Markets go down, but they also go up. These fluctuations are often out of your control. But it is generally easier to manage finance-related stress if you understand

the financial issues that can be addressed, and which are out of your control. One

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scores. Start by reviewing your cash flow. It's important to know how much is coming in, where you are spending, and where you can cut expenses and increase savings. You will need to inventory all debt and categorize it by type, institution held, interest rates and maturity dates. Also look at all recurring costs, such as utilities, to determine what must be paid each month.

3. Find opportunities and tools to help you today and in the future

One great way to reduce your financial stress is to put much of your money management on autopilot. Take advantage of autopay options to reduce how many bills and payments you have to remember each month. At the same time, set up automatic savings plans to build an emergency fund for future economic downturns. You can also leverage apps and other software to track your spending and find areas to cut back.

How Financial Professionals Can Help Americans

Knowing what you can and can't control is a great first step to help reduce financial stress. Knowing how to be strategic with what you can control is the effective next step. Financial professionals looking to develop the essential skills to best guide their clients, helping to mitigate potential financial anxiety, will benefit from in-depth technical sessions and panel discussions at the [**Advanced Personal Financial Planning \(PFP\) Conference**](#) at AICPA & CIMA ENGAGE 2021. The conference agenda has been curated to feature the most up-to-date practical information and technical knowledge in the areas of tax, retirement, estate, risk management, investments and more.

Additional Survey Findings:

- Financial stress is much higher for renters (72 percent at least somewhat stressed) than it is for homeowners (52 percent).

- Overall, since the start of the pandemic more than half of Americans (57 percent)

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- Impact financial stress brings to daily life.
- Nearly nine in ten of Americans who have experienced stress about their financial situation since the start of the pandemic (88%) say it has had at least some negative impact their mental well-being, including more than half (53%) say the negative impact has been major or moderate.

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