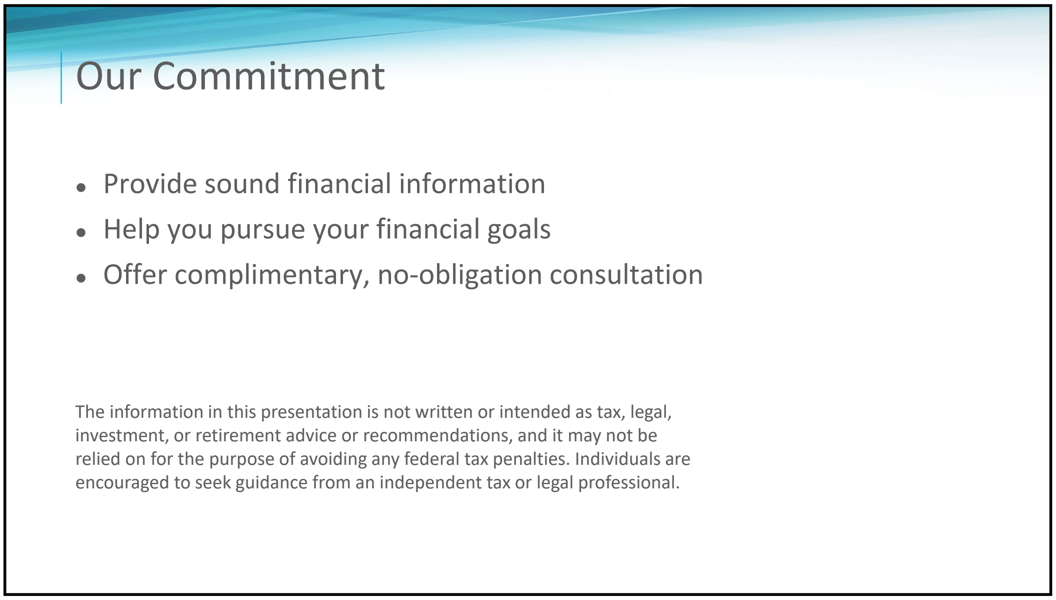
Welcome to our Taking Control seminar: financial strategies for women. We're glad that you could join us here today.

Before we get started, I'd like to introduce myself and my company.

[Note to presenter: Give a brief personal background, then talk about your organization and give its location. If appropriate, introduce other members of your organization who are in the room and discuss any housekeeping issues.]



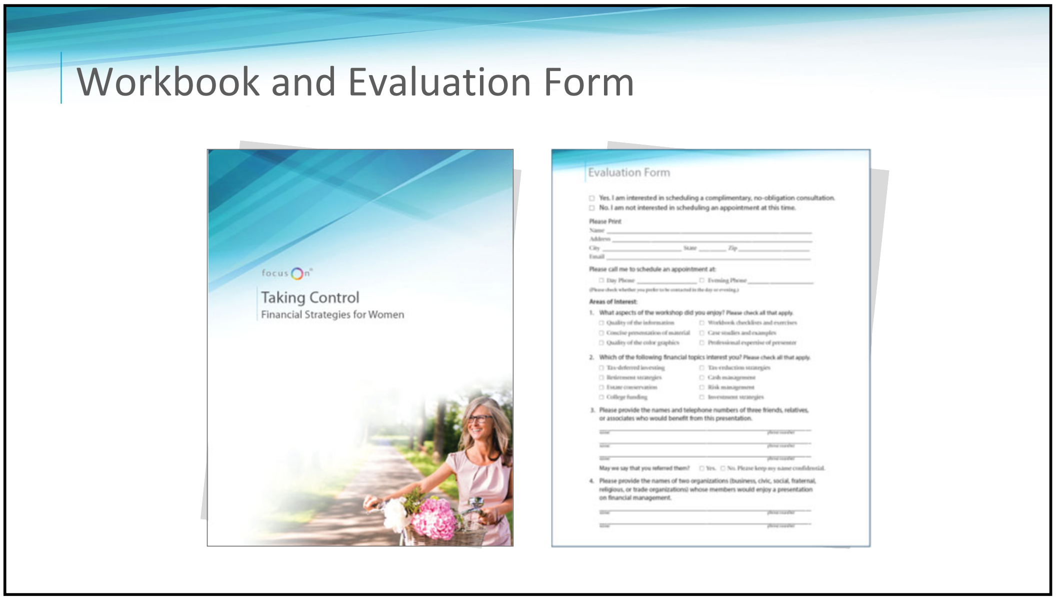
We use seminars like this one to introduce ourselves and to develop strong working relationships with members of the community like you.

Our commitment extends beyond simply offering financial services. We are committed to helping you evaluate your financial situation and giving you tools to help make informed decisions and pursue your financial goals.

We hope that after attending the seminar, you'll want to meet with us in our office. This is a complimentary, no-obligation consultation that we offer to everyone who attends our seminars. During that meeting, we can discuss any questions you have as a result of what we discuss here. If you prefer, we can use that time to examine your specific situation and begin the process of helping you formulate a financial strategy that will suit your needs.

We know that we'll establish a working relationship with you only when *you* are confident that we can be of service. We want you to understand your options and to know how you may benefit from working with us.

The information in this presentation is not written or intended as tax, legal, investment, or retirement advice or recommendations, and it may not be relied on for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalties. You are encouraged to seek guidance from an independent tax or legal professional based on your individual circumstances.



Let’s talk about the workbook you received as you entered.

We’ve found that people are more likely to remember something they act on rather than something they only hear about. That’s why we designed this workbook so you can apply what you learn to your situation. In it you’ll find helpful materials that reinforce the seminar’s major points and will be a valuable resource for you.

Feel free to highlight, underline, or make notes in whatever way serves you best.

Inside your workbook, you’ll find an evaluation form just like this one.

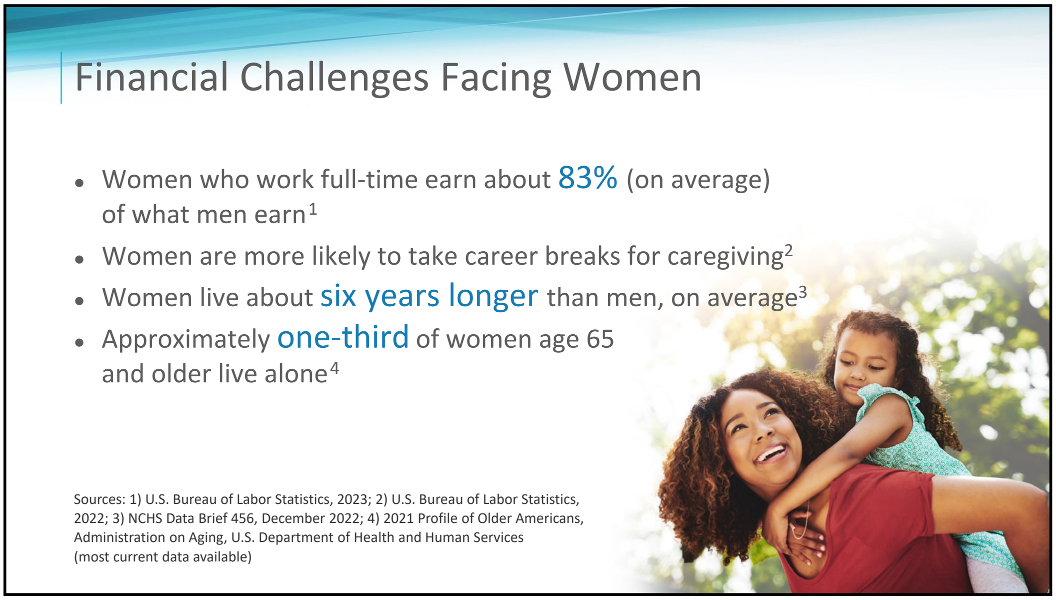
[Note to presenter: Pull out an evaluation form for your seminar participants to see.]

At the end of the presentation, please use this form to tell us whether you’re interested in taking advantage of the complimentary, no-obligation consultation.

We’d like to make you two promises concerning this form. First, if you check “Yes, I am interested in scheduling a complimentary, no-obligation consultation,” we’ll call you in the next couple of days and set up an appointment. Second, if you check “No, I am not interested in scheduling an appointment at this time,” we won’t call you directly after the seminar.

In exchange for these two promises to you, please promise that you will fill out this form. Many seminar attendees do come in for a consultation, so we’ve set aside time just to meet with you.

When you do come to our office, feel free to leave your checkbook at home. We are very interested in developing working relationships with you, but that decision is yours.



Today we're going to talk about taking control. Whether single or married, widowed or divorced, women need to plan ahead for personal and financial security. And more than anything else, this requires that you take control of your finances to help ensure a more comfortable financial future.

Being adequately prepared to meet whatever financial challenges come your way may be more important than you think, especially when you consider the challenges described here.

[Note to presenter: Read bullet points.]

What financial issues are *you* most concerned about? Do you need to save more or take more risks with your investments? Is one of your goals to help a family member pay for college? Does it seem as though you might need to work until you are age 70 or older in order to retire?

To address many of the financial concerns you may have, we're going to cover five action items that are designed to help strengthen your financial future:

1. Getting your financial house in order
2. Putting your money to work by investing
3. Building a healthy nest egg for retirement
4. Facing life's challenges with confidence
5. Addressing insurance and estate issues

Let's start with the first item: getting your financial house in order.

This may seem obvious, but the first step in any financial review is knowing your income and expenses. How much do you have coming in and how much do you have going out?

Regarding your income, you should know all the accounts that hold your money, including bank accounts, brokerage accounts, and retirement accounts. This includes passwords and log-in information to access all of these accounts online.

You should also know what assets you own, including property, insurance policies, and annuities.

Finally, you should know what loan obligations you have — for example, your mortgage, car loans, student loans, and other personal loans. This step includes knowing the lender that holds your loan, the loan terms, and your outstanding balance.

Once you've taken a financial inventory, it's time to look at your financial goals.

Your financial goals are guideposts to planning for your financial security.

[Note to presenter: Consider asking the following questions to encourage a dialogue with your audience:

> *What are some of your financial goals?*
>
> *Have you developed a systematic strategy to pursue your goals?*
>
> *How confident are you that you will achieve them?]*

Some goals are **money oriented**. For example, it takes dollars to generate retirement income, purchase a home, pay for vacations, or help cover a child's college tuition.

Other goals are **task oriented**, such as getting your financial papers in order or learning more about the investment options in your employer-sponsored retirement plan.

In addition, your goals can be **short term, medium term**, or **long term**. Making a list of your financial goals and classifying them by timeline can clarify your priorities and help you see the big picture.

Developing and maintaining smart money habits is a key strategy to being able to meet your financial goals. Let's look at some of them.

Smart Habit: Living Within Your Means

- Spend less than you earn
- Don’t use money to make yourself feel good
- Pay yourself first
- Set up monthly electronic fund transfers

At the top of the list is living within your means. Living within your means — or better yet, below your means — involves spending less than you earn, not using money to make yourself feel good, and paying yourself first.

If you’re having trouble living within your means, you’ll need to find a way to spend less or increase your current income. To spend less, look first at cutting back on discretionary expenses. If that’s not enough, look at your fixed costs. Housing is typically the largest fixed cost for most people. If you have outstanding loans, can you refinance to save money? If you can’t lower your fixed costs, you might try to increase your income by looking for new opportunities with your current employer, finding a new job, or retraining in a new industry.

Paying yourself first means you routinely put money into savings before spending on anything else. To put your savings on autopilot, set up monthly electronic fund transfers with your bank or other financial institution to have a portion of your paycheck automatically deposited into one or more savings or investment accounts. We’ll talk more about investing a bit later in this presentation.

Another key habit is maintaining good credit, which can help you get the best interest rates on personal loans. Maintaining good credit includes building a credit history, paying bills on time, and checking your credit report to make sure there are no inaccuracies.

By law, you are entitled to receive one free credit report every 12 months from each of the major consumer credit reporting agencies (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion). You can do this by visiting annualcreditreport.com.

If you find any inaccuracies or errors in the report, contact the agency in writing and provide copies of any corroborating documents. In addition, many major credit card companies let you see your credit score for free. Your credit score represents the information on your credit report and generally ranges from 300 to 850. The better your credit, the higher your score. If your score is below 670, you might not be getting the best rates for loans and insurance.[1]

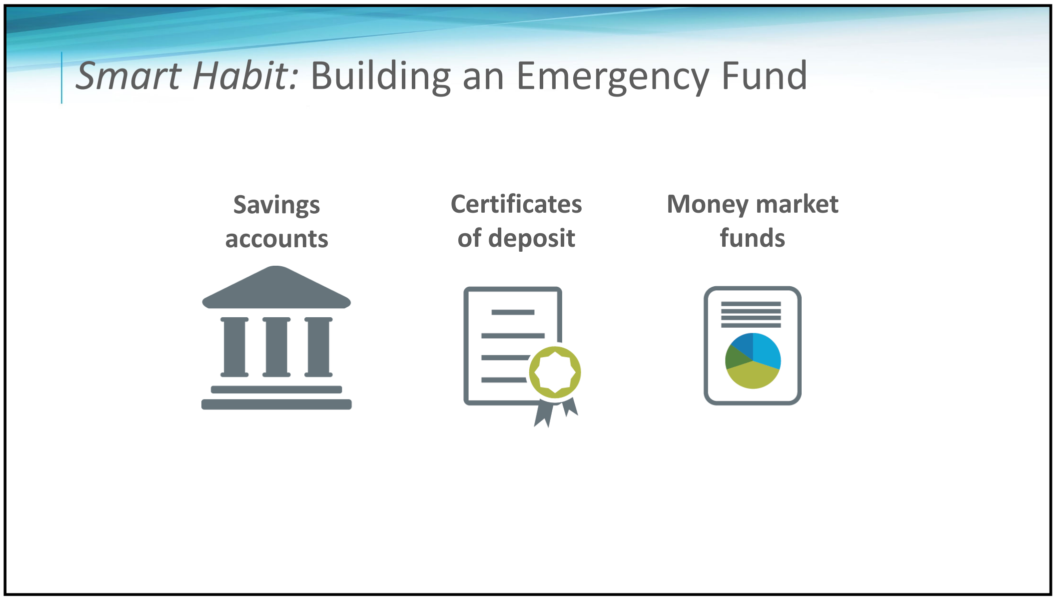
If you're married, you don't have a joint credit score but rather individual scores. However, your spouse's credit history and profile could have an impact on yours. If you have a credit card in both of your names and it doesn't get paid on time, that could affect *both* of your credit scores.

And speaking of credit cards, there's a right way and a wrong way to use them. Credit cards can help you build a credit history that might help you qualify for loans. But too much credit-card debt can become a burden when high interest payments cut into your disposable income. And having a high balance relative to your credit limit could also damage your credit score.

To use credit cards wisely:

- Before using a credit card for a major purchase, first do the math so you understand the true cost of the debt you are incurring.
- If you carry balances from month to month, pay more than the minimum amount whenever possible and reduce the account balances on the highest-rate cards first.
- Shop around for the best credit-card rates or call your credit-card company and try to negotiate a lower interest rate.

Source: 1) Fair Isaac Corporation, 2023



The next smart habit is to build an emergency fund, or a cash reserve. This is your "rainy day" money that you set aside for life's little and not-so-little emergencies, or for vacations or large periodic expenses such as property taxes and auto insurance. By having a cash reserve readily available to draw on, you reduce the need to charge expenses on your credit card that you may not be able to pay back immediately.

As a general rule, your cash reserve fund should be large enough to cover three to six months of living expenses. But if you can't save that amount, that's OK. It's better to have a smaller cushion than none at all.

Because your cash reserve fund should be liquid and safe, you might consider these savings vehicles.

Savings accounts usually offer high safety but a relatively low fixed rate of return. They don't require a large initial investment, and the funds in them are readily accessible. For many people, their main attraction is convenience and liquidity.

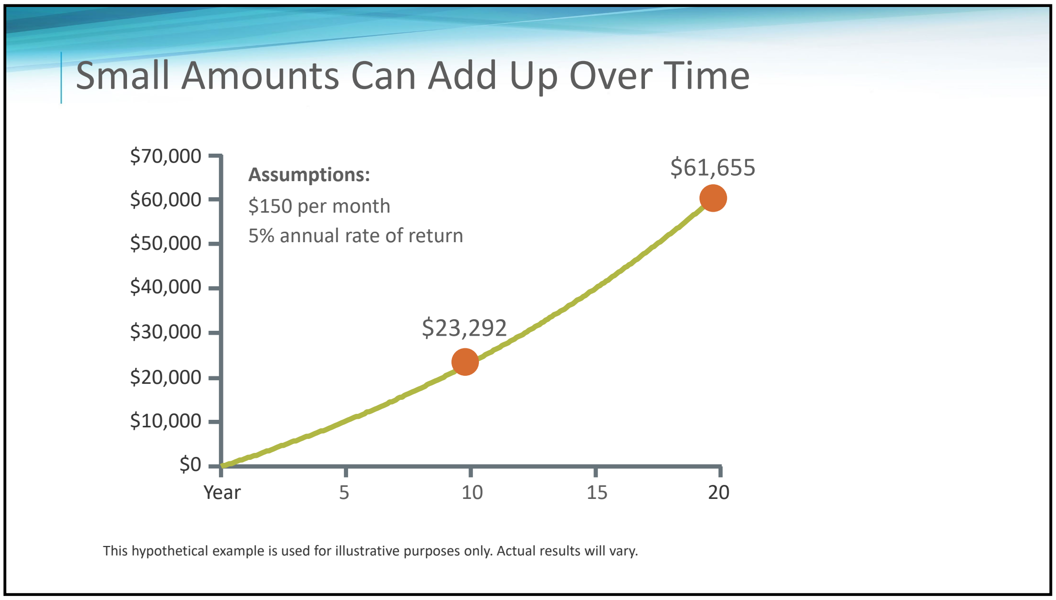
Certificates of deposit are really just short-term loans to a bank, credit union, or savings association. They offer a fixed, moderate rate of return and high safety. CDs usually require a larger initial investment than savings accounts, but you must leave your principal in the CD for a set term in order to avoid early-withdrawal penalties.

Money market funds invest in a diverse portfolio of short-term debt securities. Their goal is to preserve principal while yielding a modest return. However, the value of the funds can fluctuate.

Traditional bank savings accounts and CDs are insured for up to $250,000 per depositor, per federally insured institution, by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Money market funds are neither insured nor guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency. Although money market funds seek to preserve the value of your investments at $1 per share, it is possible to lose money by investing in such a fund.

Mutual funds are sold by prospectus. Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. The prospectus or summary prospectus, if available, which contains this and other information about the investment company, can be obtained from your financial professional. Be sure to read the prospectus carefully before deciding whether to invest.



It can be hard to think about building up a cash reserve fund with thousands of dollars. Here's an example of how small discretionary expenses can add up over time.

Let's say that everyday you buy a $5 cup of coffee or smoothie or whatever special treat you like. Or maybe you buy a $15 lunch 10 times a month, instead of bringing a lunch to work. Either way, this adds up to about $150 per month. If instead you were to put that money in a savings account earning 0 percent interest, after one year you would have $1,800, and after two years you would have $3,600.

And if instead of earning no interest you *invested* that $150 and earned a 5 percent average annual return, you might accumulate a sizable sum over time. For example, after 10 years you might have nearly $24,000, and after 20 years you might have more than $60,000. Remember that's just by investing the equivalent of $5 a day.

[Note to presenter: You might ask participants for examples of other discretionary expenses that they could cut back on to save more for specific financial goals.]

Now I'm not saying that you have to give up specialty coffees or going out to lunch altogether. Life's little pleasures can be important. I simply want to illustrate that it may not take as much effort as you think to accumulate a potentially large sum over time — *if* you have the discipline to save and invest on a consistent basis.

And now that we've looked at getting your financial house in order, let's move on to how to put your money to work.

This hypothetical example is used for illustrative purposes only and does not represent the performance of any specific investment. Rates of return will vary over time, especially for long-term investments. The effects of investment fees, expenses, and taxes are not considered. Actual results will vary.