

Are You Addicted to Shopping?

Is your need to shop getting out of control? For some people, shopping becomes an actual addiction. In fact, when shopping gets out of control, it creates great stress in your life, family, and finances. **Here are symptoms that may indicate a shopping addiction:**

- shopping or spending money when you're angry, depressed, anxious, or lonely
- poor saving habits
- arguing about your shopping habits
- buying items on credit, rather than with cash
- experiencing a rush or a feeling of euphoria when spending
- feeling guilty, ashamed, or embarrassed after a shopping spree
- lying about how much money you spend
- spending a lot of time juggling accounts or bills to accommodate spending.

If you have a shopping problem, here are some tips to consider:

- ◆ Admit that you're a compulsive spender.
- ◆ Destroy all credit cards except one to be used only for emergencies.
- ◆ Make a shopping list and buy only items on your list.
- ◆ Avoid shopping alone.
- ◆ Avoid online catalogs and don't watch TV shopping channels.
- ◆ Look for other ways to spend your time. Take a walk or exercise when the urge to shop comes over you.
- ◆ Seek counseling or a support group.

For more information, visit Debtors Anonymous at www.debtorsanonymous.org.

Encourage Reading



- Leave various types of reading materials – books, magazines, or catalogs – around your home.
- Let your kids see you reading.
- Give books as gifts.
- Set up a cozy place for reading in your home.
- Encourage older children to read to younger siblings.
- Play games that are reading related.

Easing Back-to-School Jitters

Whether your children are young or old, going back to school can be scary or stressful. Many children and teenagers experience back-to-school jitters.

Meeting new friends, having new teachers, and gaining new responsibilities can be overwhelming for some children and teens. **To ease back-to-school jitters, keep these tips in mind:**



- ▲ Visit the school before it begins so your children feel familiar with the layout and grounds.
- ▲ Let your children participate in the selection of school supplies, backpacks, and so on.
- ▲ Encourage older children to get in touch with some of the friends they haven't seen or talked to during the summer. For younger children, set up

a play date with another child who will be starting school.

- ▲ Help your children select the clothes they will wear the first day of school. Have them lay them out the night before so they're easy to put on.
- ▲ Have your children go to bed and get up on the school schedule at least a week before school starts. This will help their bodies get used to the new schedule.
- ▲ Prepare a tasty lunch for the first day of school and place a note with encouraging words in their lunch box for them to find.
- ▲ Be supportive to your children. Listen and provide them with any reassurance that they need. Try not to heighten their anxiety in any way.

Making the Transition to College

If you or your children are beginning college for the first time or in the process of going back to college after many years, **here are several tips on how to ease into college life:**

- Talk to a counselor about what's expected and listen to his or her advice on how you can succeed in college.
- Find a quiet and comfortable place to study. Make sure you have a desk, a comfortable chair, good lighting, the supplies you need, and few distractions around you.
- Make good use of study resources on campus. Inquire about lab usage, tutorial services, computer availability, professor availability for questions, and additional materials that could be helpful for you.
- Meet other students and form a small study group that can offer encouragement and help you learn. Beware of getting too social. Stay focused on studying.
- Take care of your body. Eat right, get plenty of sleep, and exercise regularly.
- Stay in touch with your family and friends back home, but avoid isolating yourself from making new friends. Participate in social and interactive activities at college.

