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40% of U.S. Adults In Live-In Relationships Have Committed Financial Infidelity

Gen Zers in relationships are significantly more likely to commit financial infidelity compared to other age groups

NEW YORK - January 27, 2025 - Among U.S. adults who are married, in a civil partnership, or living with a romantic partner, 40% are committing or have committed financial infidelity against their current spouse or partner, according to a new Bankrate survey. Examples of financial infidelity include spending more than a spouse or partner would be okay with (33%), secret debt (23%), a secret credit card (17%), a secret savings account (15%), or a secret checking account (13%).

For more information: <https://www.bankrate.com/credit-cards/news/financial-infidelity-survey/>

Younger generations are more likely to commit financial infidelity than older generations. Specifically, about two-thirds (67%) of Gen Zers (ages 18-28) in live-in romantic relationships have committed or are currently committing financial infidelity, well ahead of millennials (54%; ages 29-44), Gen Xers (33%; ages 45-60), and baby boomers (30%; ages 61-79).

"Money secrets can undermine a relationship," said Bankrate Senior Industry Analyst Ted Rossman. "It's hard enough to meet your financial goals when you're pulling in the same direction, but it's almost impossible if you're pulling in opposite directions. It's all about practicing open communication, setting the right priorities and course-correcting as needed along the way."

Almost half (45%) of U.S. adults who are married, in a civil partnership, or living with a partner believe that keeping financial secrets from a romantic partner are as bad as or worse than physical infidelity. That includes 38% who believe these practices are equally bad and 7% who say financial secrets are worse than physical infidelity. Comparatively, one-third (33%) say keeping financial secrets is not as bad as physical infidelity.

Ironically, Gen Zers are the most likely to keep financial secrets and to say these financial secrets are worse than physical infidelity. Almost two-thirds (63%) of Gen Zers

in live-in romantic relationships believe financial infidelity is at least as bad as physical cheating, while 51% of millennials, 45% of Gen Xers and 36% of baby boomers in live-in relationships said the same.

Overall, more than 3 in 5 (62%) who are married, in a civil partnership, or living with a partner keep at least some of their money separate from one another. This includes 27% who keep their money completely separate and 34% who have a combination of separate and joint accounts. Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) rely exclusively on joint accounts with a spouse/partner.

Notably, nearly 9 in 10 (88%) Gen Zers in live-in romantic relationships keep at least some of their money separate from their partner, substantially more than millennials (70%), Gen Xers (59%) and baby boomers (52%). Additionally, 46% of Gen Zers and 41% of millennials who are married or living with a partner keep their money completely separate from one another, compared to just 26% of Gen Xers and 15% of baby boomers.

"Being open with your partner about your finances doesn't necessarily mean you need to combine all of your money," added Rossman. "'Yours, mine and ours' is an increasingly popular strategy. Young adults, in particular, seem to enjoy having some money they can call theirs and theirs alone. As long as you agree upon the parameters, maintaining separate accounts doesn't constitute financial infidelity."

Methodology:

This survey has been conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc panel of individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 2,217 U.S. adults of whom 1,089 are married/civil partnership/living with a partner. Fieldwork was undertaken between December 9-11, 2024. The survey was carried out online and meets rigorous quality standards. It gathered a non-probability-based sample and employed demographic quotas and weights to better align the survey sample with the broader U.S. population.

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