



Managing stress and anxiety during election season

If you are feeling overwhelmed by the current political climate, you are not alone. A national survey suggests that more than 60% of registered voters in the U.S. say politics are a significant source of stress, and some even say they've lost sleep over it. Over 25% of voters also say politics have sparked conflict among their family and friends. Political stress, anxiety or even anger you may feel over politics can be hard to cope with.

These feelings can have a negative impact on your emotional and physical health. Symptoms such as low energy, insomnia, loss of appetite, mood swings and tension are signs that you should not ignore. It is important to recognize what you can and cannot control as the election approaches. You cannot control other people's opinions, beliefs, reactions or how they express themselves. Nor can you control others' votes. There are, however, many things you can control during and after the election:

- ✔ **Limit the amount of time you spend on election news and discussions.** While the 24-hour political news cycle on television, radio and the internet is almost impossible to escape, you can limit the amount of time you spend on media each day.
- ✔ **Be aware of the coverage, feeds and groups you follow.** When you are watching or reading election coverage, avoid negative-leaning discussions, especially if you feel frustrated or upset by them.
- ✔ **Recognize how you interact on social media.** Avoid giving angry or emotional responses to posts that do not align with your views. You are unlikely to change other people's opinions; you are more likely to get unwanted and hostile feedback.
- ✔ **Focus on the time you spend with people.** Prioritize your relationships with positive family and friends. Strong social connections can reduce stress and help you feel happier and more energetic.
- ✔ **Manage how you deal with stress.** Whether it's meditation, going out in nature, reading a book or working on a hobby, take time to do something that makes you feel good. Get enough sleep and exercise, eat a healthy diet and avoid using alcohol or drugs.
- ✔ **Stick to your boundaries.** Before you enter a conversation, ask yourself if you're in the emotional headspace to have it. Are you feeling stressed out, on edge or angry? Are you prepared to have a healthy debate or do conversations around this topic tend not to go well? If you feel like you'd be better off not having an election-related conversation, express your boundaries. You could say, "This conversation is really challenging for me, and it's bringing up a lot of feelings. Can we move on to something else?"
- ✔ **Take action by using your time and talents.** Give your time and skills to a cause you believe in. If you have a strong interest in a political cause or candidate, offer to help with a campaign or other event.



If stress and anxiety about the election start negatively impacting your quality of life, contact your program. For more information and helpful resources, scan the QR code to visit your [Program Name] member website, [URL], or call [Phone Number].

