Election Stress Kit

tips and resources to cope with the current national discourse

Brought to you by
Penn State Harrisburg Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
Edited by the UCC of Loyola University, New Orleans
**Suggested Tips**

**Unplug.**
Limit your consumption of social media and 24-hour news cycle. It’s important to stay informed, but creating boundaries is important.

**Connect.**
Engage with supportive friends and allies. Talk about current issues, if needed, but be aware of when you’re feeling overwhelmed. Not everyone will share your perspective, so it’s OK to limit your topics and avoid heated conflict. Reach out to supportive services on-campus, including CAPS.

**Be Present.**
Use reflection to recognize your inner thoughts and feelings. Be curious and non-judgmental and give yourself permission to feel the way you do. Although avoiding can be useful, “stuffing” or ignoring strong emotions can have negative impacts.

**Refuel.**
Focus on restoring yourself with rest and healthy food. Drink water and try to limit caffeine. Move a little every day. Take a walk; look at the sky; be in nature. Journal or meditate. Make art or watch funny videos. Read something fun.

**Do Something.**
Channel what you’re feeling into positive, meaningful activity. Be informed and proactive around issues that matter to you. Find ways to engage in your community through advocacy in ways that fit for you.
Stay Informed, But Know Your Limits.
Monitor how you feel after news consumption. Feeling upset or even preoccupied by national events may be a sign to cut back on your news intake and limit social media discussions.

Take Time To Focus.
During "digital breaks," take time to focus on something enjoyable, such as a hobby, exercising, being in nature or spending time with family and friends.

Schedule Digital Breaks.
Consider scheduling a short block of time in the morning and one in the evening to catch up on news without checking for every new update during the day.

Video with More Tips!
Search YouTube for "How to cope with election season stress" by 11Alive for more tips.
Be Present

Self-Compassion.
Consider practicing self-compassion as you work through challenging or uncertain times. Try some exercises compiled by Dr. Kristin Neff, a renowned researcher of self-compassion.

Try Grounding.
Grounding strategies can help us get in touch with our bodies and surroundings in the present moment. Pause what you are doing and pay attention to what you can see, hear, smell, and touch in your environment.

you’ve GOT this!
Mindfulness & Guided Meditation

MyLife YouTube Channel.
This YouTube Channel offers introductory videos to guided meditations and mindfulness.

Try Mindful Walking.
Grab your phone and your earbuds and head outside for a guided mindful walk to destress. Search YouTube for "Mindful Walking Meditation (Relieve Stress)" By MyLife for your walk.

Download Top Meditation Apps

1. Calm
2. Headspace
3. Insight Timer
4. Aura
5. Simple Habit
6. Breathe
7. 10% Happier
8. BetterMe
9. Pacifica
10. Abide

*We acknowledge that mindfulness originated in Eastern spiritual traditions, namely Buddhism, and has since been popularized in Western countries in ways inconsistent with its original purpose.*
Self-Soothing is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions. www.blessingmanifesting.com

**Sight.**
- Low Lighting.
- Soothing Colors.
- Sleeping Masks.
- Coloring Books.
- Pinterest Collages.

**Touch.**
- Soft Things.
- Cuddle Things.
- Massage.
- Hot/Cold Shower.
- Heated/Weighted Blanket.

**Sound.**
- Calming Noise.
- ASMR Videos.
- Nature Sounds.
- Guided Meditations.
- Binaural Beats.

**Taste.**
- Strong Flavors.
- Warm Drinks.
- Eat Slowly.
- Nostalgic Flavors.

**Smell.**
- Aromatherapy.
- Fresh Air.
- Candles/Insense.
- Comforting Smells.

**Bonus.**
Listen to nature and soothing Tibetan singing bowl on YouTube. Just search for "3 HOURS Long Tibetan Singing Bowl Meditation Chakra Healing | Third Eye | Brow Chakra" by Ambient Relax - Calm Music.
Refuel

Balance.
A national election during COVID? Focusing on your well-being is more important than ever! Trying to keep a balance in most areas of your life will help you roll through challenging days more smoothly and keep you on the road to wellness!

Exercise.
If you want to connect to a yoga class virtually, Loyola offers an archive of yoga classes via Facebook.

Popsugar offers more resources for healthy habits!

Eating and Nutrition.
For tips, guidelines, and health information, HealthGuide.org is a great resource!

You can also check out Loyola New Orleans' Iggy's Cupboard.

Sleep.
Is your sleep schedule irregular? Are you sleeping more than you want to be? Are you having trouble falling asleep? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," you may benefit from these sleep hygiene tips and resources!

www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene
Connect

Why connect? To decrease loneliness, stress, depression and anxiety. To acknowledge collective trauma and experience solidarity. To experience love and belonging. To give and receive care and compassion.

5 Ways to Building Stronger Connections.
- Write a letter.
- Pick up the phone and call.
- Ask meaningful connections.
- Answer questions with honesty.
- Connect via video.

COMPASS | Robert Reffkin, Founder & CEO

Connect Virtually.
- Zoom dance party.
- Netflix party.
- House party app.
- TikTok challenges virtual groups.
- Virtual support groups.
- Virtual book clubs.
- Virtual karaoke on Google Hangouts.

Spiritual Connection.
Spirituality can be one way to connect with yourself, others, nature, or a higher power(s).

Find Local or Online Spiritual Communities.
- Loving-kindness meditation.
Zoom fatigue is real, but sometimes it’s our only option. So how do we connect without MORE stress? Try these tips:

**Establish "No Screen" Blocks of Time.**

Establish "no screen" blocks of time in your day - times when you don't have classes, meetings, etc. (See "UNPLUG" above).

**Avoid Multi-Tasking.**

Even though it can be tempting to use more than one device at a time or check emails and respond to texts while Zooming, focusing on the content of the meeting will actually give your brain a break! And we all need a bit more peace and focus right now!

**Leave Your Camera On Sometimes.**

While turning off your camera during classes can be a relief, make sure you don't do it all the time. Leaving your camera on, even if you can only see your instructor and one other brave student, can help you feel connected and more focused on content.
Do Something

It can be challenging to stay motivated when everything around us seems chaotic and scary. But doing something – some action, no matter how small – can lessen some of the uncertainty. What you do doesn’t need to be political – taking a step to stand up for or stand in for a person or a cause or the environment means we’re not powerless.

✅ Lean On Your Strengths.
Knowing your strengths can help you address problems more effectively and engage in activities that generate confidence and purpose. Try taking the VIA Character Strengths Survey to identify your strongest traits.

✅ Connect With Your Values.
Identifying what is important to us can be one way to foster motivation. Google "values card sorts" and try one and consider how you can express your values on a daily basis.

✅ Wholeness.
Think about what makes you feel whole, grounded, or like you. It can be helpful to consider Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

✅ Create A Vision Board.
Google Ideas Into Action's "How To Create The Perfect Vision Board And Never Lose Sight Of Your Goals Again"