Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Coping with Pre- and Post-Election Stress



The 2016 presidential election was a significant source of stress for 52% of american adults, according to a "Stress in America" survey by the American Psychological Association (APA). In 2020, that figure has increased to **68% regardless of party affiliations for this year's election**, according to the APA. Political change brings with it uncertainty about the present and the future. You and your loved ones may experience feelings of:

insecurity

- loss of control
- worry
- anxiety.

Managing feelings of worry and anxiety

Here are some ways to effectively manage your feelings before and after the election.

Take a break from social media. Social media is full of people posting opinions, articles, petitions, disagreements, and misinformation. Avoiding social media gives you space to process your own thoughts and feelings without being influenced by others.

Recognize and manage your concerns about voting safely. This Election Day is a particularly challenging one given the COVID-19 pandemic and additional worries you might have about the virus. Confront your concerns by getting **up-to-date information** on voting in this year's election and deciding on a voting plan that works best for you.

Strive for unity, compassion, and kindness. The more compassion and understanding you are able to exhibit toward others—including those who may not share your beliefs or vote the way you do—the less tension-filled the world will be.

Make regular physical activity a priority. Regular exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress, improve your mood, and care for your general wellbeing.

Do the things you would normally do during difficult times to manage feelings of stress and anxiety. Make a point of eating well-balanced meals. Limit or avoid alcohol and caffeine. Drink plenty of water—stress can sometimes lead to dehydration. Get regular exercise.

Take breaks. Go for a walk. Get some fresh air. Practice deep breathing or meditation.

Connect with supportive friends and family members. You'll probably find that other people are just as worried as you are about the same or similar things. Talking things over helps relieve stress.

Be a role model of resilience for your child. If you are feeling stressed or worried, it's likely your child is picking up on those feelings. Make time to have a conversation with your child if that is the case. Use this time as an opportunity to talk with your child in age-appropriate ways about how government and democracy works. Listen to your child's worries and concerns. Your child may hear worried adults talking about the economy, handling of the pandemic, systemic racism, or climate

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change. They may have fears that your family will be directly affected. Listen and provide guidance and reassurance.

Seek help

If you or someone you love is struggling with feelings of worry or anxiety, don’t hesitate to reach out for help. Consult with a mental health professional or your assistance program for guidance and support.