

Dealing with Election Stress

Unplug

Limit your consumption of media, particularly the 24-hour news cycle of social media. Stay informed, but instead of constantly scrolling through your newsfeed, try one of the options listed here.

Radical Acceptance

Only when we can fully acknowledge what is taking place and how we are experiencing it can we begin to make change. You aren't accepting reality if you hear yourself saying things should be any other way than they are. We may not like it, but it is reality. Once you can say, "This is happening," then you can get down to the work of trying to make things different. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving is an example of someone who radically accepted life and made a change.)

Opposite Action

Do the opposite of your usual response to intense emotions. If you are angry with someone in your home, rather than lash out, do the opposite — take a brief vacation from them, if you can. Rather than isolating when you feel down, do the opposite — connect with people. If you feel shame and it fits the facts, face the music. Apologize and repair the harm if you can.

Search for the Nugget of Truth

Breathe deeply and see if you can get curious about the experience of others who hold different opinions than you. What in their life may have shaped their beliefs? Remember we are all humans in the pursuit of a meaningful life. You might practice saying to yourself, "This person, just like me, has experienced pain, suffering, and sadness. This person just like me has experienced loss and grief. This person, just like me wants to be happy."

Friday Conversations

We are here and we care.
November 6, 13 & 20 from 12-2 PM | HSC Student Union, Room 262

There are a lot of factors in 2020 that can be overwhelming—the recent icestorm and loss of power for so many, the presidential election, the social justice movements, social distancing, Zoom fatigue, grief and uncertainty around COVID-19, family tensions, the upcoming holidays, and just the "normal" stress surrounding academics, finances, and clinical work. For the month of November, we want to take time to acknowledge these stressors and the challenge it is to bravely face them. OUHSC Student Affairs invites you to come to the Student Union Room 262 on Fridays for a supportive space to connect with other students and share about the numerous circumstances that are part of all of our lives right now.

We are here, we care, and we want to encourage everyone that we are in this together. Join us for a meal—with proper social distancing in place—and have a conversation this Friday.

Friday Conversations will be guided by a licensed mental health provider. The point of the events will be to create a space for shared community and support around the toughest parts of 2020. It will not be a place for intellectual or political debate and conversations will be moderated to make sure they remain civil, supportive, and safe for any and all students to bring their concerns up. It is our goal that you find you are not alone in your distress and that there are healthy options for dealing with the world right now.

Acknowledge Feelings

Although distraction and compartmentalizing can be useful, unaddressed intense emotion can also have negative impacts. Allow yourself to feel what you feel and don't judge your personal experience or the experience of others. Remember reactions to events vary from person to person. Some experience intense feelings while others do not. Journal your thoughts or share with an understanding friend.

Connect with Boundaries

Engage with supportive friends and allies. Talk about it if you like, but also communicate your boundaries when needed. Not everyone will share your perspective. Avoid or limit conversations that have the potential to get heated. Try a phrase like, "I respect your perspective, and it's probably best if we don't continue this conversation."

Do Something for Someone Else

Get out of your own head, and use the energy you may be feeling to help someone else. It doesn't have to be something big. Just asking someone if you can pick up something at the grocery for them or just smile at the cashier when you check out.

Talk to a Professional

Sometimes it helps to have someone outside of our social circles to talk to. Student Counseling Services will have 30 minute sessions available via Zoom to anyone that needs a safe, confidential space to process their election stress. Call at 405-271-7336 or email at counselors@ouhsc.edu for an appointment. Please let the administrator know you are requesting one of these appointments.