



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by Lawley



## NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY DURING THE ELECTION SEASON

Election season can be a particularly stressful time for many people. According to a recent American Psychiatric Association poll, 73% of Americans feel anxious about the presidential election. Additionally, a poll by Myriad Genetics found that 38% of people are experiencing anxiety or depression related to the election, and 35% feel overwhelmed by the constant news and social media coverage.

This article explores election-related uncertainty and practical tips for managing those concerns.

### Election Stress and Your Well-being

While not an official diagnosis according to the American Psychiatric Association, the term “election stress disorder” was first coined in 2016 by psychologist Steven Stosny. The psychologist defines it as “stress and anxiety triggered by election news that spills into work, social and family life.” This term describes what you may have experienced in your own life or observed in others around you—elections can be divisive and stressful and impact mental health and overall well-being.

Here are some warning signs that you may be experiencing election-related stress:

- Election obsession (e.g., intrusive thoughts about election headlines throughout the day)
- Relationship difficulties due to impatience, resentment or lack of compassion
- Irritability or feeling on edge

- Physical symptoms (e.g., body tension, headaches, upset stomach, fatigue and decreased immune functioning)
- Disrupted or poor sleep
- Difficulty concentrating
- Impulsive decision-making

It can often be challenging for some individuals to realize how much an election impacts their own well-being, but loved ones or co-workers may be able to notice behavior changes.

### Tips for Managing Election Stress

It’s normal to have heightened negative feelings during this period, but there are ways to manage election-fueled uncertainty and symptoms. Consider these tips:

- **Identify your personal triggers.** If a certain politician, candidate or programming makes you feel stressed or anxious, try to avoid them. This may not be entirely possible all the time, but taking steps like unplugging can go a long way.
- **Limit news and social media consumption.** While staying informed is important, constant exposure to political content can be overwhelming. Set specific times to check updates and avoid social media scrolling or news

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consumption before bed to ensure a good night's sleep. Also, avoiding polarizing content can help minimize the stress of consuming news.

- **Stay connected with supportive people.** Talking to friends and family who share your concerns can provide emotional support. Sometimes, just knowing you're not alone in your feelings can be comforting. However, don't stress spiral with those people.
- **Concentrate on what you can control.** Instead of worrying about the outcome, focus on actions you can take, such as volunteering, voting or participating in community discussions. Getting involved can give you a sense of control and purpose.
- **Maintain your well-being.** Even though you may be able to vote, you won't solely be able to impact the outcome of the election. However, you can make choices to maintain your well-being by regularly exercising, eating a well-balanced diet and getting quality sleep.
- **Engage in enjoyable activities.** Make time for hobbies and activities that bring you joy and relaxation. They can provide a much-needed mental break, whether it's reading, cooking or spending time in nature.

Election season can be challenging, but by making efforts to manage your mental health, you can navigate this period more easily.

### Conclusion

The anticipation and uncertainty of election outcomes can create a tense environment. There will always be some disagreement during election cycles, so it's important to focus on how you conduct yourself with others and care for yourself. Regardless of why you're feeling stressed or anxious, it's important to build resilience and train your mind to get more comfortable with uncertainty.

Contact a mental health professional for further guidance or to discuss any concerns.