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Find Calm During the Storm: Ways to Manage Election Stress

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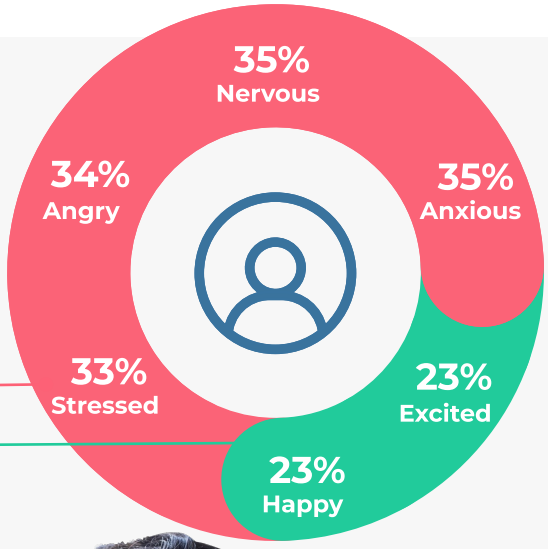
Ways to Manage Election Stress

With intense sociopolitical climates surrounding election seasons across the globe, stress levels are on the rise. Much is at stake with any big election, and feeling like you have little to no control over the outcome can lead to uneasiness or even stronger negative emotions. Having political views that differ from friends or family members may also cause stress or conflict in your social circles.

Boston University's School of Public Health surveyed 1,400 American adults from Feb. 16 - 23, 2024. Participants were asked how the 2024 presidential election has made them feel in the past month.

Many reported negative emotions

Far fewer reported feeling positive emotions



Globally, individuals living in countries that have experienced long-standing or heightened political unrest may experience especially high election-related stress that can greatly influence one's livelihood.

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If an upcoming election is leaving you stressed, nervous, or anxious, you are not alone. Rather than "doomscrolling" or getting hooked into emotionally triggering discussions, use these tips to cope with election stress and be more at ease before and after the polls close:

Limit your media usage

It's important to stay up-to-date with the news and know about events that may impact you. However, constantly doomscrolling social media for bad news or being notified of every breaking election update can do more harm than good. Simply witnessing inflammatory news coverage can trigger secondary trauma, which may negatively impact how you think, feel, and behave. If you notice increased stress or irritability due to election coverage, try reducing your media usage and focusing on self-care instead.

Develop stress-reducing habits

Regularly practicing healthy habits can reduce stress and improve your overall well-being. Eating well, staying active, and getting good sleep will help you feel better and more able to handle things you can't control. Maintaining meaningful relationships with friends, family, and your community is also a great way to manage stress and find connection. Listen to this Modern Health meditation, led by tennis superstar Naomi Osaka, to learn helpful ways to ease momentary stress.

Avoid thinking about worst-case scenarios

Unfortunately, people are prone to imagining worst-case scenarios during times of uncertainty. These thoughts can cause excessive worry, which may then impair thinking and problem-solving. If you find yourself ruminating because of an election, try distracting yourself by doing chores, calling a friend, watching a TV show, or exercising. Meditation can also be a good way to reign in intrusive thoughts. Try this quick, self-guided Modern Health program to learn new ways to cope with stress and anxiety during uncertainty.

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Maintain your peace of mind

It's easy to get caught up in heated discussions when your family, friends, or colleagues hold differing views on political issues. Practice setting boundaries by knowing when to disengage from an unproductive or triggering conversation. If you find yourself getting hooked, try these phrases to pivot respectfully:

Instead of: "You're wrong."	**Try:** "I hear your points, but I have a different opinion. It's okay if we don't agree."
Instead of: "I'm not discussing this with you."	**Try:** "I try not to get hooked into conversations like these; I could talk for hours! Let's talk about something more fun."
Instead of: "How can you possibly think like that?"	**Try:** "I struggle to see the value in that, but I can accept that that's how you feel."

Remember that after a heated conversation, you can always decompress by using the stress-reducing techniques discussed throughout this guide. You can also learn how to prepare for these tough conversations with this self-guided Modern Health program.

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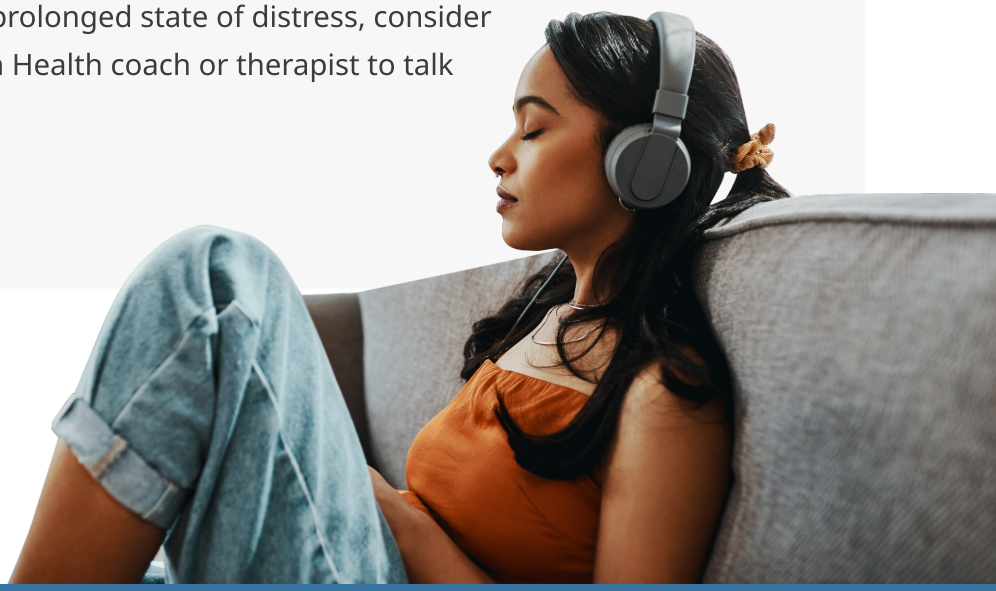
Have an election day plan

One thing within your control is how you vote in an election. You can reduce anxiety by educating yourself on candidates and important issues and having a voting plan. On election day, finding an activity to keep yourself occupied and your mind off the results may be beneficial.

You should also be mentally prepared for ongoing uncertainty if the results take days or weeks to be determined. If election results don't go how you hoped, you may find yourself experiencing extreme disappointment, hopelessness, numbness/indifference, or even fear about the future. Consider creating a coping plan that details:

- Things you can do to distract yourself
- Activities that will bring you joy or comfort
- Different ways to manage intense emotions in the moment
- People to reach out to for support

If you find yourself in a prolonged state of distress, consider engaging with a Modern Health coach or therapist to talk through these concerns.



Modern Health Resources for Election Stress

One-On-One Care

Modern Health's network includes coaches and therapists who specialize in addressing issues related to stress and uncertainty.

Match with a provider today!

Community Sessions

Circles are pre-recorded and live provider-led community spaces to learn, grow, and connect across important topics. Check out these pre-recorded sessions:

- Coping With Stress and Anxiety During Uncertainty
- Difficult Thoughts: A Beginner's Guide
- Emotional Resilience: A Beginner's Guide
- Processing Stressful World Events

Self-Guided Digital Resources

Through Modern Health, you can access digital resources 24/7 with self-serve care options you can engage with at your own pace. Try our:

- Managing Stress course
- Processing Stressful World Events program
- Finding Meaning in Difficult Moments program
- Peaceful Forest Meditation

Modern Health Guides to Read

- Facing a Difficult or Upsetting Event
- How to Manage and Embrace Change
- Set Yourself Up for Success With These 3 Morning Habits
- Coping With Things We Can't Control

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