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WAYS TO COPE WITH

ELECTION STRESS

[and other media-induced, post-tragedy stress, including identity-related fatigue]



UNPLUG.

Limit your consumption of media, particularly of the 24-hour news cycle of social media variety. Stay informed, of course, but instead of constantly scrolling your newsfeed, try one of these other options.



BE PRESENT.

It is important to be aware of and acknowledge our thoughts and feelings. Pay attention with non-judgmental curiosity, and give yourself permission to feel the way you do. Although distraction can be useful, unaddressed intense emotion can also have negative impacts.



FIND A HEALTHY ESCAPE.

Do something engaging or energizing to manage your feelings rather than turn to potentially harmful or hurtful coping mechanisms (i.e. excess substance use) Get outside. Practice mindfulness. Exercise. Journal. Meditate. Read something light. Make art. Watch a funny movie. Laughter is often a good antidote for stress and anxiety.



CONNECT.

Engage with supportive friends and allies. Talk about it if you need to, but also communicate your boundaries when needed. Not everyone will share your perspective. Give yourself permission to walk away from a conversation that is feeling uncomfortable, heated or too stressful. Reach out to a mental health professional such as those at University Counseling Center or another trusted individual.



REPLENISH.

Get back to self-care, and focus on restoring yourself. Get enough rest. Eat well. Drink plenty of water and fluids. Move daily... walking, stretching, breathing are great ways to replenish.



DO SOMETHING.

Channel what you are feeling into something that is meaningful and purposeful to you. Get informed and be proactive around issues that matter to you. Find ways to engage with your community through volunteering and advocacy.

Adapted from these resources: APA. (2016). APA survey reveals 2016 presidential election source of significant stress for more than half of Americans; Green, C. (2015). A letter of support and solidarity. University of Maryland Counseling Center. Virginia Commonwealth University's University Counseling Services.



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