



WILLIAM & MARY

HEALTH & WELLNESS

MANAGING ELECTION STRESS

Many people are feeling increased stress given the upcoming election, which is a natural and reasonable response to uncertainty. Election stress is often characterized by heightened anxiety, restlessness, and emotional discomfort surrounding the election and its potential outcomes. This discomfort can be intensified by factors such as constant media coverage, divisive political rhetoric, disagreements with friends and family, and social media. Symptoms of election stress include worry, rumination, fatigue, uneasiness, sleep and eating disturbances, concentration issues, tension, and feeling overwhelmed. Some individuals may find that these symptoms intensify as election day nears.

No matter where you fall in terms of your political beliefs, it is important to take a moment to consider how this election season may impact your stress levels and overall mental health. While many aspects of the election are beyond your control, you can shift your focus towards taking proactive steps to take care of yourself.

Tips for addressing election stress include:

- **Limit your exposure to news and media coverage:** Stay informed but limit the time you spend on election-related news. Consider a temporary break from news and social media apps.
- **Seek social support:** Spend quality time with your friends and family and seek support from trusted mentors and advisors. Continue to participate in your classes and organizations, and limit political discussions as needed.
- **Focus on what you can control:** Accept that most aspects of the election are outside of your control, and instead focus on what you can influence, such as exercising your right to vote, volunteering for election-related activities, or engaging in advocacy efforts.
- **Plan for election day:** Consider healthy activities during election day and in the days to follow. Take breaks from the election coverage, create a comforting environment, seek social support, and engage in relaxing activities.
- **Engage in healthy emotional expression:** Try journaling, physical activity, meditation, expressing gratitude, grounding techniques, or engaging in deep breathing. Check out Timely Care for additional self-help resources.
- **Practice self-care:** Prioritize your mental and emotional health. Maintain a routine, stay active, get enough sleep, and make time for your hobbies. Use the programs and services available through Health & Wellness.
- **Seek professional guidance:** Consider talking with a therapist about your feelings. The Counseling Center and Timely Care offer confidential mental health resources and services to W&M students.

RECOGNIZE A STUDENT IN NEED?

Approach them privately and refer them to the W&M Counseling Center or file a Care Concern