

# How to Combat Election Stress and Prioritize Self-Care

According to an APA survey, 70% of respondents said the upcoming 2020 election is a significant source of stress for them. During these times it is vital that we turn to internal and external support systems that allow us to function, move forward with respect, and prioritize our emotional and physical health during these turbulent times.

## Internal Support

### Identify Positive Aspects of your Life

What parts of your life will continue to be satisfying regardless of the election outcomes? Which of your interests, talents, or positive habits can become a source of strength during these times?

### How are you Resilient?

What allows you to bounce back during hard times? Is it your sense of humor, determination, athletic ability, mindset, or something else? Sometimes recalling past situations or struggles that you overcame can help you remind yourself of your resilience.

### Safety, Predictability, Control (SPC)

SPC is a framework to help us manage stress. For example, keep yourself safe and healthy by prioritizing self-care, ensure predictability by keeping a routine, and do your best to control the things you can - while letting go of what you cannot.

### Be Mindful

Mindfulness doesn't necessarily mean meditation. It refers to being in the moment - whether you are with a friend, taking a walk, watching a show, etc. Try to focus your attention and energy by being present - even if it's only for 10-15 minutes - to relieve stress on your mind and body.

### Meditate...

Meditation had be on this list somewhere right? Overall the benefits of meditation for the mind and body are huge. Take a few minutes and [click here to give it a whirl](#) with one of our program managers (and her dog, Riley).

### Be Mentally Prepared

In this year's election we know the outcome is likely to be delayed. Realistic mental preparation can prevent disappointment from unrealistic expectations.

## External Support

### **Be Social**

Connect with your friends, loved ones and colleagues. Try to veer away from political topics if possible, particularly with those that have differing views. Additionally, while talking politics with like-minded folks can be supportive and cathartic, it's also important to take breaks to avoid mental overload.

### **Plan Safe and Socially Distanced Visits**

While hugs and physical affection don't fall in the social distancing bucket, we can still engage in socially distanced visits to spend time with people. And if you aren't comfortable with that and you're all "Zoomed out", go old school and pick up the phone to call a friend or relative.

### **Take a Break from the Media**

This tip is important to help prevent cognitive overload. With a 24/7 news cycle it's tempting to check the news repeatedly throughout the day. This can be exhausting. Try to designate specific times of the day or evening to unplug and not check the news or social media. And while we have you, we also recommend reducing screen time two hours before bed.

### **Nurture yourself**

Whether it's with delicious, healthy foods, spiritual or religious practices, or a long walk, take some time to be extra kind to yourself. This may involve social interactions or be deeply personal and singular. For some, reading a good book is soothing, for others blaring some Van Halen is just the ticket. Whether it's nature, art, or a cup of coffee – treat yourself well.

### **Prepare for Potential Pitfalls**

Stressful times makes many more vulnerable to substance use, alcohol, food misuses, and more. Make sure to turn to supports that have helped in the past – whether professional, groups, or friends and family to prevent relapses.