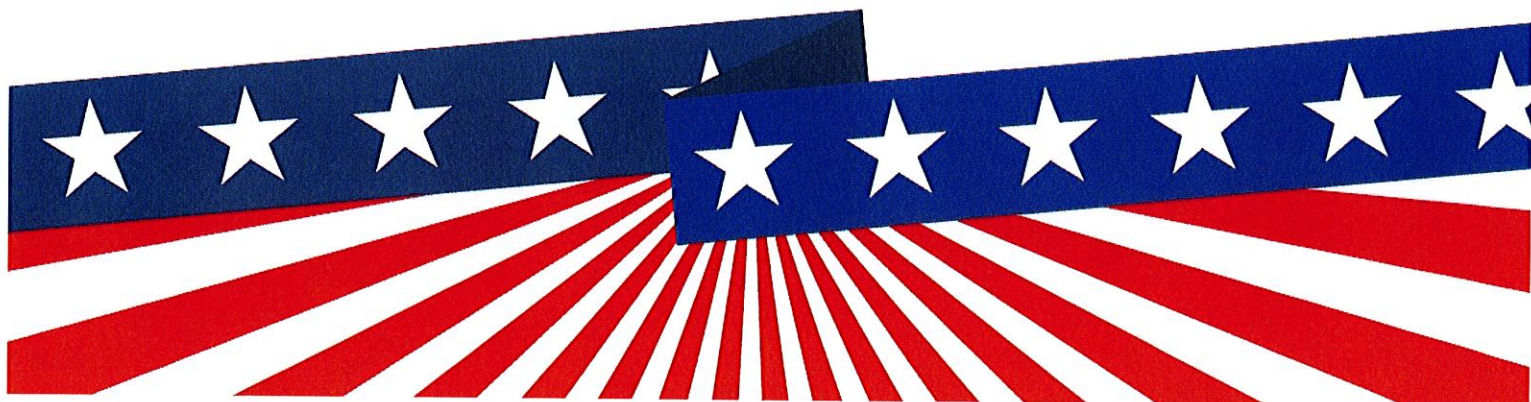


Coping in stressful times

The following material is intended as resources to help you or others as we deal with uncertainty, stress and anxiety



The 4 A's of stress management

Avoid

Believe it or not, you can simply avoid a lot of stress. Plan ahead, rearrange your surroundings and reap the benefits of a lighter load.

Alter

One of the most helpful things you can do during times of stress is to take inventory, then attempt to change your situation for the better.

Accept

Sometimes we may have no choice but to accept things the way they are.

Adapt

Thinking you can't cope is one of the greatest stressors. That's why adapting — which often involves changing your standards or expectations — can be most helpful in dealing with stress.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044476>

Radical Acceptance

There are a few steps to help you radically accept something:

First, remember that reality "is what it is". You cannot change the reality of a situation. This is a challenge to your thinking "things should not be this way." Instead, think, "Everything is as it should be."

Next, remember that every event has a cause. Nothing happens without a reason. Think about an event in your life that you didn't like. See if you can radically accept it and think about the reason for the event and the cause of the event. Create a list of possible causes, even if you are uncertain what the cause is.

Lastly, remember that life can be worth living, even if there is pain. For example, if you have been convicted of a crime that you didn't commit and are stuck in prison for life. You have used your appeals and the Supreme Court refused to overturn your conviction, you have to accept this and accept the fact that you need to create a life that is worth living in jail. Because it is the non-acceptance coupled with tragedy that causes your suffering.

EVEN WITH PAIN, YOU CAN HAVE A SATISFYING, MEANINGFUL LIFE.



A Quick Deep Slow Breathing Exercise

Sit comfortably in a chair with your feet flat on the floor and hands resting on your thighs.

Breathe in slowly for a count of 4, with each number in the count taking one second. Think of the numbers as you count. Pause for one second then exhale: 1,2,3,4. Pause. Do this 4 times. Alternately count 5 breaths, 5 times or 6 breaths, 6 times.

"Calm" breath is a 2 second timeout where you take one deep, slow inhale and then, with no pause, exhale slowing while thinking the word "calm". This is sometimes used before replying to a question or comment, beginning an exam, or speaking in front of a group.

Tips for Managing Election Emotion and Stress

1. Remember the Basics: Eat well, stay active, stay connected to others and *get sleep*. Getting enough sleep is really important for helping keep your emotions under control and managing your reactions to others. When we are tired, our patience runs short.
2. Be Real About Control. Identify what you can control and what you can't control. Act on those things that are in your control. For example, you can vote, you can take care of yourself, you can reach out to others. Do those things. Let go of those things you can't control. It's too easy to dwell on what we can't control and think about worst-case scenarios. Try not to ruminate or catastrophize about what you can't control. LET IT GO.
3. Practice Positive Coping Strategies. Practice mindfulness, meditate, do some deep breathing, distract yourself with your favorite hobbies, take a walk, exercise, play a game with family or friends, watch a funny movie, play music, do a puzzle, stay connected to close family and friends.
4. Limit Social Media Usage: Try not to read negative news stories or check the same sites over and over again. Don't engage in negative conversations.
5. Spend time with others. However, if conversations get hot, try not to take it personally. Take a break or a deep breath. Walk away. People have a hard time taking in information or hearing a different point of view when they are upset or angry. If it's really important, try the conversation another time when emotions have cooled down.
5. Plan for Ongoing Support and Self-Care. Understand and accept that we are not likely to know who our next President is at the end of the night. In fact, it might be many weeks. Make a plan for the weekend. Who will you spend time with? What will you do? How will you take care of yourself? Then make a plan for **the long-haul**.
6. Remember, while these are not easy times, you will get through this. We all will get through this. Be patient with yourself and extend that to others as much as you can. Be supportive and find support for yourself.

From Chaos to Freedom-Self Soothe

SELF SOOTHE WITH THE FIVE SENSES



Vision: Buy a beautiful flower. Make one space in your bedroom pretty. Light a candle and watch the flame. Go to a museum with beautiful art. Look at the nature around you. Go out at night and watch the stars. Watch a sunrise. Look at beautiful pictures in a book. Got to a dance performance or watch one on television. Be mindful of each sight that passes in front of you, not lingering on any.



Hearing: Listen to beautiful or soothing music. Pay attention to sounds of nature (waves, birds, rainfall, leaves rustling). Sing to your favorite songs. Hum a soothing tune. Learn to play an instrument. Be mindful of any sounds that come your way, letting them go in one ear and out the other.



Smell: Use your favorite perfumes, colognes, or lotions, or try them in a store. Spray fragrance in the air. Light a scented candle. Put lemon oil on your furniture. Put potpourri in a bowl in your room. Boil cinnamon. Bake cookies, cake, or bread. Smell the roses. Walk in a wooded area and mindfully breathe in the fresh smells of nature



Taste: Have a good meal. Have a favorite soothing drink such as herbal tea or hot chocolate. Treat yourself to a dessert. Put whipped cream on your coffee. Sample flavors in an ice cream store. Suck on a piece of peppermint candy. Chew your favorite gum. Get a little bit of special food you don't usually spend the money on, such as fresh squeezed orange juice. Really taste the food you eat; eat one thing mindfully.



Touch: Take a bubble bath. Put clean sheets on your bed. Pet your dog or cat. Have a massage. Soak your feet. Put creamy lotion on your whole body. Put a cold compress on your forehead. Sink into a really comfortable chair in your home. Put on a silky shirt or scarf. Brush your hair for a long time. Hug someone. Experience whatever you are touching. Notice touch that is soothing.

Guided Meditations

Breathing Meditation:

21 Minutes Compassionate Breathing (Neff): <http://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/meditations/affectionatebreathing.mp3>

Loving Kindness Meditation:

20 Minutes (Germer): <https://chrisgermer.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Loving-KindnessforOurselves20.41ckgamp1ified12-14-14.mp3> (or go to ChrisGermer.com/meditations and click on "Loving-Kindness for Ourselves")

15 Minutes (Kabat-Zinn): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRY5Orfc9GM>

11 Minutes Compassionate Walking (Germer): <https://chrisgermer.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CompassionateWalking.mp3>

5 Minutes Self-Compassion (Neff): <http://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/self-compassion.break.mp3>

Mindful Awareness of Thoughts:

15 Minute "Leaves on a Stream": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLIVV3dK19w>

14 Minutes from One Mind Dharma: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=971Sh8RmeMI&t=16s>

Mindful Awareness of Emotions:

9 Minutes (Everyday Mindfulness Scotland): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4fKgiv5Chg>

11 Minutes (Germer): <https://chrisgermer.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/MindfulnessofEmotionintheBody.mp3>

Apps

Insight Timer (Free):

Good for self-guided meditations. The timer can be set for however long or short you want, and has a pleasant bell or chime sound. Guided meditations are available and *some* of them are quite good. However, anyone can post a guided meditation, so the quality is variable and there is no guarantee that the guided experience is mindfulness/meditation. It may be relaxation, guided imagery, hypnosis, etc.

Head Space (10 free “basics” meditations plus daily meditation, or monthly subscription, \$8-13/month at time of writing this)

Calm (Series of free guided meditations or subscribe, \$5-13/month at time of writing this)

Breathe2Relax (available for Android and IOS devices)

For additional resources, please visit the Counseling Center’s Resource page:

<https://www.umassd.edu/counseling/resources/self-help-resources-for-students/>