

# Special Edition

2016 Post-Election Distress Special Edition Newsletter

## Managing Your Stress Post-Election Results

*Research has confirmed what we already know—the adversarial nature of the 2016 election has completely stressed us out.*

If you are dealing with election stress and/or disappointment, CONCERN has prepared the following tips to help you and your family members cope, starting with the suggestion to be respectful and tolerant of others.

Now is the time to unite—to work for what each of us believes to be good and true, and to find common ground. We must listen not only to those who agree with us, but also to those who do not, and we need to work to understand each other more fully.

Now is a time for compassion and healing, a time to promote our inherent resilience.

### Professional Help is Available

If you need additional assistance, call CONCERN at **800.344.4222** to request work/ life services or counseling with a licensed mental health professional. All calls are answered live 24/7. Or visit [www.concern-eap.com](http://www.concern-eap.com) to request services using a confidential online form.



### Tips on how to manage your stress and post-election anxiety

**Think of common ground you share with people who have different political beliefs.** Consider reasons you like your significant other, friends and relatives that have nothing to do with politics. Do not define another person by which candidate he or she supports or opposes.

**Steer clear or limit social media.** If you're feeling tense, minimize exposure to social media. Limit the amount of political news you take in, whether it's from the Internet, television, newspapers or magazines. Being overexposed can actually increase your stress. Instead, try doing something that will lift your spirits. Go for a walk, watch a movie, or participate in your favorite sport.

**Do something productive.** Whatever your feelings are now—shock, anxiety, despair—it is wise to guard against those feelings turning into helplessness and hopelessness. Decide how you will work on the issues that you believe in and are committed to. Try to do normal, productive things to help manage your feelings. Do something that will give you a temporary sense of having some control.

**Gather with like-minded friends.** Spending the day with friends that you trust and think the same way you do can help validate your concerns and also take your mind off the recent election results. Try to lighten the mood, and remember that although the election is serious, it's not the end of the world.

**Reach out to others with supportive messages.**

If you know someone who has a particular fear as a result of the election (e.g., a Muslim or LGBT friend, or someone with a chronic illness who relies on Obamacare), reach out to that person and let them know you're thinking of them. Offering support to others is a way for you to feel better.

**Apologize to anyone you've hurt.** Keep in mind that relationships with significant others, relatives and friends are extremely important and will continue beyond any presidential term. Put a stop to any heated discussions and apologize for any prior hurtful comments made in the heat of a political disagreement. Even if the other person doesn't accept your apology, your good intentions will help ease your stress.

**Take care of yourself.** When you feel stress, it's important to take care of your body. Eat well, get enough rest, and exercise. Your physical health is one more thing you can control, and exercise and sleep in particular can alleviate anxiety. Avoid alcohol and drugs because they can suppress your feelings rather than help manage and lessen your distress. Alcohol and drugs may also intensify your emotional or physical pain.

**Engage in mindfulness.** Paying attention to your immediate surroundings can take your mind off the negativity of the election and help foster a sense of well-being. Mindfulness fosters relaxation, decreased feelings of anxiety, greater focus and overall wellbeing. For a meditation video and mindfulness reading, visit our Resilience Hub [www.concernresiliencehub.com](http://www.concernresiliencehub.com)

*Note: This Special Edition newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice.*

## Tips on what to say to your children

If you're unsure about how to talk to your children, here are a few tips shared on TODAY News by Dr. Gilboa, Child Development Expert:

- **Teach them about how government works.** We have a system of checks and balances so that not even the president can effect big change alone.
- **Look for your values.** Go with them to read about the love, acceptance and support that people are already showing.
- **Spread your own message of inclusion.** Tell people you know why your family stands strong in its values of inclusion. Get your kids involved in that work.
- **Don't lie.** Only tell your child that everything is going to be OK if you believe that may be true.
- **Remind girls who were excited at the prospect of a first female president that the fight is not over.** People fought from 1848 until 1920 to get women the right to vote in this country. This delay is just that—a delay, not an end
- **Unless you really are moving to Canada, cut out the jokes.** Tell your child that you understand why people are saying they are moving to Canada, but make it clear you won't joke about it, and for a good reason: "I'm not giving up on our country!"
- **If kids are worried they or their friends will now be deported, be honest but optimistic.** You can tell nervous children that, though no one knows what will happen for sure, many people believe sending immigrants away would be the wrong thing to do. Remind them they can use the power of their voice to protect others.

These tips may be helpful to get through recent political changes. At times, however, individuals can get stuck or have difficulty managing intense feelings. A licensed mental health professional can help develop an appropriate strategy for moving forward. It's important to **get professional help** if you feel unable to function or perform basic activities of daily living.

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