

Do you have ESD? (Election Stress Disorder) Coping With Anxiety during an Election



The 2020 political campaign season has been a really trying time for everyone. **47 percent of workers surveyed say the election has affected the way they work. Here's how to stay engaged and informed without damaging your mental health.** There are ways to get past election-related stress, or cope with it so that it doesn't take over your life. **Here are 9 ways to cope:**

- 1. It's good to care** — but you need to set boundaries. It's not a bad thing to care about politics. But, it is important to set boundaries to optimize your own mental health and not let stressful news cycles take over your life
- 2. Practice 'values-based living'** Practicing values-based living whenever you can - the closer your everyday actions are to your values, the more fulfilled you will be.
- 3. Take a social media break** If it seems like this election and other news is everywhere you look, you're probably looking at your phone a lot. Log off when you can. Take a break whether it's just unfollowing negative news feeds (or people) or even disabling your accounts for a while can be a healthy way to bring focus back into your life.
- 4. Limit your news consumption** Carve out opportunities to disconnect from the media, particularly if you find yourself becoming distraught, anxious or emotionally reactive. Take breaks and focus on the things that you have direct control over, such as day-to-day routines and relationships with loved ones.
- 5. Set an alarm for the news** Set a dedicated time once a day to check the news, and set a timer to keep yourself accountable. Turn off all nonemergency push notifications.
- 6. Ask yourself these two questions when reading the news** If you get stuck in a conversation or getting irritated by something you read, ask yourself a few simple questions to gain perspective. **1.) Is this article helpful? 2.) Is this article real?** If you answer 'no' to either of those questions, give yourself permission to move on from it.
- 7. Pick up a new hobby or go to see a funny movie** Has it been a while since you did something that challenges your brain in a new way? This is a great opportunity to join a class or see a show, this will allow your brain to take a break from politics and stress and focus on something more positive even if it's only for an hour or two.
- 8. Change what's changeable and control what's controllable** — and understand the difference. Understanding what we can control and what we can change is powerful to our own stress level. Most of the political climate is not controlled by us nor can we change other's beliefs or feelings around it. Accepting the idea that we can only control ourselves and try not to get caught up in the unchangeable and uncontrollable.
- 9. Celebrate the good things in American politics** History is filled with turbulent and troubling times, just like our current news cycle, but don't overlook the virtuous moments. This year we celebrate 100 years of women having the vote. We are also a diverse population. All of these are good things, and they mean that sometimes our voices are in conflict.

The American political process is messy. American campaigns and elections give citizens many opportunities to express their beliefs and change their communities for the better. Are you still finding it hard to escape the current political climate? Are you in need of someone to talk to? EAP is confidential and FREE! Call the **COVID Counseling helpline 800-801-4182**, or **402-354-8000** or email eap@bestcareeap.org to schedule an appointment.