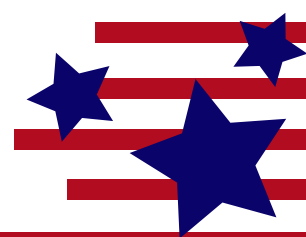


# Maintaining Mental Health During Election Season



## Mindfully limit your media exposure

24/7 connection to media can negatively impact our mental health, especially as negative campaigning and frequent news alerts can heighten stress. **Stay informed, but take digital breaks** to take care of yourself.



## Find What's in Your Control & Be Productive

- Make a specific plan for when, where, and how you'll **vote**.
- Participate in ways that feel helpful**. If you can't alter your focus from the election and the political events occurring, use that focus for good and consider **volunteering** and make a difference in your community.
- Know when it's time to focus on something else**. Finding balance is important.
- When uncertainty is present, be sure to **maintain your routine**. Do things that give you a sense of control. Clean your room, organize your space. **Focus on tasks that make you feel useful** and make time to **do those things you enjoy**, take breaks, exercise, go for a walk, and spend time with friends/family.



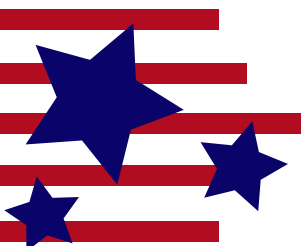
## Regularly Use Stress Management Techniques

- Set a reminder on your phone to schedule relaxation breathing breaks throughout your day. Tense? **Take 20 slow deep breaths**. While you breathe, focus on breathing in *calm and relaxation*, breathing out *stress and worry*.
- If you notice worry present, work to calmly **review the facts** of the situation rather than predicting the future.
- Read and repeat **positive and reassuring statements, quotes, and messages**. What you repeat matters.
- Spend time being creative**. Create a mood lifting playlist of favorite songs. Create a photo album of loved images of family/friends or places you've been or are looking forward to going in the future. Draw, paint, color, take photos, build something, and/or play music. Express yourself.
- If you notice stress and tension in your muscles, **take time to stretch and move**.
- Download stress management apps** like: Headspace, Calm, Insight Timer, etc. to practice relaxation and breathe.



## Connect With Others & Something Larger Than Yourself

- While meaningful conversation and debate can be energizing, **know your support system** and what your needs are. **Be intentional** about who you spend time with and the topics that may be most helpful to discuss and when. **Know you're not alone** and find those you can connect with.
- Connecting with something bigger** can help you maintain perspective and improve your emotional health. Connect with a spiritual or religious practice, spend time in nature, spend time with children or animals, check in with a mentor, enjoy art (i.e. music, a theater performance, visit an art gallery), etc.



### For Professional Support & Additional Resources :

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY  
**COUNSELING CENTER**



SSC 3rd Floor, Suite 3100  
540-568-6552  
visit <https://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/>