



Election Season Survival Guide: For Work and Home

The divisiveness and polarization that often comes with election cycles can take a real toll on our mental health, our productivity at work, and our relationships. With some intentional strategies though, we can get through this period with our wellbeing and connections intact!

At work

Political discussions at work can quickly become heated and unproductive. The best approach is to set clear boundaries - agree that you won't engage in overtly political conversations that could create a hostile environment. If a coworker tries to drag you into a debate, politely disengage. Remember that your workplace is not the venue for trying to change someone's political views. Instead, focus on finding common ground with your colleagues - the shared goals and values that brought you together in the first place to do your jobs effectively. When tensions rise, make a conscious effort to be extra courteous, respectful, and professional in all your interactions.

If you're a manager, you have an important role in setting the tone. Model calm, thoughtful dialogue. Intervene promptly if political disagreements cross the line into harassment or bullying. This is a great opportunity to also direct your team to the wonderful resources available through your employee assistance program, like coaching and counseling from VITAL WorkLife.

At home

Disagreements about politics can be especially heated with family and friends. It's important to have open, honest conversations, but avoid getting drawn into heated arguments. Really listen to understand where the other person is coming from, even if you wholeheartedly disagree. Look for areas of common ground, and ultimately, agree to disagree on the rest. When things get tense, take a break. Go for a walk, engage in your hobbies, or spend time in nature. Reconnect with your friends and family over your shared interests and activities that have nothing to do with politics. Appreciate the person behind the political views; that person is far more interesting than any singular political belief.

For your well-being

Nonstop news reports and social media buzz around elections can be exhausting and for many of us, anxiety-provoking. Set boundaries with your media consumption. Limit your time checking the latest updates and be wary of getting sucked into angry online debates. Instead,

focus on self-care practices that nurture your mental health like exercise, meditation, quality time with loved ones and activities that **bring you joy**. Seek out trusted sources of information to stay informed, but don't let the election dominate your every waking thought.

Remember that while it seems like we're always in a political season, actual election cycles are just that, cycles. They come and they go. The relationships we have with our co-workers, loved ones, and communities, are always present and because of that, worthy of increased attention and nurturing. No matter the outcome, life will go on, and there will be important work to do to heal divisions and build a better future.

The emotional challenges of election season are real, but with the right strategies, you can navigate this period while protecting your productivity, relationships, and wellbeing. Stay centered, be kind, take care of yourself. You've got this!

We can help

We're here to help mitigate stress, take on emotional challenges and bolster self-care practices. You have free resources at your disposal, ready for any issue causing disfunction in your life!

For members of our **Employee Assistance Program**, call 800.383.1908 to speak with one of our Well-Being Coordinators, anytime—day or night.