Feeling stressed?

CAPS counselors are offering one-time one-hour appointments

Regardless of your political views, these elections can serve as a source of stress and anxiety. If you need some additional support during this time, CAPS is here to help!
How to create sanity in the storm

• **Get perspective.** Humans do crazy stuff. We've been creating fanciful drama for millenia, and if we get to stick around, we'll keep doing crazy stuff. Don't get caught in taking all of this SO seriously. Seriously!

• **Do your best to separate facts from stories.** Be ruthless with yourself. Be consistent. Get back on the horse when you fall off.

  Step 1  Define the political issue that causes you upset
  Step 2  Write down all of the facts related to the issue
  Step 3  Write down all of the stories you have about the facts

  The issue is ______________________________________________________

  **Facts**  
  What a video camera records

  **Stories**  
  What you make up about the facts

  Step 4  Notice that the facts do not cause you any upset, only your stories about the facts.

  Step 5  Look for examples of how the opposite of each of your stories is at least as true.
• **Allow yourself to feel all your feelings.** Especially fear. Stay aware of cognitive emotive loops when you notice you’re doubling down on being right.

**Step 1** Name the feeling that is here now (sad, scared, angry, joyful, sexual).

**Step 2** Identify where the feeling is located in the body.

- Clenching
- Tingling
- Pulling
- Swirling
- Churning
- Swelling
- Tickling
- Buzzing
- Warming
- Fluttering
- Pinching
- Tightening
- Itching
- Flowing
- Numbing

**Anger**
- Back, Neck
- Shoulders, Jaw, Head

**Sadness**
- Eyes, Throat, High Chest

**Joy**
- Core, Spine

**Fear**
- Belly

**Sexual Feelings**
- Pelvis, Genitals, Erogenous Zones

**Pounding**
- Softening
- Twisting
- Burning
- Opening
- Pressing
- Squeezing
- Quivering
- Throbbing
- Cooling
- Expanding
- Vibrating
- Bubbling
- Streaming
- Knotting

**Step 3** Describe how the sensation is expressing itself - use words ending in “ing”

**Step 4** Breathe in and through the sensation or match it with movement or non-verbal sound until it shifts

**Step 5** Listen for the wisdom of the emotion

- **Sadness** - What wants to be let go of or mourned?
- **Anger** - What is no longer serving you or others? What wants to be stopped, changed, ended?
- **Fear** - What wants to become known?
- **Joy** - What wants to be celebrated?
- **Creative/Sexual Feelings** - What wants to be created? What is attractive?
• **Separate what is in your control and what is not.** There is nothing more liberating than letting go of trying to control things that are not in your control.

**Step 1 Identify the Issue**
What specifically is the issue that is causing you upset or stress?

**Step 2 Sort the files**
Make two columns on a blank piece of paper as below. List everything that is in your control on the left side of the page and everything that is not in your control on the right side of the page. Double check to make sure you actually have control, meaning that you can guarantee an outcome.

*See examples below*

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**What IS in your control**
- My right to vote (if I have it)
- Deciding my own beliefs
- Taking action to care for the environment
- My happiness
- What I say and do to influence other people
- My reactivity
- My interest in other people
- Choosing not to listen to gossip
- How I take care of myself
- How much action I take toward my goals
- Creating something in the world
- Eating well, exercise and medical support
- Caring for other people
- Worrying about things and people
- Choosing where I work
- Believing or investigating my thoughts
- Feeling or suppressing my feelings
- How I respond to my emotions

**What is NOT in your control**
- The outcome of the election
- Other people's beliefs
- Climate Change
- Other people's happiness
- Other people's choices
- Others' reactivity
- Other people's interest in me
- Other people gossiping
- How others take care of themselves
- Others actions towards their goals
- How people will react to my creations
- Aging, illness and death
- Who likes me
- Others worrying about things and people
- The behaviors and values of a company
- My thoughts
- My feelings
- Other people's emotions

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Created by Conscious Leadership Group (www.conscious.is)
Step 3  **Take Action**

If you’re fixated on something that is NOT under your control, shift your attention from whatever you’re focusing on to something that is under your control.

You can't control what's going to happen in the future—and worrying for sure isn't going to help—but you can take responsibility for your state of mind right now, and then direct your attention from presence towards the outcome you’d like to create.

If you’re worrying about something that IS under your control, stop worrying and act.
Election Stress Kit
Tips and resources to cope with the current national discourse

UNPLUG: Limit your consumption of social media and the 24-hour non-stop images. It’s important to stay informed, but creating boundaries is important.

BE PRESENT: Use reflection to recognize your inner thoughts and feelings. Be curious and non-judgmental and give yourself permission to feel the way you do. Although avoiding can be useful, “stuffing” or ignoring strong emotions can have negative impacts.

REFUEL: Focus on restoring yourself with rest and healthy food. Drink water and try to limit caffeine. Move a little every day. Take a walk; look at the sky; be in nature. Journal or meditate. Make art or watch funny videos. Read something fun.

CONNECT: Engage with supportive friends and allies. Talk about current issues, if needed, but be aware of when you’re feeling overwhelmed. Not everyone will share your perspective, so it’s OK to limit your topics and avoid heated conflict. Reach out to supportive services on-campus, including CAPS.

DO SOMETHING: Channel what you’re feeling into positive, meaningful activity. Be informed and proactive around issues that matter to you. Find ways to engage in your community through advocacy in ways that fit for you.
Stay informed, but know your limits:
Monitor how you feel after news consumption. Feeling preoccupied or even upset by national events may be a sign to cut back on your news intake and limit social media discussions.

Consider scheduling a short block of time in the morning and one in the evening to catch up on news without checking for every new update during the day.

During “digital breaks,” take time to focus on something enjoyable, such as a hobby, exercising, being in nature or spending time with family and friends.

Check out this video for some more tips for “unplugging” during a stressful election time.
Consider practicing **self-compassion** as you work through challenging or uncertain times. Try some of these exercises compiled by Dr. Kristin Neff, a renowned researcher of self-compassion.

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**Be Present**

Grab your phone and your earbuds and head outside for a guided **mindful walk** to de-stress.

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**Top Meditation Apps by Downloads in the U.S. for 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Downloads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Headspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Insight Timer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Aura</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Simple Habit</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 10% Happier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 BetterMe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Pacifica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Abide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Youtube channel offers introductory videos to mindfulness and guided meditations.

**Grounding**

Grounding strategies can help us get in touch with our bodies and surroundings in the present moment. Pause what you are doing and pay attention to what you can see, hear, smell, and touch in your environment.
Is your sleep schedule irregular? Are you sleeping more than you want to be? Are you having trouble falling asleep? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," you may benefit from these sleep hygiene tips and resources!

https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene

Exercise
Collins Fitness Center is now opening!

Find out more info here: https://utulsa.edu/fitness-center/

Popsugar offers more resources for healthy habits!
**CONNECT**

**Five ways to build stronger connections**

- Write a letter
- Pick up the phone and call
- Ask meaningful questions
- Answer questions with honesty
- Connect via video

Robert Reffkin, Founder & CEO

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**Why Connect?**

- To decrease loneliness, stress, depression, and anxiety
- To acknowledge collective trauma and experience solidarity
- To experience love and belonging
- To give and receive care and compassion

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**Connecting Virtually**

- Zoom dance party
- Netflix Party
- House Party App
- TikTok Challenges
- Virtual group workouts

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**Spiritual Connection**

Spirituality can be one way to connect with yourself, others, nature, or a higher power(s).

**Loving-kindness meditation**

Find local or online spiritual communities

**Animal/Nature live cams**

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**Connecting..connecting.... connecting....**

*Zoom fatigue is real,* but sometimes it’s our only option. So how do we connect without MORE stress? Try these tips:

- Establish “no screen” blocks of time in your day – times when you don’t have classes, meetings, etc. (See “UNPLUG” above)

- While turning off your camera during class can be a relief, make sure you don’t do it all the time. Leaving your camera on, even if you can only see your instructor and one other brave student, can help you feel connected and more focused on content.

- Avoid multi-tasking. Even though it can be tempting to use more than one device at a time or check emails and respond to texts while Zooming, focusing on the content of the meeting will actually give your brain a break! And we all need a bit more peace and focus right now!
It can be challenging to stay motivated when everything around us seems chaotic and scary. But doing something – some action, no matter how small – can lessen some of the uncertainty. What you do doesn’t need to be political – taking a step to stand up for or stand in for a person or a cause or the environment means we’re not powerless. Check out the ideas on this page!

Activism, service and generosity are a few ways to promote a sense of empowerment and contribution when we may be feeling helpless. Want to have a voice in local or national politics? Check this out for ideas! Simply want to support a cause that you care about? You can volunteer locally or for a chapter of a national organization. Start here!

Connect with your Values
Identifying what is important to us can be one way to foster motivation. Try one of the values card sorts below and then consider how you can express your values on a daily basis.

- Online values card sort
- Printable version

Lean on your STRENGTHS
Knowing your strengths can help you address problems more effectively and engage in activities that generate confidence and purpose. Try taking the VIA Character Strengths Survey to identify your strongest traits.

Learn about Vision Boards here.

Wholeness
Think about what makes you feel whole, grounded, or like you. It can be helpful to consider Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.