

# Coping with Intense Emotional Reactions during the 2020 Presidential Election

**Facing a national election during a time of multiple uncertainties, Americans are experiencing many powerful emotions.**

It is important to remember that everyone reacts differently to highly stressful events and each person has their own tolerance level for difficult feelings. To cope with these emotions, there are some things you can do for yourself and others.

Experts say that remaining engaged in our world, staying connected with people, and being optimistic about the challenges ahead are key to riding through otherwise traumatic times. In fact, in times of turmoil, people can make changes that improve their lives and life satisfaction.

Knowing what is a normal response to an abnormal situation, and what signs might indicate you have a more serious problem, will help you determine if and when to seek help from a mental health professional.

## Common Responses

It is common to have difficulty managing your feelings during times of difficult events. Many people will experience such symptoms as:

- Disbelief and shock
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Disorientation; difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Inability to focus
- Apathy and emotional numbing
- Irritability and anger
- Sadness and depression
- Feeling powerless
- Extreme changes in eating patterns; loss of appetite or overeating
- Crying excessively

- Headaches and stomach problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Excessive use of alcohol and drugs

## Signs to Seek Help

When feelings do not go away or are so intense that they impair your ability to function in daily life, you may have a diagnosable disorder that requires mental healthcare. There are signs that can help you determine whether you are having a normal reaction to a stressful situation or if you're experiencing a mental health problem. These signs include:

- Nightmares and reoccurring thoughts
- Being unable to stop thinking about a stressful situation
- Avoiding thoughts, feelings, or conversations that remind you of a stressful event
- Avoiding places or people that remind you of a stressful event
- Having a sense of a foreshortened future
- Continued difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Feeling jumpy or easily startled
- Being overly concerned about safety
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or hopeless
- Not taking pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Having thoughts of death or suicide

If you are experiencing these symptoms, talking with a mental health professional or taking a mental health screening test can help you understand how well you are coping. Take that step and get help.

## Tips for Coping

Here are some tips for coping in these difficult times:

- Talk about it. By talking with others, you can relieve stress and realize that others share your feelings.

- Take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest and exercise, avoid excessive drinking and eat properly. Avoid foods that are high in calories and fat.
- Limit exposure to images of the stressful event. Especially limit viewing and reading of news on TV and the internet. Do something positive. Give blood, prepare “care packages” for people in need, write letters to the homebound, or take part in community events.
- Ask for help. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Talk with a trusted relative, friend or spiritual advisor.
- Call or email Carebridge at 800-437-0911, [clientservice@carebridge.com](mailto:clientservice@carebridge.com) any time day or night.

*Source: National Mental Health Association (NMHA)*

Contact Carebridge at **800.437.0911** or visit **[www.myliferesource.com](http://www.myliferesource.com)** for more information!

