

Expert offers tips on how to manage election season stress

2 November 2016, by Julia Bernstein

Between worrying about which candidate will win and what changes they may implement, the months leading up to Election Day can be stressful. One Baylor College of Medicine expert warns that this can lead to election stress disorder and offers tips on how to manage election season stress.

"Election stress disorder, or election blues, is a disorder that presents itself before and after election season and results in people getting frustrated, anxious, depressed and worried during election season," said Dr. Asim Shah, professor and vice chair for community psychiatry in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Baylor. "The kinds of people that it will impact are those who have underlying anxiety and depression and those who are more sensitive to stress."

Shah emphasized that election stress disorder is a real issue and cautions against minimizing its impact.

"The American Psychological Association has used the term election stress disorder, and in a recent poll, found that more than 50 percent of people have election stress disorder. It also affects men and women equally, and anyone could have it to some extent," Shah said.

Shah also noted that it is unlikely for election stress disorder to be treated with medication. He said avoiding or alleviating stress is the best way to cope with election stress disorder and offered the suggestions below on how to do this.

- Do not start discussing the election or politics with friends because this can potentially lead to arguments that may increase stress.
- If a discussion does arise, try to change the topic or leave.
- Remember to concentrate on your day-to-

day life because no matter which candidate wins, your life is not going to change instantly. The changes that each candidate purposes may take years to come to fruition or may not happen at all.

- For those who are stressed about the election, learning about the issues so they are informed also can help decrease their anxieties.
- Health habits can change when people are stressed as well. For example, people may turn to eating larger amounts of unhealthy foods to cope with the stress so be aware of what foods you are consuming.

Shah added that one of the most important ways that [people](#) can ease election stress is by enjoying activities that help them relax, whether that is reading a book or listening to music.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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