Coping with Socio-Political Stress

The Boston University community recognizes that many students and their families have been affected by recent political events. For the overall health of our community, we are sharing some strategies to help you stay well during these times of stress and uncertainty.

1.) **Limit your intake of news and social media.** If you feel distressed by what is in the media, limit your consumption of Facebook, Twitter and other social media sources. This also includes watching and reading the news. There are apps and websites such as LeechBlock, or SelfControl that can help you by temporarily blocking access to social media or certain websites. Sites like Positive News allow you to read true and uplifting stories from around the world. If disengaging completely feels like too much, set limits for yourself: set a timer that allows you to engage, but reminds you to stop.

2.) **Maintain your normal routine and engage in healthy activities.** Try to strike a balance between keeping up with current events and going about your daily life. Basic acts of self-care can make a real difference during times of stress: take breaks while studying, connect more often with family and friends, take on fewer commitments, engage in spiritual or religious practices, or go for a walk. Find what feels nurturing to you.

3.) **Practice relaxation.** Try self-soothing strategies like walking, meditating, breathing exercises, listening to music, or whatever you find helpful.

4.) **Recognize your limits.** Remember that you may not be as efficient as usual, and you might need more time or help to complete tasks. It’s ok! Just plan accordingly and ask for support when needed.

5.) **Engage in healthy communication and seek community.** Sharing experiences and ideas with others can be a way to strengthen positive community values and shared identities. Check in with one another. Even when you don’t know the “right” thing to say, just being with one another during difficult times can be powerful.

6.) **Acknowledge feelings:** Reactions to events vary from person to person. Some experience intense feelings while others experience nothing at all. Allow yourself to feel what you feel and don’t judge your personal experience or the experience of others.

7.) **Get active:** When we feel powerless, it is important to find ways to have a voice. You might get involved in activism, join organizations, attend events, talk to others about what you value, or work to protect others’ rights.

8.) **Stay informed:** We are fortunate to have an office on campus dedicated to supporting our international community. Visit the ISSO website for up-to-date and accurate information on policies affecting international students and their families.

9.) **Reach out for help:** If you continue to feel emotionally overwhelmed by things, please reach out for help. There are many resources available to campus to help you. These include Behavioral Medicine (617-353-3569) and Marsh Chapel (Jessica Chicka, Chaplain to International students: 617-358-3560).