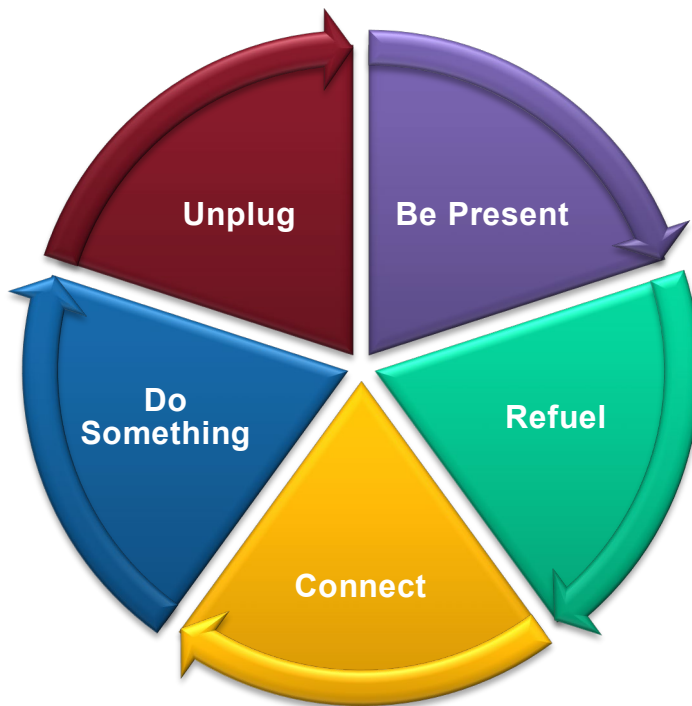


Election Stress Kit

Tips and resources to cope with the current national discourse

(Adapted from Election Stress Kit developed by Penn State Harrisburg CAPS)



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, listen to music 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 Student Health and Wellness (SHAW).

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.

Unplug

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.



Be Present

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.

Grab your phone and your earbuds and head outside for a [guided mindful walk](#) to de-stress.

Listen to nature and [soothing Tibetan singing bowls](#).

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.

Top Meditation Apps

by Downloads in the U.S. for 2018
from sensortower.com

1. Calm
2. Headspace
3. Insight Timer
4. Aura
5. Simple Habit
6. Breethe
7. 10% Happier
8. BetterMe
9. Pacifica
10. Abide

[This](#) Youtube channel offers introductory videos to mindfulness and guided meditations.

SHAW would like to acknowledge that mindfulness originated in Eastern spiritual traditions, namely Buddhism, and has since been popularized in Western countries in ways inconsistent with its original purpose.



Refuel

- [Loving-kindness meditation](#)
- [Animal/Nature live cams!](#)

Balance

A national election during COVID? Focusing on your well-being is more important than ever! Trying to keep a balance in most areas of your life will help you roll through challenging days more smoothly and keep you on the road to wellness!

Sleep

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>

Eating and Nutrition

[Visit this great resource for eating and nutrition tips](#), guidelines, and health information. The [CRSSJ food pantry](#) offers students free access during business hours. Grinnell also has local resources such as the [MICA food bank](#).

Exercise

Students have limited access to the [Bear Athletic facilities](#). The Grinnell College Museum of Art has a [series of virtual yoga](#) paired with featured art.

Popsugar offers more [resources for healthy habits!](#)



Connect

Why Connect?

- To decrease loneliness, stress, depression, and anxiety
- To acknowledge collective trauma and experience solidarity
- To experiencing love and belonging

Ways to build stronger connection

- Write a letter
- Pick up the phone and call
- Ask meaningful questions
- Answer Questions with Honesty
- Connect via video
- To give and receive care and compassion

Connect Virtually

- Zoom dance party
- [Netflix Party](#)
- [House Party App](#)
- TikTok Challenges
- Virtual group workouts
- Virtual book clubs
- Virtual karaoke on Google Hangouts
- [National Support Groups](#)
- SHAW support groups and workshops

Spiritual Connections

Spirituality can be one way to connect with yourself, others, nature, or a higher power(s). Find local or online spiritual communities. See what the [CRSSJ has to offer](#).

Connecting ... always 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 to 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!



Do Something

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!

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.](#)

Activism, service and generosity

[There are many ways at Grinnell](#) to promote a sense of empowerment and contribution when we may be feeling helpless. Check out [this website for ideas on how to have a voice](#) in local or national politics. Simply want to support a cause that you care about? [You can volunteer locally](#) or for a chapter of a national organization.

Connect with your Values

Identifying what is important to us can be one way to foster motivation. Try this [online values card sort](#) or [printable values card sort](#) and then consider how you can express your values on a daily basis.

Wholeness

Think about what makes you feel whole, grounded, or like you. It can be helpful to consider [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)



Additional Resources

SHAW is located in the lower level of the Forum. While in-person appointments are not scheduled, students can call to schedule virtual appointments at 641-269-3230.

Monday–Friday
Office Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Nursing Appointments: 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
Counseling Appointments: 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

- [SHAW Counselors](#)
- Grinnellians [Take Pause](#)

AFTER HOURS SUPPORT SERVICES

After hours support services are available and free. A student can speak with a nurse or a counselor when SHAW is closed by calling our direct line (641-269-3230) and following the telephone prompts.

NEED TO TALK? 24/7 COUNSELING HOTLINE

SHAW partners with an agency to offer a 24/7 counseling hotline for Grinnell College students to have immediate access to counseling services. Students can call the hotline at any time (even when SHAW is open) to speak with a trained counseling professional who is also familiar with the range of resources available at Grinnell. The hotline has its own number — 641-269-4404.

24/7 FREE TELEHEALTH AND TELECOUNSELING

- For Students Who Have the Grinnell College Insurance
 - To access visit www.healthiestyou.com or
 - Download the Healthiest You app by Teladoc or
 - Call 855-879-5858 to schedule a virtual appointment



- For Students Residing Outside of Iowa in the U.S. and Who Don't Have the Grinnell College Insurance
 - Activate your account at www.mdlive.com/VCG or text VCG to 635483
 - Enter your nine digit Student ID number
 - Review the available providers
 - Schedule your free telecounseling or telehealth session
 - If you have any problems with getting an appointment call SHAW at 641-269-3230

THANK YOU to our colleagues at other institutions for sharing their resources. Some information in this document was adapted from Michigan State University and California State University at Long Beach and Penn State Harrisburg.

