2020 has been an especially challenging year. We are in the midst of navigating an important election season while also managing the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing racial injustice, and the most divisive political climate in generations. It’s a lot.

As staff and faculty, we can all contribute to the well-being of our students, our colleagues, and our entire campus community as we all navigate through this unprecedented year. One way we can do this is by holding space for students to share thoughts and feelings related to the upcoming election.

attending to your own well-being: tips from student life

Consider these prompts, which encourage you to think about well-being holistically:

✔ Social: How are my social interactions & networks impacted? How might my social networks and circles be helpful?

✔ Spiritual: How might my spiritual or religious beliefs, or my values help me with next steps?

✔ Environmental: Are my environments safe? Are they supportive?

✔ Physical: How am I experiencing this in my body? How can I take care of my physical self?

✔ Mental/Emotional: How am I making sense of the election? What feelings are coming up? Where can I find support?

well-being

Civic engagement is important, but it can also be exhausting, with heightened emotion and stress. We encourage you to regularly reflect on what you are experiencing, and develop a self-care plan that works for you.

While this election season can present unique stressors, it is also an opportunity to practice important life skills including how to deal with difficult emotions and circumstances.
As staff and faculty we can foster a supportive community in part by holding space for students, actively listening, and acknowledging feelings, without having all of the answers as we navigate these uncertain times together. It may help to use an activity to structure conversations.

After you’ve thought about the well-being prompts on the previous page, check in with students. Acknowledge how the election process and socio-political climate may affect their well-being.

In addition to some of the well-being prompts described above, consider the following prompts for use in a small group format.

- How have you been making sense of this election?
- What feelings are coming up?
- What is one thing you need from others?
- What is one thing you might be able to offer others?
- What is one hope you have for yourself as an individual and a hope you have for our community?

Encourage students to develop a self-care plan and identify resources for additional support in managing election-related stress. Keep in mind that students may have a variety of different reactions or perspectives about the election and its outcomes so don’t make assumptions.
For many students, the ability to be in conversation with others, including supportive faculty and staff, will be enough. For others, however, the stress and uncertainty of this moment may prompt the need for additional support.

If you are worried for a student’s safety, remember that you can offer your support as a caring person until other professionals are able to step in. The goal is to promote a safe, healthy, and inclusive campus community for all students at the University of Michigan.

Use the CAPS tool **Helping Students in Distress** to help assess the level and type of support a student may need. A referral to a formal student support unit, such as CAPS or the Dean of Students Office, should be considered when you believe a student’s problems go beyond your own experience and expertise, or when you feel uncomfortable helping a student in need. **If the student is in crisis and needs to see someone on the same day, they can access a Counselor on Duty.**

**reporting campus climate concerns**

Reports of **campus climate concerns** by U-M students, faculty, and staff are addressed by the Campus Climate Support staff. The Campus Climate Support is committed to providing support for those who may have been targets of or affected by campus climate concerns. CCS’s purpose is to support students, faculty or staff connect to resources. Concerns can include actions that discriminate, stereotype, exclude, harass, or harm anyone in our community based on their identity.