How to Manage Election Stress in the Workplace

The days leading up to an election, and the days after, may pose unique challenges in the workplace. Politics have been impacting work life more prominently in recent years and can make it difficult to maintain team cohesion amongst political differences.

While not easy, these tips are designed to help your teams navigate the challenges that accompany election stress.

45% of U.S. employees talk about politics at work. [1]

54% of in-person workers had a discussion about political issues. [2]

48% of hybrid workers report talking about politics. [3]

Before starting work, decide what you think is okay to discuss and what topics you will avoid. For those working remotely, we have to seek out dialogue with co-workers and in doing so, can be thoughtful about what we discuss and what we don't.

Establish boundaries between your work and personal life, especially during politically charged times. It's easy for lines to blur with remote and hybrid work, and it's vital to consider what language, views and disclosures are not appropriate for workplace discussions.

Recognize how your own views are impacting your behaviors. Take responsibility for your actions and words. Identifying how you may be contributing to a tense or uncomfortable environment can help decrease conflicts at work. And remember that you don't always know the political views of your co-workers, so it's important not to make assumptions.

Be respectful during interactions at work. A survey from the Society for Human Resource Management found that 45% of U.S. employees say they have personally experienced political disagreements at work.[4] Respect includes listening to what your co-worker is saying. If you begin to feel disconnected and that your emotions are clouding your ability to listen, it may be time to politely bow out of the conversation. Respectfully agreeing to disagree can go a long way.

Strive to be inclusive as a leader or coworker. Some people have differing levels of comfort talking about private matters or political views at work. Notice who is and isn't participating in conversations, and it could imply that the topic isn't one that everyone wants to discuss. According to Gartner, 47% of employees reported feeling uncomfortable discussing their political opinions with coworkers.[5]

Focus on your work. Remember where you are and what tasks are in front of you. During times of stress and preoccupation, focusing on one work-related task at a time can help improve productivity and provide a sense of accomplishment.

Sources: 1, 2, 3: Gallup (2024); 4: SHRM (2022); 5: Gartner Survey (2024)