



Managing Election Anxiety

For Elementary School Students

- **Explain Simply:** Reassure them that elections are a normal part of how adults make big decisions, and it's okay to have questions.
- **Identify Feelings:** Use simple language to help them name feelings (e.g., "worried," "scared"). Emphasize that these feelings are normal and safe to talk about.
- **Positive Distractions:** Encourage fun activities like drawing, coloring, or reading to reduce stress.

For Middle School Students

- **Discuss Concerns:** Allow them to share their worries openly, emphasizing that it's okay to feel a range of emotions.
- **Limit Media Exposure:** Encourage time limits on news or social media related to the election, as too much exposure can heighten stress.
- **Focus on Empathy:** Teach them that while people may have different opinions, everyone deserves respect and understanding.

For High School Students

- **Foster Critical Thinking:** Ask open-ended questions about what they're hearing to help them process what's going on. Teach them about how to get information from credible sources.
- **Encourage Balance:** Remind them to take breaks from election news and engage in other activities they enjoy.
- **Emphasize Acceptance:** Reinforce that while everyone is entitled to their own opinion, hateful or harassing comments contribute to divisiveness.

For Parents and Caregivers

- **Name Your Feelings:** Name your own emotions and share what you are feeling (e.g. "I notice I've been feeling ____ lately"). This normalizes that it's OK to have and talk about feelings.
- **Model Calmness:** Your reactions can influence how kids feel. Speak calmly and use respectful language when around your kids or teens.
- **Set Media Boundaries:** Set boundaries around your own news consumption and model healthy media habits.

About Cartwheel: We partner with school districts to provide students and families with rapid access to mental health assessments, evidence-based therapy, medication management and consultation, and parent/guardian guidance. All of our services are via telehealth with licensed clinicians. We are committed to providing affordable care for everyone - including uninsured families and those covered by Medicaid. **To learn more about Cartwheel's services, please contact a member of your school's counseling or guidance team.**