

Tips for Supervisors

Pre- and Post-Election

Pre-Election Preparation

In the weeks leading up to the election, you can get ahead of potential fallout by anticipating needs and preparing accordingly (*prevention*). By making plans in advance, you can greatly increase the chances that your diverse workforce will feel supported and avoid the buildup of anxiety, concern, or PTSD that can result from cumulative unaddressed traumas. Here are a few tips for election prep:

Preemptively Speak About the Election and Jointly Set Expectations

Whether or not you choose to speak about the election, your staff will undoubtedly be discussing it. Consider having a preemptive conversation about how staff members wish engage or not engage in these types of conversations. Acknowledging what is happening will allow for open dialogue around needs or questions that follow.

Talking points:

- Discuss resources for staff (EAP, campus events, collegial support, time off, etc.)
- Discuss resources for students (Counseling Center groups, campus events, peer support, etc.)
- Acknowledge that the final outcome may take longer than in previous elections to confirm. We need to ask for what we need not just the day of or the day after. We will role model this as leaders. It is not a sign of weakness for you to do this.

Plan a 'Soft Week'

One way to address and/or reduce distraction, anxiety, and mental health concerns in the workplace during the week of the election is to allow a 'soft work week', in which the community collectively agrees to have less meetings, less calls, and to exercise greater leniency and compassion with each other. A soft week will also allow for employees to make time to vote and can also provide time for people to care for themselves. Consider offering a floating flexible day the week of the election, specifically on Election Day and beyond. Another consideration is to allow for a camera off week, as well. A final consideration is to allow for more flexible days for individuals throughout the week.

Questions to ask staff:

1. Look at your calendar next week and proactively rearrange as needed. What needs to happen this week? What can wait?
2. What are you communicating to your students about their options for support beyond you?
3. If you "need to" attend meetings next week, can they be shortened? Can you make space for more cameras to be off?



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Consider Creating a Contingency Plan for your Team: The elections may have a significant impact on the lives of employees from impacted communities (e.g. Black, persons of color, international, LGBTQIA+, etc.) Consider creating a contingency plan to address significant concerns that may impact their well-being and productivity at work. Staff may need at least a day to process the election, this could mean more than usual absence rate. Planning ahead for this scenario with your staff may undoubtable release secondary anxiety of making a decision to come into work.

Questions to ask staff:

1. If you need to step away from processing with students, who can step in for you? Identify your person.
2. How do we proactively connect students to this person who may step in so that a relationship and point of connection exists? (Attend staff meeting this week, attend an organizational meeting prior to the election, etc.)

Post-Election Actions

Regardless of the outcomes of an election, there will be an opportunity to engage your community in dialogue and re-anchor the team around the organization's shared commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion. Please ask staff members what they believe might be best for them post-election. The following are options and tips to consider:

- **Create a Virtual Space for Discussion the Day After the Election:** Allow for staff to engage in virtual spaces within or outside of your team as they see necessary. Consider if they need to alert a supervisor of this need?
- **Provide Mental Health and Self-Care Resources:** Regardless of outcome, a national election presents a significant shift that is likely to disproportionately impact people with historically marginalized and underrepresented identities. Impacted employees may be struggling with mental health challenges and need extra support in the weeks or even months following the election. Make a point to provide resources to your whole team for those that need it

The Secondary Trauma of "Business as Usual"

While some staff may take a "business as usual" attitude the day following this election, this may not be possible for other employees. In fact, the worst possible response to such trauma being experienced by some staff is to ignore it and expect them to act as if they are unaffected. Please consider the following action(s) that can be taken and those that should not be taken the day(s) after the election:

Potential Actions to Consider:

- Check with staff to determine if they need/want an opportunity for staff to safely express emotions and where they wish to express these emotions. It may not be with your immediate team and that's okay.
- Allowing staff to take a "mental health day," or if they do come to work, allowing them to lighten their workload for the day without penalty (see *Soft Week suggestions*)
- If/When your team agrees, create space to foster discussion across marginalized identity groups with an understand of everyone may be expressing different emotions.

Actions NOT to consider:

- Say "we'll all get through this"
- Expect staff to be ok, cheery, or their normal selves.
- Ask for impacted staff to show up, or lead a community-based healing hour for students impacted by the results before they are ready
- Carry on as "Business as usual"

Resources

- [Preparing for the Election at Work](#)
- [How to Create an Emotionally Supportive Workplace for Employees of Color](#)
- [3 Ways to Be Unwaveringly Anti-Racist as a Student Affairs Professional](#)