

## Coping with election anxiety

To say that this week is an anxious one doesn't really capture it for many of us. Here are a couple of thoughts about managing election anxiety (that could pertain to other times of stress, too). As usual, I should note that the ideas here tend to be grounded in the cognitive-behavioral model of psychological interventions.

Here are some maneuvers that might be helpful:

- Notice your feelings. Label them, as in, "I feel scared. I am hopeful but with much trepidation."
  - Use emotion words. Oddly enough, just articulating feelings with nuance is associated with good coping.
- *Accept* the feelings themselves. This is the opposite of reactive, or avoidant coping.
- Take rational action. What does it *make sense* to do today? Studying, activism, kind actions toward others, running, playing, cuddling with pets, practicing the oboe, calling a close one. You get the idea.
- If you're ruminating or, perhaps, relentlessly scrolling for reassurance or danger, consider gently redirecting your attention to:
  - The present moment, focusing on your breath or doing [progressive muscle relaxation](#).
  - Something you value, like something beautiful someone created – music, art, [poetry](#), a video game, and the like.

If you're looking for more, Dr. Tara Brach, a psychologist influenced by Buddhist thought, has an excellent talk [here](#), on transforming anxiety. She speaks eloquently about the evolutionary design of anxiety and how to use that knowledge to move out of passivity and paralysis into compassion and empowerment. Worth a listen. Tell me what you think.

I'm also glad to talk, of course. I'll likely add a few extra [drop-in times](#) next week. Email [Summer Griffin](#) if you can't find a time that works.

Lee Rosen, Ph.D.

Director of Student Wellbeing (and Interim Associate Dean for Students)