

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Brain Health Matters: Resilience to Election Stress Makes a Difference

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Today, the BHI is talking about stress and the upcoming presidential election.

We are in the final stretch of the 2020 U.S. presidential election campaign. Anyone feeling stressed is not alone. It turns out election stress is real, and it has left many of us feeling anxious and overwhelmed.

A recent survey by The Harris Poll on behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) reports 68 percent of U.S. adults say the upcoming election is a significant source of stress in their lives. That finding was true for Republicans, Democrats, and Independent voters.

A [press release](#) from the APA says that election stress is higher in 2020 than it was in 2016. And it's not just the election that is causing our stress. More than 75 percent say the future of our nation is a significant source of stress, and the current political climate in our country is reported as a significant source of stress by 68 percent of us.

Adding to our election stress are the issues we have been facing in 2020, including the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, social injustice, and economic recession. Those factors may be why significant stress levels are being reported in Black voters and people with chronic health conditions.

These stressors are taking a toll on our physical and brain health and well-being and it is important to find ways to manage our stress, a risk factor of brain illness. A recent article in [Forbes](#) highlighted apps that are focusing on help for election stress. A wellness and meditation app called [Breethe](#) has added a collection of meditations and playlists under the categories of Voters,

Election Workers, and Candidates. [Real](#), an on-demand therapy platform, has new offerings to address general and election-specific anxiety especially in terms of what companies can provide employees.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO BOOST YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

If you are looking for advice about how to protect your brain health during this election process and manage your stress in general, the Brain Health Initiative suggests:

- **Focus on what you can control.** If following the election is causing you stress, limit your media consumption and take a break from the news and social media.
- **Engage in meaningful activities.** Find an activity you enjoy or get involved in issues that are meaningful to you.
- **Stay socially connected.** Spend time with friends and family.
- **Stay active.** Go for a walk or get moving in some other way. Movement helps you release the energy you feel when stressed.
- **Sign up for the Mindful Triathlon.** [Register](#) for the Second Annual Mindful Triathlon benefitting the Brain Health Initiative. It features a virtual 5K run/walk and in-person yoga and meditation from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. on Nov. 14 at Bob Gardner Park in Lakewood Ranch.
- Look to our [Brain Health Boosts](#) for advice and **adopt a brain healthy lifestyle**, including thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses and language that promote:
 - Stress resilience
 - Nutrition
 - Physical activity
 - Sleep
 - Social connection
 - Emotional wellbeing
 - Meaning and Purpose
 - Cognitive stimulation and creativity
 - Engaging with nature
 - General health
 - Positive impacts

About the Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI works collaboratively with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance to build brain healthy communities through education, collaboration, research, innovation, and action, with a specific focus on *brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention and optimization of performance*. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference***. To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).

