

Dear HSU students,

This national election cycle has been an emotional and divisive one and the outcome of the vote has left a lot of varied and complicated emotions in its wake.

If you are struggling with your emotional reactions to the election results or the current social/political climate, or are simply trying to come to terms with what “it all means” and could use a safe space to come talk about those things, I want you to know that the therapists at CAPS are here to listen and support you. We will have open hours at the center for this purpose and are also planning some events on the broader campus where people can come dialogue. We will post plans on the CAPS website.

Please know that CAPS is committed to supporting all of our students and to upholding the values of social justice, inclusion, and the recognition that growth and enrichment come from respecting and learning from our differences. As a staff, we are opposed to any rhetoric or action that is intended to be hurtful (or discriminatory) to members of our community based on differences in identity, appearance, abilities and/or viewpoints. We support civil rights, civil discourse, and respectful and compassionate action.

We are all in this life together and I hope that, in time, we can come together to start to heal and to build community that embraces diversity, is inclusive by design, and is caring and respectful toward all. I know that this will take time and that right now many are simply trying to process and understand the meaning of this election and move through the emotions that have been stirred.

If you are having a hard time right now, here are a few suggestions...

- Acknowledge your feelings. Reflect on your own emotional state and thoughts and figure out what your needs are in the moment. Do you need alone time or company? Does it make sense to move toward (explore) the feelings (e.g., through talking or journaling) or to have a break from them (e.g., through exercising or escaping into a novel)?
- Focus on the present moment. What is happening right now and in the immediate future? Looking too far into the future may cause unnecessary anxiety.
- Connect with people that feel supportive and safe. Ask for what you need.
- Set boundaries.
  - Pay attention to how much time you spend checking social media or watching the news... Take time to “unplug.”
  - Don’t engage in discussions that feel counterproductive. It is easy to get swept up in such dialogues, but pay attention to your “gut”—step away if a conversation feels unsafe or harmful.
- Practice good self-care: avoid alcohol and other drugs that may temporarily numb you but will not help in the long term; eat well; get enough sleep; exercise; meditate...
- Keep up with your academic coursework and other life tasks. Getting behind in key areas will lead to further stress.
- If you feel moved to create positive change in the world, get involved in a political organization or volunteer your time toward a cause you feel passionate about. Doing something to support your values and causes feels good.
- Check the CAPS website for helpful stress reduction and wellness apps; drop-in support groups (such as the One Breath Meditation and Creative Self-Expression Groups); drop-in support hours; and other resources.
- Check HSU websites for upcoming events related to post-election dialogue and support.

In solidarity,

Jen Sanford, Director, Counseling and Psychological Services, Humboldt State University