

Community College Health Coalition

Election Anxiety Facilitated Discussion¹

Why Elections Can Cause Anxiety

It is natural for elections to cause [anxiety](#) because they can have a deep impact on your safety and stability. In fact, more people in the U.S. are feeling anxious about this year's elections compared to previous years. One reason for the rise in anxiety is the polarized political climate and extreme views. Many people are worrying about how the vote will impact their family, their job, their home, their safety, and their rights. Secondly, social media platforms like Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram are inundated with political content.

Signs and symptoms of election anxiety could include:

- Intense worry that affects home, school, or work life
- A constant feeling of unease that makes it difficult to relax
- Feeling drained and lacking in energy despite adequate rest
- Difficulty focusing on tasks or maintaining attention
- [Ruminating](#) about the same election-related concerns or scenarios
- Increased irritability
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- [Panic attacks](#)
- Decreased appetite or overeating
- [Avoidance](#) of news, social media, or conversations about the election
- Increased use of substances
- Physical symptoms, such as headaches, muscle tension, stomachaches, nausea, or diarrhea
- [Feelings of hopelessness](#) and despair²

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the nature of our general anxiety?
2. How does fear influence our and our students' concerns?
3. What are we hearing on our campuses?
4. How can we help students and support our communities?

Suggestions to Help with Election Anxiety

1. Focus on what you can control
2. Limit News Exposure
3. Watch What News You Consume
4. Find Ways to Contribute Positively
5. Use Anti-Anxiety Techniques to Reduce Stress
6. Walk Away from Unhelpful Conversations
7. Practice Mindfulness and Focus on Present

¹ Adapted from <https://www.choosingtherapy.com/election-anxiety/>

8. Separate People From Viewpoints
9. Find Things to Be Hopeful For
10. Focus on Your Physical Health
11. Limit Negative Coping Skills
12. Uplug

Election Anxiety Resource List

Community College Health Coalition

The American College Health Association, Community College Health Coalition hosted an “Election Anxiety” watercooler chat on October 9, 2024. During that meeting a number of helpful resources were shared. We are sharing these with you in the hopes that they may support any concerns you may have related to election anxiety on your campuses.

Weblinks:

[Gonzaga University, Six Ways to Ease Election Anxiety](#)

[How to Manage Election Anxiety: 13 Tips to Staying Calm](#)

[Headspace: Your election season survival guide](#)

[A Braver Way Podcast, Monica Guzman](#)

College Programs, JED, and Campus Mental Health:

[Tulsa Community College: Ballots and Balance-Election Week De-Stress Activities](#)

[Election Stress: Tips to Manage Anxious Feelings About Politics](#)

[Elections Are Stressful, But Civic Engagement Is Good for Youth Mental Health](#)

[Library Guides TCC](#)

Self-Care:

[How Curiosity Will Save Us | Mónica Guzmán | TEDxSeattle](#)

Self-Talk, Suggestions from the Discussion:

“You can walk away from a heated discussion”

“Tips for Stressful Election Conversations Stick to Your Boundaries, Enter debates with an open mind, remember the value of your relationships, Take care of yourself!”

“We have two ears and one mouth to listen twice as much as we speak. – Epictetus”

“It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters” – Epictetus”

“We use a code phrase at our family dinners that means "drop the subject!"

Communication and Well-Being Through the Election Cycle

Kaitlin Hill, MS, LPC-S, NCC

Associate Dean of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

It's the most wonderful time of the year (every four years)... presidential election season. For many, the constant coverage and commentary around election cycles cause a sense of unease, anxiety, anticipation, nervousness, dread – you name it. While many may share a general sense of apprehension or anticipation given the widely unknown results of an upcoming election cycle – many others will also experience another phenomenon – communication breakdowns with others. Loss of friendships or connections. Argumentation. Does this ring a bell? Do we see this example in front of us on social media or news outlets?

These types of discussions and communication (or lack thereof) can affect our personal relationships, our work environments, and connections to peers and classmates, among others. And let's be clear – good communication is positive, even when we disagree! Poor communication, however, increases stress, anxiety, disconnection, and apprehension. Anxiety and distress, too, can have very real and immediate impacts on our physical selves – we become more vulnerable to colds, flu, and other illnesses, have a higher likelihood of developing chronic illnesses, and our sleeping and eating habits may be affected.

Did you know that the American Psychiatric Association¹ assessed that almost 75% of adults feel anxiety about the upcoming election? They also assessed anxiety around topics that fill conversations around election season - almost 80% of adults feel anxiety about the economy, and almost 70% feel anxiety about gun violence. While an election cycle is certainly a great platform to exercise our civic duty through voting and encouraging others to do so as well, it's also a great time to model positive communication techniques that are grounded in respect and well-being. So what does this look like?

- **Practice active listening:** In respectful communication, both sides of the discussion know the other is listening actively and accurately. Using phrases like “I understand” or “I hear you,” or nonverbals like nodding your head lets the other person know you're listening intently and showing attentive respect, rather than hearing to speak or counter. You should expect the same in return!
- **Granting the benefit of the doubt:** We never know someone's lived experiences, background, or level of information that informs their opinions, choices, or actions. Allowing space for someone to have a different opinion than yours allows for a reasonable benefit of the doubt.
- **Identify what you can and can't control:** What you can control is your vote and the act of voting, or through other positive civil or community action! What you may not be able to control is the outcome of a national election, or even something as near to you as changing someone's mind. Identifying what you can and cannot control, and finding empowerment through what you **can** control is important.

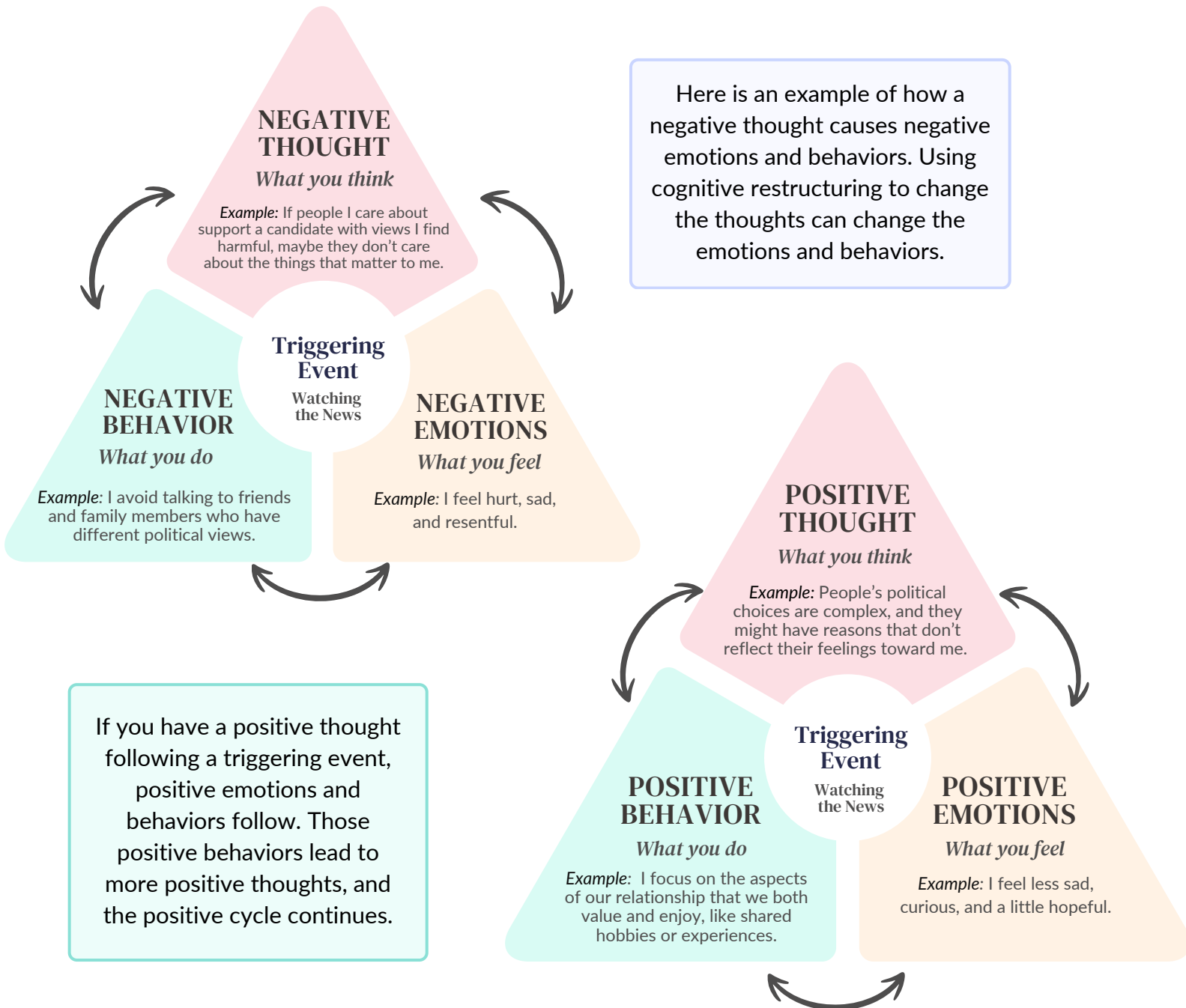
- **Embrace discomfort:** Differing opinions may inherently be uncomfortable. Some discomfort or awkwardness is okay – we can lean into that and learn to become better communicators through it or even understand each other a bit better! However, it's important not to equate discomfort with disrespect. Good communication is never disrespectful, cruel, or hateful.
- **Set boundaries for yourself and others:** Set boundaries for the amount, types, and source of media you consume to protect your mental well-being. When communicating with others, set limits to how much you want to be in the thick of political discussions. Want to enjoy a nice family or friends outing without discussing politics? Say so and kindly ask for that ahead of time, noting you really want to enjoy the time together connecting in other ways! Have you established through experience that you may be unable to connect (even if disagreeing!) with someone about politics? These may not be safe conversations to venture into with them.
- **Utilize a curious, open mindset:** We're going to encounter many who don't think and choose as we do – that's the nature of life. A curious, open mindset may ask "what will I learn about this person, their opinion, new information..." rather than dismissing the person or conversation from the front end. In spaces where the rights or livelihood of others (or ourselves!) are vulnerable because of politics or policy, this can be understandably difficult. Assess your headspace, too – if you find it difficult to impossible to feel a sense of grounded neutrality discussing politics or issues with another person, it may not be the person, place, or time to have those discussions.
- **Practice self-care:** Find time for disconnection and care for you. Moving your body, nourishing yourself well, hydrating, sleeping well, pursuing activities that fill your metaphorical cup – these are important all the time, but especially important during high stress seasons. Feeling balanced and cared-for can also help address our sense of high reactivity or irritability, as well.
- **Find common ground:** Through discussion, we often find that there are far more things that we realize we share between us. Political rhetoric tends to operate via "othering" - creating wide divides between a partisan system, voters, economic or social beliefs, etc.
- **Set limits, and empower yourself to end discussions:** If we find we're in a discussion or engaged with a person who cannot be respectful in discussion – or we're having our own difficulty remaining grounded ourselves – know it is okay to end a discussion. A powerful statement grounded in respect and boundaries may be, "you know, it sounds like we're not going to be able to respectfully connect in this discussion, so I'm going to step away from our conversation."
- **Separate person from opinions:** This can be difficult with friends, family, people we've known for a long time, people we've looked up to, etc. This can be especially difficult when examining opinions of others related to hot topic voter issues – women's health, social programs funding, immigration, gun safety, the economy, student loans...Where we can, it's important to try to remember that an opinion is an opinion and may not be representative of the person as a whole.

- **Seek support:** If you find that the stress of the election cycle, ability to connect and discuss with others, or repercussions such as struggling relationships or physical health and wellness due to political disagreements are getting in the way of your enjoyment of day-to-day life – reach out for help! As the APA shows, the majority of US adults experience some level of anxiety related to this election cycle, so you are not alone. Take care of you, and seek assistance through a trained mental health professional:
 - Dallas College students who are 18+ and attending the current semester can reach out to Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Counseling@DallasCollege.edu to set an appointment.
 - Benefits-eligible faculty and staff can utilize our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Alliance Work Partners for counseling resources.

1. American Psychiatric Association. *American Adults Express Increasing Anxiousness in Annual Poll; Stress and Sleep are Key Factors Impacting Mental Health*. May 2024.

Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restructuring is a CBT technique that involves recognizing negative and unhelpful thoughts, examining the evidence for and against these thoughts, and developing more balanced, helpful alternative thoughts. During election season, it's common to experience heightened anxiety due to uncertainty and concern about the future. **Cognitive restructuring can help you manage this election-related anxiety by identifying and challenging the negative thought patterns that may be causing distress.**



Cognitive Restructuring

THOUGHT

What you think in a situation
Ex: If the candidate I support doesn't win, I will fall apart.

EMOTION

How you feel
Ex: Fear, frustration, anger, and helplessness.

BEHAVIOR

How you handle the situation
Ex: Constantly checking news and arguing with others.

It's important to understand that our automatic thoughts affect our feelings and influence our behavior.

You can recognize unhealthy thought patterns that are making your election anxiety worse by practicing cognitive restructuring. Use the questions below each time you're experiencing unwanted thoughts that lead to unhealthy behaviors.

Thought:

Is my thought factual?

What evidence do I have to support my thought?

What would someone else say about the situation?

Is it possible to view this situation differently?

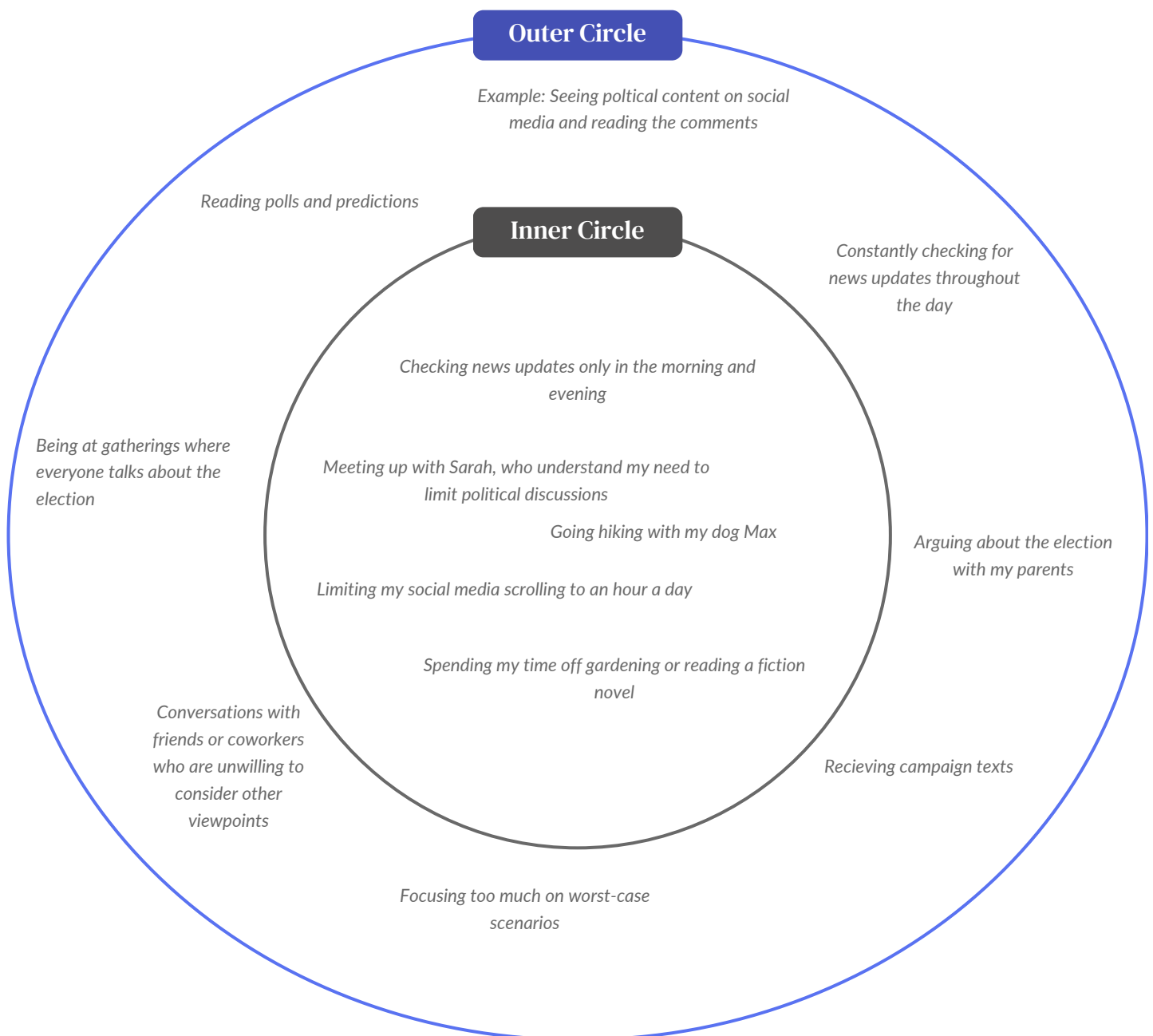


How to Set Healthy Boundaries

This worksheet is designed to help you identify and set healthy boundaries to manage anxiety related to the election. **By setting clear boundaries around your exposure to election content and discussions, you can reduce stress, protect your mental health, and maintain a sense of balance during this time.** Use this worksheet to explore what boundaries you need, how to communicate them, and strategies for maintaining them.

PART 1: Visualize Your Boundaries

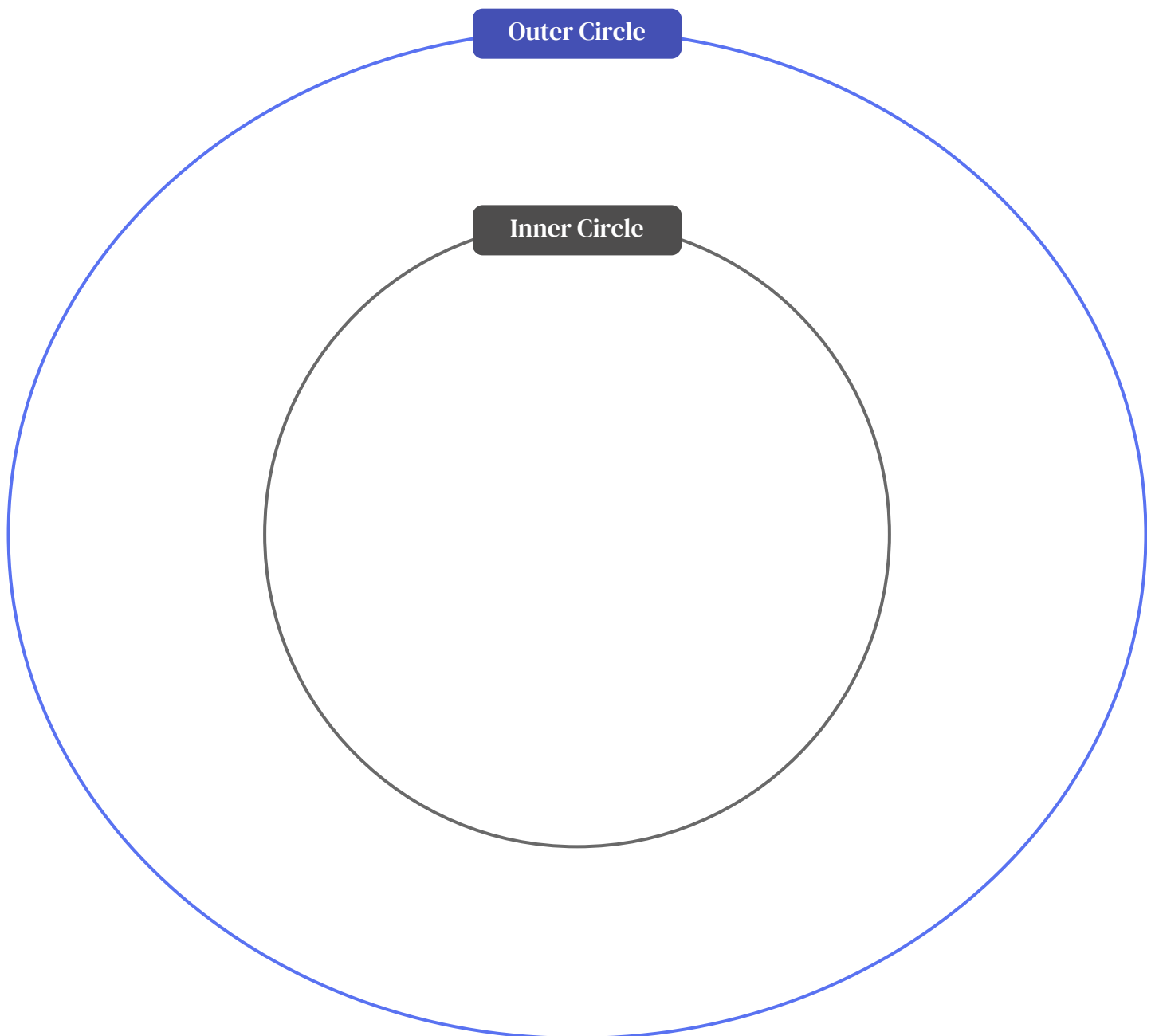
Inside the circle, write everything that makes you feel calm, informed, and in control during the election season. On the outside of the circle, Write down anything that makes you feel stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed during the election season. These are the things that push your boundaries and need further attention.



How to Set Healthy Boundaries

When filling out your inner and outer circle, here are some questions to consider:

- Who or what makes me feel supported and understood when I'm feeling anxious about the election?
- Who or what makes me feel more anxious or misunderstood when I'm feeling anxious about the election?
- What types of election-related content or conversations tend to increase my anxiety or stress levels?
- What types of election-related content or conversations tend to decrease my anxiety or stress levels?
- What environments or settings help me maintain a balanced perspective on the election?
- What environments or settings make it harder for me to maintain a balanced perspective on the election?



PART 2: How to Communicate Your Boundaries

Here are some basic rules and examples for communicating your boundaries effectively.

Use Confident Body Language

Stand or sit up straight, maintain eye contact, and use firm but calm gestures to convey confidence and assertiveness.

Be Clear & Set Consequences

Be specific about what behavior you want to change and clearly state what will happen if your boundary is not respected.

Keep Your Tone Calm and Respectful:

Speak calmly and assertively, avoiding raised voices or aggressive tones to maintain a respectful atmosphere.

Practice Active Listening:

Listen to the other person's response without interrupting and acknowledge their perspective while staying firm on your boundary.

Information Boundaries

- Limit news consumption to X amount of time per day
- Unfollow or mute anxiety-inducing social media accounts
- Avoid checking news or social media right before bed
- Subscribe only to news sources that provide balanced coverage
- Check election updates only 1-2 times per day

Emotional Boundaries

- Step away from conversations that make me feel anxious
- Avoid engaging in discussions about the election when I'm already feeling stressed
- Set aside time each day to engage in activities unrelated to the election.
- Prioritize mental health over staying constantly informed.

Interpersonal Boundaries

- Avoid discussing the election with loved ones who tend to become argumentative
- Avoid political discussions during work hours
- Limit participation in group chats or online conversations about politics
- Tell loved ones that I'm taking a break from political conversations



How to Set Healthy Boundaries

PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries (Example Page)

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

Situation:

Example: My friends frequently share alarming news articles in our group chat, and I feel obligated to read and respond to them, even when it's overwhelming.

Boundary I will set:

In the group chat, I will send the following text: "I'm trying to reduce my anxiety, so I'd appreciate it if we could keep this chat light and avoid political news for now." If they continue to share, I'll mute the conversation and check in only when I feel up to it, focusing on the parts of the chat that are supportive and positive.

Any potential challenges:

Stacey tends to ignore my needs, even when I state them overtly. Although I can mute her on the group chat, I cannot avoid her and her political discussions when we hang out in person.

How I will handle these challenges:

I can let my other friends know how important this is to me, and if they can help me redirect Stacey to more neutral conversations. If that doesn't work, I can avoid large group hangouts, and hang out one-on-one with friends until the elections have passed.



How to Set Healthy Boundaries

PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

Situation:

Boundary I will set:

Any potential challenges:

How I will handle these challenges:



Practicing Gratitude

Election-related anxiety can be overwhelming, especially during times of uncertainty. However, focusing on gratitude can be a powerful tool to help manage this anxiety. This worksheet is designed to guide you through the process of recognizing and appreciating the positive elements in your life, even amidst the uncertainty of an election. By focusing on what you are grateful for, you can reduce anxiety and cultivate a more positive outlook during this challenging period.

PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 1	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M	<i>Example: The taste of fresh coffee in the morning.</i>	<i>The kind text my friend sent me.</i>	<i>The relaxing bath I took to unwind.</i>
T	<i>A productive work meeting where I felt heard.</i>	<i>My cozy blanket keeping me warm while I read.</i>	<i>A surprise call from my mom to check on me.</i>
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

PART 2: Weekly Reflection

Reflect on your gratitude entries at the end of each week. Answer the following questions:

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

The kind text my friend sent me stood out because it reminded me that I have people who care about me, even on tough days.

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

Practicing gratitude helped me stay positive and focused on the good things in my life, even when I felt stressed.



Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 1	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

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.....

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How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 2	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

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.....

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

.....

.....

.....



Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 3	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

.....

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.....

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 4	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

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.....

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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PART 3: Monthly Summary

At the end of each month, summarize your gratitude practice.

What patterns do you notice in the things you are grateful for?

The highlights included reconnecting with an old friend over coffee and experiencing a beautiful day at the beach with my family.

How has your perspective changed since you started practicing gratitude?

I've begun to notice the small, often overlooked joys in my daily life, such as the sound of rain on my window or the smell of freshly baked bread from the local bakery.

What new gratitude practices would you like to try next month?

I would like to start a gratitude jar where I can add notes about what I'm thankful for each day and review them at the end of the month.

What challenges did you face in practicing gratitude, and how did you overcome them?

I found it difficult to focus on positive aspects during stressful times, but setting a specific time each day to reflect helped me stay consistent.

Which gratitudes can you turn into a daily affirmation?

I am grateful for the abundance in my life.

I appreciate the love and support I receive from others.

I am thankful for the opportunities to grow and learn each day.

I am grateful for the beauty of nature around me.



PART 3: Monthly Summary

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What patterns do you notice in the things you are grateful for?

How has your perspective changed since you started practicing gratitude?

What new gratitude practices would you like to try next month?

What challenges did you face in practicing gratitude , and how did you overcome them?

Which gratitudes do you want to turn into a daily affirmation?



Self-Care Inventory

Election anxiety can be overwhelming, but practicing self-care is a powerful way to manage stress and maintain your well-being during this time. Self-care involves any activity that enhances your mental, emotional, or physical health. For instance, limiting exposure to election news, engaging in calming activities, and connecting with supportive people can help reduce anxiety and improve your overall well-being. A self-care routine is not one-size-fits-all, so it's important to experiment with different strategies to find what works best for you.

This worksheet is designed to help you explore various specific self-care activities that can alleviate election-related anxiety. You will be asked to rank each activity on a scale from 1-3 to determine how well you are currently engaging in these practices. After ranking, you can “star” the activities you would like to do more often. The goal of this worksheet is to help you recognize the different types of self-care available to you, identify what you are doing well, and pinpoint areas where you can improve to feel better overall during the election season.

Ranking

- 1 I rarely engage in this, and it is not a regular part of my routine.
- 2 I occasionally engage in this, but it is not consistent.
- 3 I regularly engage in this, and it is a frequent part of my routine.
- ★ I want to do this more frequently.

1 2 3 ★ Physical Self-Care: Improving your physical health.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaging in regular physical activity such as walking, running, yoga, or strength training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensuring you get enough restful sleep each night to rejuvenate your body.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eating a balanced and nutritious diet, including plenty of fruits, vegetables, and grains.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drinking enough water throughout the day to stay hydrated.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining good hygiene practices such as bathing, brushing teeth, and grooming.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attending regular check-ups and following medical advice from healthcare professionals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking time to relax and unwind, through activities like taking a bath and getting a massage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limiting or avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time outdoors in natural sunlight to enhance vitamin D levels and improve mood.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paying attention to your body's needs, such as stretching when tense or resting when tired.



Self-Care Inventory

1 2 3



Emotional Self-Care: Processing & expressing your emotions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in activities you enjoy to boost your mood and provide a sense of fulfillment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoiding political conversations during quality time with friends and family.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practicing mindfulness to stay present instead of focusing on the "what ifs" of election results.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write down your thoughts and feelings about the election to process your emotions and gain clarity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keeping a gratitude journal or reflecting on things you are thankful for.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using affirmations, such as "I am in control of my reactions" or "I can handle whatever comes my way."
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading a lighthearted book, listening to upbeat music, or watching a funny TV show
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Setting boundaries around how much news or social media you consume.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doing emotional check-ins where you ask yourself how you're feeling and what you need emotionally.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular sessions with a therapist to help manage your anxiety and develop coping strategies.

1 2 3



Social Self-Care: Fostering & maintaining healthy relationships.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reaching out to friends who share your concerns or who can offer a comforting, non-political conversation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asking for help from friends or family when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Setting boundaries with friends and family about discussing politics if it increases your anxiety.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning activities with friends or family that are completely unrelated to the election.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking regular breaks from social media to avoid heated political discussions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Channeling your energy into a cause you care about, whether related to the election or something else.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When engaging in conversations, focusing on listening more than speaking.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaging in group activities, like a virtual book club or a fitness class, that have nothing to do with politics.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Politely asking coworkers or acquaintances to avoid discussing election news during breaks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduling intentional alone time with your romantic partner.



Self-Care Inventory

1 2 3



Professional Self-Care: Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and pursuing career development opportunities.

Clearly defining work hours and sticking to them to ensure a healthy work-life balance.

Stepping away from work to recharge, through daily short breaks and using vacation time.

Talking to a supervisor or HR about mental health challenges (if it feels safe).

Exploring available support options, such as employee assistance programs (EAP).

Organizing and prioritizing work tasks to manage workload effectively and reduce stress.

Ensuring your work environment is comfortable and conducive to productivity.

Establishing achievable work goals and celebrating small accomplishments.

Being kind to yourself during work and avoiding excessive self-criticism.

Building positive relationships with coworkers for mutual support and camaraderie.

1 2 3



Spiritual Self-Care: Nurturing your spirit and providing purpose.

Practicing meditation to connect with your inner self and find peace and clarity.

Engaging in prayer or other forms of communication with a higher power.

Spending time in nature to experience connection to the world around you.

Regularly reflecting on what you are thankful for to cultivate an appreciative mindset.

Reading inspirational books, scriptures, or quotes to uplift and inspire your spirit.

Participating in spiritual or religious community activities.

Engaging in artistic activities, such as painting, music, or writing.

Performing acts of kindness and service to others, fostering a sense of purpose.

Acting in accordance with your morals to create a sense of integrity in your life.

Spending time with the people who give your life meaning.



DBT PLEASE Skill

The PLEASE skill in dialectal behavior therapy (DBT) is a simple acronym that helps you remember the basics of mental and physical well-being. This worksheet will guide you through applying the PLEASE skill to manage intense emotions that get in the way of feeling good.

PL

Treat Physical Illness

Make sure to look after your overall physical health by having regular check-ups, staying active, and following any medical advice. Taking care of your body helps keep your mind stable and healthy.

E

Balanced Eating

Try to eat regular, healthy meals. Good nutrition can help keep your mood steady and give you the energy you need, making you less likely to feel upset or stressed.

A

Avoid Mood-Altering Substances

Stay away from substances like alcohol and drugs that can affect your mood and thinking. Avoiding these helps you think clearly and manage your emotions better, which is important for your mental health.

S

Balanced Sleep

Getting enough sleep is very important for handling your emotions well. Try to keep a regular sleep schedule. Good sleep helps your mind work properly and keeps your emotions steady, reducing the chances of feeling moody or upset.

E

Exercise Daily

Exercise can lift your mood, reduce stress, and improve your overall emotional well-being. It also helps your body produce endorphins, which make you feel happier.



DBT PLEASE Skill

PHYSICAL ILLNESS: Take care of your physical health.

Track your progress daily for a week to see if you are attending to your physical health on a regular basis or if there is room for improvement.

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Scheduled and attended doctors appointments							
Took medications							
Took a shower and washed face							
Brushed my teeth							
Moved my body							
Ate nutritious food							
Went outside							
Drank enough water							
Limited time on social media							
Cleaned the house							
Spoke to another person							

What challenges did you face when taking care of your physical health and how can you overcome them?

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DBT PLEASE Skill

BALANCED EATING: What we eat contributes to our mental health.

Keep track of the foods you consume for several days and how you feel after you eat them. The more specific you can be about how you feel after eating, the better!

Food Consumed	How I Felt After Eating it
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	

Which foods made you feel the best & what foods do you want to avoid going forward?

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DBT PLEASE Skill

**AVOID MOOD
ALTERING
SUBSTANCES:**

Evaluate your use of substances that may affect your mood.

Substances such as alcohol, non-prescription medications, drugs, and caffeine can affect your ability to regulate your emotions. One of the keys to emotional stability is to take medication as prescribed and avoid substances used for self-medicating.

What mood altering substances do you use?

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What are your personal reasons for avoiding mood altering substances?

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What steps can you take to reduce or eliminate these substances?

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What challenges might you face and how can you overcome them?

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DBT PLEASE Skill

BALANCED SLEEP: Getting enough sleep is important to your mental health.

You should strive for 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night and establish good sleep habits to help regulate your mood.

With a sleep diary, you can log your bedtime, night awakenings, and morning wake-up times. This helps you see your sleep patterns and overall sleep duration, as well as how often your sleep is disrupted. Additionally, a sleep diary helps you track activities affecting your sleep. You'll note when you exercise, nap, take medication, or consume caffeine or alcohol.

INSTRUCTIONS: (1) Write the date and type of day: Work, School, or Day Off. (2) Put the letter "C" in the box when you have coffee, cola or tea. Put "M" when you take any medicine. Put "A" when you drink alcohol. Put "E" when you exercise. (3) Put a "B" in the box to show when you go to bed. Put a "Z" in the box that shows when you think you fell asleep. (4) Put a "Z" in all the boxes that show when you are asleep at night or when you take a nap during the day. (5) Leave boxes empty to show when you wake up at night and when you are awake during the day. **SAMPLE ENTRY BELOW:**

Date	Type of Day	P.M.											A.M.												
		12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
7/12	Work		C					E		A		M	B	Z	Z	Z	Z		Z	Z	Z				

Date	Type of Day	P.M.											A.M.												
		12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11



DBT PLEASE Skill

EXERCISE DAILY: Exercise is a great way to balance your mood.

Though it can be challenging to incorporate exercise into your daily routine, completing it can make you feel better physically and mentally. Even 20-30 minutes of brisk walking can be beneficial.

DATE & TIME	TYPE OF EXERCISE	DURATION	INTENSITY

Which workouts did you enjoy the most & want to do more?

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What challenges did you face and how can you overcome them?

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Practicing Gratitude

Election-related anxiety can be overwhelming, especially during times of uncertainty. However, focusing on gratitude can be a powerful tool to help manage this anxiety. This worksheet is designed to guide you through the process of recognizing and appreciating the positive elements in your life, even amidst the uncertainty of an election. By focusing on what you are grateful for, you can reduce anxiety and cultivate a more positive outlook during this challenging period.

PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 1	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M	<i>Example: The taste of fresh coffee in the morning.</i>	<i>The kind text my friend sent me.</i>	<i>The relaxing bath I took to unwind.</i>
T	<i>A productive work meeting where I felt heard.</i>	<i>My cozy blanket keeping me warm while I read.</i>	<i>A surprise call from my mom to check on me.</i>
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

PART 2: Weekly Reflection

Reflect on your gratitude entries at the end of each week. Answer the following questions:

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

The kind text my friend sent me stood out because it reminded me that I have people who care about me, even on tough days.

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

Practicing gratitude helped me stay positive and focused on the good things in my life, even when I felt stressed.



Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 1	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

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How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 2	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

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How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 3	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

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How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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Practicing Gratitude

WEEK 4	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

Which gratitude entries for this week stood out to you the most and why?

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How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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PART 3: Monthly Summary

At the end of each month, summarize your gratitude practice.

What patterns do you notice in the things you are grateful for?

The highlights included reconnecting with an old friend over coffee and experiencing a beautiful day at the beach with my family.

How has your perspective changed since you started practicing gratitude?

I've begun to notice the small, often overlooked joys in my daily life, such as the sound of rain on my window or the smell of freshly baked bread from the local bakery.

What new gratitude practices would you like to try next month?

I would like to start a gratitude jar where I can add notes about what I'm thankful for each day and review them at the end of the month.

What challenges did you face in practicing gratitude, and how did you overcome them?

I found it difficult to focus on positive aspects during stressful times, but setting a specific time each day to reflect helped me stay consistent.

Which gratitudes can you turn into a daily affirmation?

I am grateful for the abundance in my life.

I appreciate the love and support I receive from others.

I am thankful for the opportunities to grow and learn each day.

I am grateful for the beauty of nature around me.



PART 3: Monthly Summary

At the end of each month, summarize your gratitude practice.

What patterns do you notice in the things you are grateful for?

How has your perspective changed since you started practicing gratitude?

What new gratitude practices would you like to try next month?

What challenges did you face in practicing gratitude , and how did you overcome them?

Which gratitudes do you want to turn into a daily affirmation?

