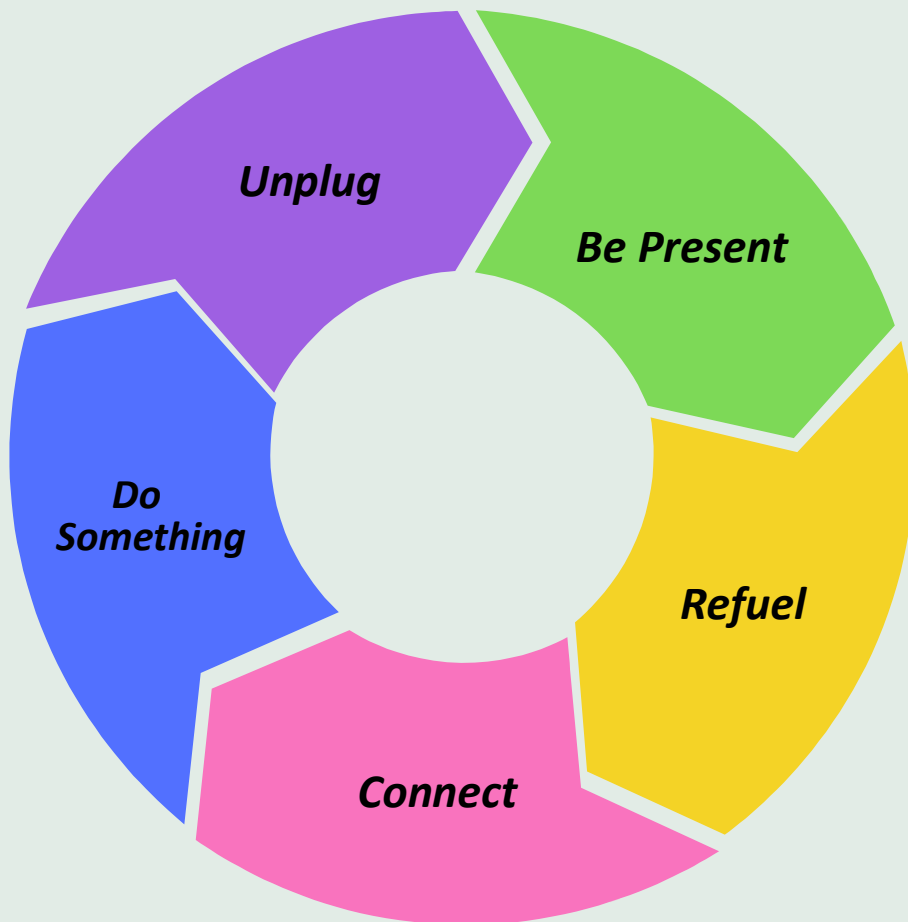


ELECTION STRESS KIT

Tips and resources to cope with the current national discourse

Cal U Wellness Center



UNPLUG: Limit your consumption of social media and the 24-hour non-stop images. It's important to stay informed, but creating boundaries is important.

BE PRESENT: Use reflection to recognize your inner thoughts and feelings. Be curious and non-judgmental and give yourself permission to feel the way you do. Although avoiding can be useful, "pushing down" or ignoring strong emotions can have negative impacts.

REFUEL: Focus on restoring yourself with rest and healthy food. Drink water and try to limit caffeine. Move a little every day. Take a walk; look at the sky; be in nature. Journal or meditate. Make art or watch funny videos. Read something fun.

CONNECT: Engage with supportive friends and allies. Talk about current issues, if needed, but be aware of when you're feeling overwhelmed. Not everyone will share your perspective, so it's OK to limit your topics and avoid heated conflict. Reach out to supportive services on-campus, including the Cal U Counseling Center.

DO SOMETHING: Channel what you're feeling into positive, meaningful activity. Be informed and proactive around issues that matter to you. Find ways to engage in your community through advocacy in ways that fit for you.

UNPLUG

Stay informed, but know your limits:

Monitor how you feel after news consumption. Feeling preoccupied or even upset by national events may be a sign to cut back on your news intake and limit social media discussions.

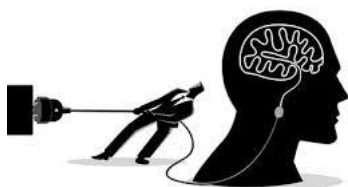


Consider scheduling a short block of time in the morning and one in the evening to catch up on news without checking for every new update during the day.



During “digital breaks,” take time to focus on something enjoyable, such as a hobby, exercising, being in nature or spending time with family and friends.

Check out [this video](#) for some more tips for “unplugging” during a stressful election time.



BE PRESENT










Consider practicing **self-compassion** as you work through challenging or uncertain times. Try some of [these](#) exercises compiled by Dr. Kristin Neff, a renowned researcher of self-compassion.

Grab your phone and your earbuds and head outside for a guided [mindful walk](#) to de-stress.

Top Meditation Apps by Downloads in the U.S. for 2018

sensortower.com

Overall Downloads

-  Calm
-  Headspace
-  Insight Timer
-  Aura
-  Simple Habit
-  Breethe
-  10% Happier
-  BetterMe
-  Pacifica
-  Abide



SELF-SOOTHING

Self-soothing is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions.



Sight

Low lighting
Soothing colors
Sleeping masks
Coloring books
Pinterest Collages

Touch

Soft things
Cuddle things
Massage
Hot/cold shower
Heated/weighted blanket



Sound

Calming noise
ASMR videos
Nature sounds
Guided meditations
Binaural beats



Smell

Aromatherapy
Fresh air
Candles/incense
Comforting smells



Taste

Strong flavors
Warm drinks
Eat slowly
Nostalgic flavors



www.blessingmanifesting.com

Listen to nature and [soothing Tibetan singing bowls](#)



Grounding



Grounding strategies can help us get in touch with our bodies and surroundings in the present moment. Pause what you are doing and pay attention to what you can see, hear, smell, and touch in your environment.

REFUEL

Balance

A national election during COVID? Focusing on your well-being is more important than ever! Trying to keep a balance in most areas of your life will help you roll through challenging days more smoothly and keep you on the road to wellness!



Eating and Nutrition

For tips, guidelines, and health information, this is a [great resource!](#)

If you are experiencing food insecurity, the Cal U Cupboard is open at Vulcan Village for Cal U Students! Please contact Diane Hasbrouck for more information: Hasbrouck_d@calu.edu.



Sleep

Is your sleep schedule irregular? Are you sleeping more than you want to be? Are you having [trouble falling asleep](#)? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," you may benefit from these sleep hygiene tips and resources!

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene>



Exercise

Cal U's Herron Recreation Center offers a variety of virtual classes: [@CalURecServices](#)

Popsugar offers [more resources](#) for healthy habits!

CONNECT

Five ways to build stronger connections

- 01 Write a letter
- 02 Pick up the phone and call
- 03 Ask meaningful questions
- 04 Answer questions with honesty
- 05 Connect via video

COMPASS

Robert Reffkin, Founder & CEO

Why Connect?

- ◆ To decrease loneliness, stress, depression, and anxiety
- ◆ To acknowledge collective trauma and experience solidarity
- ◆ To experiencing love and belonging
- ◆ To give and receive care and compassion

Connecting..connecting.... connecting....

Zoom fatigue is real, but sometimes it's our only option. So how do we connect without MORE stress? Try these tips:

- Establish "no screen" blocks of time in your day – times when you don't have classes, meetings, etc. (See "UNPLUG" above)
- While turning off your camera during class can be a relief, make sure you don't do it all the time. Leaving your camera on, even if you can only see your instructor and one other brave student, can help you feel connected and more focused on content.
- Avoid multi-tasking. Even though it can be tempting to use more than one device at a time or check emails and respond to texts while Zooming, focusing on the content of the meeting will actually give your brain a break! And we all need a bit more peace and focus right now!

Connecting Virtually

- ◆ Zoom dance party
- ◆ [Netflix Party](#)
- ◆ [House Party](#) App
- ◆ TikTok Challenges
- ◆ Virtual group workouts

- [Amazing support groups](#) for EVERYONE and all topics!
- Virtual book clubs
- Virtual karaoke on Google Hangouts

Spiritual Connection

Spirituality can be one way to connect with yourself, others, nature, or a higher power(s).



[Loving-kindness meditation](#)

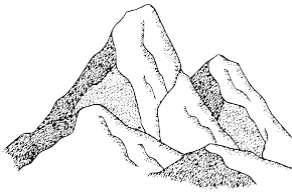
Find local or online spiritual communities

[Animal/Nature live cams!](#)

DO SOMETHING

It can be challenging to stay motivated when everything around us seems chaotic and scary. But doing something – some action, no matter how small – can lessen some of the uncertainty.

What you do doesn't need to be political – taking a step to stand up for or stand in for a person or a cause or the environment means *we're not powerless*. Check out the ideas on this page!



Learn about Vision Boards [here](#).

Advocacy, service, and generosity are a few ways to promote a sense of empowerment and contribution when we may be feeling helpless. Want to have a voice in local or national politics? [Check this out](#) for ideas! Simply want to support a cause that you care about? You can volunteer [locally](#) or for a chapter of a national organization. [Start here!](#)

Connect with your Values

Identifying what is important to us can be one way to foster motivation. Try one of the values card sorts below and then consider how you can express your values on a daily basis.

- ◆ [Online values card sort](#)
- ◆ [Printable version](#)

Lean on your STRENGTHS

Knowing your strengths can help you address problems more effectively and engage in activities that generate confidence and purpose.

Try taking the [VIA Character Strengths Survey](#) to identify your strongest traits.



Be a JOINER! Become a member of one of the many [Cal U Clubs and Orgs!](#)

Wholeness

Think about what makes you feel whole, grounded, or like *you*. *It can be helpful to consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.*

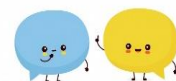


Additional Resources

Virtual Student Affairs

All Student Affairs departments are operating virtually and staff members are ready to assist you! Please call 724-938-5375 or email stuaffairs@calu.edu.

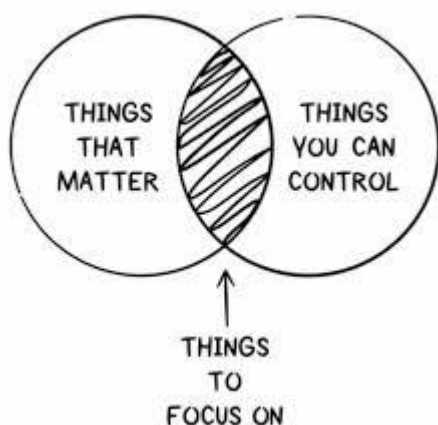
The Cal U Counseling Center offers virtual individual and group services to students.



You can reach us M-F 8AM-4PM
(724) 938-4056



Questions and concerns about mental health? Check out the [JED Foundation's Mental Health Resource Center](#).



★ NEED IMMEDIATE SUPPORT?

For crisis and urgent concerns, you may contact SPHS (Washington County) at 1-877-225-3567, Resolve Crisis Network (Allegheny County) at 1-888-796-8226, or 911.

You may also contact the Crisis Text Line (24/7) by texting "HOME" to 741741 or contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

THANK YOU to our colleagues at other institutions for sharing their resources. Some information in this document was adapted from Michigan State University, California State University at Long Beach, and Penn State University.

