



## Psychological First Aid for Parents/Caregivers During Political Elections

Political elections may trigger strong emotions for staff, students, families, and community members throughout the District and across the nation. As adults and parents, we play a critical role in promoting a sense of safety, as well as in healing the divisiveness that may permeate our schools and communities. For many children and families, the results may trigger feelings of concern, fear, anger, and sadness. A positive relationship with a healthy adult at home and at school is one of the most important factors that helps build an individual's resilience. Having a sense that children and adults care about each other, individually and as a collective contributes to their social-emotional well-being, as well as their academic success. As parents and guardians, there are strategies you can implement on a daily basis to ensure your children are heard and feel protected during these uncertain times.



### **LISTEN** to what they say and how they act.

- Ask your child how they are feeling in response to the election season.
- Pay attention to any behavioral changes in your child; often children demonstrate their emotions in nonverbal ways.
- As your child continues distance learning, inquire about their day of virtual classes and remind them to tell you if they are ever insulted, put-down, harassed, or bullied at school or in the community due to their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or political views.



### **PROTECT** by maintaining structure, stability, and consistency.

- Remind your child that you will protect them from any danger: physical, verbal, or emotional.
- Understand that some populations may be feeling more vulnerable and at risk of harm from others.
- Alternatively, when children witness others being harmed or threatened, they may not feel safe. Their sense of danger can be alleviated by offering them comfort, stability, and predictability in their home.
- Some ways to protect children are to monitor conversations that may trigger fear or anxiety. Limit or monitor use of technology, social media, or television that may incite fears. During these conversations, it is important to provide accurate and age-appropriate information.
- If your child says that they have experienced or witnessed any incident of harassment or bullying, believe them and report the incident immediately.



### **CONNECT** through interaction, activities, and resources.

- Check-in with your child regularly.
- Become familiar with the school and community resources available to support your child and family.
- If your child shares that they were physically attacked, call your local law enforcement agency. To contact the Los Angeles School Police Department call (213) 625-6631.
- If an incident takes place during virtual learning or in school, inform the school Principal, teacher, or other school support staff to help you.

**Call Los Angeles Unified's  
Student & Family Wellness Hotline**  
Consultations, Support & Referrals



**Need help?**  
Call (213) 241-3840  
Weekdays 8 am to 5 pm

**For support with:**  
Mental Health  
Immunizations  
Health Insurance  
Food and Housing  
Enrollment  
And more

### Community Hotlines

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
(800) 273-TALK (8255) (24 hours)

**Teen Line** (800) 852-8336  
(Daily, 6pm-10pm)

**Trevor Lifeline** (24 hours)  
(866) 488-7386

### Text and Chat Resources

**Lifeline Chat** (24 hours)

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/)

**Crisis Text Line**  
(24/7) Text "LA" to 741741

**Teen Line**  
Text "TEEN" to 839863  
(Daily, 6pm-9pm)

### If You Need Immediate HELP, Call 911

**Los Angeles School Police Department**  
(213) 625-6631

For a psychiatric emergency, contact the  
**Department of Mental Health**  
24-hour ACCESS Center at  
(800) 854-7771

To make a School Mental Health  
Clinic referral, visit [smh.lausd.net](http://smh.lausd.net).

## MODEL calm and optimistic behavior.



- It is important that as adults we model what it looks like to hear one another's views in a calm, optimistic manner, while respecting differing opinions.
- Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and reactions about the election, as well as to adult conversations happening in the presence of children. Children take their cues from adults.
- Model healthy behaviors/responses by remaining calm, courteous, and helpful.
- Request a meeting with the principal or designee if you have questions on how your child's school is handling bullying, harassment, discrimination, and/or any other threatening incidents towards students due to their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or political views.
- Acknowledge that recent political developments may leave many feeling vulnerable and overwhelmed. The uncertainty may create feelings of desperation and hopelessness for the future. As adults, it is important that we maintain calm and express optimism.
- Practice self-care, which includes getting help when needed, making sure to get enough sleep, eating healthy, and maintaining an exercise regimen.

## TEACH about normal changes that can occur when feeling nervous or upset.



- Each child will have a unique reaction to the same situation.
- Teach your child that speaking up and asking for help is a source of strength. It is important for children to develop and utilize their skills to overcome difficult situations by engaging in help-seeking behavior.
- Establish a nurturing environment so that children feel that "if something unpredictable happens, I can count on my family to support and help me heal."
- Ask your child to identify one adult at their school that they can ask for help if they experience harassment or bullying.

For tools and resources for engaging students, visit [L.A.Unified Human Relations Diversity and Equity](http://L.A.Unified Human Relations Diversity and Equity)

