

Tips for supporting clients & staff as they process their election results concerns:

The campaign rhetoric and subsequent election results may have created new fears for clients and staff, and for some may also reactivate traumatic memories from their past experiences with corrupt and oppressive governments. It is important that we are proactive in reaching out to clients, staff and our communities offering support and perspective as we move through the unknown days ahead. Below are some tips on how to support clients, staff and children:

- Create a safe space for people to share their concerns and ask questions
- Validate people's concerns, anger and fears and let them know you understand and support them
- Suggest they share their worst fears so that you can offer a counter message and perspective to help elevate those fears
- De-catastrophize the situation which will help people to manage their dread and thoughts of their worst fears coming true (the world is not ending)
- Encourage people to limit watching the news and reading political social media posts
- Discourage people from getting into arguments with others who don't share their views
- Encourage people to eat well, sleep and channel their anxieties into physical activity such as exercise
- Encourage people to surround themselves with persons they trust and feel connected to
- Encourage people to get out into nature as it can provide perspective and connection to a bigger reality
- Create a network of positive community supporters for those who are the most vulnerable
- Consider asking community supporters to write messages of love, hope and support to your clients and staff
- Consider inviting elder citizens to talk to your clients and staff about their experiences with the American political system throughout their lifetime to offer hope and perspective
- Encourage clients, staff and partners to reach out to refugee newcomers and other vulnerable members of the community with messages of welcome and support
- Offer referrals for support through mental health services, particularly when people's fears are interfering with daily functioning
- Encourage people to seek solace and support in their faith communities
- Create a mechanism for people to report to you any negative incidents
- Remind people that very little will change overnight
- Remind people that what is said in the heat of a campaign is often not how things play out when candidates actually get into office and govern
- Help people to think about how they can take action and channel their fears into positive ways to express their values and ideals
- Remind people that unlike many of the countries where they came from, we have a three part governmental system with checks and balances and radical change is unlikely
- Remind people that despite the divisions in our country, the majority of Americans do not hold radical views of exclusion and hate
- Answer people's questions about the future of the program honestly and assure them that we are all fighting for it to continue
- Offer a sense of hope and resilience

Tips for parents in supporting their children:

- Remember that children take their cues from their parents (If you are anxious and fearful, they will be anxious and fearful)
- Give children a safe space to express all their thoughts, feelings, concerns and fears
- Validate their feelings and let them know you understand
- Convey a sense of calm and hope
- Let them know that they are safe
- Encourage them to report to you any incidents that concern them
- Limit their exposure to the news and social media political posts
- Limit their exposure to adult conversations about the results of the election
- Discourage children from getting into arguments with others about their views and discuss ways to have constructive dialogue
- Encourage children to spend time with their friends and create opportunities for play (Children work out their feelings through play)
- Engage the entire family in positive activities such as exercise, time in nature, art and play etc.
- Ensure that children eat and sleep well
- Be explicit about your values and ideals and how you plan to move forward with hope in the days ahead
- Talk to children about standing up for their ideals and values while respecting those of others
- Offer children the opportunity to be creative and express themselves through action
- Explain to children how the US Government operates and reassure them that unlike some countries, the US has a system of checks and balances
- Surround your children with people who love them and make them feel valued and safe