

# Checking in with Yourself



## RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF STRESS, TRAUMA, AND BURNOUT

In the high-stress world of election administration, it's crucial to prioritize your mental well-being. Regularly checking in with yourself allows you to recognize signs of stress, trauma, or burnout early on, enabling timely intervention and support.

### BENEFITS

- Increase self-awareness
- Timely recognition and management of mental health challenges
- Improve overall resilience

### QUICK EXERCISE/ACTIVITY

#### Stress, Trauma, and Burnout Check-in

- Regularly assess your stress levels by taking a moment to reflect on your emotions and physical sensations.
  - Try this [Body Scan Meditation](#)
  - Utilize an [Emotions and Sensations Wheel](#) to help identify your feelings.
- Identify symptoms of stress such as:
  - **Cognitive symptoms:** Difficulty making decisions, difficulty concentrating, memory problems, cognitive disorders
  - **Emotional symptoms:** Irritability, moodiness, feeling anxious, nervousness, feeling sad or depressed, anger, low self-confidence
  - **Physical symptoms:** Headaches, tightness in chest, muscle pain, insomnia, digestive issues, fatigue, lack of energy, low sex drive and reproductive issues
  - **Behavioral symptoms:** Changes in eating habits, crying more often than usual, social withdrawal, changes in sex drive, increased use of alcohol or other substances
- Recognize signs of trauma, such as:
  - Intrusive thoughts or memories
  - Heightened anxiety
  - Emotional numbness
  - Avoidance
  - Negative changes in thinking and mood
  - Changes in physical or emotional reactions

- Pay attention to burnout indicators like chronic exhaustion, cynicism, or a sense of ineffectiveness.
- Use a journal to track patterns and identify when symptoms are more pronounced. A [Thoughts/Feelings Tracker](#) can also help to record your symptoms.

## Recognize When to Get Help

It's important to seek help before your symptoms get severe.

- Persistent feelings of overwhelming stress or anxiety.
- Changes in sleep patterns, appetite, or energy levels.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed.
- Passive or active thoughts of self-harm or suicide



## Resources for Getting Help

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Many workplaces offer EAPs providing confidential counseling and support services.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call 988 for immediate assistance (put this in your phone contacts).
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor (put this in your phone contacts).
- **SAMHSA National Helpline:** Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for free, confidential assistance.
- **Local mental health services:** Explore local mental health resources and counseling services in your community.

## CONCLUSION

Checking in with yourself is a powerful tool for maintaining mental well-being. Recognizing signs of stress, trauma, or burnout early on allows you to seek help proactively. Remember, reaching out for support is a sign of strength and there are resources available to assist you in navigating the challenges of your role as an Election Official.

