

Weathering the Political Winds



As political events and elections fill the news, it's natural for tensions to rise. Children and teens are deeply affected by what they see and hear – at home, at school, online, and in their communities. Even when they don't fully understand every issue, they can feel the stress, fear, and uncertainty that often accompany political conflict and change. Together, we can help our children grow into thoughtful, resilient, and compassionate citizens.



Here are some considerations to help protect and promote mental health and emotional resilience during these challenging times.

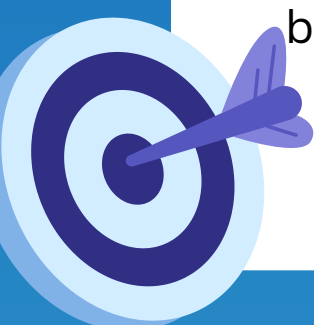
Talk about it

One of the most important things you can do is create a safe space for open conversations. Children and teens need to feel comfortable asking questions and expressing their emotions. Listening actively without judgment and validate their feelings by letting them know it's okay to feel upset, confused, or worried. When responding, it's helpful to answer honestly but simply, keeping explanations age-appropriate and avoiding overwhelming them with complex details.



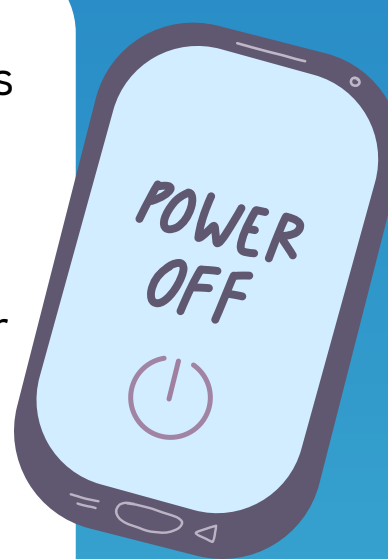
Focus on what you can control

Focusing on what your family can control is another key strategy. In a world that may feel unpredictable, small positive actions like volunteering, supporting causes you believe in, or writing letters can restore a sense of agency and hope. Maintaining familiar routines around meals, bedtime, and family activities also provides a reassuring structure that helps children feel safe.



Limit exposure

While staying informed is important, constant exposure to news coverage and social media debates can heighten anxiety. Setting boundaries around media consumption, such as turning off the news during family time or encouraging regular screen breaks, can create much needed breathing room. For older children and teens who want to stay informed, guiding them toward reliable, age-appropriate news sources can help them engage thoughtfully rather than fearfully.



Model healthy coping

Children also look to adults for cues on how to manage stress. Modeling calm and thoughtful behavior, especially during political discussions, can have a lasting impact. Managing your own anxiety and being mindful of how you talk about current events in front of children helps set a reassuring tone. Demonstrating respectful dialogue, even when opinions differ, teaches young people important lessons about empathy and critical thinking.



Exercise is a powerful stress reliever. A short walk or stretching can release endorphins that help us feel calmer.



Simple mindfulness practices like focused breathing or grounding exercises can help you feel more present and relaxed.



Being creative can help to process emotions and channel your energy into something positive and fulfilling.

Get Help

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, prolonged exposure to stressful news and uncertainty can lead to heightened anxiety, sleep disturbances, and even depression. It's important to watch for signs that your child might be experiencing more stress than they can manage on their own. Changes in mood, sleep, appetite, or school performance can be indicators that additional support is needed. If you notice anything concerning, don't hesitate to reach out to a counsellor, school support staff, or a mental health professional for help.

Check out the [Mental Health & Wellness Hub](#) for a list of resources.