

Election Season De-Escalation Tips

These four techniques will help you avoid or de-escalate tense situations, keep stress low, and your environment calm.

1 Avoid judgement.

Understand that everyone has a different life experience and may be overwhelmed with struggles and anxiety from things they know nothing about. Listen and focus on the feelings behind the message.

2 Don't take it personally.

Another person's behavior is not about you. You are likely not the true cause or target of someone's behavior. Tell yourself, "*This may not be about the two of us; it may be about other issues in their life.*" Or repeat to yourself, "*I'm going to be respectful. I'm going to be respectful.*"

3 Control your reactions.

You can't control another person's behavior, but you can control how you react. Avoid using facial expressions, gestures and language that could make another person feel anxious or defensive.

4 Be prepared if you have to engage.

Have a plan to acknowledge and redirect. Here are some things you could potentially say:

- *Yeah, this year has been difficult on everyone.*
- *This is an important election year; every vote counts.*
- *I'm glad to see such great voter turnout.*
- *It's great to witness so many people exercising their right to vote.*
- *We'll all be glad to have this year behind us.*