SOS

Some de-stressing thoughts about the state of our nation

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The recent presidential campaign and its end result placed a huge strain on many people that's still being felt today. According to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the day before and the day after the recent presidential election registered short-term increases in call volume. Lifeline workers noted that call surges were about 140 percent higher than usual. According to the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC), these frantic outreach attempts didn't reflect party affiliation or politics. They represented the stress caused by change.

"Abrupt change and the uncertainties it can bring can be challenging for anyone," says John Draper, PhD, the director of MHA-NYC, a 50-year-old nonprofit organization that's locally based but boasts a national reach. "It is important for everyone to know they are not alone and that there are people and resources available to help them."

Sanam Hafeez, PsyD, a licensed clinical social worker in New York City, notes that the signs of this postelection stress continue to wreak havoc on our collective psyche. Many people feel on edge and angry, relationships can suffer, people can't sleep and "anything can set you off," she says.

"When stress disturbs sleep for a prolonged period of time, this can lead to depression and mental illness, heart and kidney disease and diabetes," Hafeez explains. This is why people must resume a normal lifestyle and overcome persistent feelings of worry.

"Put yourself in time-out mode," Hafeez says. "Cash in on some well needed me time and you may notice that within hours your mood will shift."

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