LifeStance Survey Finds 79% of Americans Are Experiencing Anxiety Over the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election

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Election stress is contributing to an increase in anxiety and strained relationships, reinforcing the importance of accessible mental healthcare

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., Oct. 8, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- A LifeStance Health survey released today reveals how widespread election-related anxiety is impacting Americans' mental health, straining their personal relationships and prompting many to limit social media exposure.

Nearly four out of five (79%) respondents said the upcoming U.S. presidential election has caused them anxiety this year. Key generational differences were evident, with younger individuals more likely to experience moderate to significant election-related anxiety. Additionally, nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents who are currently in therapy say they have discussed politics or the election with their clinician during sessions.

These findings underscore the ongoing need for high-quality, accessible mental healthcare, as therapy plays a critical role in helping people effectively navigate election-related anxiety, develop healthy coping techniques and maintain their overall mental well-being during times of stress. For tips on how to cope with election-related anxiety, visit LifeStance's blog.

Key findings from LifeStance's survey, "The 2024 Election Cycle's Impact on Mental Health & Relationships," include:

The U.S. presidential election is a significant source of stress and anxiety for Americans, especially among younger generations.

- The vast majority (79%) of respondents said the upcoming presidential election has caused them some degree of anxiety this year, with 21% saying it has caused them significant anxiety.
- Younger generations are the most likely to have experienced "moderate" to "significant" election-related anxiety, including 64% of Generation Z and 54% of millennials, as compared with 47% of Generation X and 52% of baby boomers.
- More than half (57%) of respondents think about the election daily, including nearly one-third (31%) who said they think about it multiple times per day.
- Forty-four percent of Gen Z have even postponed major life events such as moving, going to college, getting married or having children due to anxiety about the political climate.
- Therapy plays a crucial role in helping people process external stressors like politics. In fact, nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents who are in therapy say they discuss politics or the election with their mental health clinician during sessions.

Political disagreements are meaningfully impacting relationships, causing conflict among friends and family and even ending friendships, all of which can significantly impact one's mental health.

- Nearly half (44%) of respondents said political or election-related discussions have led to conflicts in their personal lives.
- This is especially true of younger generations: 29% percent of Gen Z and 25% of millennials say that discussing politics leads to conflicts "always" or "often," compared to 12% of Gen X and 9% of baby boomers.
- Nearly a quarter (22%) of respondents said they have considered ending a friendship due to opposing political views, and 18% said they have done so before.

Differing political views are creating tension in romantic relationships and impacting who people choose to date.

- Half (50%) of Gen Z say "political compatibility" is an important factor when considering who they date, compared with 42% of millennials, 31% of Gen X and 29% of baby boomers.
- One-third (33%) of respondents said they would not date someone with opposing political views, while more than a quarter (28%) would consider it a "deal breaker" if they found out someone they were currently dating had opposing political views.
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of Gen Z and (23%) millennials have ended a romantic relationship due to political disagreements at least once, compared to 10% of Gen X and 4% of baby boomers.

To cope with election anxiety, people are adjusting their social media habits and even blocking friends and family members.

- Over one-third (34%) of respondents said they unfollowed or blocked a friend or family member on social media due to their political views, while 22% said they haven't but have considered it.
- Over two-thirds (72%) of respondents said social media and news coverage contribute to their anxiety about the election, and more than half (54%) limit their exposure to news and social media to manage election-related stress.
- More than half of Gen Z (52%) and 44% of millennials said social media and news coverage have moderately or significantly contributed to their anxiety about the election, compared to baby boomers (37%) and Gen X (35%).

"Election-related anxiety is just one example of the mounting mental health challenges people face in today's complex world," said Dr. Ujjwal

Ramtekkar, Chief Medical Officer, LifeStance. "Our survey highlights the ongoing need to improve access to high-quality mental health care, which would provide even more people with the tools to effectively manage daily life stressors, build long-term resilience and ultimately foster healthier, more resilient communities."

Methodology
On behalf of LifeStance Health, Researchscape International conducted an online survey of 1,052 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. The survey was fielded from Aug. 7 to 15, 2024. The credibility interval is plus or minus four percentage points for questions answered by all respondents. The data was weighted to the U.S. population by eight demographic questions.

ABOUT LIFESTANCE HEALTH
Founded in 2017, LifeStance (NASDAQ: LFST) is reimagining mental health. We are one of the nation's largest providers of virtual and in-person outpatient mental health care for children, adolescents and adults experiencing a variety of mental health conditions. Our mission is to help people lead healthier, more fulfilling lives by improving access to trusted, affordable and personalized mental healthcare. LifeStance and its supported practices employ nearly 7,000 psychiatrists, advanced practice nurses, psychologists and therapists and operates across 33 states and more than 550 centers. To learn more, please visit www.LifeStance.com.

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