



STRESS IN AMERICA™: U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2016

As the United States and the world prepare for the 2016 U.S. presidential election on November 8, more than half of Americans are reporting that the campaign is a very or somewhat significant source of stress. Election-related stress also seems to affect various generations of Americans differently, including those who use social media versus those who do not use social media.

For the past decade, the Stress in America™ survey has examined how stress affects the health and well-being of American adults. Prior to the release of the full survey data in early 2017, the American Psychological Association is making available specific data related to stress levels associated with the presidential election. This data backs up anecdotal reports from multiple news sources about election-related stress.

ELECTION STRESS SNAPSHOT

This year, more than half (52 percent) of all Americans say that the 2016 U.S. presidential election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress in their lives.

Those who find the election to be a source of stress have a significantly higher overall stress level than those who don't find the election stressful. On a 10-point scale, where 1 is "little or no stress" and 10 is "a great deal of stress," the average reported overall stress level for Americans who say the election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress is 5.1. For Americans who say the election is neither a very nor somewhat significant source of stress, their reported average stress level is significantly lower (4.4).

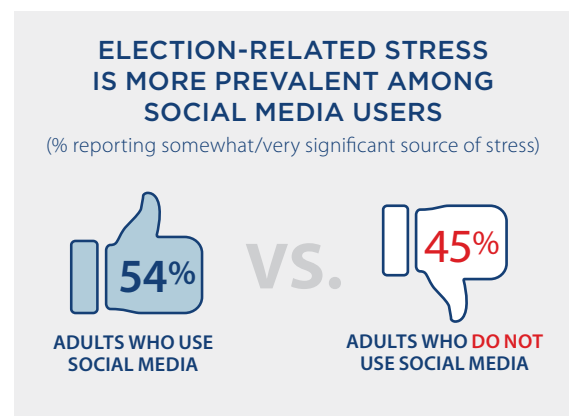
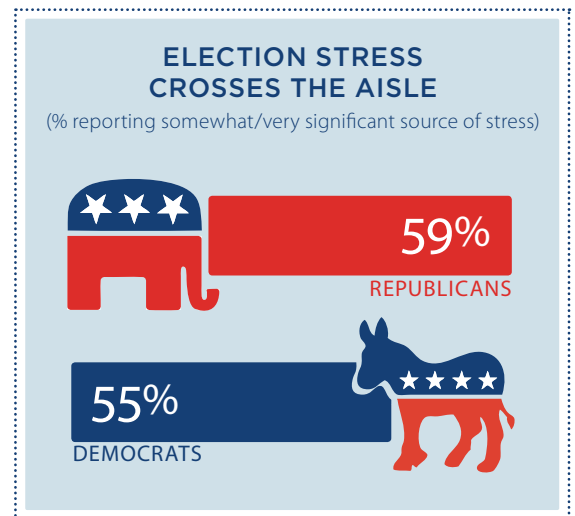
ELECTION STRESS IS BIPARTISAN

Survey findings reveal that while sources of stress differ across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and urbanicity, Republicans and Democrats are statistically equally likely to cite the election as a significant source of stress. In addition, 46 percent of Independents say the same.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAN CAUSE ELECTION-RELATED STRESS

According to the survey, social media appears to affect Americans' stress levels when it comes to the election and related topics. In fact, more than one in four adults (38 percent) say that political and cultural discussions on social media cause them stress.

Additionally, adults who use social media are more likely than adults who do not use social media to say the election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress (54 percent vs. 45 percent, respectively).





DECISION 2016: AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STRESSOR

Everyone — Young and Old — Is Feeling It

While around half of adults, regardless of generation, report that the election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress, youngest and oldest generations appear more likely to be affected, with 56 percent of Millennials (ages 19 to 37) and 59 percent of Matures (ages 71+) saying the election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress. This is significantly more than the 45 percent of Gen Xers (ages 38 to 51), and directionally more so than the 50 percent of Boomers (ages 52 to 70).

Election Stress Bridges Racial and Ethnic Lines

Survey findings show that election-related stress does not confine itself to one racial or ethnic group. Rather, it appears to manifest across groups — more so in some than others. Hispanics, in particular, are most likely to say that the election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress (56 percent), followed by Whites and Native Americans at 52 percent each.

Americans with Disabilities More Likely to Report Election Stress

The outlook for election-related stress changes when considering Americans with disabilities. Six in 10 (60 percent) Americans with disabilities report that the election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress, compared to 48 percent of those who do not have disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

The 2016 Stress in America™ survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) between August 5 and 31, 2016, among 3,511 adults aged 18+ who reside in the U.S. Interviews were conducted in English (n=3255) and Spanish (n=256). Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Poll surveys. Data are weighted to reflect their proportions in the population. Weighting variables included age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. In addition to the demographic variables listed, data from Hispanic respondents were weighted for acculturation, taking into account respondents' household language as well as ability to read and speak in English and Spanish.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error, which are most often not possible to fully estimate and control, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Poll avoids the words "margin of error," as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for unweighted, random samples with 100 percent response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls — whether conducted by telephone or online — come close to the ideal probability sample given the sources of error previously noted. Because the sample is based on those who were invited and agreed to participate in an online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

The full 2016 Stress in America report will be released in early 2017.

