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Recognizing and Overcoming Election Anxiety

Premier Health Now

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Every four years there is a heightened sense of anticipation over an event that captures the world’s attention along with the hopes, dreams, and even fears of those awaiting its outcome.

Though we could easily be referring to the upcoming Olympic games in Paris, it’s possible that many are much more preoccupied with a completely different contest looming ominously on the horizon.

The upcoming election to decide the next President of the United States has already felt overripe with social and political tension though November remains a few months away.

Premier Health Now spoke with Dr. Fadi Tayim, Clinical Neuropsychologist and Division Chief of the Brain Mapping Center at the Clinical Neuroscience Institute, to learn more about the causes of election-induced anxiety along with important strategies to overcome it.

Bipartisan Fears

Though Americans might be divided in their opinions over several key issues, there seems to be a united sense of dread over the results of the pending election no matter one’s political affiliation.

“Given today’s political landscape, as well as recent events, anxiety has seemed to be a lot higher for everyone,” says Dr. Tayim, “I think there is a lot at stake for individuals and the challenges we face every day. We tend to look to our political candidates to help address those challenges, but they simply can’t resolve all of them. Tension and anxiety tend to run higher if you believe one candidate might take away something from you if they are elected.”

Dr. Tayim also notes that so much of social media is driven by algorithms that target our interests and funnel us to exclusively interact with those who agree with our line of thinking.

“When this happens, our perspective towards others can become warped and can turn our thoughts into an echo chamber,” says Dr. Tayim. “It is important at times for us to limit or take breaks from social media, and routinely practice stress, relaxation, and breathing techniques. Vote and allow your voice to be heard, but be sure to create space for stillness, calm, and silence.”

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