



Helping Students in Troubling Times

Here are some suggestions and resources to consider as you provide ongoing support to your students. Before you take any action, review your school and district policies to be sure you don't violate any policies as you help your students. For example, some districts have policies prohibiting faculty from talking about politics with students. In addition, consult with your district to discover any guidance or response initiatives it has in place so your actions align with school and district programs.

- Encourage all students to treat others with respect and dignity regardless of differences in culture and beliefs. All students deserve to be treated with respect regardless of their political beliefs, socio-economic background, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and other factors.
- For students of some populations, the election results brought not just anxiety and despair, but fear for the future. During an emotional period like this, it is important to remind students that their strong emotions will pass and therefore they must refrain from drastic or risky behaviors that could have long-term consequences. If they feel they've suffered an emotional loss, they must give themselves time to heal.
- Don't provide assurances you can't ensure. If students are fearful, don't tell them, "Everything will be okay." For some students, the dangers they fear are very real. However, you can help them find positive ways to address their fears.
- Help students process information or images they find inflammatory in print, television and social media. Very often, simply discussing current events can help students develop a better understanding, and expressing their emotions can help students deal with them more effectively.
- Take clear actions to intervene with situations of bullying or harassment and review bullying prevention activities. Remind students of school and district policies related to offensive language, harassment and bullying.
- Check in with students who may be at risk for bullying and harassment, recognizing that all students have the right to be treated equally and fairly with dignity and respect as unique individuals, free from discrimination, harassment and bullying. Reassure them that there are adults who can help, work with them to identify those they can go to in a time of need, and encourage them to seek out an adult they trust and are comfortable talking to.
- Review the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success and focus on standards that are appropriate for your students' needs. For students enthusiastic about the election results, consider standards such as these.
 - B-SMS 2. Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control
 - B-SS 1. Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
 - B-SS 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students
 - B-SS 4. Demonstrate empathy
 - B-SS 5. Demonstrate ethical decision making and social responsibility
 - B-SS 9. Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment
- For students experiencing anxiety or sadness, consider standards such as these.
 - M 2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed
 - M 3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
 - B-SMS 7. Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem

- B-SS 2. Create positive and supportive relationships with other students
 - B-SS 3. Create relationships with adults that support success
 - B-SMS 10. Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities
 - B-SS 1. Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
 - B-SS 6. Use effective collaboration and cooperation skills
 - B-SMS 9. Demonstrate personal safety skills
- Review upcoming topics for classroom lessons to determine any adjustments you could make to address your school's climate. If you don't have classroom lessons scheduled in the immediate future, consider adding them to have an impact on a larger group of students. Topics such as creating positive relationships and communication skills are appropriate topics after the election.
 - Consider additional support through small groups for students who may need more in-depth interventions and actively identify those students through needs assessments, faculty referrals, observation or other means.
 - Consult and collaborate with stakeholders to create a school climate that welcomes and appreciates the strengths and gifts of all students, particularly culturally diverse students.
 - Consult and collaborate with relevant stakeholders when student assistance is needed, including the identification of early warning signs of student distress. Student privacy should be honored to the greatest extent possible while balancing the best interests of students and the safety of self and others. Review the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors when weighing issues of confidentiality.
 - Consult with parents if you have concerns about a student and share local referral resources as needed.
 - Collaborate with teachers and administrators to ensure that information is shared appropriately with those who have a need to know.
 - Consult with other school counselors and district school counseling supervisors when considering the best approach for supporting a student or when a breach of confidentiality may be necessary.
 - Provide a safe space for students and allies to discuss fears of safety and well-being. Promote sensitivity and acceptance of diversity among all students and staff to include LGBTQ students, immigrants, members of religious minorities, and diverse family systems.
 - Become familiar with state and federal laws and regulations. When appropriate, remind students the Supreme Court has ruled that all students are guaranteed access to K-12 public education regardless of immigration status.

Resources

[ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success](#)

ASCA School Counselor Magazine

[Address Student Anxiety](#)

Anti-Defamation League

[11 Ways Schools Can Help Students Feel Safe in Challenging Times](#)

Facing History and Ourselves

[Fostering Civil Discourse: A Guide for Classroom Conversations](#)

[A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools](#)

The National Association of School Psychologists

[Guidance for Reinforcing Safe, Supportive and Positive School Environments for All Students](#)

ASCA Webinars

Working With Undocumented Secondary-Level Students

[View the webinar](#)

Infusing a Caring Climate in Your School

[View the webinar](#)

Help Students Reduce Anxiety

[View the webinar](#)

Culturally Competent School Counseling

[View the webinar](#)

Suggested Web Sites

The Child Mind Institute

[How to Help Children Cope With Frightening News](#)

[National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

Sample Documents and Publications

[Culturally Competent Crisis Response: Information for Crisis Teams](#)

This document talks about the importance of delivering culturally competent crisis responses in our changing society. Although written for school psychologists, this document provides an excellent resource for school counselors in giving strategies and tips for effective crisis response planning and implementing.

[Help for the Helpers](#)

[Help for Caregivers/Parents](#)