



Counseling Center
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**Support and advocacy in the post-election:
Coping with the negative climate towards immigrants and other diverse groups
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Many students have expressed being disturbed and scared about the messages of oppression, campaign promises of discrimination and deportation, as well as hate crimes and graffiti towards immigrants and people of diverse identities and religions occurring locally and nationally. We at the Counseling Center share your concerns about the current climate of our country and the prospect of bias and discrimination against members of our community who identify as immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQ, people of color, women, or people of other diverse identities and religions. Bias and oppression is damaging to a person's psychological and physical health but it also damages the fabric of our college and the country. We stand with our students and community in condemning all discrimination, bias and hate crimes and advocating for social justice.

SUNY Oneonta's commitment to providing a safe and welcoming place to all students is strongly affirmed by President Kleniewski and our college administrators. The Counseling Center is here to support students in coping with the negative cultural climate and prospect of bias, discrimination, deportation, and the possible loss of legal rights in the United States. The Counseling Center supports and affirms the rights, education and mental health of all students in our community.

During these uncertain times, we invite students to utilize the Counseling Center for support and coping strategies. We also offer these tips for taking care of yourself as well as your friends and family.

Acknowledge your feelings. It is completely normal to feel scared, betrayed, hurt and angry when faced with these messages of bias and discrimination. Holding feelings in can lead to long-term psychological and health concerns. Vent, journal, share your feelings in a safe place with safe people. Feelings are information about what we need and what is important to us. Use your feelings to guide your self-care and coping strategies.

Take care of yourself physically and emotionally. Eat well, exercise, get lots of sleep, do things you enjoy. Spend time in nature. Don't use alcohol or drugs as a coping strategy. Take good care of yourself. Coping with uncertainty and oppression and (if you choose) getting involved in activism can be exhausting and keeping your body and mind healthy is an important way of maintaining your strength. When you receive messages that someone doesn't care about you or doesn't want you here, taking good care of yourself is a radical act of rebellion.

Connect to community. Be with people who support you and whose strength you can lean on when things get hard. There are many, many people in our country and in our community who do not endorse

the messages of bias and discrimination. Being around people who love and support you is a way of helping to restore your sense of safety and hope during scary times.

Connect to your values and roots. Connecting to the history of your family, culture or community can be a source of pride and comfort. Reading literature, listening to music, or enjoying art that connects you with your history and identity can help you find strength, pride and courage during these uncertain times.

Self-examination. Times of crisis can also be times of tremendous growth. Examining any areas of privilege or power in your life can help you to be a better ally to people targeted for bias or discrimination. Being clear on your values and examining your thoughts and feelings regarding your membership in both oppressed and privileged groups can help you to be clearer in where you devote your energy and how you use any privilege you might have.

Get active. Activism can make a difference. Contact your government representatives and voice your opinions. Support important political organizations that are fighting oppression and discrimination. Your voice does matter. Doing something constructive with your fear and anger can also be empowering in a time when you might be feeling powerless and hopeless.

Connect to the legacy of activism and Civil Rights movements. Read biographies and learn the history of people who have fought for civil rights before you. If you chose to participate in activism, you are not alone in this. You can find role models and inspiration in knowing that you are part of the legacy of leaders and civil rights activists who made our world better. They all faced dark times in their work and in their worlds and they can provide support and inspiration for your journey.

Be balanced. If you are getting involved in activism, it is also important to take care of yourself and make sure you feel safe. Take a rest when you need one. Rely on other people involved in the movement to keep things going when you need a rest. Connect to people and things that help you feel safe and calm so you have the strength and energy to go the long haul.

Use the resources that are here for you. There are many campus resources who are here to support and protect you. The Counseling Center provides individual and group counseling to students as well as consultation for any member of the campus community. All of our services are free and confidential. Experiencing discrimination, bias or hate crimes can cause stress, anger, sadness, or a variety of other feelings that can affect your mental health. Talking to a mental health professional can help.