

## Dealing with Co-worker Conflict during Elections

Election seasons can bring heated debate and disagreement to many people's relationships. This can be hard to handle in any environment, especially at work. Consider these strategies for protecting your peace, navigating conflict, and maintaining a neutral and respectful work environment for everyone this election season.



### Don't make assumptions

It's easy to assume that people around you have the same beliefs or opinions as you, but that's not always the case. This can lead to moments that are awkward, tense, or not appropriate for work. For example, what feels like a light-hearted joke to you may feel upsetting to someone else. To prevent this, avoid making guesses, comments, or jokes about how other people think or feel about the election.



### Hold boundaries

A simple way to avoid political conflicts is to keep conversations related to the workplace. If political topics do arise that feel unhelpful or draining, it's perfectly acceptable to set a boundary or excuse yourself. You might say something like, "I see your point, but I'd rather not get into that at work."





**You don't have to agree, but you do have to be respectful.** We all experience the world differently. Despite those differences, it's critical for everyone to feel safe and respected at work.



## Communicate mindfully

If you choose to engage in political discussions, only do so with the intention to listen and understand. Work is not the place for swaying political opinions, and brief exchanges between co-workers are unlikely to change anyone's mind. If you want to discuss it anyway, make sure everyone is OK with having the conversation first, then focus on asking questions, listening openly, and sharing your views in a non-judgmental way.



## Respond, don't react

If a conversation becomes difficult, try to pause and respond thoughtfully rather than reacting impulsively. This gives you the chance to separate what could be shared from what should be shared given the situation. Will starting an argument about this at work be helpful? Is there a different way to respond that feels more healthy and productive? Arguing or lashing out may feel good in the moment, but it's worth considering what it may cost you before engaging. If the conversation starts to feel unhelpful, excuse yourself politely. You can say something like, "Thanks for chatting. I have to get back to work now."

Even if you choose not to act on them in the moment, your feelings are still valid. It's important to make space for them later—with a friend, a family member, or on your own. This gives you a chance to reflect on what happened, process how you felt, and use that information to guide how you might handle similar situations in the future. For example, consider:

- What kinds of conversations feel helpful? Which ones aren't?
- What signs can I notice (through feelings or physical sensations) that can tell me it's time to end a conversation?
- If an unhelpful conversation happens again, how can I respond in a way that feels authentic, productive, and protects my peace?

You have the right to a safe and respectful workplace. If you don't feel that way, talk to your manager, HR, or a mental health professional using your Lyra Health benefit.



**Work conflict can be tough, but Lyra is here to help.**

Explore videos, articles, therapy, coaching, and more at [care.lyrahealth.com](https://care.lyrahealth.com).