



**MANAGER'S
GUIDE:**

**NAVIGATING
POLITICAL
CONFLICT**

Navigating Political Conflict

Our political climate remains uncertain and repercussions from the unrest will be felt for a long time to come. Many individuals hold deeply personal and cultural beliefs that have been the subject of debate leading up to this election. For most of us on either side of these issues, the stakes are high. As managers, it's your responsibility to navigate the uncharted waters. To get you started, here is an example message you can send to your teams to let them know you are here for them and care about their wellbeing.

"This election has weighed heavily on many of our minds for some time. We may have different points of view or emotions about the outcome, but I hope we can support each other as a team and respect each other's differences. I'm happy to connect with any of you directly if you need some time to process one-on-one." Below is a compiled list of "Do's and Don'ts" to help you maintain a commitment to inclusive behaviors.



Supporting your Teams

- Commit to an environment of mutual respect. As always, IPG strives to be inclusive of all individuals of difference, including political affiliations.
- When engaging in political discussions, make sure you do so in appropriate spaces where people can easily opt-in or out of the conversation, and share that they are welcome to do so.
- Share in advance whether it's okay to have political or election-related discussions in team meetings, etc. prior to the meeting taking place.
- Encourage people to make use of our mental health and resilience resources, like the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#), our Mental Health Guide, and other resources available on [Inclusiveatwork.com](#).
- While this election will likely have different impacts on different people, maintain a neutral stance, regardless of your personal views.
- Create a team culture of empathy, understanding and inclusion that provides support to everyone on your team.
- **Consider the following questions to plan how you will lead through this week and the following weeks or months:**
 - How might your position in the company, background, or political affiliation influence how your team responds and engages with you following the election?
 - How prepared are you to be empathetic with someone whose response to the outcome of the election differs from your own?
 - What support might you need after the election? Plan for this. The best way to support others is also to support yourself.
 - How might your direct reports know their performance reviews will not be impacted by political discussions with their peers or managers?

What to Avoid

Action Strategies



Avoid sharing political viewpoints or engaging in discussions about the election in spaces where people do not have a choice to opt into or out of the conversation, such as team meetings. Everyone may share the same beliefs, perspectives or sentiments.



As results come in, do not making assumptive statements like "I know we're all feeling.... (relieved,upset, etc.), as people may silently hold different beliefs and feel excluded, ashamed or belittled.



At no time should you condone or engage in insulting, bullying, disparaging, shaming or mocking behavior toward others' perspectives. This is always true at IPG, like all forms of inclusion, and this also applies to people's political beliefs.



Avoid sweeping statements like "conservatives are x" and "liberals are y" as you cannot know how everyone identifies.

Conclusion

When responding to your teams in the coming weeks, they will be looking to you to lead them through these complicated times. While there is no right answer, Maya Angelou put it best, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Some other phrases you can consider that reinforce empathy and inclusion are:

- "I don't have all the answers, but I care and want to listen."
- "How are you right now? What do you need in this moment?"

With so much up in the air, what is most important is connecting with your teams. They need to hear from you; they need to know that you care about their well-being. Create an environment where people can process what's happening in their own way. While we all have work that needs to get done, allow for some patience and some compassion. If you need more guidance for navigating these dynamics, as always, please reach out to us at Diversity@interpublic.com.