



Navigating The Topic of Elections- Communication Tools
Provided in Collaboration by LeadingAge and LeadingAge State Affiliates

Navigating the topic of elections in a non-partisan way can be challenging but it's possible. After a contentious election, it is even more important for leaders to approach their comments with sensitivity and a focus on unity. Here are suggested items to consider when thinking about how you communicate with and support residents and staff in the coming months.

1. **Emphasize Unity and Healing:** Highlight the need for coming together as a community. Stress the importance of moving forward collectively, regardless of differing opinions.
2. **Acknowledge Emotions:** Recognize that employees and residents may have strong feelings about the election results. Validate these emotions and encourage a supportive environment where people can express themselves respectfully.
3. **Promote Constructive Dialogue:** Encourage open, respectful conversations about the election and its outcomes. Provide guidelines for these discussions to ensure they remain constructive and inclusive.
4. **Reaffirm Organizational Values:** Reiterate the organization's commitment to its core values, such as respect, integrity, and inclusivity. Emphasize how these values guide the company's actions and interactions, especially during challenging times.
5. **Focus on Common Goals:** Highlight shared goals and aspirations that transcend political differences. This can help unite employees around common purposes and projects.
6. **Offer Support Resources:** Provide resources for employees and residents who may be struggling with the election results. This could include access to counseling services, social work or spiritual care, mental health resources, or employee assistance programs.
7. **Encourage Civic Responsibility:** Continue to promote the importance of civic engagement and participation in the democratic process. Emphasize that active and informed citizens strengthen democracy.
8. **Stay Neutral and Respectful:** Maintain a neutral stance in all communications. Avoid taking sides or making statements that could be perceived as partisan. Focus on the principles of democracy and the importance of respecting the electoral process.
9. **Highlight Positive Actions:** Share stories of positive actions and initiatives within the organization and the community that demonstrate resilience and cooperation. This can help foster a sense of hope and optimism.
10. **Create Safe Spaces:** Provide opportunities for employees and residents to come together in safe spaces to discuss their thoughts and feelings about the election. Ensure these spaces are moderated to maintain a respectful and supportive atmosphere. Consider inviting an outside facilitator to help.

Here are sample talking points you might use:

After a Contentious Election

1. Emphasizing Unity and Healing

- “Now that the election is over, it’s time for us to come together as a community. Let’s focus on unity and healing as we move forward.”

2. Acknowledging Emotions

- “There are many strong feelings about the election results. There may be times when we disagree or are experiencing quite different emotions from our neighbors or coworkers. It’s important to acknowledge these emotions and support each other during this time.”

3. Reaffirming Company Values

- “Our commitment to our core values remains steadfast. (FILL IN with your organization's core values) will continue to guide us, especially during challenging times.”

4. Focusing on Common Goals

- “Despite our differences, we at (name of organization) share common goals and aspirations. (List some of those that are specific to your organization). Let’s work together to achieve these goals and build a better future.”

5. Offering Support Resources

- For staff: “We are here to support you. If you need someone to talk to or resources to help you cope, please take advantage of our employee assistance programs (FILL IN with specific contact information). We are also offering (FILL IN with any other support being provided for staff)”
- For residents: “We are here to support you. If you need someone to talk to or resources to help you cope, please contact (FILL IN with specific name and contact information of staff people who are available, including social work, spiritual care, or others).”

6. Encouraging Civic Responsibility

- “Active and informed citizens strengthen democracy. Let’s continue to engage in the democratic process and contribute to our community.”

7. Highlighting Positive Actions

- “Let’s focus on the positive actions we can take within our company and community. Together, we can make a difference and foster a sense of hope and optimism.”

Having a difficult conversation about election results can be challenging, but it’s important to approach it with empathy, respect, and a focus on constructive dialogue. Here are some steps to help guide the conversation:

1. Prepare Yourself:

- **Reflect on Your Own Feelings:** Understand your own emotions and biases before entering the conversation. This will help you stay calm and objective.
- **Gather Information:** Be informed about the election results and the issues at hand. This will help you provide accurate information and address any misconceptions.

2. Set the Right Environment:

- **Choose a Private Setting:** Have the conversation in a private and comfortable setting where everyone feels safe expressing their thoughts.
- **Ensure a Calm Atmosphere:** Make sure the environment is calm and free from distractions.

3. Start with Empathy:

- **Acknowledge Emotions:** Begin by acknowledging that the election results may have stirred strong emotions. Validate these feelings without judgment.
 - **Express Understanding:** Show that you understand the significance of the election and its impact on individuals.
4. **Use Respectful Communication:**
- **Listen Actively:** Give the other person a chance to speak without interruption. Show that you are listening by nodding and providing verbal affirmations.
 - **Speak Calmly and Clearly:** Use a calm and respectful tone. Avoid raising your voice or using inflammatory language.
5. **Focus on Common Ground:**
- **Identify Shared Values:** Highlight common values and goals that you both share, such as a commitment to democracy, respect, and community.
 - **Find Areas of Agreement:** Look for points of agreement and build on them to create a sense of unity.
6. **Encourage Constructive Dialogue:**
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Encourage a two-way conversation by asking open-ended questions. This helps to understand the other person's perspective better.
 - **Avoid Blame and Accusations:** Focus on discussing the issues rather than blaming or accusing each other.
7. **Provide Support and Resources:**
- **Offer Support:** Let the other person know that you are there to support them, regardless of their political views.
 - **Share Resources:** Provide information about resources that can help, such as counseling services or community groups.
8. **End on a Positive Note:**
- **Summarize the Conversation:** Recap the main points of the conversation and any agreements or understandings reached.
 - **Express Hope for the Future:** End with a positive message about moving forward together and working towards common goals.

By following these steps, you can help ensure that the conversation is respectful, empathetic, and productive. Remember, the goal is to foster understanding and maintain positive relationships, even in the face of differing opinions.

Suggested Resources

Link/Source	What it Is
www.whatisessential.org	
Persistent Resident Abuse Policy	Article Shared from a CCRC member in North Carolina
Webinar 2024 Presidential election results: Potential impacts on employee benefits	Webinar on election results impact on employee benefits shared by Tom Akins
LeadingAge article detailing impact of election on aging services.	
Recording of LeadingAge call detailing impact of election on aging services	
Effective Conflict Management in Senior Living Communities Workshop.pdf	Resource on conflict management provided by Bill Bates
Conflict De-Escalation Cheat Sheet .pdf	Resource on conflict de-escalation provided by Bill Bates
<p>2024 Elections: Impact on Aging Services. Access the review here. Recording is here.</p>	<p>LeadingAge weighs in on how the elections might alter the federal aging services policy landscape. This page summarizes the post-election updates provided by LeadingAge staff on our November 18 National Policy Pulse call and includes impact projections for programs and issues across the</p>

	aging services continuum, including Medicare and Medicare Advantage, workforce, employment and labor, care in the home and community, affordable housing, and nursing homes.
19 QuickCast and Learning Tools from LeadingAge Knowledge Base Catalog - LeadingAge	Mental Health, Burnout, Creating Calm, Purposeful Reflection and Emotional Well-Being.
New Leadership, Policies: What It Could Mean for Health Care: CLA	Posted article by LeadingAge member, CLA.
Federal Tax Proposals: Election Impact: CLA	Posted article by LeadingAge member, CLA.