

Talking U.S. Presidential Poll at Hospital, Not



In the U.S., voters have been experiencing one of the most bitter and divisive presidential elections. The problem is that when you feel so strongly about a particular issue or candidate, it can be difficult not to bring up your view at work.

A report in [Health Leaders Media](#) suggests it is not always wise to talk about politics as heated discussion can easily escalate and cause rifts at work that are difficult to mend.

As election fever heightens and shows no sign of abating following the poll on November 8, [Diane Gottsman](#) an American etiquette expert has suggested how to deal with politics talk in the professional environment. This is especially true for the healthcare workplace where the daily pressures and life-and-death responsibilities mean there is no room for unnecessary acrimony amongst staff and Gottsman suggests that managers take the lead.

Change of Subject

Dominant though it is, the current presidential election in the U.S. is not the only headline-grabbing story. There are numerous topics to discuss at work that are unlikely to cause offence to co-workers or patients.

Managers can take action by diverting discussions away from controversial topics if they hear a staff member starting to talk about a risky election-related topic. It will help to have an arsenal of ready-prepared topics for discussion for a change of subject.

Stay Neutral

There are plenty of remarks staff can make to coolly keep out of an inappropriate discussion about politics. Gottsman suggests remarks such as "what interesting times" used as a way of moving on to a more neutral topic could help diffuse a tense talk about the election.

"The bottom line is that you're at work. You have a job to do, and a relationship with clients and co-workers. You're not there to be divisive," she says.

See Also: [Teamwork and Communication Training for Surgical Safety](#)

Bowing Out

There will no doubt be many heated discussions about the U.S. presidential election in the days and weeks ahead. If a co-worker is clearly avoiding getting involved in a controversial talk, it is not appropriate for a colleague to keep trying to get them involved. Allowing a co-worker to bow out of a discussion that makes them uncomfortable should be encouraged and, if this still isn't working,

a manager should step in by changing the subject.

colleagues are here to stay. Meanwhile, it is the responsibility of managers in healthcare to keep an eagle eye on any touchy election-connected topics amongst staff and step in to diffuse any harmful escalation.

Source: [Health Leaders Media](#)

Image Credit: Central Florida Health Network

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