



## *candidate wellbeing guide 2026*

**so you're running as a candidate in the SU Elections 2026 -  
congratulations!**

**it's going to be an incredible experience, but it's also very normal to  
feel nervous, stressed or overwhelmed during the campaign and  
election.**

**looking after yourself during this time is really important, so please  
do make plans for staying well**

this guide has information and tips for managing your wellbeing

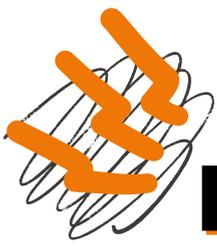
some suggestions might not work for everyone, and you should  
always prioritise professional or medical advice for existing  
support needs, including mental health conditions or disabilities

**in this guide, you'll find:**

- information about stress and stagefright
- top tips for looking after yourself when campaigning
- ways to access support
- suggestions for staying well at Candidate Question Time and Results Night



**we know you're going to put a lot of time and energy into your  
campaign, but your health and wellbeing must **always** take priority  
if you're worried about staying well during the election, let the  
Voice team know - they're here to help you**



# Managing Stress

candidate wellbeing  
guide 2026



stress can be very normal, particularly when you're doing something new or putting yourself out there - sometimes a small level of stress can give us the push to achieve great things!

however, too much stress can leave us feeling overwhelmed, panicked or unable to cope - which we don't want for you!

## signs of stress

everyone experiences stress differently, but signs can include:

- feeling anxious or afraid
- becoming irritable or frustrated quickly
- feeling sad or tearful
- headaches
- nausea or sweating
- having trouble sleeping
- feeling indecisive

## quick stress busters

- take a 2 minute reset - find somewhere quiet and take a few slow deep breaths
- get moving - go for a brisk walk, or shake out your arms, to release tension
- prioritise one small task and take the win when it's done
- use one of our [grounding techniques](#)
- check out our [top tips for staying well](#)



remember! we're talking about short term stress during the election - if you're experiencing long-term symptoms of stress or feel unable to cope, please seek more support from your GP



# Stage Fright

candidate wellbeing  
guide 2026



you're putting yourself out there during the campaign, which is incredible!

don't worry if this also makes you feel anxious or nervous - this is very normal

## being seen

being the centre of attention isn't always easy, and it could feel that way when your face is on a big poster in the Hive!

remember that most people are just curious rather than judging, and usually much more focused on what's going on in their own lives

if you can, rally some friends to help out as your campaign team; they can cheer you on!

## public speaking

feeling nervous before public speaking is very normal! here's some tips and tricks that can help:

- take a breath before you start talking
- pause when you need to - conversation breaks feel longer to you than the audience
- look for friendly faces - focusing on some supportive people in the room makes it feel less intimidating
- know your campaign - prepare some notes about your manifesto that you can refer back to if needed
- practice talking about at least one key reason why you're running
- wear something you feel comfortable and confident in
- be yourself! students want to get to know the real you, and understand why you'd be a great representative for them

# Quick tips for staying well

candidate wellbeing  
guide 2026



## switch off

plan time to rest and decompress during campaigning - whether you pick up a book, hang with friends or get immersed in a video game, take a couple of hours each day to focus on something completely different!



## fuel up

sometimes it's easy to skip meals when we're busy and preoccupied, but staying hydrated and having regular meals helps you stay at your best when you're campaigning, keep snacks and a bottle of water with you!



## get outdoors

yes, the weather can be a bit rubbish at this time of year, but try to get outside for some fresh air every day if you can

spending time outdoors can help with stress management, improve sleep quality and boost creativity



## log off

social media can be a huge part of campaigning and staying on trend, but keep healthy boundaries with social media

try to avoid doom-scrolling or constantly checking up on other candidates, and limit the times you check your own account each day

# Quick tips for staying well

candidate wellbeing  
guide 2026



## rest and recharge

it seems like old news, but sleep is important! you'll be more effective and engaging if you're well-rested during the campaign, and will have more opportunity to enjoy the whole experience



## speaking up

you're not doing this alone and the sign of a good leader is recognising when to ask for support you can come to us for help, access UEA wellbeing services, speak to friends, or contact a listening service - just make sure you're talking to someone about how you're feeling



## get everyone involved

let your campaign team know how you're planning to take care of your wellbeing - it will encourage them to do the same, but also means they can check in on you



## hype yourself

putting yourself out there can feel scary, so remember to be kind to yourself and be so proud of your hard work!

# Getting support

candidate wellbeing  
guide 2026

## wellbeing and mental health

if you have any concerns about looking after yourself while campaigning, or would like some individual support, [UEA Student Services](#) can offer help and resources:



[Student Services Blackboard Hub](#) has a range of brilliant self-help resources including stress management and managing unhelpful thinking



reach out - the Wellbeing service can offer appointments and referrals to specific services, including talking therapies - complete their [online form](#) to get started

## think ahead

if there is support you think will help through the Election and campaign, like specific adjustments, let us know!

reach out to our Voice team at [su.elections@uea.ac.uk](mailto:su.elections@uea.ac.uk)

## urgent support

if you need to speak to someone urgently about your mental health, don't delay in seeking help

call 999 in an emergency or 111 (option 2) if urgent  
you can also contact your out-of-hours GP, medical centre, or attend A&E at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital

# Getting support

candidate wellbeing  
guide 2026



## anonymous listening services

if you need someone to talk to, there are a number of national listening services available, including 24 hour support



### **Samaritans**

Call freephone [116123](tel:116123) (24-hour service)  
email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)



### **HOPELINE247**

Call 0800 068 4141  
Text [88247](tel:88247)  
email [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)



### **CALM**

Call [0800 58 58 58](tel:0800585858)  
Webchat service 5pm-midnight  
[www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat](http://www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat)



### **SHOUT**

Text 'shout' to [85258](tel:85258)

# Candidate Question Time

candidate wellbeing  
guide 2026



we'll have a quiet space in Union House for candidates preparing for Candidate Question Time

plan ahead and think about what to bring with you to help manage any nerves - here's some suggestions:



Headphones and a good playlist or podcast



A bottle of water and some of your favourite snacks



Fidget toys, handheld video games or a book



A portable charger for your phone



Notes and a copy of your manifesto or talking points

remember: it's completely normal to feel nervous!

check out our suggestions for [grounding techniques](#) at the end of this wellbeing pack

if you start to feel unwell, or need some support, find a member of SU staff

we're not going to pretend that getting the Election results can be stressful for candidates  
after a lot of hard work, energy and commitment, you'll be feeling tired and nervous - that's completely normal!

## **choose how you want to find out**

you will be contacted before Results Night to ask how you'd like to hear the news  
you'll have the option to find out with your fellow candidates, or have an individual meeting with staff from both Voice and Advice teams

Results Night will be a UEA student-only event, but if you'd really like someone specific to come with you, please do let us know as soon as you can by telling the Voice team

## **make plans for later**

regardless of the result, you'll need plenty of rest after campaigning - get some sleep, but also plan ahead with selfcare activities

you could schedule some time with friends or family over the weekend, head into the city for a wander, or get food in for a good meal

it's a great way to mentally and emotionally reset

## **if you're unsuccessful...**

it's ok to feel sad, frustrated or disappointed - you worked hard, and deserve time to feel what you're feeling without judging yourself for it

## **be proud of yourself**

it takes courage to run in an election!  
you put yourself out there, shared ideas and got involved - that's a really big deal, regardless of the result

## **unpack the experience**

when you feel ready, reflect on:

- what you enjoyed
- what surprised you
- what you'd do again, or differently

this isn't self-criticism, but identifying growth and skills that you can transfer into your learning and career development

## **rest and reach out**

you might want to have some time by yourself to recharge, but it's also ok if you just want to spend time with friends or concentrate on other events and experiences

if you're struggling with the result or how you're feeling, speak up - the wellbeing options in this guide are available to you during your whole time at UEA

## **if you're successful...**

you're going to feel all sorts of emotions!

don't worry if you feel nervous or anxious about what comes next - it's perfectly normal, and doesn't mean you're not also excited and proud of the result

## **take a moment to celebrate**

before you jump into planning mode, enjoy the win!  
celebrate with your team, friends or family - however that looks for you

## **unpack the experience**

when you feel ready, reflect on:

- what you enjoyed
- what surprised you
- what you'd do again, or differently

this is a great way to note down the skills and growth you got from the experience that you can take into the role!

## **build connections**

think about any candidates who ran an incredible campaign alongside you

they'll want some time to process the result, so give them time, but consider reaching out later on to discuss their ideas and any collaborative work you could do together

## 54321 method

**this is a simple but effective tool to help you focus and feel more present**

either out loud, or in your head, describe

- ⑤ things that you can SEE
- ④ things that you can TOUCH
- ③ things that you can HEAR
- ② things that you can SMELL
- ① thing that you can TASTE

## 7/11 breathing

**practice purposeful breathing and take notice of how you're feeling**

inhale for a count of seven  
exhale for a count of eleven

it doesn't matter how slowly you count, just find a pace that works for you - this can help slow your body and mind, and reduce feelings of stress or panic