The current conflict in Israel has heightened emotional and psychological challenges for many members of our community, particularly our Israeli volunteers and those who have friends and family in the region.

If you need support in your volunteering experience, please reach out to us in the office. If you require further support, **JewishCare’s expert support services are available on 8517 5999**, and you can always contact **lifeline on 13 11 14.**

Courage to Care staff ensure that schools are aware of the sensitivities of our volunteer team. We are briefing all schools in advance of program delivery to ensure they are prepared to take steps to prevent our people from being targeted by hate speech or suffering harassment.

We are doing all we can to ensure your emotional and psychological safety while you do the vital work of delivering our Upstander programs. More than ever, the circumstances demonstrate just how important our message is.

 **COURAGE TO CARE PRINCIPLES**

Occasionally issues are raised which fall outside the purview of Courage to Care, such as:

* Israeli government actions and policies
* Partisan politics in Australia
* Specific government policy on refugees or Indigenous Australians
* Judgements on specific overseas governments

As individuals, we all are entitled to have strong, even conflicting, views on such issues.

However, Courage to Care is an **apolitical organization** and our fundamental principles are **humanitarian, independent** and **universalist** as we work towards preventing victimization of individuals and minorities. Within this context:

* When representing Courage to Care please **don’t offer opinions that can be construed as politically partisan**. Don’t hedge with “my personal opinion is”, or “I speak only for myself”, or “I can’t speak for Courage to Care but…”
* **We will not shy away from stating our program antecedents.** We continue to acknowledge our origins in B’nai B’rith; and we continue to state that the Holocaust was genocide on an industrial scale
* Identifying yourself as a Jewish or Israeli person is your right, and only you can decide if you wish to do so in any given situation
* Practice self-care and support one another
* **Your safety remains our first priority.** Harassment or hate speech towards you is unacceptable. Immediately refer to school authority, the team and the office

 **BE PREPARED**

We encourage you to be prepared emotionally and intellectually in case you are faced with a difficult question.

* **Be aware you may be more sensitive than usual** and so more prone to be reactive. A calm, measured and respectful response is best no matter your audience.
* Remind yourself that **questioning is natural.** Questions are not usually intended to be hostile
* A **calm, measured and respectful response** is best no matter your audience.
* **Trust your own judgement**. Seek assistance from the Team Leader, reach out to one of the teachers to assert discipline, leave the situation if you need to.

 **TALKING POINTS**

* **Acknowledge the passion** “I can see you feel very strongly about this.”
* **What are you doing about it?**
“I am doing this – educating your generation in the hope that you will learn from the lessons of history so such tragedies are not repeated.”
* **Where do you stand on** (Hamas/Israel war …)?
“I grieve for all of the people who have died in this tragedy. I want the violence to stop and for everyone to be able to live in peace without fear.”
* **Diffuse disruptive insistence**
“You raise a really important issue that deserves more time for discussion than we have available.”
“Let’s circle back to this after the workshop so other students can complete the program they came for.”

**Hamas/Israel war**

As this crisis has spilled over into ugliness on Australian streets, and Australian students are more exposed to information and misinformation about ongoing events, students are more likely to raise this. Respond to students using these points:

* “Choose to **be well informed**. If you understand both sides of the conflict, you have the power to give informed opinions.”
* “Choose to **separate people from the policies of their governments**. In all wars there are innocent victims on both sides.”
* “Choose **not to dehumanize others**. Don’t lose empathy for those you disagree with;
support for one side does not mean hate for the other.”
* “Pay attention when using social media to **avoid sharing disinformation**. Think critically about bias and fact check what you share. Be relevant and honest.”
* **Your choices define you:** “How you act now will identify you as an Upstander, Bystander, Perpetrator”

**Remember, you represent Courage to Care, and Courage to Care has no political platform, only a humanitarian one.**