

Guidelines & Procedures

9.1.1 Responding to difficult questions

Occasionally students, or perhaps teachers, will raise issues which fall outside the purview of Courage to Care, such as:

- The situation in Israel
- Child protection in the Catholic Church
- Partisan politics in Australia
- Specific government policy on refugees
- Judgements on specific overseas governments

This has happened infrequently, but it is worth thinking about so you are emotionally prepared with a response if you are faced with a tricky question.

As individuals, we all are entitled to have strong and even conflicting views on such issues. However, Courage to Care is an **apolitical organisation**, and when representing Courage to Care you cannot offer opinions that can be construed as politically partisan. At all times, your responses should be from a general humanitarian perspective without reference to partisan politics.

As a volunteer representative of a not-for-profit apolitical organisation, please **do not offer a response** to such issues – not even by hedging with “my personal opinion” or “I speak only for myself” or “I can’t speak for Courage to Care but...”

No matter who your audience is, when asked questions on hot political issues, divert the discussion back to our central themes. Do not allow side discussions to distract from the Courage to Care aim.

Suggested responses:

- “That’s a really important/complicated topic and I encourage you to find out more about it, but it’s a bigger discussion than we have time for. We need to focus on the topic that Courage to Care has been asked to present.”
- “Courage to Care has a clear policy not to discuss politics and political issues.”
- “We don’t have the time to delve into ... the complexities of the history ... different views about the conflict ... questions of ideology or religion...” etc and we would miss this short opportunity to discuss the program. So let’s move on.”

If you are challenged directly: “What are you actually doing to help...”

Respond: “I am doing this – educating your generation in the hope that you will not make the mistakes of my generation.”

If there is disruptive insistence, acknowledge the passion (“I can see you feel very strongly about this”) but cut off the conversation and insist that the student put the issue aside until the Courage to Care workshop is finished so that other students can complete the program they came for.

You can seek assistance from the Team Leader, others in the team, or reach out to the accompanying teacher to assert discipline so you can stay on track

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

Title	9.1.1 Responding to difficult issues		Page 1 of 1
Creator	Zoi Juvris	Creation date	2016
Amendments by	Zoi Juvris	Amendment date	12.05.2021