

OPTIONS FOR ACTION: responding to political crisis

Reminders & Invitations

- **If you are struggling to figure out exactly how you feel, what you think, and/or what should be done, that is okay.** You do not need to have all the answers in order to do something meaningful that is aligned with your values.
- **Start by asking yourself what you know for sure** about what is going on, what you know you care about, and what you might be able to do in response. (For example: "I know children are dying. I know I think it is wrong for children to be the victims of violence. I can donate to an organization that provides aid to child victims.")
- **You can also ask yourself: What don't I know?** Why am I not sure? Where can I find out what I do not know? Who can I talk to that I trust as a think partner? Consider sources' reliability + the positionality of their creators. Pay attention to how you process information best (e.g. via news article? Personal testimony? Art? History? etc).
- If you know how you feel + are feeling deeply disappointed that **what seems intuitively obvious to you about what is right + what should be done is not intuitively obvious to others:** Remember that others have different knowledge, different experience (personal + ancestral), and different positionality than you, thus different intuition.
- **There are many non-apparent reasons (besides cowardice or complicity) why people may not (be able to) participate in certain forms of public, visible response to a crisis.** Immigration status, disability, financial or job insecurity, physical safety concerns, trauma, and (lack of support for) mental health are just some of them.
- Disengaging from or not participating in one form of action does not equal full disengagement or refusal to participate. **You don't owe anyone: social media engagement...an in-depth dialogue...a debate...a public statement of your position...or a personal testimony.** Do not assume that lack of apparent action = no action.

Care. Narratives. Research.

Expressing Care &/or Solidarity

Ask what action they would appreciate, or just extend compassion. You don't have to "agree" to recognize + respond to their suffering. While valuable in itself, this form of action can contribute to building connection, belonging, and trust which may serve future dialogue or collaboration.

Reading narratives

Connect to your own & others' humanity via visual art, film, poetry & narrative (both fictional and non) related to the crisis. This activates empathy without the over-whelm that intense social media imagery can cause.

Researching what is happening

- Explore the historical background of the crisis + keep updated as it develops.
- Seek out a multitude of voices, with a variety of positions + positionalities relative to the crisis.
- Besides books, articles, op-eds, or timelines, consider podcasts, documentaries, or teach-ins organized by political or community groups. Ask trusted friends and interlocutors for resources.
- Pay attention to the ways in which metaphorical language and sources are used. Withhold judgment (initially).

Politics. Posting. Rest.

Connecting with Political Orgs

- Connect with local, national, or international political organizations that align with your values and goals.
- Read their mission and vision statements, look through their history of political actions, find out who else endorses them (trusted friends, activists, political leaders?).
- Through their websites and social media, find out what they are working on and what their urgent actions are that you may be able to participate in.

Posting & Links

Be slow and thoughtful in what you choose to post. If you post on social media or put a link in your email signature to an action you support, be mindful of your rhetoric & its impact on others.

Do not discount the power of rest.

While the effects of political crises may be vastly different for different individuals and groups, everyone needs rest.