



Talking to Girls About Current Events:

A Framework for Hard Conversations

Ivy Walker

Serial Entrepreneur, Author & Risk Management Expert
Treasurer, S.H.A.U.N. Foundation for Girls

Your girls already know. They've seen the headlines, scrolled the feeds, and overheard others talking. The question isn't whether to talk about what's happening in the world; it's how to do it in ways that inform without traumatizing, that build agency without dismissing very real fears.

Here's a framework that centers the girls you serve while honoring your role as trusted adults in their lives.

Start with what they already know.

Before you explain anything, ask what they've heard. This accomplishes two things: it prevents you from introducing concerns they haven't encountered yet, and it shows you exactly what misconceptions need addressing. Their version of events, pieced together from TikTok, playground conversations, and partial adult discussions, tells you where to begin.

Name it clearly, then zoom out.

Girls of color are often forced to be more sophisticated about power, identity, and injustice than their peers. They can handle directness. Use accurate language. Explain the actual issue without sugarcoating and then immediately provide context. This isn't the first time. This isn't the only place. People are organizing. Things have been bad before and have gotten better.

That context matters because it transforms paralyzing fear into productive understanding.

Connect it to their lives without making it about them.

Help them see how current events relate to systems and structures they navigate daily, but resist the urge to make every national crisis a teaching moment about their personal identity. Sometimes a girl just needs to process scary news as a human, not as a representative of her race or community.

The goal is informed awareness, not premature adultification.

Identify what they can control.

Helplessness breeds anxiety. After discussing what's happening, shift to agency. What can we do? This might mean writing letters, learning more, supporting affected communities, or simply taking care of each other. Even small actions matter because they restore a sense of power when the world feels chaotic.

For some conversations, the action might be internal: "We can remember that our emotions are valid" or "We can choose who we trust with our feelings about this."

Create space for all reactions.

Some girls will want to organize immediately. Others will crack jokes as a coping mechanism. Some will cry. Some will go quiet. All of these are normal responses to abnormal circumstances. Your job isn't to produce a uniform reaction but to hold space for genuine ones.

Avoid the trap of performing how you think girls of color "should" respond to injustice. Let them be complex humans with their own processing styles.

Follow up, don't just drop in.

One conversation isn't enough. Check in later that week. Notice who's still carrying it heavily. Create ongoing space for questions as they arise. The most meaningful support often happens in the days after the initial conversation, when the reality has settled in and new questions surface.

Remember: you're modeling resilience.

Girls are watching how you hold difficult truths without falling apart or pretending everything is fine. They're learning from your balance of honesty and hope, your acknowledgment of pain and commitment to action.

You don't need perfect answers. You just need to show up, tell the truth, and remind them they're not alone.