



Promoting positive opinion about refugees: Pivoting

Pivoting is a technique that is used to move from a negative or distracting question or comment back to our positive message. This requires message discipline. Depending on the context, your job is not to educate. Your job is to use their question as an opportunity to deliver your strongest message as effectively as possible.

Example: Isn't refugee intake a major drain on our economy? How can we really afford it?

There are three parts to a pivot

1. **Connect** to the value(s) in question

Example: "I'm glad you asked about public finance, we all want to make sure our country is prosperous."

2. Contrast and **reframe the idea**.

Example: I'm sure you'd agree that we need to look at the value of investing in refugees over both the short and the long term. While protecting refugees involves some short term costs, they are made up for by long term economic contributions.

3. **Deliver your message**

Example: "Refugees over the long term contribute to our communities in so many ways, economic and other ..."

Phrases to use to help bridge or pivot to what you want to say:

"Actually..."

"That's a good question. (pause) Here's how I think about this issue..."

"The real question is..."

"The important thing to remember is..."

"What we are really talking about here is..."

"What matters most is..."

"To put this in broader perspective..."

"I would like to emphasize that..."

"Let's not lose sight of the core problem..."

“At the heart of the matter is...”

“Taking a closer look what we see is....”

Tips for handling difficult questions:

- Look for what you and questioner have in common: reality, experience, perspective, beliefs.
- Stay respectful.
- Take a stand and explain patiently why you hold these views.
- Move from problem to solutions. Connect your proposition to the person, to vision and values.
- It's alright if you don't know the answer.

Tips based on a CCR webinar ‘[How to counter and pivot negative messages about refugees](#)’ with Jennifer Story of StoryStiles communication