

Counseling in the Anthropocene: Addressing Social Justice Amid Climate Change

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Scientists have increasingly called for the recognition that Earth has entered a new geological epoch called the Anthropocene. Researchers believe anthropogenic climate change and ecological degradation will have the greatest impacts on communities that are socially and economically marginalized. This article will explore the role of counselors in the Anthropocene as environmental justice advocates through the application of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts et al., 2015).

Keywords: Anthropocene, climate change, social justice, multicultural counseling, environmental justice

La comunidad científica ha insistido cada vez más en el reconocimiento de que la Tierra ha entrado en una nueva era geológica denominada Antropoceno. Los investigadores creen que el cambio climático antropogénico y la degradación ecológica tendrán un impacto máximo en las comunidades que se encuentran social y económicamente marginadas. Este artículo explora el papel de los consejeros en el Antropoceno como defensores de la justicia medioambiental a través de la aplicación de las Competencias en Consejería Multicultural y de Justicia Social (Ratts et al., 2015).

Palabras clave: Antropoceno, cambio climático, justicia social, consejería multicultural, justicia medioambiental

Due to the abundant evidence linking human activity to geological changes in the Earth, many scientists now claim that our planet has entered a new geological epoch called the Anthropocene (Crutzen, 2002; Gradstein et al., 2012). In Paul Crutzen's (2002) now famous article "Geology of Mankind," he defined the Anthropocene as the "human-dominated, geological epoch supplementing the Holocene" that likely started in the latter part of the 18th century (para. 1). These human-induced changes include the massive increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the spread of nitrogen fertilizer, exploitation of water supplies, extractive mining practices, deforestation, nuclear bomb testing, overfishing, and the spread of plastic, aluminum, and concrete materials (Crutzen, 2002). Human activity in the Anthropocene has so threatened the environment that scientists now contend that we are in the midst of the sixth extinction, marked by rapid losses in biodiversity (Kolbert, 2014).

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In the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018), scientists projected that global warming will exceed 3 to 5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels if rapid changes to carbon dioxide emissions are not made. Even if emissions are cut, scientists warn that self-reinforcing feedbacks in the Earth's system instigated by carbon emissions could result in a "Hothouse Earth" that would be massively disruptive to human societies (Aengenheyster et al., 2018; Steffen et al., 2018, p. 8252). Climate change has already resulted in record-high temperatures, more extreme weather events such as hurricanes and wildfires, the melting of the polar ice caps, ocean acidification, disruption of the coral reefs, and increased droughts and food shortages (IPCC, 2018; Ripple et al., 2019). As predicted by many scientists, climate change, deforestation, and agricultural practices have also contributed to the transmission of infectious diseases, including COVID-19 (Sabin et al., 2020).

Scientists believe climate change will have its most disastrous effects on those who live in low- and middle-income countries and people who are located in hazard-prone areas (IPCC, 2018). For example, researchers at Climate Central have predicted that by 2050, sea-level rise could force the relocation of 300 million people, with coastal cities in Asian countries such as Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia facing the gravest effects (Kulp & Strauss, 2019). Although individuals with greater wealth may be able to pay to escape the harsh conditions of climate change, those with fewer resources may be left to suffer in what the U.N. Human Rights Council (Alston, 2019) has called "climate apartheid" (p. 14).

The recognition of the Anthropocene provides an opportunity to raise questions regarding the role of counselors in responding to climate change and the disparities it is associated with. Although a substantial body of literature has been developed outlining the potential impacts of global warming on mental health (S. E. Burke et al., 2018; Cornelius-White, 2007; Cornforth, 2008; Doherty & Clayton, 2011; Fritze et al., 2008; Hayes et al., 2018) and integrating an ecological dimension to psychotherapy (Blair, 2013; Buzzell & Chalquist, 2009; Fisher, 2002; Roszak, 1992), the field at large has failed to make environmental concern a professional issue. One can take a look through counseling textbooks, codes of ethics, and course syllabi and not find a mention of the ensuing environmental crisis that many in the scientific community have deemed "potentially catastrophic to human health" (Watts et al., 2015, p. 1861). As Seaman (2016) observed, although many counselors feel that climate change is important to their work, few feel that their training has adequately prepared them to address the subject.

The relevance in addressing climate change will only increase as its effects continue to accelerate. As noted by many researchers, climate change will intersect with social inequality and systemic racism to affect those most vulnerable in society (Bond & Dorsey, 2010; Harlan et al., 2015; Levy & Patz, 2015; Robinson & Shine, 2018). Although counselors have increasingly made it part of their

identity to address systemic issues of injustice through advocacy, prevention, and outreach (Chung & Bemak, 2012; Lewis et al., 2003; Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018; Ratts et al., 2015; Toporek & Daniels, 2018; Vera & Speight, 2003), environmental justice remains at the periphery in the counseling literature.

In this article, I will build upon the multicultural and social justice movement in counseling by discussing how counselors can promote environmental justice, defined as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 2019, para. 1). The purpose of this article is threefold: (a) to build awareness about climate change and the Anthropocene among counselors, (b) to expand knowledge regarding how climate change may exacerbate issues of social inequality, and (c) to demonstrate how counselors can apply the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC; Ratts et al., 2015) to address environmental justice issues affecting clients and their communities.

the human cost of climate change

Scholars have identified climate change as a major threat to human health and well-being (Watts et al., 2015). First, climate change can contribute to an increased frequency of extreme weather events (e.g., wildfires, floods, hurricanes, heatwaves, droughts), which increase rates of mortality, morbidity, and mental health disorders like posttraumatic stress disorder (Levy & Patz, 2015). Second, climate change can contribute to increased air pollutants, which may lead to respiratory disorders, impaired cognitive development, and other health problems (Friere et al., 2010; Harlan & Ruddel, 2011). Third, climate change may lead to increased food insecurity, which can lead to greater rates of malnutrition and poverty (Levy & Patz, 2015). Last, climate change can contribute to increased rates of waterborne, foodborne, and vector-borne diseases such as malaria and West Nile virus (Levy & Patz, 2015).

The negative effects of climate change extend to the domain of mental health. Scholars have noted increased rates of posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression following extreme weather events (Fritze et al., 2008; Rataj et al., 2016). Furthermore, psychologists estimate a rise in rates of depression and suicide corresponding with rising levels of global temperature. Recently, M. Burke et al. (2018) estimated an increase of between 9,000 and 40,000 additional suicides across the United States and Mexico by 2050 due to global warming. Scholars have also recognized growing ecological anxiety, defined by “intense emotions associated with observation of climate change effects worldwide” (Doherty & Clayton, 2011, p. 265). This may be especially worrisome for children and individuals living in frontline communities affected by climate change (S. E. Burke et al., 2018).

race and class climate disparities

Although climate change poses a threat to everyone, scholars and activists have increasingly noted that the negative impacts of climate change will disproportionately affect developing countries and socially and economically disadvantaged communities in wealthy nations (Fritze et al., 2008; Harlan et al., 2015; Levy & Patz, 2015; Robinson & Shine, 2018; Uddin, 2017). Paradoxically, politically, culturally, and economically marginalized communities are the least responsible for the release of greenhouse gases and exploitation of the environment yet stand to suffer the worst consequences because of their lack of resources and political power (Harlan et al., 2015; Levy & Patz, 2015; Samson et al., 2011). In particular, scholars have noted that climate change will disproportionately affect low-income communities, women, children, migrants, individuals with disabilities, older adults, the homeless, outdoor workers, people of color, and Native/Indigenous people (Harlan et al., 2015; Levy & Patz, 2015).

For example, Native/Indigenous communities around the world live in more vulnerable regions where they rely on locally available resources that are threatened by climate change (Abate & Kronk, 2013; Mander & Tauli-Corpuz, 2006). These changes threaten Native/Indigenous communities' rights to their sovereignty and preservation of cultural and spiritual traditions. Additionally, Native/Indigenous people have faced great repression and violence for their efforts to oppose the encroachment of exploitative fossil fuel and agricultural projects in Native protected lands (Amazon Watch, 2019).

Scholars have also linked global warming to higher rates of migration and the creation of climate refugees (Berchin et al., 2017). Climate change can exacerbate disease prevalence, increase flooding and food insecurity, lead to the loss of clean water, and foster greater intergroup conflict (Berchin et al., 2017). Between 2008 and 2014, an estimated 144 million people were displaced by natural disasters, and it is likely that number will increase due to climate change and sea-level rise (Bayes, 2018). Although climate refugees have yet to be recognized internationally, the impacts of climate change have been viewed as a contributing factor in the Syrian refugee crises. Between 2007 and 2010, droughts exacerbated by climate change killed crops and livestock, contributing to the migration of millions of Syrian farmers to overcrowded cities where they could not find work (Kelley et al., 2015). This tension, combined with economic inequality and corrupt leadership, contributed to the civil war and brutal government response leading to the emergence of an international refugee crisis (Wendle, 2016).

In the United States, evidence of race and class disproportionality linked to climate change can be seen in the aftermath of climate change-related natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Maria in 2017 as well as in the COVID-19 pandemic. In New Orleans, Black Americans suffered greatly due to a history of redlining, which left Black communities

more vulnerable to flooding, and systemic racism, which led to inadequate relief efforts and a lack of support in rebuilding post-Katrina (Elliot & Pais, 2006; Henkel et al., 2006).

In 2017, Hurricane Maria caused massive infrastructural destruction to Puerto Rico, leaving thousands without water, electricity, medical care access, and telecommunication networks. Researchers argue Puerto Rico was especially vulnerable to the devastation of the storm due to having a high population (approximately 56.3%) below the poverty line (Carrubba et al., 2013). Furthermore, despite Puerto Rico's designation as a U.S. territory, the federal government's response to the hurricane was slow and limited. As Rodríguez-Díaz (2018) wrote, "Hurricane Maria exposed the colonial condition of Puerto Rico" (p. 32).

Finally, the COVID-19 global health pandemic has exposed many deep-rooted injustices in the United States. Black, Native/Indigenous, and Latinx individuals—particularly those of low socioeconomic status—continue to face disproportionate exposure, illness, and death compared with White Americans (Raine et al., 2020). Scholars attribute these disparities to systemic racism and structural barriers, such as lack of access to health care and paid sick leave, "essential worker" policies that limit many people's ability to socially distance, housing and transportation injustices, and greater exposure to incarceration (Brown, 2020; Raine et al., 2020). Additionally, COVID-19 intersects with preexisting health inequalities driven by environmental injustice, such as lack of access to nutritious foods and greater exposure to air pollutants (Raine et al., 2020; Xiao et al., 2020).

history of the environmental justice movement

The environmental justice movement grew as a response to the disproportionate exposure to environmental toxins faced by Black, Latinx, and Native/Indigenous communities (Bullard et al., 2011). The roots of the environmental justice movement can be traced to the protests and civil disobedience in Warren County, North Carolina, following the relocation of a toxic polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill to a rural, low-income African American community in 1979 (Bullard et al., 2011). Following these events, grassroots activists and researchers joined together to document and campaign against environmental racism. In 1987, the United Church of Christ (1987) allied with Warren County activists released the first large-scale study on environmental justice, "Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States." The authors found that Black and Latinx communities reside disproportionately near commercial hazardous waste facilities. In a follow-up study 20 years later, the United Church of Christ found that Black and Latinx communities were 47% more likely to be located near toxic waste facilities than White communities (Bullard et al., 2007). Increased exposure to environmental toxins is associated with increased levels of asthma, lead poisoning, developmental disorders, cancer, and many

other chronic health issues (Gochfeld & Burger, 2011; Sadd et al., 2014).

The environmental justice movement has also led to large-scale protests and advocacy efforts regarding injustices such as “Cancer Alley,” the 85-mile stretch along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans where communities face staggering rates of cancer due to the over 150 fossil fuel facilities in the surrounding area (Juhasz, 2019; Livingston & Staggers-Hakim, 2012). In 1991, Robert Bullard together with other activists at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit created the Principles of Environmental Justice, which helped define the movement (see <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>).

Despite research findings and the work of grassroots activists, the U.S. government has been slow to respond to issues of environmental justice. After many years of denial, in 1992, the EPA finally introduced the report *Environmental Equity: Reducing Risks for All Communities*, which documented the realities of environmental racism. Afterward, the EPA released numerous prohibitions under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act barring environmental racism. Yet, the EPA has faced continual criticism for its slow response to claims of environmental injustice. In 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling of *Alexander v. Sandoval* made it near impossible to file cases of environmental racism under Title VI due to its declaration that the plaintiffs need to prove intentional discrimination in civil rights cases (Livingston & Staggers-Hakim, 2012).

Issues of environmental injustice continue to persist today, such as the recent water crisis in Flint, Michigan, when in 2014, city officials voted to change the city’s water services to the nearby Flint River to save money but failed to treat the water and dangerous levels of lead in the old pipes (Renwick, 2019). These actions created a public health crisis that endangered thousands of children, predominately from economically disadvantaged communities (Greenberg, 2016).

from environmental justice to climate justice

The environmental justice movement has expanded in the past decade to include a focus on the disproportionate impacts of climate change and its association with global inequality (Bond & Dorsey, 2010; Livingston & Staggers-Hakim, 2012). The climate justice movement is vast and includes grassroots organizations and Native/Indigenous communities engaged in direct actions over the exploitation of natural resources and expansion of the fossil fuel industry (Bond & Dorsey, 2010; Routledge et al., 2018). The 2016 protests at the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline provide a prime example of climate justice action (Rome, 2018). After Energy Transfer Company rerouted the proposed pipeline from the primarily White city of Bismarck, North Dakota, to instead cross over territory that would threaten the water and sacred sites of Native communities, nearly 15,000 protestors joined together to stage nonviolent protests (Rome,

2018). Despite facing police and private security in riot gear and military equipment, water protectors maintained prayerful nonviolence in defense of their sovereignty, ancestral lands, water, and world-at-large (Democracy Now, 2016). The historic gathering of Native/Indigenous nations, environmental activists, and veterans helped galvanize the climate justice movement and spurred similar movements across the world.

The climate justice movement is also increasingly youth led, as seen in the Fridays for Future movement, started by activist Greta Thunberg at the age of 15, and initiatives led by Indigenous youth and youth of color such as the Sunrise Movement, Zero Hour, and the International Indigenous Youth Council (Marris, 2019). The efforts of protestors and researchers alike have helped raise the urgency of climate crisis in recent years. However, the implications of climate change and the Anthropocene are largely unexplored in the counseling literature.

environmental justice and the MSJCC

The climate and ecological crisis and issues of environmental injustice remain at the periphery of the counseling profession (Cornelius-White, 2007; Cornforth, 2008). Although the past 3 decades have seen an expansion of the counselor's role to include a focus on social advocacy, prevention, and outreach (Ratts et al., 2015; Vera & Speight, 2003), responding to the Anthropocene will require counselors to incorporate environmental and climate justice into their work. The MSJCC may be one framework for infusing environmental justice into multicultural and social justice counseling.

The MSJCC were developed to reflect new trends in multicultural scholarship. This includes recognizing how various identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexual orientation) intersect to lead to different experiences of privilege and/or oppression, conceptualizing the impact of oppression on mental health and well-being, embracing a socioecological perspective, and balancing individual counseling with social justice advocacy (Ratts et al., 2016). The MSJCC consist of four developmental domains that contribute to multicultural and social justice practice: (a) counselor self-awareness, (b) client worldview, (c) counseling relationships, and (d) counseling and advocacy interventions. This model can be applied by counselors serving at the individual, community, and system levels. There is great overlap, as well as some areas of difference, between the theoretical underpinnings of the MSJCC and the environmental justice movement.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Similar to the MSJCC, the environmental justice movement has embraced the tenets of intersectionality (Pellow & Brehm, 2013; Sarathy, 2018). Whereas the environmental justice movement originally focused heavily on issues of environmental racism, it has since expanded to incorporate an intersectional

focus due to the influence of fields such as ecofeminism, sociology, critical race theory, and Native/Indigenous theory (Sarathy, 2018). For example, scholars have documented that the White working class in Appalachia have been subjected to environmental injustice through extreme air and water pollution and environmental disasters (Mozena & Perrault, 2017). Additionally, scholars recognize how women are often subjected to living and working in more toxic conditions (Pellow & Brehm, 2013). These changes in recognizing the full spectrum of identity and forms of oppression mirror the inclusion of intersectionality in the MSJCC.

OPPRESSION AND MENTAL HEALTH

Both the MSJCC and the environmental justice movement focus on how oppression affects the health and well-being of marginalized groups. The MSJCC focus primarily on how social systems (e.g., microaggressions, minority stress, stigma) shape negative health outcomes (Ratts et al., 2016). The environmental justice movement similarly recognizes the impact of social forces (e.g., racism, sexism, classism), but adds to it an analysis of how environmental inequality exacerbates health disparities through exposure to various environmental hazards (Lee, 2002; Pellow & Brehm, 2013). The acknowledgment of disproportionate exposure to various toxins and pollutants and its subsequent impact on health could be an important contribution to the MSJCC's biopsychosocial conceptualization of the influence of oppression.

THE SOCIOECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The authors of the MSJCC take a socioecological perspective to conceptualize how multiple social forces interact to contribute to a person's mental health (Ratts et al., 2016). The environmental justice movement embraces the socioecological perspective in the truest sense in its recognition of how environmental issues (e.g., pollution, climate change) interact with social forces (e.g., racism, classism, sexism) to shape health outcomes (Bullard et al., 2011; Gochfeld & Burger, 2011). The MSJCC could be broadened by the environmental justice perspective by including recognition of how an individual's well-being may be shaped by their ecological context. Additionally, both the MSJCC and the environmental justice movement recognize the impact of international affairs on health and well-being. The acknowledgment of global issues is important because climate change is an international crisis that will exacerbate social inequality on a global scale.

SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

The MSJCC call for a balance between individual and social justice advocacy, with the recognition that individual counseling is not enough when the cause of an issue exists at the ecosystemic level (Ratts et al., 2016). Similarly, the environmental justice movement recognizes that individual action (e.g.,

proenvironmental behaviors such as recycling) is not enough and that an effective approach to curtailing climate change and environmental injustice necessitates collective action and advocacy (Bond & Dorsey, 2010; McKibben, 2018). The environmental justice movement could provide a strong example to counseling of how academics, activists, and affected communities can partner together in grassroots organizing efforts to protests for systemic change (Bullard et al., 2011).

applying the MSJCC framework to enhance environmental justice

The MSJCC can be used effectively to address climate and environmental justice concerns across its four domains as described in the following sections.

COUNSELOR SELF-AWARENESS

Counselor self-awareness consists of becoming aware of one's attitudes and beliefs and how they are influenced by one's experience of privilege and/or oppression (Ratts et al., 2016). The exploration of self and identity is also extremely important to understanding issues of environmental justice. Multicultural and social justice counselors should understand how experiences of oppression and/or privilege can contribute to exposure to environmental hazards and vulnerability to climate change. This exploration of self may also mean examining one's role in issues of environmental and climate injustice through inaction and participation in an unsustainable culture. It is also paramount that counselors understand their sense of privilege and/or oppression and take an antiracist and culturally humble approach when considering issues of environmental injustice. Additionally, counselors can increase their motivation to act for environmental and climate justice by enhancing their sense of closeness and attachment to the natural world through spending time in nature and using mindfulness practices (Buzzel & Chalquist, 2009).

CLIENT WORLDVIEW

Client worldview refers to the ability of counselors to attune to the diverse values, perspectives, and views a client may hold. This ability entails counselors understanding how the worldview of clients may be connected to their social group status (Ratts et al., 2016). Counselors sensitive to issues of environmental justice could attune to the client's worldview as it relates to their connection to nature and issues of environmental justice. For example, Miller Hesed and Ostergren (2017) conducted a qualitative study with African American communities living in areas vulnerable to flooding due to sea-level rise near the Chesapeake Bay. Community members reported feelings of frustration regarding a lack of information and preparedness to cope with flooding

induced by climate change, as well as frustration with their lack of institutional power and ability to contribute to preparedness efforts. The multicultural and social justice counselor could validate these frustrations and connect them to wider issues of systemic racism. The counselor could also draw upon the strengths of clients, including their local knowledge, which could be an asset in climate resilience efforts (Miller Hessed & Ostergren, 2017).

COUNSELING RELATIONSHIPS

Concerning counseling relationships, multicultural and social justice counselors can understand how their social privilege and that of their clients can influence the counseling relationship. Such awareness can allow counselors to better process issues of power, privilege, and oppression as they manifest in the counseling relationship (Ratts et al., 2016). Additionally, the multicultural and social justice counselor understands that the counseling relationship can extend beyond the traditional office setting and can entail community engagement and outreach efforts.

Counselors can work to build relationships with communities most affected by climate change and environmental injustice through community outreach and immersion (Ratts et al., 2016). In the aftermath of extreme weather events, including Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Maria, independent counselors and organizations such as Counselors Without Borders went into affected communities to provide mental health support. Many of these counselors used strengths-based approaches to build relationships with clients and help them begin to process their grief, loss, and trauma (West-Olatunji & Goodman, 2011). Counselors also emphasized culturally responsive strategies, such as integrating their clients' spirituality and social support networks (Bemak & Chung, 2011; Dass-Brailsford, 2010).

COUNSELING INTERVENTIONS AND ADVOCACY

In regard to counseling interventions, multicultural and social justice counselors can initiate discussions on multicultural issues and apply interventions congruent with their client's worldview (Ratts et al., 2015). Multicultural and social justice counselors can promote psychological resilience to climate change. For example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, environmental education specialists promoted climate resilience through engaging community members in efforts to restore the shoreline to prevent future flooding (Dubois & Kransy, 2016). This is an example of active coping, which multicultural and social justice counselors can strive to promote through community engagement and advocacy. Similarly, researchers have engaged historically marginalized communities through community-based research such as documenting environmental hazards (Sadd et al., 2014) and constructing community gardens (London et al., 2018). Urban gardening has been especially noted as one path to self-empowerment that both offsets carbon dioxide emissions and can be used to provide healthy

food to communities who struggle with access to fresh fruits and vegetables (London et al., 2018).

Multicultural and social justice counselors also advocate with and on behalf of communities experiencing marginalization (Ratts et al., 2016). This can take the form of engaging community members in self-advocacy efforts. For example, Miller Hesed and Ostergren (2017) brought together African American communities affected by climate change–induced flooding and local policymakers by holding a multistakeholder workshop. The workshop promoted environmental justice by allowing the community members to voice their concerns and develop working relationships with their representatives. Counselors can work to become aware of whatever environmental justice issues exist in the communities they work with (e.g., fracking, construction of waste plants, oil pipelines) through community outreach and personal research. This knowledge could prepare counselors to raise awareness among clients about environmental risks and be a springboard for counselors to use their voice in advocacy efforts.

Advocates across urban areas throughout the United States have increasingly addressed access to parks and green spaces as an issue of environmental justice. Researchers have shown that parks and green spaces can promote mental health and mitigate carbon emissions, yet they are often less accessible in economically marginalized communities (Bullard et al., 2011). To address this problem, activists and community-based organizations in Chicago's West Side developed 48 projects to revitalize parks, including providing green job training to formerly incarcerated individuals and running an antiviolence basketball program for local youth (City Parks Alliance, 2019). Counselors could partner with organizations in their communities to develop similar projects. Counselors can also lend their expertise on mental health to advocate for increased access to parks and green spaces.

Last, multicultural and social justice counselors engage in advocacy at the public policy level (Ratts et al., 2016). Counselors can help advocate for regional and national energy plans that call for the immediate reduction in carbon emissions in a way that is socially just (e.g., creating jobs in the renewable energy economy for historically marginalized communities, protecting the sovereignty of Native/Indigenous communities). For example, the city of Providence, Rhode Island, implemented an exemplary climate justice plan that called for 100% use of renewable energy in municipal buildings by 2040, actively partnering with frontline communities to promote climate justice and resilience, training city staff in racial equity and environmental justice, and by 2035, reducing 20% of direct emissions in frontline communities (City of Providence, 2019). Counselors could help call for the implementation of similar plans in areas where they live.

implications for counseling practice

Given current threats to human well-being and social justice, the recognition of the Anthropocene necessitates counselors to expand their roles to include environmental and climate justice. As described in this article, the MSJCC can be used to help guide efforts to engage in environmental and climate

justice advocacy. To do this, counselors should first educate themselves on climate and environmental justice issues on global, national, and local levels, and then seek to become involved in a way that is culturally responsive. For example, counselors can use their preexisting skills, such as group facilitation, to help educate communities on the climate crisis or to help environment activists process their grief to help prevent burnout. Counselors can also show up as advocates and bring their unique expertise on mental health to climate change mitigation and resilience plans. As a profession, counselor educators can also help lead the way by focusing research on the implications of the climate crisis on marginalized communities and by training future counselors on environmental justice principles. Counselor educators can also join with leaders from other helping professions and the STEM fields to form interdisciplinary coalitions focused on addressing issues of environmental and climate justice. In conclusion, counselors can use the principles of multiculturalism and social justice counseling to advocate for a fair and just response to the realities of the climate crisis and Anthropocene.

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