

How can counselors address social justice amid climate change?

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We're currently living in what many scientists are calling the Anthropocene, the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. An article published

in the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* discusses how counselors can promote environmental justice during this time.

The Environmental Protection Agency defines environmental justice 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."

The article accomplishes three goals:

- It builds awareness about climate change and the Anthropocene among counselors.
- It expands knowledge regarding how climate change may exacerbate issues of social inequality.
- And it demonstrates how counselors can address environmental justice issues affecting clients and their communities.

The article's author, Alexander J. Hilert, Ph.D., LPC, CCTP, of William & Mary, provides examples of how counselors can make a difference, noting that they can use their 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. Also, counselor educators can help lead the way by focusing research on the implications of the [climate](#) crisis on marginalized communities.

"As counselors, it is our ethical duty to respond to issues of systemic injustice that affect the lives of our clients," said Hilert. "Using the framework of [environmental justice](#), counselors can better understand the disproportionate impacts of [climate change](#) on communities experiencing marginalization and oppression, and how we can respond through advocacy and outreach."

More information: Alexander J. Hilert, Counseling in the Anthropocene: Addressing Social Justice Amid Climate Change, *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* (2021). [DOI: 10.1002/jmcd.12223](https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12223)

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