Abolish ICE: Counselors' Demand for Justice and Human Rights

Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) stands in solidarity with immigrant communities, and activists taking action against the state-sanctioned violence against immigrant communities. We call for the immediate abolishment and prosecution of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Since the crackdown from Kristi Noem and the Department of Homeland Security, at least 32 people have died in ICE custody, and ICE agents have been involved in at least 14 shootings (Singh, Marcos, & Simmonds, 2026). On January 24th, Alex Pretti, an ICU nurse in Minneapolis, Minnesota was murdered by ICE for attempting to aid an immigrant woman pushed to the ground by ICE. On January 20th, Liam Conejo Ramos was used as bait by ICE to lure out his father, leading to both of their detainment by ICE at one of their facilities in Texas. On January 13th, Aliyah Rahman, a disabled Bangladeshi woman and U.S. born citizen was violently dragged out of her car by ICE on the way to a medical appointment. On January 7th, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Renee Nicole Good was killed by ICE in her community (MPR News). On New Year's Eve 2025, an off-duty ICE agent shot and killed Keith Porter Jr., a Black man and father, outside his apartment building (The Guardian). In 2026 alone, ICE has been involved in the deaths of nine people so far, also including: Luis Gustavo Núñez Cáceres, Geraldo Lunas Campos, Victor Manuel Díaz, Parody La, Luis Beltrán Yáñez-Cruz, and Heber Sánchez Domínguez (Aljazeera).

There are clear occurrences of state sanctioned violence against individuals regardless of migration and citizenship status. ICE agents detained five unhoused Indigenous men in Minneapolis, which shows it was never just about enforcing immigration law (ICT News). In September 2025, an ICE agent shot Silverio Villegas González, who was an undocumented immigrant. In April 2025 Marie Ange Blaise, a Haitian immigrant died in a Broward County Detention Center in Florida due to medical neglect. In early 2025, over 100 Indian migrants were deported to India on a US military plane with their arms and legs in shackles. These are just a few of the many reported and unreported accounts of violence against immigrants.

From Minneapolis, to Chicago, to Washington D.C., to North Carolina, to New Jersey, to Los Angeles and beyond, there are countless reels and videos on social media that show ICE agents cowardly wearing masks and head coverings, being violent towards protesters and civilians. ICE is kidnapping individuals including children at public places like Home Depot, during pickup/dropoff at their children's schools, or while working their construction, retail, delivery, and service jobs. In ICE detention centers, people who are detained routinely face medical and psychiatric neglect, lack of access to food, hygiene and clean water, and face violence from detention officers, including sexual assault of both adults and minors, and such abuses have contributed to severe mental health crises for detainees and deaths by suicide (ACLU, 2025; Ossoff, 2025). ICE is causing chaos and targeting communities across the US, with the full support of the current

Administration, to achieve their goal of upholding the pillars of White supremacy, xenophobia, and racism through state sanctioned violence (McConnell & Hubbard, 2025).

Impact

Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) stands against this regime that is fueling hate-fire in our communities. We believe people have the right to live in communities where they feel safe and connected. People have the right to protest and hold the government accountable for wrongdoing without being targeted with deadly violence. The constant threat of raids, detention, and family separation is producing widespread anxiety, hypervigilance, and fear. Children are witnessing their parents, caregivers, and community members being taken and disrupting their sense of safety, attachment, and ability to exist. People with disabilities, whether seen or unseen, continue to face harm and violence at the hands of ICE agents, threatening their safety and well-being. As counselors, we hold a responsibility to advocate for people with disabilities experiencing such harm and to protect the rights and dignity of all individuals, including those of vulnerable communities. Many individuals are not leaving their homes, going to work, attending school, seeking medical care, or accessing mental health services out of fear of being targeted. As counselors, we are ethically bound to promote client welfare, advocate for social justice, and do no harm (ACA, 2014). The current climate makes this work more difficult and more urgent. Therapeutic trust and client welfare is near impossible to build when client welfare is threatened by state sanctioned violence. CSJ stands in solidarity with the immigrant and Indigenous communities who are being targeted by ICE. We join with immigration rights activists and others who are calling for the abolition of ICE.

Call to Action

CSJ is putting out a call to action for counselors to show up for the revolution!

This inhumane and violent mistreatment of immigrants must stop. As mental health clinicians, educators and community members, we hold a key role in raising critical consciousness of how xenophobia, racism, nationalism and white supremacy upholds state-sanctioned violence perpetuated by ICE. Many in our profession have been silent and ambivalent on speaking out against social injustice (Hannon et al., 2023) and specifically ICE related violence while their own clients, students and community members are being targeted.There has been mounting pressure on immigrant professionals to be the sole voices that carry the movement to abolish ICE. Our peers with dominant identities, however, remain complacent, expecting those who are most impacted to carry the burden alone. Let us remind you that it is not only our ethical, but our moral responsibility to act now. Staying silent is violence. We as a community are overwhelmed and angry at how silent our profession has been. Apathy and neutrality only upholds oppression.

Need ideas? Find ways to get connected with your local community and get involved in the resistance. This is a time for counselors to be more than just performative and to be actively involved in social justice. Organize with others, join your local Rapid Response group, contact your representative to oppose money for ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), offer childcare, fill food boxes, print and disseminate information about legal rights in multiple languages, donate money to activism organizations, demand responses from counseling organizations, offer support groups, provide pro bono services to individuals and communities impacted by ICE violence & deportation, find organizations and businesses in Minnesota and other areas to directly support, get involved in BDS (i.e., Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movements to boycott companies who are supporting the current Administration and providing funding and resources for ICE (ICE Boycott List).

In the midst of all this, find joy, rest, recharge, and reach out for support for yourself. Let yourself experience all your emotions (as Sahaj Kaur Kohli calls it whimsical grief), as this is a marathon, not a sprint. As you support your clients, remember that CSJ is here to support counselors as we all navigate this current sociopolitical environment. We offer non-judgmental, collaborative spaces for connection, mentorships, resources, and opportunities to get involved in the movement. Please visit the CSJ website (https://www.counseling-csj.org/) to access this information and to become a member of CSJ.

As a therapist, what can I do if faced with the threat of ICE presence?

Safety Plan for a Therapist Facing Potential ICE Presence (credited to Xiomara Sosa):

A good safety plan for a therapist facing potential ICE presence involves ** preparedness (knowing rights, clear policies), staff training (referring agents to a liaison), physical security (locked doors, designated private zones), and community connection (rapid response, legal aid links)**, focusing on calm adherence to procedure and non-obstruction to protect patients and staff while upholding legal rights, according to resources from the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), Introspective Family Therapy, and the ACLU.

Workplace Protocols (Clinic/Office):

- Designated Liaison: Appoint a trained staff member as the sole point of contact for ICE; all others should refer agents to them, stating, "You must speak with our designated representative."
- Written Policy: Have a clear, written policy on how to handle immigration enforcement, including locking doors and restricting access to private areas.
- Staff Training: Conduct drills (like fire drills) so staff know exactly what to say (or not say) and who to direct agents to, preventing accidental consent.
- Know Your Rights: Understand that you don't have to let agents in without a warrant and can record their actions (without interfering).

Client/Patient Safety (Especially for Undocumented Clients):

- Know Client Rights: Educate yourself on patient confidentiality (HIPAA, state laws) and the rights of immigrant patients.
- Safety Planning: Provide clients with resources like the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) for personal/family safety plans.
- Referrals: Have a list of reputable immigrant defense attorneys and legal aid groups.

Personal & Community Safety (For You, the Therapist):

- Build Networks: Join or support rapid response networks and community defense groups.
- Practice Self-Care: Use techniques like coherent breathing and journaling to manage stress and prevent re-traumatization.
- Document, Don't Confront: If you witness activity, document it from a safe distance without obstructing agents.

Key Resources to Consult

- National Immigration Law Center (NILC): Resources for Healthcare Providers.
- ACLU: Immigrants' Rights "Know Your Rights" Guides. https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/immigrants-rights
- Immigrants Rising: Wellness Support Groups and Resources.

Other Resources (Non-Exhaustive)

Undocuprofessionals
https://www.undocuprofessionals.net/

Stand with Minnesota
https://www.standwithminnesota.com

Smitten Kitten Minneapolis
https://www.instagram.com/smittenkittenmn/

Minnesota Immigrants Rights Action Committee
https://www.miracmn.com/

Freedom for Immigrants
https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/news-and-updates/ffi-mourns-those-killed-by-ice

Siembra NC
https://www.siembranc.org/

Under the Desk News
https://underthedesknews.substack.com/

Immigrant Defense Project
https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/raids/

Immigration Policy Tracking
https://immpolicytracking.org/policies/reported-migrant-deaths-in-ice-custody-rise-under-trump-administration/

Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid
https://www.dcmigrantmutualaid.org/

Community Defense Art
https://defend612.com/art/

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Aljazeera https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/27/us-witnessed-many-ice-related-deaths-in-2026-here-are-their-stories

Boycott Citizens
https://www.boycottcitizens.org/ice

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ICT News
https://ictnews.org/news/five-native-americans-detained-by-ice-during-ongoing-raids-in-minneapolis/

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MPR News: https://www.mprnews.org/

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Whimsical grief in a burning world: https://culturallyenough.substack.com/p/whimsical-grief-in-a-burning-world