Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) 2027 Conference

Courtyard Minneapolis Downtown, Minneapolis, MN

April 30 – May 1; Pre-conference Day of Service April 29

Conference Theme: **No Neutral Ground: Counseling, Justice, and the Courage to Disrupt**

Our conference theme, *No Neutral Ground: Counseling, Justice, and the Courage to Disrupt***,** speaks directly to our current moment. *No Neutral Ground* is not simply a slogan; it is a declaration. It reminds us that when communities are harmed, silence is a position. Avoidance is a position. Comfort is a position. To choose justice requires the courage to disrupt the systems, narratives, practices, and conditions that produce and sustain harm.

This conference invites counselors, educators, students, researchers, advocates, and community partners to examine what it means to practice counseling in a world marked by inequity, violence, exclusion, and resistance. We seek proposals that move beyond awareness toward action – work that challenges oppressive systems, interrogates taken-for-granted assumptions within the counseling profession, centers historically marginalized voices and ways of knowing, and imagines more just and liberatory approaches to healing, education, advocacy, leadership, and community care.

We welcome presentations that explore the many forms disruption can take: clinical, educational, organizational, political, relational, cultural, and communal. Proposals may address advocacy and systemic change; trauma and collective healing; decolonization and liberation; race, gender, sexuality, disability, migration, class, and other dimensions of identity and power; ethical responsibility in times of injustice; community-based approaches to counseling; resistance and resilience; counselor education, research, training, and supervision; or other work that asks us to reconsider what counseling requires of us when neutrality itself can help preserve the status quo.

At its core, *No Neutral Ground* asks a simple but demanding question: *When the conditions around us are unjust, what does it mean to be a counselor willing to act?*

<u>Why A CSJ Conference in Minneapolis</u>

Selecting Minneapolis as the site for the 2027 Counselors for Social Justice Conference is not simply a logistical decision. It is a statement about place, history, accountability, and the urgent work of justice unfolding in real time.

Our conference theme, *No Neutral Ground: Counseling, Justice, and the Courage to Disrupt,* speaks directly to Minneapolis and to this moment. No neutral ground is not just a slogan; it is a

declaration. It reminds us that when communities are harmed, silence is a position. Avoidance is a position. Comfort is a position. To choose justice requires the courage to disrupt the systems, narratives, and conditions that produce harm.

Minneapolis and the surrounding communities hold a profound place in the national conscience. It is the broader region where Philando Castile was killed in his car while with his partner and young child. It is the city where George Floyd was murdered in 2020, igniting a global movement for racial justice, police accountability, and a deeper reckoning with state violence.

Minneapolis also carries a much longer history of justice movements. It is the birthplace of the American Indian Movement, founded in 1968 by Native activists responding to poverty, discrimination, police brutality, and the conditions facing Native people displaced into urban communities. AIM grew from local grassroots organizing into a national and international movement for tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, cultural survival, and Indigenous self-determination. Long before Minneapolis became a global symbol after George Floyd's murder, Indigenous communities and organizers were already challenging state violence, settler colonialism, erasure, displacement, and systemic neglect.

Questions of justice, safety, belonging, and state power have become even more urgent in recent time. Minneapolis and the surrounding communities were again shaken by immigration enforcement actions, raids, and federal operations that generated fear, protest, and outrage, particularly among immigrant communities. Most painfully, these operations were marked by the killings of two Minneapolis residents: Renée Good, a mother of three who was fatally shot by an ICE agent on January 7, 2026, and Alex Pretti, an ICU nurse who was fatally shot by federal officers on January 24, 2026.

But Minneapolis is not only a site of tragedy. It is a living site of organizing, resistance, remembrance, community care, and unfinished struggle. Again and again, communities have responded to harm not only with protest, but with collective action – with people coming together to bear witness, care for one another, challenge injustice, and imagine something different. The story of Minneapolis is not only about what has happened there. It is also about what people have chosen to do in response.

To gather in Minneapolis is to gather in a city shaped by generations of resistance. It invites us to consider counseling not apart from the world in which people live, but in relationship to the histories, systems, communities, and conditions that shape their lives.

Our theme, *No Neutral Ground: Counseling, Justice, and the Courage to Disrupt,* takes on particular resonance in such a place. We come to Minneapolis not simply to hold a conference, but to learn, listen, remember, engage, and ask what it means for counselors to stand alongside communities in the unfinished work of justice.