

Social Justice

Click on a topic below to go directly to that section.

[Definition of Social Justice](#)

[Social Justice is Fundamental to a CBA](#)

[Additional Resources Related to Social Justice](#)

Definition of Social Justice

Social justice is a critical focus for school counselors. First, many students with whom counselors interact are impacted by social injustices and counselors need to know how to respond to their needs. Second, school counselors can help make students aware of social injustices and provide them with strategies to help rectify those situations. The following definition of social justice is provided.

Social Justice

- **Education for social justice assumes that societies should not act to discriminate against groups or individuals.**
- **Movements for social justice are composed of many individuals, not just one, who share awareness of injustices and a strong belief that something must be done to rectify them**

School counselors can help students be able to identify and become involved in resolving injustices in their own school and communities. Injustices like racism, sexism, domestic violence, LGBTQ, and poverty immediately touch students' lives and need to be addressed wherever it is found if our students are to grow up and live in a world that is free of injustice. This is their world and they need to be aware that they have choices to make and actions to take that will help shape what their world will be like in the future.

Social Justice is Fundamental to a CBA

School counselors have a responsibility to help students develop their sense of responsibility for social justice and how they can contribute to a more just society and world. Action projects are an important way to engage students in the fight for justice. Counselors and teachers who remain attuned to students' interests and needs are actually justice workers already and are doing their part to make the world a better place.

One of the greatest gifts we can give as educators is to help students become free thinkers with the courage and commitment to reflect on their own experiences and beliefs, question whether the consequences of doing things a certain way benefit or thwart humanity from progressing. It also is important for students to question their traditions and ask what the consequences are from the attributions about others which have become part of the belief systems that govern their traditions. We, along with our students, must take a step back and ask how we can improve society and the world in the same way as we need to look at our own mental processes that control our thinking, emotions and behavior.

School counselors have an important role to play in helping students understand the need for respect of self and others, for embracing meaningful relationships that promote individual and social growth, and work to change where that is not occurring. We have a human responsibility to ensure peace and the continuance of the human species in community and supportive environments.

Our sense of critical consciousness and social injustice are both personal and something we share with others. Here are some critical questions we can ask ourselves about injustices in our society and the world.

- What is my level of critical consciousness about social injustices in our society and the world?
- Do I feel any personal responsibility for addressing these injustices?
- Am I consciously or unconsciously participating in the continuing existence of these injustices?
- What attributions do I assign to, or accept about, people and groups that are different from me?
- Do I understand the causes of these injustices and remedies that work?
- Am I aware of strategies that can help reduce or eliminate these injustices?
- Do I personally use any of these strategies?

- Am I motivated to take action against injustices?
- Do I feel confident in my ability to affect change?

Additional Resources Related to Social Justice

The Internet is a wonderful tool for accessing information on just about any topic. It has been invaluable in helping us to identify what research has demonstrated to be strongly related to students' academic achievement and well-being, and evidence-based practices that provide concrete examples of how to translate the research findings into meaningful learning opportunities that support student development.



Staying informed about what works and does not work to help students achieve and succeed is one of the defining characteristics of a professional school counselor. Internet search engines can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the topics discussed on the CBA Website. To get you started, here are some additional resources you may find helpful. These resources, however, only scratch the surface of what is available on the Internet or in published books and articles. We encourage you to use search engines to find more resources that will increase your understanding and build your capacity to apply these ideas in your work as school counselors.

Videos

An inspiring Ted by Talk by Charles Robbins entitled “Social justice -- is it still relevant in the 21st century? He defines social justice as “a place where everybody is free to achieve everything they are capable of doing.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wtroop739uU>

Video by Dr. Chris Dula on “Stereotype, Prejudice, Discrimination, and Just World Hypothesis/Belief.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yueo-C_3Eyc

This is a C-Span video on a panel discussion during a National Symposium on Jobs and the American Dream. This panel focuses on social justice and examines the contrast between Dr. Martin Luther King's vision for a just America and our current reality. Click on the link below to open the video.

<http://www.c-span.org/video/?301236-3/social-justice-issues>

Websites

“Social and Cultural Issues in School Counseling,” ASCA.

<http://www.school-counselor.org/topics/social-justice-issues.html>

Excellent website on prejudice.

<http://www.understandingprejudice.org/apa/english/page9.htm>

This is a blog on Teaching Tolerance “where educators who care about diversity, equity and justice can find news, suggestions, conversation and support.” It us a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

<http://www.tolerance.org/>