



CENTER FOR NATURALISM

CFN Policy and Applications

Science advocacy and critical thinking

Naturalism is a worldview grounded in a scientific, evidence-based understanding of the universe and our place in it. The CFN promotes science and critical thinking in public education and public discourse as a constructive alternative to faith-based justifications for beliefs. In advocating science, the CFN supports the teaching of cosmology and evolution as essential elements of the epic story of life on earth: www.naturalism.org/science.htm.

Social and economic inequality

Naturalism holds that persons are not self-created, but owe their successes and failures to the conditions into which they were born and developed. Therefore, major social and economic inequalities cannot be justified on the basis that individuals strongly deserve their status. The CFN supports progressive policies that will increase the well-being of those who are unlucky in life, and that reduce extreme disparities in income and opportunity. By challenging the myth of the self-made self, we can help create a more equitable society: www.naturalism.org/policy.htm.

Behavioral health and psychotherapy

Mental illness, addiction, obesity, and other behavioral disorders are too often misunderstood as failures of will. The CFN advocates the recognition that dysfunctional behavior is fully caused by the interaction of genetic and environmental factors. This understanding reduces the stigma associated with behavioral disorders, while pointing the way toward effective treatment. The CFN supports the development of psychotherapeutic and self-change techniques that apply naturalism to enhance psychological well-being. Properly presented, challenging conventional wisdom about the self is a powerful means to increase life satisfaction and deepen interpersonal relationships: www.naturalism.org/addictio.htm.

Criminal justice

The CFN encourages an empirically-based, comprehensive understanding of the causes of criminality. Knowing the full causal story behind the offender allows us to design effective interventions to prevent crime, abuse, and dysfunction. Seeing that criminals are not self-made undercuts retributive attitudes favoring the death penalty and punitive prison conditions. Realizing that but for the luck of circumstances, any of us could be standing in the criminal's shoes generates compassion for offenders as well as for victims: www.naturalism.org/criminal.htm.

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CFN Policy & Applications, continued:

Environmental awareness

Because naturalism shows our deep connection to the world and others, it prompts concern for the natural environment and for those who will succeed us on the planet. Because it discounts the existence of the soul and survival after death, naturalism increases the value we place on this, our only life, and the world we inhabit now. The CFN supports an environmental ethic of wise use, sustainability, and population control that will keep the earth habitable for future generations of all creatures: www.naturalism.org/environment.htm.

Naturalistic spirituality

While the word “spirituality” may imply the supernatural, it is also used to denote pursuits that generate awe, wonder, compassion, gratitude, good will, peace of mind, and well-being. The realization that human beings and their emotions, thoughts, desires and actions are empirically “one with the universe” can ground a naturalistic, non-dualist spirituality. The CFN supports an approach to personal well-being and ultimate concerns that is consistent with both science and our highest spiritual aspirations: www.naturalism.org/spiritua.htm.

Community of naturalists

The CFN recognizes that naturalists have the same human needs for affiliation as those attracted to more traditional worldviews, so we support the development of naturalism as the basis for social networks. The CFN encourages individuals and groups to promote awareness of naturalism in their communities, for instance by forming affinity groups, sponsoring events for cultural enrichment such as philosophy cafes, and organizing public forums related to naturalism: <http://www.centerfornaturalism.org/community.htm>.
