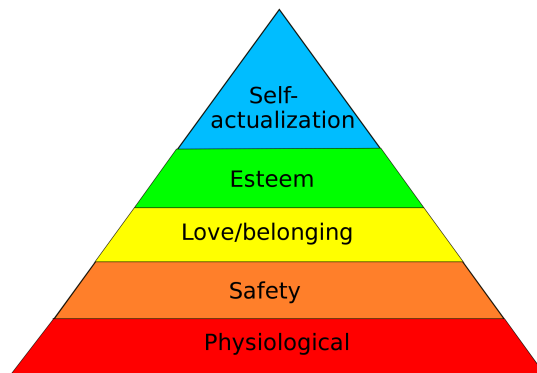


8.2: Psychological Constructs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid, with the greatest and most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualization at the top.
- The order of needs as categorized by Maslow are physiological; safety; love and belonging; esteem; and self-actualization.
- Maslow acknowledged that many different levels of motivation are likely to be present in a human all at once. His focus in discussing the hierarchy was to identify the basic types of motivation and the order that they generally progress as lower needs are reasonably well met.



Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are generally obvious because they are required for survival. If requirements are not met, the body cannot continue to function. Air, water, food, clothing, and shelter are the basic physiological needs.

Safety Needs

Once physical needs are satisfied, individual safety takes precedence. Safety and Security needs include:

- Personal and family safety
- Financial security
- Health and well-being

Love/belonging Needs

After physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, the third layer of human needs are interpersonal. This involves feelings of belongingness. Deficiencies in interpersonal needs, due to neglect, shunning, ostracism, etc., can impact an individual's ability to form and maintain emotionally significant relationships in general, such as:

- Friendship
- Intimacy
- Family

Humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from larger community affiliations or simply a few close friends. Without these connections, many people become susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety, and clinical depression. This need for belonging can sometimes overcome physiological and security needs. For example, an anorexic may ignore the need to eat and the security of health for a feeling of control and belonging.

Esteem

Esteem represents the normal human desire to be accepted and valued by others. People need to engage themselves to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel self-valued, be it in a profession or hobby. Imbalances at this level can result in low self-esteem or an inferiority complex. Many people with low self-esteem will not be able to improve their view of themselves simply by receiving fame, respect, and glory externally, but must first accept themselves internally. Psychological imbalances, such as depression, can prevent one from obtaining self-esteem on both levels.

Self-actualization

This level of need refers to what a person's full potential is and the realization of that potential. Maslow describes this level as the desire to accomplish everything that one can, to become the most that one can be. Individuals may perceive or focus on this need very specifically. For example, one individual may have the strong desire to become an ideal parent. In another, the desire may be expressed athletically. For others, it may be expressed in paintings, pictures, or inventions. Maslow believed that to acquire this level of need, the person must adequately achieve the previous needs.

Freud's Defense Mechanisms

Defense mechanisms are psychological mechanisms aimed at reducing anxiety. They were first discussed by Sigmund Freud as part of his psychoanalytic theory and further developed by his daughter, Anna Freud. Often **unconscious**, defense mechanisms are used to protect an individual from psychological pain or anxiety.

While such mechanisms may seem to be helpful in the short term, they can easily become a substitute for addressing the underlying cause and lead to additional problems. The solution, therefore, is to address the underlying causes of the pain these mechanisms are used to alleviate.

Here are a few examples:

Defense Mechanism	Description	Example
Repression	Unknowingly placing an unpleasant memory or thought in the unconscious	Not remembering a traumatic event such as being sexually abused as a child
Regression	Reverting back to an immature behavior from an earlier stage of development	Throwing temper tantrums as an adult when you don't get your way
Displacement	Redirecting feelings or actions from the intended source to a safer, substitute target	Taking your anger towards your boss out on family members by yelling at them in place of your boss
Sublimation	Replacing socially unacceptable impulses with socially acceptable behavior	Channeling aggressiveness into playing football
Reaction Formation	Overacting in the opposite way to one's true feelings	Being overly protective of an unwanted child
Projection	Attributing one's own unacceptable feelings and thoughts to others and not yourself	Accusing your boy/girlfriend of cheating on you because you have thought about cheating on him/her
Rationalization	Justifying actions, thoughts, or unwanted outcomes with excuses or faulty logic	Blaming the teaching style of a professor for why you failed an exam

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