Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow was a psychologist who introduced the concept of a hierarchy of needs in which people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other needs.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is usually shown as a pyramid. The lowest levels of the pyramid are made up of the most basic needs, while the higher level, more complex needs are located at the top of the pyramid.

Needs at the bottom of the pyramid are basic physical requirements including the need for air, water, food, and warmth. Once these lower-level needs have been met, people are able to move up to the next level of needs, which are for safety and security.

Needs further up the pyramid, become more associated to social needs, followed by psychological needs. The social need for belongingness, and friendships become important, followed by the need for self-esteem. At the top of the pyramid the need to feel a sense of accomplishment is becomes significant. Maslow emphasized the importance of self-actualization, which is a process of growing and developing as a person to achieve individual potential.

Types of Needs

Maslow believed that these needs play a key role in motivating behavior. Physiological, security, social, and esteem needs are deficiency needs, this means that these needs arise because of deprivation. These lower-level needs must be met in order to avoid negative feelings.
He described the highest-level of the pyramid as growth needs. Growth needs do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person.

**Five Levels of the Hierarchy of Needs**

There are five different levels in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs:

1. **Physiological Needs**

   Physiological needs include all the most basic of needs which are necessary for survival, such as the need for water, air, food and sleep. Maslow believed that these needs are the most basic and instinctive needs in the hierarchy because until these physiological needs are met all other needs are secondary.

2. **Safety Needs**

   These include needs for safety and security. Safety needs are important for survival, but they are not as demanding as the physiological needs. Examples of safety needs include a desire for shelter from the environment, or stable employment, insurance, and a safe neighborhood to live in.

3. **Social Needs**

   These needs for belongingness include the need for social interactions, love and affection. These needs were considered to be less essential than physiological and security needs. Relationships such as friendships, romantic attachments and families help fulfill this need for companionship and acceptance, as does involvement in social, work, community or religious groups.

4. **Esteem Needs**

   Once the first three needs have been satisfied, esteem needs becomes increasingly important. These include the need for things that reflect on self-esteem, personal worth, social recognition and accomplishment.

5. **Self Actualisation**

   This is the highest level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Self-actualising people are self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinions of others and interested fulfilling their potential.