

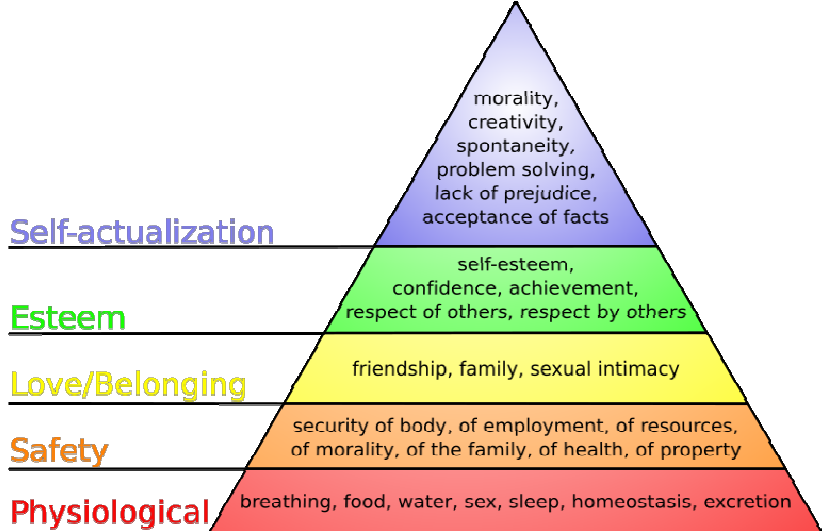
GETTING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS MET

Psychological needs can be defined as: **a psychological condition in which something is required or wanted.**

The most widely known model of psychological needs is the one proposed by Albert Maslow in his 1943 paper, A Theory of Human Motivation (see the figure to the right).

According to Maslow, there is a hierarchy of needs ranging from basic physiological needs to self-actualization, which are needs related to identity and purpose. In his theory, individuals progress from the lower stages to the upper stages one level at a time. Only when needs in the lower stage are satisfied can one focus on needs in the higher stage. Once needs in the lower stage are met they are no longer prioritized since they are satisfied. However, we do have the flexibility to move between stages. If a need in a lower stage is no longer met, it is re-prioritized at the expense of needs in the higher stages. As an example, someone who is autonomous and successful working as a manager in a company (i.e. needs in the self-actualization stage) will stop and focus on meeting basic needs (i.e. physiological needs) if they were to suddenly be diagnosed with a life-threatening disease such as cancer.

A more recent theory developed by Ryan & Deci (1985, 2000), called Self-Determination Theory (SDT), looks at the degree to which behaviours are volitional or self-determined. Human beings are believed to have innate tendencies towards psychological growth and self-development. The key ingredients for growth and development are psychological needs, which are believed to be universal and innate. The extent to which these are satisfied has a direct effect on personal growth, psychological development and self-actualization.



HOW TO GET YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS MET

1) Know what your needs are. Knowing what is important to you is the first step.

2) Define what that need means to you. Different people may have a different understanding of what a particular need means. For example, the need for intimacy may mean sexual contact for one person, where as for another individual it may mean being physically close and cuddling in bed.

3) Describe how you can get the need met. Use concrete behavioural descriptions of how to get the need fulfilled. For example, if you desire intimacy through physical contact state, use a definition such as, "Ask my spouse to hug me each time they get home" rather than just stating "Hugs".

In order to help you out, make sure to use the Psychological Needs Worksheet to help you out. Lastly, if you find it is still difficult to get your needs met, another toolkit such as Assertiveness Training or Developing Effective Communication Skills will likely be useful.