

# Psychological and social support



01

02

03

03. Concept and aims of psychology  
03. The beliefs about this discipline

06. The physiological needs:

06. The need for security:

06. He need for love and belonging.

06. Esteem need

06

07

07. Need for self-realization.

07. Professional ethics of Humanities practitioners

04. The hierarchy of needs according to Abraham Maslow

04

05

08. Personality

08. The concept of personality

08. Personality and emergency situations

08

09

09. The theories of personality

10

00

00. Click the page you want to view



## Module ⑥ Psychological and social support

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Etymologically, «Psychology» means the science of the soul. Like all other scientific disciplines, continued advancing, developing and diversifying psychology. The progress of the discipline are based on research carried out in laboratory and in clinical practice knowledge. Studies and psychological attention in people who have suffered extreme situations, such as a natural disaster, for example, have allowed to develop a body of knowledge about behavior, reaction, and the resulting trauma.

The objective of this chapter is the development of a certain knowledge of the psychological processes of the victims exposed to an extreme situation, the perspective that will allow to better adapt to the needs of these persons.

We start defining what it is psychology, basic aspects of the human psyche, the personality, the biological causes of behavior to models of behavior of people who face extreme situations. It is based on the assumption that the behavior of the victims is not abnormal in itself, but is a natural response and logic to an unacceptable situation, our job is to first understand what living in a context that overcomes them to then propose the appropriate assistance.

### 1. Concept and aims of psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and experience that is how humans feel, think, know and learn to adapt to their environment.

#### 1.1. The beliefs about this discipline

To better understand what is psychology let's dismantle errors and myths on the subject of this science.

- Think that a psychologist is a person able to read our minds, or able to hypnotize and manipulate to his will.
- Think that psychologists focus exclusively to mental health problems and that individuals who come to consult them are "mad".

## Module ⑥ Psychological and social support

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- Think that it is possible to classify **individuals** from a superficial observation of their behavior.
- Associate “to have psychology” with having common sense.

Psychology is a science that studies the behaviour and mental processes in order to decrypt and explain all aspects of thought, feelings, perceptions, and human actions. As it is a science it uses a scientific method. Psychology is a part of the human or social sciences who studies:

- The behaviour of individual organisms that interact with their environment.
- The mental processes of individuals.
- The process of communication of the individual against society.

### 2. The hierarchy of needs according to Abraham Maslow

Abraham Harold Maslow is a famous American psychologist, considered the father of the humanist and best known approach to explanation of the motivation by the hierarchy of needs.

Maslow argued that human needs are prioritized on a priority basis. A need reveals a new need of superior character and therefore a new motivation (Figure 1).

Can be divided into two broad categories needs: the need to have and need to be.

The need to have reference to anything humans can acquire and hold for his own survival. The need to be depends on willingness to exist as a human being and recognized as such.

Requirements are divided into 5 phases:

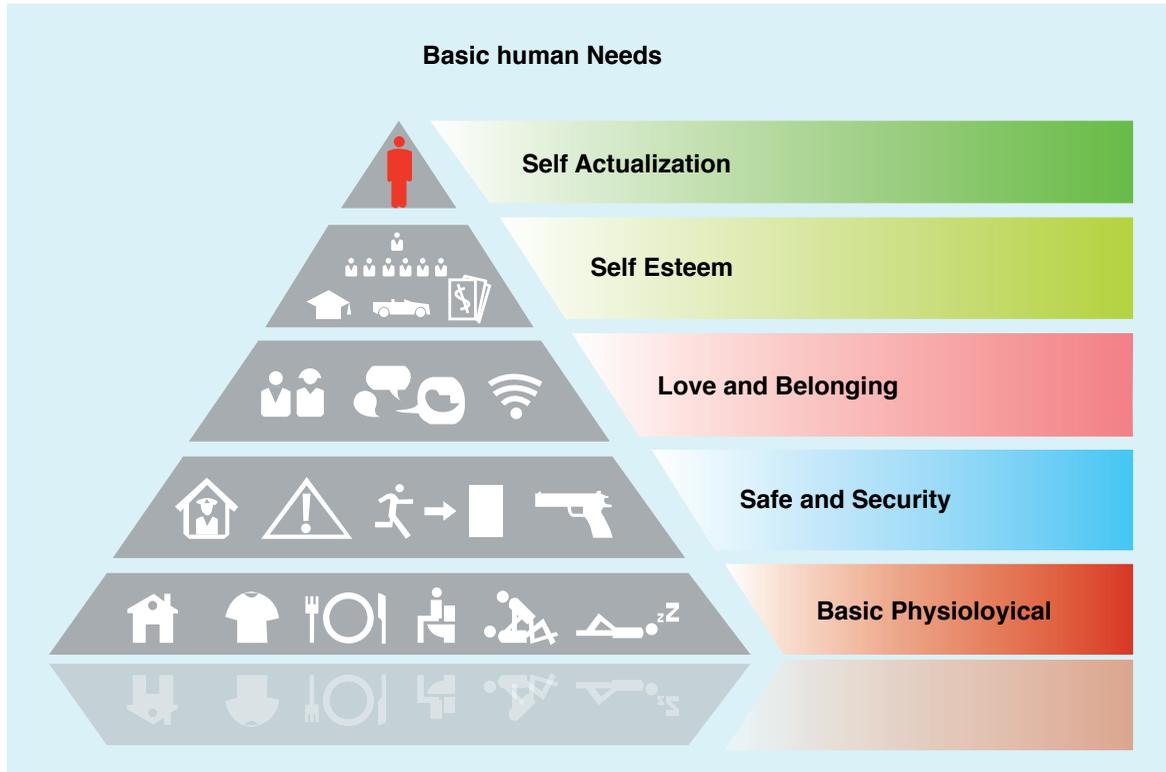


Figure 1. The pyramid of Maslow.

## Module ⑥ Psychological and social support

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### 2.1. The physiological needs:

Physiological needs are those relating to the survival of the organism. Are classified in this category needs is maintaining the health of the body (breathing, feeding, hydration, elimination of waste, balance acid-base (pH), temperature, rest, avoidance of pain, sex, etc.).

### 2.2. The need for security:

As the physiological needs are met, the individual looking for security that is a way to protect its achievements, to stabilise its situation, shelter... as for example: security of employment, the House, the family, morality, etc.

### 2.3. He need for love and belonging.

The need for love and belonging motivates individuals to develop relationships with others, through friendship or simply the need to belong to a community. At this level, we find the band's boyfriend, marriage, family, associations, etc.

### 2.4. Esteem need

As what a person is integrated into a group she sought recognition of its individuality. What translates into trademarks of self-respect, confidence that he carries other, recognition of its own competencies, the display of its participation in the achievements of the group, the independence, the freedom to act, etc. which can be summed up by the attention, appreciation, recognition, fame, status. At this level may arise questions and/or problems related to a feeling of inferiority and self-esteem.

### 2.5. Need for self-realization.

Search instinctive to go beyond itself, to be even better and use its qualities to fight and defend just causes. Here are a few examples of characters who have attained self-realization: Gandhi, Einstein, William James, etc.

Quote: "If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail"  
*A. Maslow*

### 3. Professional ethics of Humanities practitioners

The study of human will not without raising ethical issues. Ethics is a matter of "limit". What can we allow to do or not in order to help the man? Humanities practitioners share values, rules and standards:

#### **With regard to men**

- Respect and promote the development of human, its dignity and its fundamental values.
- Respect the rights of the individual to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy.

#### **Opposite of themselves as practitioners**

- Maintain a high level of jurisdiction in its field of activity.
- Recognize the limits of his field of expertise.
- Provide assistance in the areas in which they are qualified by training or experience.
- Stay aware of their responsibilities towards patients, the community and the society in which they live and work.

### 4. Personality

Personality is defined as the integration testing and individualized set of behaviours, emotions and cognitions, based on reactions to the environment modes that characterize every individual (Cottraux and Blackburn, 2005)

#### 4.1. The concept of personality

Personality comes from the word 'person' that is derived from the Greek «*prosopon*» for the mask wore the actors to the theatre. Personality is the set of feelings, thoughts and behaviors that characterize a distinctive and lasting the normal functioning of an individual. Each personality is distinguished by a large number of traits of personality or character traits. This is our behavioral signature making to tell others: 'well you!'. As an example, we could appoint the hysterical tendencies, impulsiveness, or even ambivalence.

Temperament represents the set of innate traits that characterize a person psychologically and physiologically. It is based on more biological aspect of behaviour and involves biochemistry, endocrinology, and the underlying structure of the neurological functioning. It is de facto hereditary. It is a provision general mood and the sensitivity of a subject in his relationship with himself and the external environment. Hippocrates in his theory on the «humours» already attempted a classification of temperaments and distinguished four: the nervous, the bilious, the blood and the lymphatic.

Personality includes both genetic temperament and character which results from learning and events in life of each one.

#### 4.2. Personality and emergency situations

In an emergency situation, which in general is particularly stressful, it recognizes some traits of personality that promote management situation. For example, a person who has a high score of emotional stability will be

more resistant to difficult situations, will be able to control intense negative feelings and will quickly find new motivations against failures.

## 4.3. The theories of personality

### 4.3.1. Classical psychoanalysis according to Freud

Most people think they know why they do things. In fact, according to Freud, the most important reasons for our behaviors are not available to our conscious thought.

The author compares the human mind to an iceberg, the visible tip as the conscious mind, the waterline the preconscious and finally the part always invisible, submerged under water: the unconscious. The water line is variable, sometimes the preconscious is submerged, sometimes emerging. This is the information to which we do not believe, but which can be recalled at any time. The largest part of the iceberg

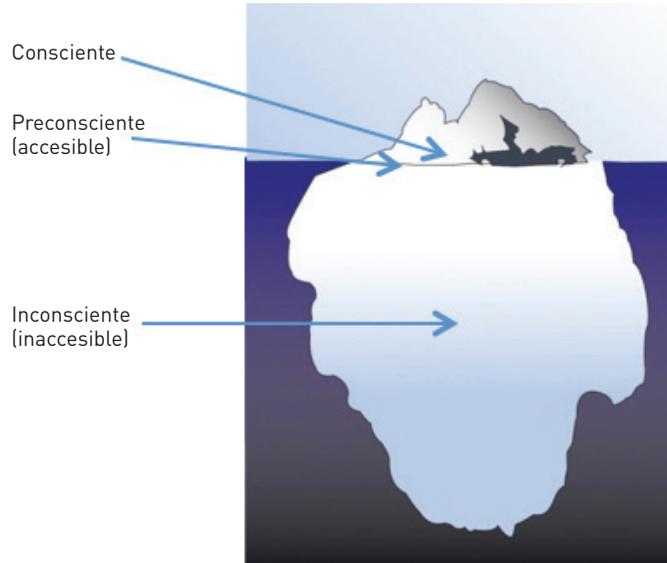


Figure 2. Tip of the iceberg.