

# Psychosocial Needs of The Elderly

## Learner Workbook



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## **BASIC CONCEPTS**

There are several basic concepts to understand when addressing psychosocial needs of the elderly. While physical well being is important, we also need to be concerned about care for the resident's psychosocial well being.

Important basic concepts include:

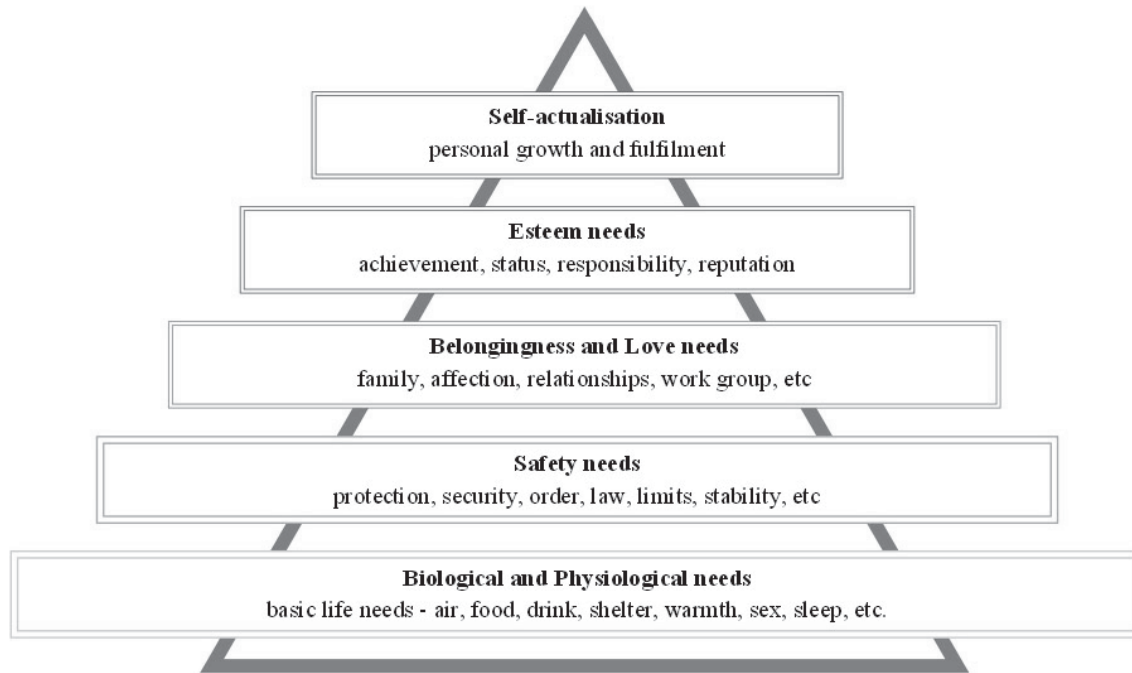
- We treat our residents as individuals and plan care accordingly.
- The resident's psychosocial needs should be evaluated at the time of admission as well as on an on-going basis. Understanding the resident's history and past will help us understand who the resident is today and provide outstanding care.

### **Consider the Following When Evaluating Resident Needs and Preferences:**

- Family history
- Privacy issues
- Career/work history
- Hobbies and interests
- History of psychiatric illness
- Coping mechanisms
- Spirituality/religion
- Cultural considerations
- Birthplace
- Significant losses
- Accomplishments

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

We can use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a structure to consider a resident's psychosocial needs and our role in providing care.



© alan chapman 2001-4, based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

### Physical Needs

Make sure the fundamental needs are met, including if the resident has enough food, is warm enough, is clean, and is well groomed. Make sure the resident is medically managed for any illness or pain.

### Safety/Security

Monitor the resident. Follow safety protocol. Build security by keeping your work. Be honest and never trick a resident. Make sure the resident feels safe by introducing new caregivers to the resident, so he/she does not feel surrounded by strangers. Keep wandering residents out of other resident rooms.

### Belonging

Encourage a resident to make friends in the Community. Introduce him/her to other residents and point out common interests. Help the resident learn the Community routine so he/she feels "part of the group." Make a resident's family feel at home. Frequent pleasant family visits will help the resident to continue to feel like an important part of his/her family.

**Esteem**

Allow the resident to do as much for himself/herself as possible. Focus on what the resident can do, rather than his limitations. Recognize achievements. Remind the resident of past accomplishments.

**Self actualization**

Personal growth and fulfillment is different for everyone. Your activity programming and other opportunities within the Community can help provide opportunities for self-actualization, but it is not something you simply “give” to someone.

## **Depression**

When considering psychosocial needs, watch for abnormal conditions such as depression.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Change in sleep pattern
- Change in eating habits
- Change in activity patterns
- Not enjoying usual activities
- Isolation
- Physical symptoms (e.g., upset stomach, headache)
- Changes in mood or emotion
- Suicidal thoughts or statements

Report any changes or concerns to your supervisor immediately.

Treatment and Management of Depression:

- Always follow physician orders
- Medication
- Therapy
- Maintain open communication
- Allow residents to express concerns
- Encourage/provide meaningful activities

## **Spirituality**

Our residents may view religion in a different way from us. Each resident has a right to his/her own personal beliefs. Assisting the resident to practice his/her spirituality is an important component to good psychosocial care.

- Be mindful and respectful of the resident's beliefs
- Assist the resident to meet his/her spiritual needs
- Assist in placing religious items in the physical environment
- Arrange for transportation to place of worship
- Arrange for visitors
- Provide privacy (as appropriate)
- Monitor other residents to ensure rights are not violated

## **Sexuality**

Basic concepts to consider regarding sexuality include:

- The resident has the right to develop personal relationships
- Staff should allow for privacy
- If you feel a relationship is not consensual or you have concerns, contact your supervisor.

## Learner Activities

Complete the following activities. Your Instructor will sign and date when completed.

1. Interview two residents about their life history. Focus on:	Date Completed Instructor Signature
a. Where he/she grew up	
b. Professional accomplishments	
c. Family history	
d. Activities he/she enjoys	

2. Spirituality	Date Completed Instructor Signature
a. Arrange a meeting with a spiritual advisor (pastor, priest, etc.)	
b. Discuss ways you can enhance your residents' opportunities for spiritual expression and explain your findings here:	

3. Setup and conduct two resident-centered activities	Date Completed Instructor Signature
a. What supplies will be needed?	
b. How will you encourage residents to attend?	
c. How will you obtain feedback from your residents about the activity?	
d. Activity #1 completed	
e. Activity #2 completed	