

Maslow's hierarchy of needs and implications for head start families

[Family](#)



\n[[Table of Contents](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Theory](#) \n \t
3. [Summary and Conclusions](#) \n \t
4. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

Abraham Maslow was a prominent theorist that played a role in the formation of humanistic psychology. Maslow worked on a theory that would accommodate human motivation. The concept that behavior is motivated primarily by a person's desire to fulfill a specific need. He proposed that it was our inner nature that we had basic needs that we strive to meet. Then as those needs are met we move to the next level and continue to strive to "actualize," doing what one is fitted for.

I chose to research Abraham Maslow because his Hierarchy of Needs directly aligned with the challenges Head Start Families are currently facing. His Hierarchy is a great tool to assist staff with the identification of family needs and goals. When meeting with families this past year the decline in the economy, unemployment and inflation have had major impact on the ability of families to function in our communities. Some of the top issues they are dealing with include: poverty, hunger, and unemployment, finances, time, and fear, lack of transportation, inadequate housing, substance abuse, and language barriers.

<https://assignbuster.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-and-implications-for-head-start-families/>

As we work with families and children it is important to determine where they fall in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and assist those families in accessing services to meet those needs.

Biographical Information Abraham Maslow

Maslow was born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 1, 1908. He was the son of poor Jewish immigrants from Russia. They migrated to escape the harsh conditions and socio-political turmoil. His father, Samuel Maslow, was a cooper and his mother, Rose, was deeply religious. Abraham was the eldest of seven children and was expected to care for the younger children. Maslow's family was not intellectually oriented and quite poor. Since they had suffered so much in the past, Abraham's father pushed him to succeed in life, even in areas that were of no interest to him. This caused problems within the home, especially since Samuel regarded his son as ugly and stupid. Abraham grew up with no friends to play with and his father made him study long hours. He spent much of his time in the library and found solace in books. His childhood was unhappy and lonely. His mother complained about her ugly son, his skinny body and his general appearance.

He was self-conscious about his physical appearance even to the point that he would avoid entering a subway car so that the rest of humanity wouldn't have to look at him. Over time his hatred for his mother grew into a generalized dislike for everything she stood for, including Jewish religious practice. His hatred for her continued to grow so much that he refused to attend her funeral. Abraham was close with his uncle throughout his lifetime since his parents had practically alienated him. In later life, he eventually reconciled with his father.

After graduating from high school, Maslow enrolled in the City College of New York. He was taking legal studies in addition to his undergraduate studies as his father desired. He hated it, so after three semesters, in 1926 he transferred to Cornell. Again he had trouble, dropping out because of grades and the high cost of tuition. Maslow rebelled; he changed his field of study to psychology and married his first cousin, Bertha Goodman. Eventually Maslow ended up at the University of Wisconsin where he earned his BA in 1930, MA in 1931, and Ph. D. , 1934 (Emrich, n. d.).

In 1928, when Abraham Maslow married Bertha Goodman, his first cousin and longtime sweetheart, he stated his life began (Emrich, n. d.). The couple had two daughters, Ann and Ellen. They remained happily married until his death in 1970. He died of a heart attack. CareerAt the University of Wisconsin, in graduate school, Maslow studied under the supervision of Harry Harlow. Harlow was famous for his experiments with baby rhesus monkeys and attachment behavior. Maslow wrote his doctoral dissertation on the relation between sexual conduct and dominance hierarchies in monkeys.

He was never enamored with laboratory psychology. He went on to Columbia University as a Carnegie fellow where he worked with Alfred Adler, one of Sigmund Freud's colleagues. Those days were spent in testing and measuring child and adult intelligence and their ability to learn. Between 1937 and 1951, Maslow was a faculty member at Brooklyn College. During that time he published several articles, on Human Motivation, higher and lower needs, and actualizing people . In 1947, he suffered a heart attack and was forced to take medical leave. He and his family relocated to California.

He headed a division of the Maslow Cooperage Corporation, supervising men repairing wine barrels for a local winery. After he recuperated, he returned to Brooklyn College. In 1951, Abraham Maslow went to Brandeis University to serve as Chairman of the psychology department. He held this position until 1969. In 1969, Maslow accepted a resident fellowship with the Laughlin Foundation and moved to Menlo Park, California. He led a life of semi-retirement allowing him to write. Illhealthplagued him until he died on June 8, 1970.

Theory

Early in his career and while working with monkeys, Maslow noticed that some needs take precedence over others. If you are hungry and thirsty, you can go weeks without food, but you can only go without water for a couple of days. Thirst takes precedence over hunger and breathing takes precedence over both. Maslow took this idea and created his hierarchy of needs which he laid out in a pyramid of five layers. At the base of the pyramid are the basic needs or physiological needs, which include breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, and excretion. The next level is safety needs. These are security of body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health and property.

The first two steps are important to survival and once these are met the person attempts to accomplish more. The third level is the need for love and belonging. After individuals have taken care of themselves physically they are ready to have a relationship with others. They are ready for friendships, family and sexual intimacy. The fourth level is esteem and achieved when individuals are comfortable with what they have accomplished. They have

<https://assignbuster.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-and-implications-for-head-start-families/>

self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others and are respected by others. At the top of the pyramid is self-actualization.

This is reached when a person reaches a state of harmony because they have reached their full potential. Very few people ever reach this level. Maslow also talked about how we can regress to a lower need level under stressful conditions. He even proposed that we may become fixated on a set of needs when we have significant problems (i. e. extreme hunger as a child...as an adult we have to keep the pantry full).

Summary and Conclusions

I think since Maslow was still writing and publishing at the time of his death he intended to continue his research. He would have tested his theory and validated it in the real world. The following areas are possibilities for future investigation:

- As technology continues to develop, investigate and identify new and emerging areas of human need, comparing to Maslow's Hierarchy.
- Cross cultural studies to investigate human needs across cultures.
- Studies to investigate human needs in a variety of contexts (i. e. living in poverty, trauma/war survivors, or refugees).
- Apply his theory to contemporary experiences (i. e. Katrina, Jaycee Dugard, Enron families, etc.).
- Investigate consequences of extreme deprivation or gratification, on human behavior over time.

References

1. Kenney, C. T. (2008). Father Doesn't Know Best? Parents' Control of Money and Children's Food Insecurity. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 654-669.
2. Parker, M. N. (2010). How adequately are food needs of children in low-income households being met? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 1175-1185.
3. Vanessa R. Wight, K. T. (2010). *Who Are America's Poor Children? Examining Food Insecurity Among Children in the United States*. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.