



A CLIENT CARE MODULE: UNDERSTANDING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS



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A Client Care Module:

UNDERSTANDING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

We hope you enjoy this inservice prepared by registered nurses especially for caregivers like you!

About this Course:

This great inservice gives your caregivers an overview of the basic needs of all humans, based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Audience: Home Health Aide; Hospice Aide; Nurse Assistant - CNA; Personal Care Aide

Teaching Method: Classroom-based, instructor-led training.

For California, please indicate the teaching method used: Lecture

Group Discussion Other (please specify) _____

CE Credit: 1 hour

Evaluation: The learner must achieve 80% or higher on the post-test to receive credit.

Disclosures: The authors, planners and reviewers of this educational activity declare no conflicts of interest with this activity. There are no commercial interests or sponsorships related to this educational activity.

Note to Instructors: Please see the Instructor's Guide for classroom activity suggestions, teambuilding activities, discussion questions, worksheets, quiz answer key, and a post-course survey for learners.

If you have comments and/or suggestions for improving this inservice, email In the Know at feedback@knowingmore.com.

THANK YOU!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Describe the five levels of basic human needs.



Discuss how the five levels of need relate to each other.



Discuss how illness affects a person's level of needs.



List at least five ways to help clients meet their needs.



Demonstrate your understanding of basic human needs in your daily client care.



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A Client Care Module: Understanding Basic Human Needs

WHAT ALL PEOPLE NEED...

Think of all the abilities that you bring to your job: skill, imagination, critical thinking, sensitivity, dedication, and a desire to help. When you apply each one of these qualities to your daily work, it is in an effort to meet the needs of your clients.

As a nursing assistant, you aren't caring for *bodies*, you are caring for *people*. And, all your clients have very basic needs, including physical and psychological needs. These fundamental needs are the same for every human being, regardless of where or how they live.

For example, let's look at two people who are dying of cancer. One is a wealthy senior citizen living in California and the other is a young woman from a poor family in New York. Both people have similar needs: they need air to breathe and water to quench their thirst. They both seek relief from physical discomfort and support for their emotional pain.

Many scholars have studied the concept of human needs. One of them, a psychologist named Abraham Maslow, developed a theory about human needs that serves as the foundation for nursing care across the

United States and beyond. Maslow listed the basic requirements that are shared by all human beings and then organized them into a sort of "ladder" called the *hierarchy of human needs*.

According to his theory, there are five levels of basic human needs, all of which need to be met to be healthy and balanced:

- **Physical needs** such as food, air and water. These needs are at the *bottom* of the ladder.
- **Safety needs** such as a secure place to live and protection from danger.
- **Social needs** such as being part of a family and a community.
- **Esteem needs** such as self-respect and having the respect of others.
- **Self-actualization needs** are at the *top* of the ladder and include being creative and developing new skills.

Keep reading to learn more about human needs—and what you can do to help your clients meet these basic requirements.

Level #1: Physical Needs

The most basic needs of all humans are *physical*—they focus on what the body needs to stay alive. These physical needs include:

- Air
- Water
- Food
- Shelter
- Protection from extreme temperatures
- Intact skin
- Freedom from pain
- Sleep
- Elimination
- Exercise

Obviously, people can't live without air. And, they can't survive long without food or water. It's understandable that these needs are the first level—on the *bottom* of the ladder.

People learn how to meet their physical needs during childhood. Babies cry when they are hungry, wet, or cold—and usually someone comes to the rescue.

As toddlers, we discover that clothes keep us warm, a roof

keeps us dry, and that nighttime is for sleeping.

We also learn to avoid pain, to take care of our own bathroom needs, and to keep our skin clean and dry.

According to Dr. Maslow's "ladder" of needs, the physical needs have the strongest hold on people. If these needs go unmet, people have a hard time moving up the ladder to the next level of need.



Nearly all of the personal care you provide to your clients focuses on physical needs. Some of your clients will always need your help to meet these needs. Others can become independent as time goes by.

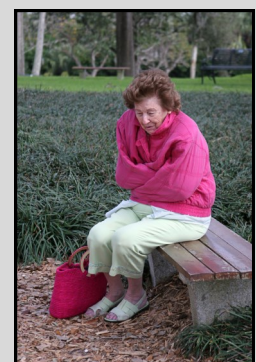
An Obstacle to Overcome: Illness

In general, healthy people go about their daily lives assuming that their physical needs will be met. They breathe, eat, drink, and go to the bathroom without giving it much thought.

However, most of your clients are probably working hard to meet their physical needs.

For example, you may have clients who are on oxygen or who depend on inhalers to help them breathe. Some of your clients may have conditions that affect their appetite or keep them from exercising. Others may find it challenging to stay warm, get a good night's sleep, or have a bowel movement.

People who suffer from an illness are often battling a serious threat to their *survival*. This makes them acutely aware of how important their physical needs are. Remember...the most significant event in their day may be keeping their lunch down or going an hour without pain.



Level #2: Safety Needs

Once the physical needs have been met, people step up to the second level of the ladder. These needs center on both physical and emotional *safety*. To meet their safety needs, most people:

- Strive to live in a safe neighborhood.
- Look for a secure job.
- Try to build up a savings account.
- Make plans for retirement.
- Buy car, life, and/or health insurance.

In addition, in order to feel safe, it's natural for most people to need a certain amount of order and *routine* in their lives. To achieve this, they:

- Develop—and stick to—daily patterns for how they spend their time.
- Do their shopping, banking, etc., at the same places every week.
- Obey the laws of their community (and expect others to do the same).

In general, safety needs are *psychological* in nature. For example, there is no guarantee that a person who buys health insurance will never get sick. But, by buying insurance, that person has paid for *peace of mind* in case an illness or accident occurs.

It's common for children to have unmet safety needs, but most adults go through their daily lives feeling confident that their safety needs are met.



People tend to focus on their safety needs during a time of crisis. This could be a personal crisis, such as domestic violence. Or, it could be a community crisis, such as destruction from a hurricane or tornado.

An Obstacle to Overcome: Fear

When people become “patients” their safety needs may rise to the surface. However, they may not be able to express what they are really feeling.

For example:

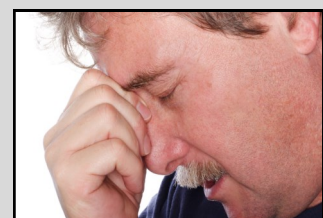
When being admitted to the hospital, Mr. Jones makes a big scene—shouting and cussing—about

wanting a single room. While he may come across as rude and obnoxious, the truth is that Mr. Jones is *afraid* to share a room with a stranger.

Mrs. Wilson is a new resident at the nursing home. She feels very anxious in the unfamiliar surroundings and is

afraid that no one will come if she needs help. However, rather than tell the staff how she feels, she “tests” them by turning on her call light every few minutes.

Keep in mind that fear is usually a sign of some unmet safety need.



Level #3: Social Needs

Have you ever heard that old saying, “*No man is an island*”? It’s just another way of saying that people are social beings, with a natural desire to belong to groups.

The desire to *belong* is a primitive need that begins in infancy. Babies learn quickly that being alone for too long means that they will suffer from hunger, thirst, discomfort, and fear.

This basic desire for love and “belongingness” continues into adulthood. To meet

this need, people strive to:

- Be part of a family.
- Communicate with others.
- Give and receive love and affection.
- Enjoy friendships.
- Develop relationships with co-workers.

In addition, some people meet their social needs by joining clubs or becoming a member of a church. Even young people who join “gangs” are trying to meet their social needs.

It is important for healthcare workers to recognize that there are many different types of families—depending on a person’s beliefs, background, and life experiences. For example, you may work with clients who are part of a traditional family—father, mother, and children. But, you may also have clients whose families consist of a single parent with children, a family with two moms or two dads or simply a group of close friends. Part of your job is respecting these family units.



Keep in mind that no one can climb the ladder of needs and just stay on the top level. People go through changes during their lives which cause them to take steps up or down the ladder.

An Obstacle to Overcome: Loneliness

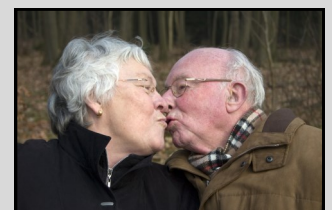
People who have unmet social needs are probably dealing with feelings of loneliness. This may be especially true of some of your older clients. As people age, it’s common for them to lose a number of loved ones. For example, they may face the

deaths of their parents, their siblings, and their friends. Longtime friends may move away—to retirement homes or nursing facilities. Children and grandchildren may also move.

The result of all these losses is that older

people may feel unloved, lonely, and that they no longer belong.

With fewer people to talk to, they can become withdrawn and quiet. So, remember that living with unmet social needs puts people at risk for depression.



Level #4: Esteem Needs

The next step up the ladder involves *esteem* needs. These needs have to do with feeling appreciated, respected and valuable. At this level, people not only want to be part of a group, they want to feel *unique* and *special* within that group.

To meet their esteem needs, people must:

- Have a healthy view of themselves.
- Appreciate themselves for who they are—despite any faults they may have.

- Have control over their own lives.
- Maintain their dignity.
- Feel that they deserve, and have earned, the respect of others.
- Feel useful and necessary to the world.

Most people battle self-esteem issues at times. For example, when starting a new job, a CNA may feel that her co-workers all know more than she does. A woman who has lost her hair due to

chemotherapy may think she is no longer attractive. Or, a man who is too sick to work may believe he is a burden to his family.

In fact, sick people often have low self-esteem (even if they normally have high self-esteem). They may become depressed, discouraged, and frustrated. It's common for them to feel powerless against their disease—and the healthcare system.



To support your clients' esteem needs, it's important to help them maintain as much control over their own lives as possible. Treat your clients with dignity and let them make decisions for themselves every day.

An Obstacle to Overcome: Feeling Worthless

Many people take pleasure in being productive. A large part of their self-esteem comes from their work—whether they are paid for it or not. If they lose the ability to be productive, they may feel worthless.

Some people lose their *identity* without a job.

When asked, "*What do you do?*", they can no longer answer, "*I'm a lawyer.*" or "*I own my own business.*" Instead, they have to say, "*I'm retired.*" or "*I'm too sick to work.*" This makes them feel less valuable to society.

Women who have always taken care of their families and

homes may feel worthless when they no longer have a household to manage. They may start to think, "*I am no good to anybody...I'm just taking up space.*"

It's important to help people feel valuable—no matter what their age or health status!



Level #5: Self-Actualization Needs

The highest level on Maslow's ladder of needs focuses on personal growth and fulfillment. The needs on this level are not *necessary* to stay alive, but, when they are met, help people to live fuller, richer lives.

If *self-actualization* needs are met, people have been successful in:

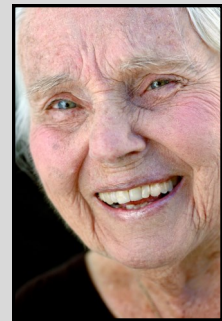
- Exploring and developing their creative powers.
- Creating dreams for themselves—and then making them happen.
- Finding solutions for all the

challenges in their lives.

- Continuing to learn new things throughout their lives.
- Exploring their spirituality.
- Adding "spice" and variety to their lives by seeking out new experiences.

To be "self-actualized," people must have most of the other four levels of needs met. Let's face it. If someone is starving or homeless, he's probably not worried about achieving his full creative potential!

Another important point to remember about self-actualization is that it is *different* for every person. Think about it. Most people have the same physical needs, such as three meals and eight hours of sleep a day. And, most people have similar needs when it comes to safety, love, and self-esteem. But, at this top level of the ladder, it's up to individuals to determine what makes them feel *fulfilled* and what steps they must take to reach their idea of *success* and *happiness*.



Some basic needs are what people need to survive, while others are what people need to be happy. One of your goals is to assist your clients with their survival needs, so they have more time and energy to focus on being happy.

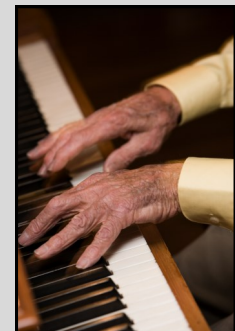
Obstacles to Overcome: Unmet Needs

When he developed his theory on human needs, Dr. Maslow estimated that only 10% of humans meet their self-actualization needs. So, what's up with the other 90% of the population?

It's important to remember that personal growth is an

ongoing process that continues and changes over time. The ways in which someone feels fulfilled may change *completely* from age twenty to age forty—and again by age sixty. Becoming self-actualized can take a lifetime!

Along the journey toward fulfillment, unmet needs from the other four levels can get in the way. No one's life is perfect all the time! The key is to remain flexible, open to new experiences and to maintain a positive attitude toward the future.



What Is Homeostasis?

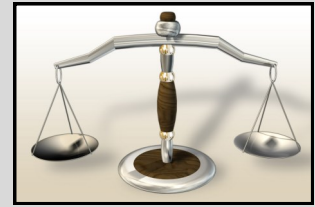
Homeostasis is a fancy term for “stability” or “balance.” For example, a furnace thermostat works on the principle of homeostasis. When a house gets too cold, the thermostat switches on the heat. When the air in the house warms up, the thermostat switches off the furnace. The goal of the thermostat is to keep the house at a stable temperature at all times.

This same principle can be applied to human needs. Dr. Maslow believed that the reason people are born with basic needs is so that they will do what it takes to keep themselves stable—or in *homeostasis*.

For example, when a person needs food or rest, the body triggers feelings of hunger or fatigue. When the person eats a meal or gets some rest, the

body is stable again and the person no longer feels hungry or tired.

The principle of homeostasis can also be applied to safety, love, and esteem needs. According to Maslow’s theory, people are born with an instinctive desire for security, loving relationships, and the respect of others. When these things are missing, people are not in homeostasis—and they feel *out of balance*.



While the physical needs are most important for human survival, the other levels of needs are just as important to a person’s well-being.

When Needs Change...

When people are healthy, they often take basic survival needs for granted. They don’t think about breathing—they just do it. Each day, they eat, drink, go to the bathroom, and go to sleep on a regular schedule. Keeping the body in “homeostasis” is relatively easy, giving people time to focus on family, friends, work, and creative pursuits.

However, when people develop an illness or

become unable to care for themselves, basic needs come into sharper focus. It’s common for people who are under stress to drop down the ladder to a lower need level. For example, Mr. Smith owns a small business and loves going to work every day. He feels healthy, secure, and happy—well on his way to being self-actualized. But, when he develops cancer, his higher level needs take a back seat. Suddenly, his focus is

on lower level needs, such as:

- Recovering from surgery to remove the cancer.
- Battling the fear that his disease might kill him.
- Worrying that his family might lose respect for him because he can no longer work.

In general, people who are ill are *not* in homeostasis—and may have unmet needs on every level.



Understanding Your Clients' Needs

Without you (and the other members of the healthcare team), your clients probably can't meet their basic human needs. This may be a temporary situation—or it may last for the rest of their lives. During your daily work with sick and/or aging people, you may notice a number of unmet needs, including:

Physical Needs

Some seniors (and most sick people) need help with basic everyday activities, such as bathing, grooming, and dressing. Losing the ability to perform their own **personal care** can make your clients feel like children again. This can be difficult for many people to accept. People who are ill tend to **focus on their bodies** and may seem to “obsess” about aches and pains or bodily functions. It's important to understand that this is a normal reaction. They are dealing with a threat to their physical well-being!

Safety Needs

To stay safe, many people who need daily help must move in with family members or become residents at nursing facilities. This means **losing their homes** along with their independence. It may take some time for them to feel secure in their new environment.

When dealing with a health crisis, people may worry that they won't be able to afford the care that they need. They may also have **fears about the future**; it's scary to be sick and to wonder if and when you will ever get well.

Social Needs

Spending time in a hospital or nursing facility can lead to **social separation**—from family, friends, and a local place of worship. People in this situation may suffer from loneliness.

People who are ill and/or aging may worry about **being a burden** on their loved ones or about being forgotten.

Esteem Needs

Illness can have a major impact on someone's self-esteem. For example, people recovering from an amputation may have a **negative body image**. Or people who must suddenly use a walker or wheelchair may feel badly about themselves.

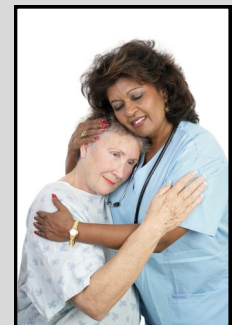
Sick or aging people may feel as if they have **no control** over their own lives. They may become depressed and uninterested in doing anything for themselves.

Self-Actualization Needs

Sometimes, a health crisis forces people to focus on the important things in their lives—and may lead to **spiritual and/or personal growth**. However, for many people, the idea of seeking creative fulfillment is put on the back burner during times of illness. The other four levels of need take priority.



The goal of your daily client care is not just to meet the current needs of each client—but to also prevent new needs from developing.

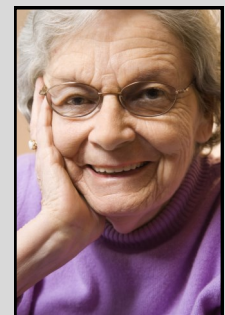


Tips For Meeting Your Clients' Needs

- Keep the five levels of human needs in mind during your daily client care. Remember that the lower level needs generally come first. For example, any unmet *physical* needs probably need your attention before the other levels of needs.
- Follow the plan of care for each client. A good care plan is one that has been individualized and looks at the client as a *whole human being*—not just as a disease or condition.
- Use your observation skills to pick up any changes in your client's physical or mental condition.
- Take the guesswork out of figuring what your clients need by *asking* them! When you combine the client's input with the plan of care and your own observations, you should have a good handle on each client's needs.
- Be patient with your clients—even if they are irritable or demanding. Remember that when people are being difficult, it's usually because they:
 - Are afraid.
 - Feel insecure.
 - Lack confidence.
 - Feel like their lives are out of control.
- Treat your clients in a professional manner so that they feel secure and comfortable in your presence. A positive attitude and sense of humor help, too!
- Allow your clients to make decisions for themselves, whenever possible.
- Avoid getting stuck in the role of "rescuer." If you always rescue your clients by doing too much for them, you teach them to be helpless. After a while, they lose the skills and desire to do for themselves.
- Praise your clients when they accomplish a goal—even a small one. A bit of praise goes a long way toward making people feel good about themselves.
- Help your clients stay in touch with their family and friends.
- Remember that family members may have unmet needs as well. If your client's family seems fearful or anxious, do what you can to make them feel comfortable.
- Encourage your clients to stretch their minds by learning a new hobby, reading, or playing music.
- Listen when your clients discuss their hopes and dreams with you. Most people feel better when they have a sense of hope for the future.



Keep in mind that meeting a client's needs takes effort from every member of the healthcare team—including the client. You can't do it by yourself!



Paying Attention to Your Own Needs

In order to care for others, you must also care for yourself. That sounds simple enough, but many healthcare professionals are better at looking after others than at meeting their own needs.

Have you ever found yourself struggling to get up in the morning, feeling overwhelmed by the thought of going to work? Most people experience these feelings every now and then, but if it happens to you frequently you may be at risk for job burnout.

Burnout is more than just stress. (Most people learn to deal with a certain amount of regular stress.) Burnout develops *gradually* and is usually related to on-the-job issues such as staffing shortages, long work hours, and not feeling appreciated. This kind of chronic job-related stress can turn into a complete loss of interest in work. People who suffer from burnout may feel run-down and tired all the time, have frequent aches and pains, dread going to work, and feel as if they just don't care anymore.

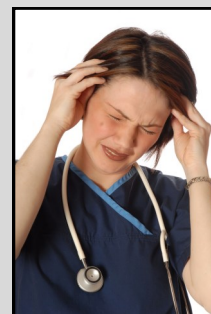
The Warning Signs of Burnout

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral
• Headaches	• Anxiety	• Blaming others
• High blood pressure	• Depression	• Crying
• Diarrhea	• Fear	• Feeling irritable
• Racing heartbeat	• Frustration	• Forgetfulness
• Back and neck pain	• Anger	• A negative attitude
• Insomnia	• Feeling powerless	• A short temper
• Weight gain or loss	• Feeling worthless	• A drop in productivity

To help avoid burnout, make sure you pay attention to your own basic human needs. Get enough sleep, eat right, and enjoy some type of regular exercise. Work on building positive relationships with your co-workers so that you can give and receive support as needed. Remember the positive things that happen during your work day—and take joy in them. Fight boredom at work by continually learning new things. Use your creativity on the job by coming up with solutions to workplace problems.

If you find yourself getting burned out, talk to your supervisor. Tell him or her how you have been feeling and discuss some possible solutions. Do you need a day off? Would a change in your client load or assignment help? Would you like to learn more about time management or how to deal with stress?

Remember that working with sick and/or aging people can be emotionally exhausting. It can be very frustrating to work hard every day and see no improvement in your clients—or even see them getting worse. It's important to recognize your own limits and to take time for yourself.



Remember to guard against burnout! The best healthcare professionals are the ones who not only care for their clients, but also take good care of themselves.





A Client Care Module:
Understanding Basic Human Needs

Fill each blank with one of the words from the list below.
Then check your answers with your supervisor.
(Hint: You will not use every word on the list.)

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Childhood | Wealth | Illness |
| Safety | Personal Care | Respect |
| Groups | Physical | Plan of Care |
| Healthy | Personal Growth | Esteem |
| Third | Homeostasis | Loneliness |
| Body Image | Fear | Psychological |

1. According to Maslow's theory, the _____ needs are on the bottom of the ladder and include food, air, and water.
2. Most people learn how to meet their basic survival needs during _____.
3. _____ is usually a sign of some unmet safety need.
4. The desire to belong to _____ is part of the _____ level of human needs.
5. People who feel disrespected or worthless may have an unmet _____ need.
6. The highest level of human needs involves fulfillment and _____.
7. People whose needs are met and whose lives are in balance are probably in _____.
8. People who are struggling with an _____ may have unmet needs on every level.
9. A negative _____ _____ can have a major impact on someone's esteem needs.
10. For healthcare workers, the _____ _____ _____ can serve as a "blueprint" for meeting a client's unmet needs.

EMPLOYEE NAME
(Please print):

DATE: _____

- ***I understand the information presented in this inservice.***
- ***I have completed this inservice and answered at least eight of the test questions correctly.***

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:

1 Hour CE Credit

File completed test in employee's personnel file.