Up Close and Personal With Dr. Maslow:
Designing Training to Meet Trainees’ Needs

Goals:
I. To explore Abraham Maslow’s (1970) theory of the hierarchy of needs as the basis for creating a positive learning climate in a training experience.
II. To present a format for designing a training module.
III. To offer the participants an opportunity to practice designing and presenting a training module that meets trainees’ needs.

Group Size: Four subgroups of 4-8 members each. This activity is designed for use with practicing and prospective trainers as participants.

Time Required: Approximately 3 hours.

Materials:
I. One copy of Theory Sheet per participant.
II. One copy of Resource Sheet per participant.
III. Four newsprint signs prepared in advance, each listing one of the following questions:
   A. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees’ needs for safety?
   B. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees’ needs for belonging?
   C. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees’ needs for enhancing self-esteem?
   D. What methods/techniques can a trainer use to satisfy trainees’ needs for self-actualization?
IV. Four newsprint flip charts with easels.
V. Four felt-tipped markers.
VI. Four rolls of masking tape for posting newsprint.

Physical Setting:
A room large enough for subgroups to work without disturbing one another. Plenty of wall space should be available for posting newsprint. Movable chairs.
Process:

I. The facilitator introduces the activity by stating that Abraham Maslow’s (1970) theory of the hierarchy of needs can serve as the basis for creating a positive learning climate during a training experience. Each participant is given a copy of the Up Close and Personal with Dr. Maslow Theory Sheet and is asked to read this sheet. (5 minutes)

II. The facilitator leads a discussion on the contents of the theory sheet, eliciting and answering questions as necessary. (10 minutes)

III. The facilitator posts the prepared newsprint signs in four separate corners of the room and places a newsprint flip chart, an easel, and a felt-tipped marker next to each sign. Participants are assembled into four subgroups of 4-8 members each. Each subgroup is to be seated next to one of the four posted signs.

IV. Each subgroup is instructed to spend three minutes brainstorming as many answers as possible to the question listed on the newsprint sign posted in its corner. The facilitator asks each subgroup to select a recorder to write the subgroup’s ideas on the newsprint flip chart displayed on the easel (not on the posted newsprint sign).

V. After 3 minutes the facilitator calls time and asks each subgroup to turn over the newsprint sheets it has filled so that a blank sheet is displayed on the easel. Then each subgroup is instructed to move clockwise to the next posted sign and to repeat the brainstorming procedure explained in Step IV.

VI. Step V is repeated twice more so that each subgroup completes the brainstorming procedure for every sign. After the fourth brainstorming period, the subgroups are instructed to remain where they are.

VII. The facilitator distributes copies of the resource sheet and asks the participants to read this sheet. (5 minutes)

VIII. The facilitator reviews the content of the resource sheet and answers any questions that the participants may have. (10 minutes)

IX. Each subgroup is instructed to spend 45 minutes designing and organizing a 10-minute training module on the information generated in that corner. The facilitator explains the particulars of the task:
   1. Each training module should be designed and presented in such a way that it meets as many of the needs in Maslow’s hierarchy as possible.
   2. Any newsprint information, generated by any subgroup, may be used.
   3. Each subgroup member must have a role in the presentation.
   4. Visual aids may be used.
   5. Each presentation must follow the guidelines on the resource sheet.
The facilitator encourages the subgroups to be creative and to vary their instructional strategies, gives each subgroup a roll of masking tape for posing newsprint, and then asks the subgroups to begin. While the subgroups work, the facilitator monitors their progress, periodically advises them of the remaining time, and provides assistance if asked.

X. After 45 minutes the facilitator calls time and asks the subgroups to take turns making their presentations, beginning with the subgroup assigned to safety needs and progressing through Maslow’s hierarchy in order. Before each subgroup begins its presentation, the facilitator asks the remaining participants to move their chairs so that they can see the members of that subgroup. After each presentation the facilitator leads a brief discussion and critique of that training module (based on the content of the resource sheet), assessing which needs were met by the module and how they were met. The facilitator ensures that each critique ends on a positive note. (1 hour)

XI. The facilitator leads a concluding discussion by asking these questions:
A. What is your reaction to developing and presenting a training module in accordance with the guidelines on the resource sheet? How as this experience different from other experiences you have had in developing and presenting training?
B. What similarities did you find in the ways in which information was conveyed in the presentations?
C. What have you learned about the relationship between Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and the creation of a positive learning climate? And using those needs to design and present a training module?
D. How will you apply what you have learned when planning your trainings?

Variations:
I. When clarifying the task, the facilitator may stipulate that each presentation must meet the need(s) about which it presents information.

II. The participants may be asked to develop action plans for upcoming training events, incorporating what they have learned.

III. To shorten the activity, the facilitator may ask the members of each subgroup to answer only one of the posted questions and then to stay in that corner and to develop a module based on the information that they have just generated.

IV. The subgroups may be asked to follow the guidelines on the resource sheet to develop a single activity instead of a training module. Each subgroup may be instructed to show how the activity meets the need to which the subgroup was assigned.


By Bonnie Jameson
Up Close and Personal with Dr. Maslow
Theory Sheet

Abraham Maslow’s (1970) theory of the hierarchy of needs (Figure 1) is generally accepted as part of the foundation of the field of human resource development. The human needs that comprise the hierarchy - physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization - are the primary motivators that, if satisfied, will help individuals to understand themselves and, in turn, to understand others. Maslow believed that people meet these needs in ascending order from most basic for survival, represented at the bottom of the triangle in Figure 1, to least basic, represented at the top of the triangle. For example, a person usually meets most of his/her physiological needs before safety needs become a concern; physiological and safety needs are usually met before belonging needs become a concern; and so on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Actualization</td>
<td>The need that drives us toward that elusive yet compelling goal of self-fulfillment. The need to become the persons that we are meant to become, to utilize our talents and capabilities, to know and understand ourselves and other more fully, and to contribute in positive ways to the world around us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>The need for a healthy sense of self-respect and the need to be respected by others. The need for competence and achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>The need for community, for a place where we feel that we belong. The need for close relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>The need for security and stability. The need for order and structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological</td>
<td>The need for the basic components of existence, such as food, water, and sleep.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 1. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
Up Close and Personal with Dr. Maslow

Resource Sheet

When designing a training module, you start by defining the objective, which is based on a desired outcome. In other words, you must answer the questions “Why am I conducting this training?” and “What do I expect trainees to gain from this experience?” The objective can be likened to an organization’s mission: It provides meaning or purpose.

Once you have clarified the objective, you can proceed to designing and organizing the training experience. Every training module must have three stages: (1) an opening, (2) a body, and (3) a conclusion. The opening accounts for 10% of the training time, the body for 80%, and the conclusion for 10%.

The opening consists of two components: (1) a “hook” (question, statistic, story, skit, role play, group sharing, or example) to capture the trainees’ attention, and (2) a review of the objective and the agenda for the training experience. This stage should meet trainees’ needs for safety and belonging.

The body of the training module should have no more than 3-5 main ideas, and each idea should be supported with information that helps to meet the training objective. This stage should meet trainees’ needs for self-esteem and self-actualization.

   It is useful to vary the instructional strategies for the ideas. If you present one idea in a didactic fashion (by delivering a lecture, for instance), then you might want to use a skit, a role play, and a group discussion to convey subsequent ideas.

In the conclusion you summarize the objective and the main ideas that you presented; review action plans, if the trainees have made any, and encourage them to follow through; and answer any questions that the trainees may have. This stage should meet trainees’ needs for self-actualization.