

MEMBERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, OTTAWA & DISTRICT BUILDING TRADES COUNCIL

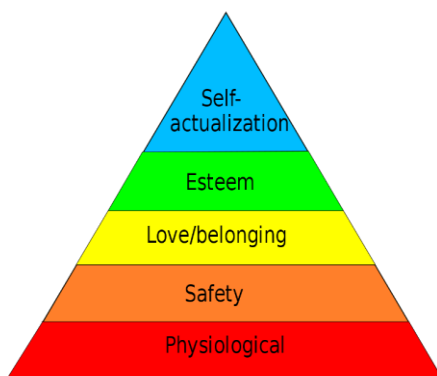
April 2020 Newsletter

WE ARE STILL COUNSELLING

In this time of self-isolation, we are conducting client counselling sessions online or by phone.

The Journal of Technology in Human Services reported that research into internet-based counselling "... support the adoption of online psychological interventions as a legitimate therapeutic activity."

The Journal of Technology in Human Services, Volume 26, 2008. Issues 2-4. "A Comprehensive Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Internet-Based Psychotherapeutic Intervention." Azy Barak, Liat Hen, Meyran Boniel-Nissim & Na'ama



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, 1943

for some difficult to get to the store, many items are missing once the individual is at the store, and

COPING WITH COVID-19 ANXIETY

In 1943 Abraham Maslow theorized Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It was at the time a new and orderly way to look at human motivation. The pyramid starts at the bottom with the most basic 'Physiological' needs and works in order up to 'Self Actualization' at the top of the pyramid.

I use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to assist my clients in understanding their focus or the focus of their childhood.

During this stressful time of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have clients who are struggling with the resulting anxiety. I find that the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid helps my clients understand their current focus and stress.

"I am not suggesting that one loses a focus on the 'Physiological' and 'Safety,' but we also need to include opportunities to fulfill our need for 'love/belonging.'"

We have become almost exclusively focused on Physiological and Safety requirements. The surge in toilet paper sales is an example of this hyper-focus on the Physiological. We are storming grocery stores and big-box retailers, to stock up on goods like toilet paper, to fulfill our physiological or day to day survival needs. I believe that toilet paper also represents our need for safety. We cannot guarantee we will be able to protect ourselves from COVID-19, but I can buy toilet paper. COVID-19 is not a gastro illness – it's an upper respiratory illness, but being stocked up on toilet paper helps us somehow feel we are preparing ourselves for the crisis and, in turn, protecting ourselves – fulfilling the need for 'safety.'

Our membership face three forms of stress: First: our members are stuck in a perma-focus on 'Physiological' and 'Safety.' It is



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even going to the store is not a safe endeavor. We are focused on our ability to pay rent or a mortgage. Many members are asking the question, will I keep my job, and if I am out of work, when will I return?

Second, because we are hyper-focused on ‘Physiological’ and ‘Safety,’ the motivation of ‘love/belonging,’ does not receive adequate attention; yet, this is where we draw our support. Not only is ‘love/belonging’ earning less of our focus, it is also blocked by our inability to interact. Stuck in our homes, unable to gather with friends, family, and peers, are having an impact on the anxiety level of many we know.

Third, there is no clear end to self-isolation. Remember when you were a child and your parents would count down to special occasions by reminding you of the number of sleeps. It was a way to keep your childhood excitement and anticipation in check. We can’t do that with COVID-19, and if a member is struggling with anxiety, we can’t tell them when it will be over, there is no clear end for them.

How do we assist our membership in moving beyond a hyper-focus on ‘Physiological’ and ‘Safety?’ Our members need to take

opportunities to truly connect with others and introduce more opportunities for ‘love/belonging’ into their daily lives.

1. When they are home with their families, they need to stay in the present with one another, spend time together talking, playing board games, or cooking.
2. Use technology to connect with friends and family, maintaining supportive relationships.
3. Don’t spend too much time taking in the news. Limit yourself to one to three sessions a day. Some are listening to the news nonstop – immersing themselves in the fears of COVID-19.
4. If they can place themselves in a deserted area, go for a walk. If this is not an opportunity, exercise in their home.
5. Finally, be careful to keep alcohol and marijuana use in check so that it does not move to overuse, leading to increased anxiety.

I am not suggesting that one loses a focus on the ‘Physiological’ and ‘Safety,’ but we also need to include opportunities to fulfill our need for ‘love/belonging.’ Make efforts to shift personal focus away from the fears of COVID-19 and structure opportunities to interact and develop relationships, lowering anxiety in these anxious times.

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