

## Chapter 5

### NEEDS AND BEHAVIORS OF CLIENTS

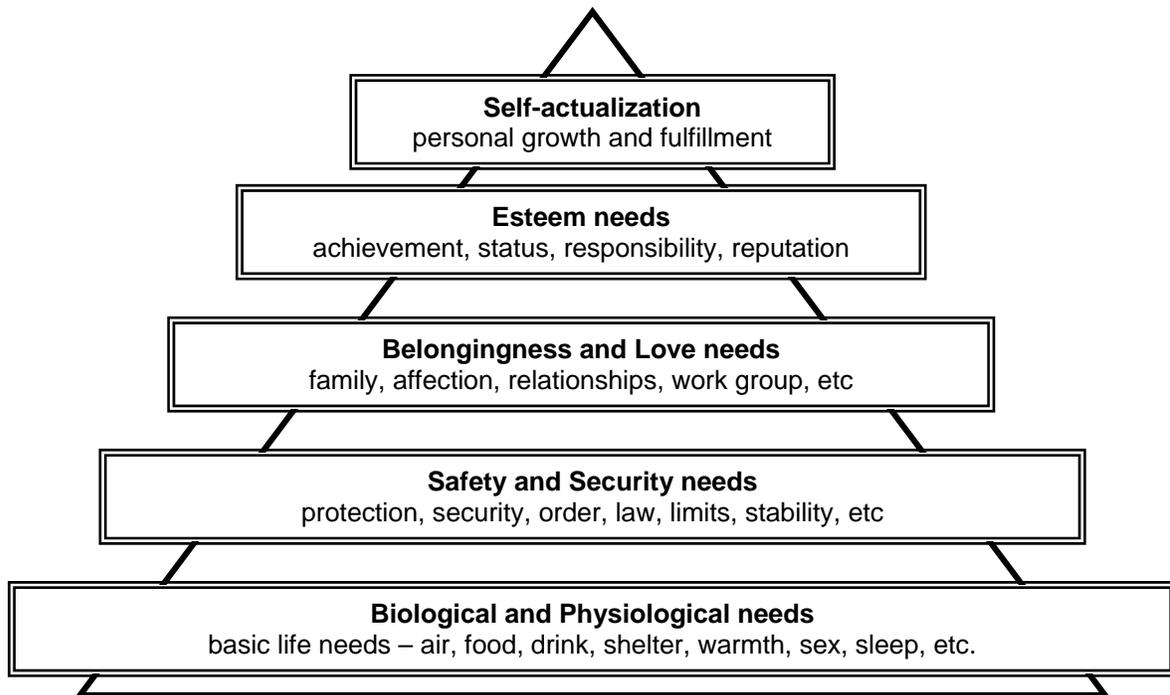
#### What You Will Learn

- How the In-Home Aide can meet the client's needs
- Losses the client may have experienced
- The challenges of aging
- Various nursing approaches to satisfy the spiritual needs of the client
- Various nursing approaches to satisfy the emotional needs of the client
- Ways in which the client may cope if emotional needs are not met

#### Meeting the Client's Needs

A need is something a person must have to survive. When caring for a client, it is important to understand their needs in order to meet them. Psychologist Abraham Maslow placed needs on a pyramid in order of their importance (see Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs). The most basic needs, physical needs, appear at the bottom. The highest level of need, self-actualization is at the top.

#### *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*



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Physical needs are the most basic needs. We all need food, water, and air to survive. Rest, relief of pain, personal hygiene and the ability to eliminate body waste are also physical needs. These needs must be met before the person can think about their other needs. Many of your clients will need help in meeting their physical needs.

Once physical needs are provided for, a person must have their safety and security needs met. A safe and comfortable environment becomes important to the person. The In-Home Aide is responsible for helping to prevent accidents and keep the client safe. People need to feel safe and secure before they can think about higher level needs.

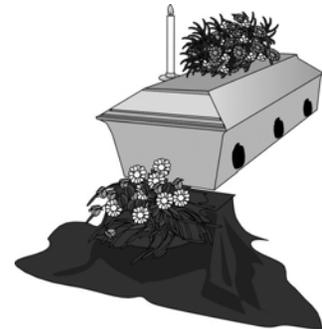
We all need to feel that we are loved and cared about. Everyone needs to have relationships with other people. Clients may be lonely and depend on the In-Home Aide to care about them. Pets can sometimes help a person to meet this need.

A person's self esteem is how he feels about himself. We all need to know that we are accepted by other people too. A person's self esteem can be affected by illness or injury. When a person is not able to take care of himself, his self esteem may be affected.

Self-actualization is the highest level need. When all of a person's other needs are met he can focus on this level. At this level the person works towards reaching his full potential through creative activities and learning.

### **Losses Experienced by the Client**

As we go through life, we all experience losses. The clients you are caring for have also experienced losses in their lives. It is common for a client to be dealing with the loss of physical or mental health. As we age, the human body wears out. The client may be irritable and grouchy due to pain. The sensory system gradually deteriorates, which may lead to confusion or withdrawal. The client who has experienced a loss of independence may have a poor self-image. A change in physical appearance can cause clients to have negative feelings about himself.



The loss of a spouse, friend, or pet can make the client feel as if he is all alone. If a client feels that no one cares about him or that he is not needed, he may become depressed.

If a person is ill or injured, he may not be able to return to work. Many people feel that their jobs are important and will have a hard time dealing with this life change. In some cases, the loss of a job also means a loss of financial security. If a client is unable to remain in his own home, he may feel a loss of independence as well as the loss of his home.

It is important to allow the client to talk about his feelings without being embarrassed.

## **Challenges Associated with Aging**

As people age, they learn to live with decreasing physical strength and health. Aging and illness are not the same. Many people are healthy into their 80's and 90's. Other people may be very ill at a young age. There are common challenges that all people face as they get older.

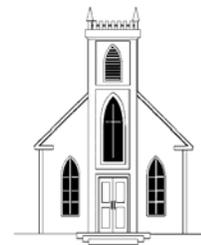
Adjusting to retirement and a reduced income can be a challenge for some older people. They may have to adjust to the death of a spouse or life partner. This means establishing new relationships within their own age group. After the death of a partner the person may need to learn to be flexible in social roles when they are no longer part of a couple.

Arranging for satisfactory physical living arrangements may also be a difficult challenge associated with aging.



## **Spiritual Needs and Care**

Meeting the spiritual needs of clients is just as important as meeting their nutritional, hydration, sleep, and safety needs. Spiritual care offers a sense of hope. It helps clients find meaning and purpose in life. This hope may affect whether a client lives or gives up and dies. Spiritual care is concerned with caring for the “whole” person. The connection of mind, body, and spirit is well known and medically accepted. The goal in giving spiritual care is to give peace of mind to the client, which helps heal the physical part of the body.



The need for spiritual care is important to all humans and especially for many of the elderly. Even though the client may have no specific religious faith, he can have a sense of spirituality that provides a meaning for being.

As a member of the health care team, the In-Home Aide shares in helping the client reach the goals in the service plan by using the approaches as outlined. Meeting the spiritual needs of the client provides them with peace and hope.

The spiritual needs of the client may be met by doing the following:

- Treating the client with respect
- Talking with and listening to the client
- Assisting clients to worship or participate in religious studies as desired
- Assisting a client to attend a religious study group
- Being a supportive presence and showing empathy for the client

## **Meeting the Client's Emotional Needs**

The In-Home Aide also helps to meet the client's emotional needs. A client may be very sweet and agreeable to work with or he may be irritable, complain about everything, use

abusive language, or strike out. The client may take out his frustrations on the nearest person and it may be the In-Home Aide.

You may not approve of client's actions, but it is important to let him know that he is cared about as a person. Never argue with a client. Accept him and his personality as he is while trying to see the positive things about him.

The client should be treated in the same manner by everyone who cares for him. Using the service plan helps provide this consistency. The client needs reassurance that he is still a functioning adult and may need someone to talk to about his fears, worries, and anxieties. Be a good listener and respect the client's dignity. Never treat an adult client as a child. Do not use such words as "diapers, bibs, etc." The client has a right to understand what is happening to him. Give thorough explanations before a procedure. Praise the client for doing something well. Focus on the positive and be pleasant and friendly at all times. Never discuss personal problems with clients, smile often, and use humor appropriately.

It is easy to become emotionally involved with clients. Meet their needs while in their home and provide the client with the best care possible. Due to loss of family or friends, the client may lack human contact and closeness. Don't forget to smile, squeeze a hand, and give a hug. All people need affection.

### **Coping Abilities of the Elderly**

If a loss or illness happens suddenly, it may cause enough stress to make a person unable to cope with all that is happening. When a client's needs are not being met, negative behaviors may be seen. Box 5.1 lists behaviors that may be seen if a client's needs are not being met

Box 5.1: Behaviors that may be seen if a client's needs are not being met

- The client may become dependent and not want to take any responsibility for his own life.
- The client may become overly suspicious. He may not trust others and escape from reality by blaming others for his troubles.
- The client may become jealous of attention the in-home aide gives to others and want all of her attention.
- The client may become depressed due to loneliness, boredom, and losses he has experienced.
- The client may be angry at the prospect of becoming older and more dependent. This may be due to all the losses that the client has suffered.
- The client may become withdrawn possibly due to loneliness; and may withdraw to a private world.
- The client may become confused or disoriented due to decreased efficiency of their sensory system.

Always keep in mind that the client is an adult with a lifetime of knowledge and experience. Allow this adult to continue to thrive, make decisions, and participate in his

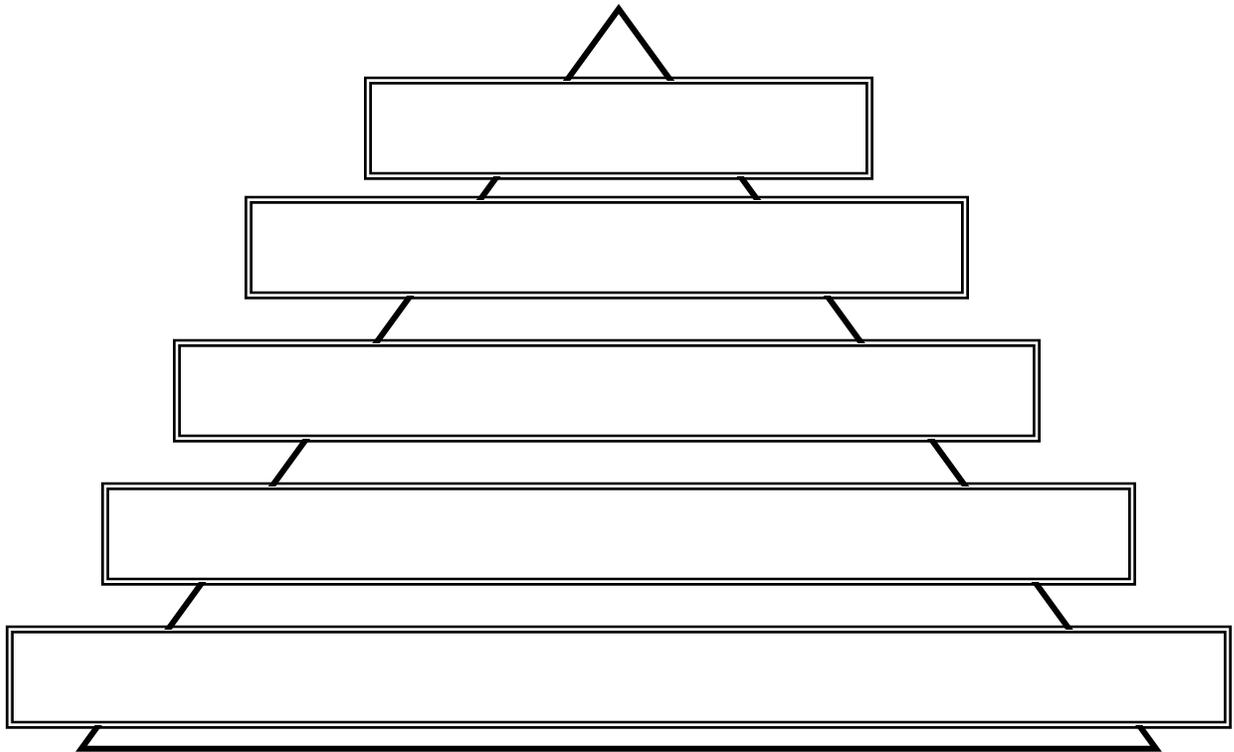
own care. This enhances self-esteem and feelings for independence. Be alert for clients whose behaviors indicate their needs are not being met.

### **Chapter Review**

1. How can the In-Home Aide meet the client's needs?
2. What are some losses the client may have experienced?
3. What are the challenges of aging that people face?
4. What can the In-Home Aide do to meet the spiritual needs of a client?
5. What can the In-Home Aide do to meet the emotional needs of a client?
6. What are ways in which the client may cope if emotional needs are not met?

### Student Exercise

1. Fill in the diagram below with each of the levels of needs as described in the text.



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2. List three examples of biological and physiological needs and describe how the In-Home Aide can meet those needs.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
3. List three examples of safety and security needs and describe how the In-Home Aide can meet those needs.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

4. List two examples of belongingness and love needs and describe how the In-Home Aide can meet those needs.
  - a.
  - b.
5. List two examples of esteem needs and describe how the In-Home Aide can meet those needs.
  - a.
  - b.
6. List three examples of self-actualization needs and describe how the In-Home Aide can meet those needs.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
7. What are three losses that a client may have experienced?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
8. **(Circle)** the statement that represents a challenge associated with aging.
  - a. Learning to live with severe medical problems.
  - b. Adjusting to retirement and increased income.
  - c. Adjusting to the death of a spouse or life partner.
  - d. Establishing new friendships with younger people.

**Circle true (T) or false (F) for the following statements.**

9. T / F Meeting the spiritual needs of a client is not as important as meeting their nutritional needs.
10. T / F Spiritual care is provided only by a member of the clergy.
11. T / F Spiritual needs are only important to people who belong to an organized religion and regularly attend services.

12. T / F When a client's needs are not being met he may become dependent, angry or withdrawn.
13. T / F The In-Home Aide should accept the client as he is and focus on the positive things about him.
14. T / F If the In-Home Aide does not approve of a client's actions, she should let him know that she does not like him and wants him to change.
15. T / F Disabled clients are childlike and should be treated like children.
16. T / F The In-Home Aide should focus on providing physical care and limit the amount of time she spends talking to the client.
17. T / F It is never appropriate to argue with a client.
18. T / F The client has a right to understand what is happening to him.
19. T / F It is acceptable for the In-Home Aide to discuss her personal problems with her client if she is asked to.
20. T / F Clients should be allowed to vent their positive and negative feelings.