A theory of motivation proposed by well-known psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943, The Hierarchy of Needs involves the pattern of human motivations by which an individual moves through, from the most basic and fundamental drives up to the secondary needs at the top level.

The Hierarchy of Needs is frequently portrayed using a graphical representation of the needs and drives of humans. The pyramid above shows the different levels of the hierarchy, in which the largest level at the bottom includes the physiological needs of a person, while the secondary level at the top represents the need for self-actualization.

Starting from the bottom of the pyramid, the first four layers refer to the "deficiency needs" or "d-needs". These layers include the physical needs, esteem, love and belongingness and security needs. The "d-needs" as coined by Maslow himself indicates that if the needs in these levels are not met, there would be a physiological effect on a person. For instance, if there is lack of security, the person would feel anxious - his heart rate would increase, he would begin to perspire a lot and other physiological effects of anxiety will appear. The pyramid implies that the needs at the lower levels of the pyramid must be satisfied first before the individual can move on to the higher levels and satisfy those needs. The satisfaction of the needs in the lower levels will result in a stronger motivation to satisfy the needs on the next level.

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