



# 1. Basic Human Needs

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# 1 Our vision

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Our vision is a better world where no human being shames, threatens or exploits another. A world where everyone has a choice in how they behave, and accordingly choose behaviours that are meaningful and serve everyone.

- *How can that work?*
- *Would you like to try a little experiment?*

Imagine a person who is content with him- or herself and his/her life (surely you know someone who is). Try to put yourself in this person's place, how he/she feels:

His/her survival is assured and he/she feels up to the daily challenges. He/she has someone he/she loves and can trust. He/she can make his own decisions, enjoys what he/she does and gets recognition for it.

This person certainly feels good - what do you think?

If you now have a really good sense of how such a person feels:

- *How does he/she approach other people?*

We assume that people who are satisfied with themselves and their lives also grant this to other people. That they are friendly and benevolent and do not need to dominate others.

**So, our goal is to help people to be more content by understanding themselves and others better. That they better understand what they really need to be more satisfied.**



How would your life change, if you adopted this idea?

If you are clear about what you really need now to get in tune with your needs and feelings, would you be able to better shape your life and relationships?

Would you then feel more secure and upright in life?

Imagine how your life would change if the people in your class were also like this and acted according to the principle of needs: How would the mood in the class change?

Would that also have an impact on learning?

- *Imagine a world where people are in harmony with themselves and are kind and benevolent towards others, where people try to understand and support each other - would there still be disrespect for human rights, oppression, exploitation and wars?*

## 2 Basic Human Needs

---

*Let's start with a clarification of the term.*

### 2.1 What are basic human needs?

The basic needs are basically our driving force, because it is unpleasant for every human being if one or more of his or her needs are not met.

What happens when one of your basic needs is not met or even threatened? You feel an inner tension and you notice it in your feelings. Feeling is also called emotion and, in this word, you have already contained the movement. (Motion = movement). So, when a basic need is not fulfilled or is threatened, a corresponding unpleasant feeling arises in us and this feeling urges us to act so that our situation improves again.

In part 2 of this booklet, you will find some examples of how unmet needs push us to act.

**So, feelings are what move us and give us the impetus to act.**

If you take a little time to reflect, you can identify in all human behaviour a basic need that has driven the person concerned.

### 2.2 The 5 basic human needs

Of course, there are many different systems for classifying basic human needs. We have agreed on the five basic needs as described by William Glasser in his Choice Theory. Why? Because we have already had good experience with them and have found his theory very useful in practice.

**1. Security and survival**

**2. Freedom**

**3. Love and belonging**

**4. Power and influence**

**5. Fun**

## 1. Security and survival

### 2.2.1 Security and Survival

The need for survival includes everything needed to live, such as movement, air, shelter, food, warmth, cooling, rest and sleep, health, protection and safety.

All people have the need to feel safe. Imagine you had nothing to eat and you didn't know where you could get something to eat in the near future. How would that feel? If you had no home and didn't know where you could sleep the next night, your need for security and survival would be affected. People living in crisis regions also have their need for security and survival threatened.

But it doesn't always have to be so dramatic: our need for security and survival also comes up when we feel threatened and afraid. You probably know students who freak out when they get a bad grade. Of course, their life is not threatened, but still they have feelings as if they are in great danger. You have probably also experienced situations in which you felt great fear. This is where your need for safety and survival has come in.

Our need for survival also helps us to stay healthy. It becomes apparent quite soon when our body needs something. Think about how uncomfortable hunger or thirst can be. Some people get really fidgety if they have to sit still for too long and need exercise. The need for cleanliness, fresh air, more warmth or cooling down are also part of this.



- Take two minutes to pay attention to your **body's needs**:



- Feel inside yourself for a moment - are all your physical needs being met right now?
- Do you feel awake and lively? Do you need exercise or fresh air?
- Are you sitting well? Do you feel tense anywhere?
- Is the temperature right for you or would you like it warmer or cooler?
- Are you hungry or thirsty?
- Do you feel safe in your current environment?
- If you have now noticed that something is not right, how could you improve your situation?

## Freedom

### 2.2.2 Freedom

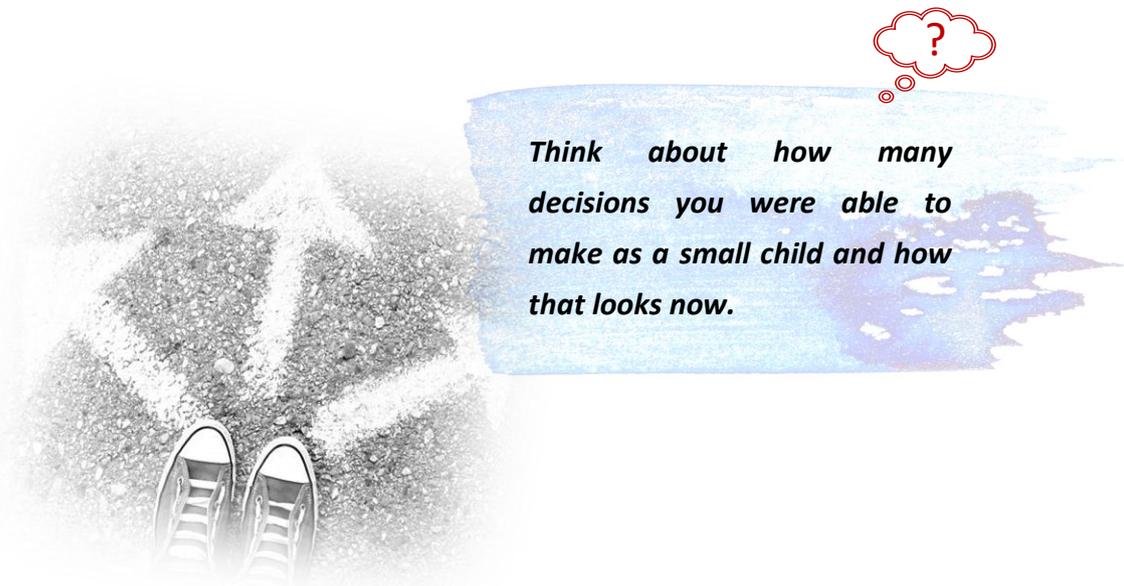
Our need for freedom means having our own opinion, having different choices and being able to make our own decisions. But that's not all: imagine a life in which someone totally rules over you. Everything you do, you do not do because you have decided so, but because someone else decides so.



- **Who would then be responsible for your actions?**



Exactly: the one who decides about you. Off course, this rule also applies the other way round. Making decisions and taking responsibility for them belong together. The older you get, the more responsibility you can take for yourself and your actions.



Surely you can make more decisions now than you could a few years ago. You can do this because you have already had more experiences in life and you can better assess the consequences of your actions. You see, the need for freedom is closely related to the willingness and ability to take responsibility.

- *The better informed you are and the more you know about yourself and your needs, the better you can make decisions.*

## 3. Love and belonging

### 2.2.3 Love and Belonging

This is about both the need to be loved and the need to love. You surely know this need from your own experience and probably you have also experienced how painful it is to feel unloved or to have your love not returned.



For an infant, this can even become a life-threatening and fatal deficiency. There are observations that infants, even though they are fed and changed, die if they do not receive emotional attention.

We humans are social beings and have therefore created regular opportunities to meet each other in all cultures. This already starts in the crèche (nursery) or kindergarten. We meet each other in cafés and restaurants, go to the cinema or theatre, or in groups and clubs.

This basic need also means feeling connected to someone else, wanting to please them and being interested in their wishes and thoughts. At the same time, everyone also wants to feel understood by others and to belong to a group.

But you can also feel love and belonging to a hobby, an idea or a goal.

Maybe you have been really enthusiastic about something and got involved in it. Think about how many people, especially young people, are currently committed to climate protection. Maybe you have a hobby that you spend hours on and are impatient to get back to. Then you know how that feels.

Another form of this need is the feeling of being touched.



- Do you know the feeling of being completely enraptured by an event?
- That your heart really swells when you look at the beauty of nature or listen to a song, for example?

What applies in relation to others also applies to yourself, of course.



- How much do you like yourself?
- How do you show yourself that you care?
- Are you as empathetic and understanding with yourself as you are with the people closest to you?

#### 2.2.4 Power and Influence

## 4. Power and influence

Another basic human need is to have an impact.

Think, for example, of how satisfied you are when you do a good job at school and how good it feels when someone you care about acknowledges or even praises you.



- Surely you have often been able to make a suggestion and it has contributed to the solution.
- Did that make you proud and encourage you to continue to contribute?

That is exactly what this need is about. Power is closely related to the word "to do" and in order to be able to do something, we need the drive to do it. And the good news is: we get this drive through our need for power and influence. What reinforces this need is when we are well aware of our own strengths and abilities and can use them well and beneficially for ourselves and the community.



- Have you ever been so impressed by another person's deed that you felt that sense of honour or respect? Have you said this to the other person?
- How much are you in your power right now?
- Do you know your strengths? Write them down below:
- How and where can you use each of these strengths for yourself?

These are my strengths:

.....	name of strength	Where do I need this	.....
.....	name of strength	Where do I need this strength?	.....
.....	name of strength	Where do I need this	.....
.....	name of strength	Where do I need this strength?	.....
.....	name of strength	Where do I need this	.....

### 2.2.5 Fun

Surely you have had fun many times in your life and you know what that feels like.

## 5. Fun



- How did it feel?
- Were you fully immersed in the activity?
- Were you pleasantly excited?
- Did you feel like everything was going easily, almost by itself?
- Did you forget everything around you and afterwards you were amazed at how quickly the time passed??

That's exactly what is meant. Maybe you know this feeling from different situations, often it happens when you discover something new, when you do something that suits you, when you play and have fun or when you have a so-called aha experience.

- You can see that the need for fun also has a lot to do with learning, namely when you have the feeling that you are developing.

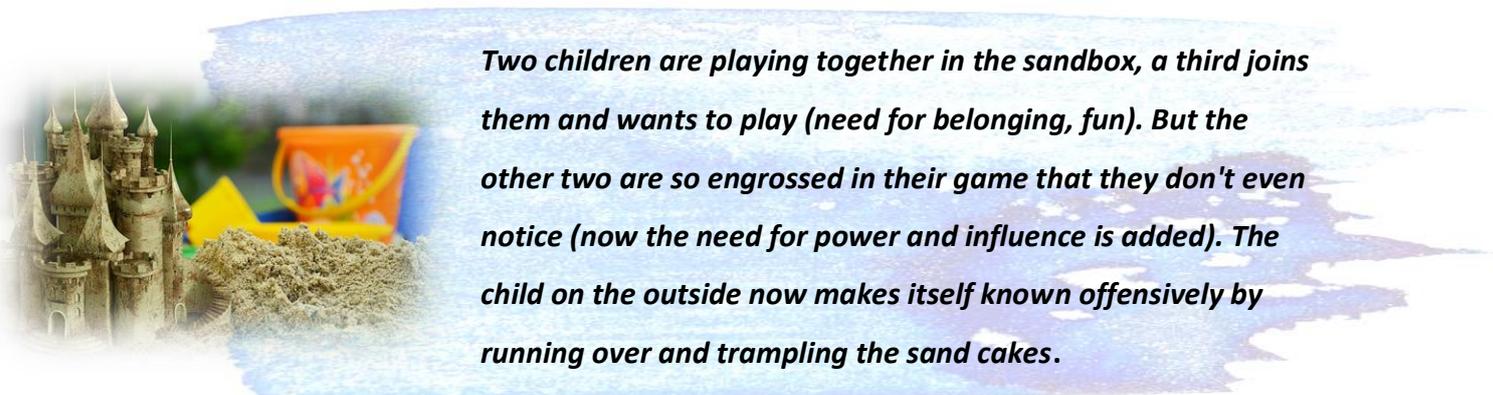
The need for fun is also what drives us to grow beyond ourselves and to constantly test our limits anew. So, it also has a lot to do with the curiosity to get to know ourselves and the world.

Fun is also often a good way to get more distance from a problem and to bring more ease into a situation. You surely know the situation when before a school assignment many pupils and students are exhilarated and laugh about things, they normally don't find so funny. They do this in order to relieve the inner tension and still remain concentrated and attentive, which is quite necessary in a school assignment. If this fun is at the expense of others, it is off course not so optimal. In the Booklet 2 we will explore which behaviours are purposeful and positive for all involved and which behaviours can have bad effects.

### 2.3 What happens when a basic need is not met?

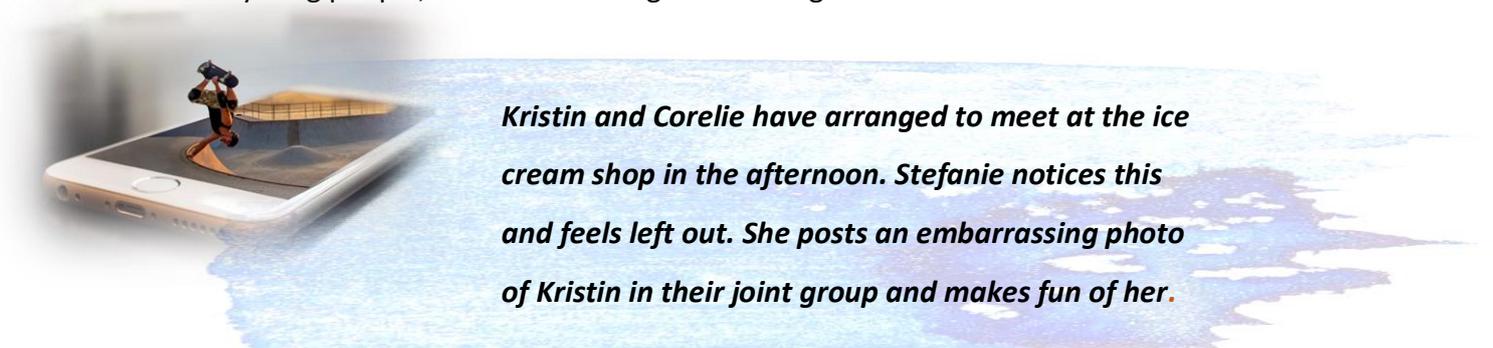
Off course, this depends very much on the character of the respective person, on the situation and on how long this state lasts. In general, one can say that every person strives to fulfil their basic needs. If this cannot be done in a way that is generally compatible and beneficial, people choose behaviours that can harm them or others.

Example: Perhaps you have observed small children at the playground:



***Two children are playing together in the sandbox, a third joins them and wants to play (need for belonging, fun). But the other two are so engrossed in their game that they don't even notice (now the need for power and influence is added). The child on the outside now makes itself known offensively by running over and trampling the sand cakes.***

With young people, the scene could go something like this:



***Kristin and Corelie have arranged to meet at the ice cream shop in the afternoon. Stefanie notices this and feels left out. She posts an embarrassing photo of Kristin in their joint group and makes fun of her.***

According to our vision, we would of course like Stefanie to choose a different way (a different strategy) to make her two friends aware that she also wants to go out for ice cream. Why doesn't she just say that she wants to be there too? We will deal with this question in part 2 of this booklet.

*But let's start with the basic needs!*

### 3 How to start

---

1. As a first step, it is important to know the five basic needs. What are they called again?

2. Then it is good to gradually familiarise yourself with them. Choose a need that you want to start with and think about where and in which situations this need is particularly noticeable. You can then do the same with the other needs. See also exercises 1 and 2 at page ...

3. Next, you can start to observe the behaviour of your fellow human beings: what need could be behind their behaviour? See exercises 3 and 4 at page ...

4. If you are already familiar with recognising the five basic needs, you can begin to observe yourself: which of your needs is being completely fulfilled right now? See exercise 5 at page ...

5. For every person there are always situations in which one or the other basic need comes up because it is not fulfilled. The next step is to recognise this in yourself. You can practise this in situations when you perceive a strong unpleasant feeling. It is important not to suppress this unpleasant feeling, but to take it seriously, take a breath and ask yourself what unfulfilled need it could have to do with. If you now blame someone else for it, that is also a possibility, but it does not bring you any further in exploring your

feelings and needs. If you want to find the unmet need, just go into compassion with yourself. Just as you would empathise with a loved one or a pet. See exercise 6 at page ...

6. Once you have identified the need (sometimes there are more than one), think about how you can meet it in the best way for you. You can learn more about this in the chapter on strategies.

7. Congratulations!!! You have dealt with your basic needs and certainly learned a lot about yourself! Use this new knowledge to make your life more enjoyable!

### 3.1 Your feelings as a compass

In the last chapter you saw that you can recognise that one or more of your basic needs are not being fulfilled when an unpleasant feeling arises. Here you will find an overview of the basic needs and what feelings it can trigger in you if one of them is not fulfilled.



# Security/Survival



is met	is not met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Calmness</li> <li>• Serenity</li> <li>• Fitness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threat   Worry   Fear</li> <li>• Restlessness   Hunger</li> <li>• Thirst   Freezing</li> <li>• Sweating   Panic</li> <li>• Breathlessness   Sick</li> <li>• Deficiency</li> </ul>

# Freedom



## is met

- Courage | Self-reliance
- Self-responsibility
- Creativity | Sense of freedom



## is not met

- Feeling of being constricted
- Protest | Anger
- Aggression
- Resignation (to give up)



# Love and Belonging

## is met

- Want to please someone
- To feel attracted to someone
- Feeling interested in someone
- Feeling love | Admiration
- Gratitude | Devotion
- Compassion | Feeling connected
- Feeling understood
- Desire to do something together with others



## is not met

- Sadness | Loneliness
- Feeling of senselessness
- Feeling at the mercy of others
- Feeling left out



# Power / Influence



## is met

- Wanting to make a difference, thirst for action
- Self-confidence
- Self-esteem
- Strong and competent
- Pride
- The desire to contribute oneself and one's ideas
- Perseverance
- wanting to help others
- Respect for others
- Respect for others

## is not met

- Envy
- Resentment
- Feeling of inability
- Shyness
- Shame

# Fun



is met	is not met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adventurousness</li><li>• Curiosity</li><li>• Humor</li><li>• discover something new</li><li>• development</li><li>• growth</li><li>• exploring boundaries</li><li>• Flow</li><li>• Joy</li><li>• Astonishment</li><li>• Lightness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nervousness</li><li>• Tension</li><li>• Loss of drive</li><li>• Listlessness</li><li>• boredom</li><li>• feeling blocked</li></ul>

Surely you know most of the feelings listed above from yourself or others. If you now want to continue with this new knowledge, you can now observe yourself and others, which basic needs are currently fulfilled in you. If you experience unpleasant feelings, you can ask yourself which basic need could be behind it. If you manage to find out which need it is, it will be much easier and faster for you to improve your situation.

## 4 Exercises

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Here you will find exercises to familiarise yourself with your basic needs. We recommend that you first do each of the exercises on your own. Take your time and make sure that you are undisturbed. If you are not sure which basic need or needs is or are concerned, look again at the descriptions from page 5 or the table on page 13.

Afterwards, you can discuss each exercise with a friend. Did you both come up with the same results? Discuss them briefly and tell each other what you think. This is not about being right or knowing something better. It's about sharing your thoughts, listening to your friend, and learning from each other.

### Exercise 1: Your personal success story

Recall a situation in your life when you were really proud of yourself.

Briefly describe the situation:

- What exactly were you proud of?
- How did it feel in your body?
- Which of your abilities were involved in this sense of achievement?
- Imagine that you are reliving this experience now and you are in the middle of it, full of pride and self-confidence - with what attitude will you master future challenges?

*Your notes*

## Exercise 2: Your learning style - what do you need to learn well?

Think about the conditions under which you yourself can learn best.

- What needs to be fulfilled in yourself?
- Can you learn best when you are completely calm and relaxed, when you are slightly activated or when you are very excited? (Survival)
- How can you create this state when you intend to learn something?
- How much and how long can you learn in one piece before your concentration wanes? (Freedom)
- When you notice your concentration slipping, it's a good idea to take a break where you can move around and let what you've learned sink in before you continue.
- What supports you to learn in a concentrated way? Power.
- Do you need a free table where nothing distracts you, do you need movement, is it easier for you if you read aloud or mark the important parts?
- How can you motivate yourself to learn if you find the material not so interesting? (fun)
- Think about the benefits of learning something well. Where in your life can this help you? How can you reward yourself in a meaningful way?

*Your notes*

### Exercise 3: Incompatible?

Sometimes we are in situations where two needs seem incompatible.

Sigrid is in a class where there are many more boys than girls. Therefore, among these five girls, there is an unwritten law that everyone must stick together in order not to be overlooked. Most of the time, Wilma determines what counts as an opinion in this group and what is to be done. Sigrid, goes along with it and often doesn't say it when she has a different opinion, because she is afraid of being ostracised and then standing there alone.

Which of Sigrid's needs are affected?

*Your notes*

Solution: Above all, the needs for freedom and belonging are affected. Sigrid puts her need for freedom (to have her own opinion, to be able to make her own decisions) at risk so that her need for belonging is satisfied. See also part 2 of this booklet.

### Exercise 4: Virtual worlds

Felix, one of your classmates is a gamer. He has little time for school or friends because he spends a lot of time on his notebook. What needs does he fulfill with this behavior?

- What does it have to do with the need for fun?
- What does it have to do with the need for power?
- What does it have to do with the need for love and belonging?
- What does it have to do with the need for freedom?
- What does it have to do with the need for security and survival?

*Your notes*

Solutions:

Fun: colourful, discovering new things, forgetting about time and everything around you

Power: abilities and powers that you don't have otherwise as a human being

Love and belonging: enthusiasm, joy

Freedom: decide for yourself

Safety and survival: Thrill, but nothing can really happen

As exciting and tempting as it can be to immerse yourself in virtual game worlds, Felix should not forget about his real basic needs in the real world. If you overdo it with gaming, you lose the freedom to decide for yourself how to use your time, as well as good contact with yourself and your fellow human beings.

### **Exercise 5: Are your basic needs met?**

Can you agree with each of the items?

- My survival is assured (I have food and drink, a place to sleep, I feel healthy and well); and I feel safe.
- I have at least one person I love and who also cares about me. There is at least one person in my life that I can count on when I need something. I also have someone I enjoy spending time with and feel comfortable with.
- I can make my own decisions in my life and I have areas in my life, appropriate to my age, that I am allowed to take responsibility for. (For example: my room, how I arrange my homework, what friends I meet, how I spend my allowance, etc.).
- I have enough fun in my life and also enough opportunities to discover new things.
- I feel respected by my peers and can contribute my opinions and ideas.

This is how one could describe the desirable basic state. In most cases, at least in our society, this is the case.

Your notes

### Exercise 6: What do you need right now?

Imagine the following situation: You've been sitting for several hours studying for tomorrow's test. You notice a restlessness and an uncomfortable feeling rising up inside of you.

Imagine how you perceive this restlessness and uneasy feeling - what do they want to tell you?

1. Maybe you need exercise to get your circulation going again, maybe you are thirsty or hungry? (What basic need are we talking about here?)
2. Maybe you are afraid of not passing the test and failing? (What basic need are we talking about here?)
3. Maybe you would rather be with others than study alone? (What basic need are we talking about here?)
4. Maybe you feel forced to learn and would rather do something completely different? (What is the basic need here?)
5. Maybe you find the material totally uninteresting and don't know what you will ever need it for in your life? (What basic need is this about?).

Notes:

Solutions:

1. safety and survival
2. power
3. love and belonging
4. freedom
5. fun

## 5 How to express needs

---

The first and most important step is to recognise that right now a need of yours feels suppressed or attacked. How do you recognise this? Exactly!

You notice it when an uneasy feeling arises in you.  
You notice that something doesn't feel right.

Don't suppress this feeling, but feel inside yourself and ask yourself what need is arising.

When you have found the need, be kind to yourself and recognise that this need belongs to you.

After all, it is about you being able to live a good life!

## 5.1 Examples of how to formulate needs

Here are some examples of **how you can express your needs**, or **what you need to have your needs met**. You can add a concrete wish or request so that the person opposite you knows what you need. The clearer you are about what you need and exactly what you want from the other person, the better your counterpart will be able to understand you. However, please do not expect that your request is automatically fulfilled, because the other person is also an independent person and has his or her own needs! But it will help you to talk and find a good solution that suits both of you.

### Love and belonging

*Please help me to understand this better.*

*I would like to have you with me.*

*Can you understand me and my situation?*

*In order for me to feel comfortable here, I need ...*

*If you (... description of behaviour), I feel (... feeling).  
However, I would like (... need).*

## Security and survival

*I don't feel comfortable  
in this situation  
because I'm afraid that  
...*

*I am tired and need  
rest for myself today  
(this weekend, ...).*

*I need to go and  
get some air.*

*I need a short break.*

*I feel uncomfortable  
that ...*

*I realise that I need more  
security for myself.*

*For me to feel safe,  
I need ...*

*I am currently  
worried that ...*

## Fun

*I have a lot on my plate  
at the moment and  
need a bit of a change.*

*Now I would really  
like to ...*

*I'm really  
interested in ....*

*I would find it  
really cool if ...*

*Although we have a lot on  
our plate at the moment, I  
would like to ...*

## Power and influence

*Please let me finish.*

*It's important to me  
that you know that ...*

*I'd like your help.*

*It's really important  
to me to do this  
well.*

*Please listen to me,  
because it's important  
to me that you  
understand.*

*I would like your  
honest opinion on ...*

*I need more info to be  
able to form an opinion.*

*I am very upset  
right now because  
I really care about  
this issue.*

*In order for me to  
feel heard, I need ...*

## Freedom

*Let me think for a moment, please.*

*Wait a minute, please, I haven't quite understood yet.*

*In order to understand it fully, I need ...*

*That was really a lot. I need a little time to digest now.*

*I need some more time to be able to decide.*

*I still need to think about it.*

*I need more information to be able to make a good decision.*

*In order for me to agree to this decision, I need ...*

*I would like to take over this reliably. For this I need ...*

## 5.2 It is not always possible immediately

There are also situations in which it is not possible to express or fulfil a need at the moment. All people have to make compromises or weigh up what is more important to them at the moment, for example when two needs want to be met at the same time.

Example: Perhaps you have observed small children at the playground:

***Max has schoolwork tomorrow and just today there is this football match. But he is not quite through with the material yet.***

***Which of his needs are affected by this inner conflict?***

***Fun (A match like this is always fun, isn't it?)***

***Power (He wants to get a good grade, or at least not a bad one)***

***He has the freedom to decide what he does, because his parents know that he thinks carefully and can assess the consequences. So, they trust him to act responsibly.***

***If he decides to watch the match, he risks getting a bad grade.***

***The consequence would be that he has to accept failure and work harder afterwards. If he decides to study instead, he won't be able to talk to his friends tomorrow who watched the match.***

- *How would you decide?*

It is important to think about the consequences and make a conscious decision so that you don't feel like a victim of circumstances.

If you cannot fulfil a need because of the circumstances, give yourself the assurance that you will fulfil the need later in another meaningful way.

## 6 Success Stories

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Why did we take the effort to summarise and share all this?

We have been working for over ten years with students who are experiencing difficulties in their lives, trying to help them in the best possible way based on the Five Basic Needs.

The many success stories have convinced us that the Five Basic Needs can really help people understand themselves and others better, and that it can improve their lives so much! These success stories have encouraged us and we want to share some of them with you here.

You will see that in these stories, as so often in life, several people are involved. We have therefore also given a voice to those people who have been crucial in enabling someone to finally meet her/his needs in a positive way for everyone - and these are very often close confidants, friends, teachers - simply people who care about how other people are doing.

***But let's start with the first story:***

### 6.1 Bullying - power and powerlessness

#### Summary

**Max suffers a lot from his father's outbursts of rage. He is completely helpless in such situations. And then there is Bernd in his class. Max doesn't know exactly why, but somehow, he feels totally annoyed by Bernd. So, he starts to make life difficult for him in class. But he soon realises that this will lead to further problems. And of course, it's also about Bernd! After all, he has to be helped too. But how can all this succeed?**

#### The whole story

Hello, my name is Martina. I am a guidance counsellor at a vocational school. I like my job. It's interesting, sometimes a bit exhausting. But that's just part of it. My colleagues always call

me when there are problems. When it needs a frank conversation. And I can listen well and that often changes quite a lot.

The reason why Max was sent to me by his maths teacher is that Max went off on his classmate Bernd and - as it turns out – he has done that several times before. Of course, we can't tolerate that here at school. Recently, Max has attacked his classmate Bernd several times. Bernd is quite small for his age. He is rather shy and likes to withdraw. And what does Max do now? He makes life difficult for Bernd wherever he can. During breaks, Bernd is simply no longer safe from him. Max hides his mobile phone or his school things from him and makes jokes about him. The other day Bernd fled to the toilet, but Max chased him there too and splashed him with water. And his maths teacher caught him in the act. This time Bernd called for help so loudly that it could be heard throughout the corridor. And then Max sat in my office all contrite. Then I had a long talk with Max. I like Max very much and know by now that he doesn't really have it easy at home.

Max told me during our conversation that his father is often irascible, especially when he has problems and stress at work. And that is quite often the case! Then his father yells angrily, Max is taken to task for little things, and often Max then gets punishments from his father. He gets grounded, has to hand in his gaming console or his father takes away his beloved smartphone. Max gets very angry in such situations, but doesn't dare to say anything to his father.

I then talked a lot about it with Max. At first he said that he didn't really know why he didn't leave poor Bernd alone. Then, during the conversation, we came to the conclusion that Max feels totally annoyed by Bernd. Bernd is quite small for his age and quite shy. And when he starts to fidget nervously, it blows Max's fuses. The fact that Bernd is so small and helpless reminds Max of how he feels at home with his father. When he torments poor Bernd, he is finally the powerful one; the one who dishes it out, and he enjoys that. But it doesn't really make him happy either. He gets an uneasy feeling and that tells him that what he is doing is not really okay.

I then told him that when his father rages like that at home, he probably often feels quite helpless. That made Max quite uncomfortable at first. But yes, he then said, he really is very helpless at home in such situations. And that really is a "shitty feeling", he said. We then talked about what he would actually like - about his needs. And of course, we also talked about poor

Bernd and what his needs might be. Max then had to admit to himself that he wasn't doing Bernd or himself any good with his behaviour.

After our first conversation, I now see Max regularly. At some point, Max even agreed to have his father come along to one of our talks. His father was very defensive at first. He didn't really want to get involved in the conversation. But the longer we talked, the more he realised how much his son suffers from his outbursts of anger. He was quite affected and promised to get professional help. And really! Later, Max told me that his father is now taking a course in relaxation techniques.

And things are finally getting better for Max at home. His father is no longer so angry, he says. And lo and behold, Max has also changed his behaviour. He leaves Bernd alone now. Yes, even more! Now he always stands by Bernd when someone in the class says something stupid about him. How do I know that? Of course, I also had a few conversations with Bernd and he's doing much better in class now. Now that Max is standing by him, he has more confidence in himself: and that's really good for him.

- What are the main needs that have been addressed here?
- Are there situations in your life where you feel helpless and threatened?  
What do you do in such cases to get a grip on the situation?

## 6.2 Xenophobia - Survival, Belonging, Power, Freedom

### Summary

**Ahmad is new to the class and has only been in this country for a short time. He had to leave his old homeland. As an outsider, he does not necessarily have it easy. When events come to a head and Ahmad gets into trouble with older students, many of his basic needs are threatened. Does no one really stand by him?**

### The whole story

I am Lea. And Ahmad is one of my best friends. Ahmad! Yes, it wasn't so easy with him at the beginning. But he didn't have it so easy in his life either. I've known Ahmad for two years now. He was one of the newcomers who came to our class. Two who had to repeat a year and

Ahmad. And I have to say, at the beginning we all didn't really know what to do with him - me neither. He is a Muslim and fled his homeland, as if that was all there was to say about Ahmad! But that's just how we thought back then! And in the breaks he always stood there all alone. Nobody talked to him. He hardly knew our language, so none of us tried to talk to him. And I wasn't courageous enough either, I didn't even try to start a conversation with him. It would have been much easier for all of us to make the first step than for him. He was all alone.

Then one day, during the break, it happened. Martin from the class above us and his two friends, Jan and Leon, came down to us and made a stink. You dirty foreigner, they said, you have no business here! Get lost, you pig!

And we just stood there, didn't say anything: we were paralysed and just watched spellbound. Martin even became aggressive, grabbed Ahmad by the collar and wanted to punch him. But then, thank God, Freidinger, who was supervising the gang that day, came and the three boys quickly left.

But after school the three of them caught him after all. They waited for him, took his school supplies, emptied his backpack on the pavement and threw it in the bin. They really beat him up, the poor guy. And nobody helped him. We were scared! Yes, really scared, because everyone was afraid of Martin.

And when they finally stopped, we didn't really know what to do. Help him and risk getting into a fight with Martin and his mates? Nobody really dared to do that! So Ahmad was left all alone. Desperate. We sensed how exhausted he was, how much he was suppressing his tears. And the others just stood there and looked. And that's when I had enough! I got angry! You can't put up with that, I thought to myself! They can't do that to the poor guy!

Then I went to Ahmad because I couldn't take it any more. I started to pick up his things. And when I did that, I realised that I felt really strong and liberated. Then Joshua came and helped me to pick up all the things, too. And then Carla! And all of a sudden we were all with Ahmad and helped him. We suddenly realised that we belonged together and it felt right and strong.

Suddenly we weren't afraid of Martin and his people any more. We all suddenly realised that we were much, much more than just the three of them.

Are there situations in your life where you feel helpless and threatened? What do you

- What needs have been dealt with here?
- Now it's up to you! Go on a search and see where this story is about the following basic needs:
  - Survival
  - Belonging
  - Power
  - Freedom

### 6.3 Radicalisation - Belonging

#### Summary

**Martin's parents are not really interested in him. Only his achievements are important to them. So, Martin looks elsewhere for the feeling of belonging that is so important to him. Unfortunately, at first he only finds a connection with a group that wants to exploit him for their own purposes.**

#### The whole story

My name is Georg. And I've been working in this counselling centre for a good 15 years now. We look after young people who are at risk of going off the rails. Martin is one of these young people. Mrs Freidinger, his class teacher, called me and told me about the incident at school. Martin and two others attacked a pupil because he was a foreigner.

In our first conversation, he just sat there stiffly at first and it wasn't easy at all to gain his trust. But little by little it got better and better and Martin started to talk about himself.

The family he comes from is wealthy. Both parents work and are really successful in their jobs. And because his parents are both so ambitious, they had big plans for Martin right from the start. They wanted him to achieve something, just like they did. So they put a lot of pressure on him. Performance is all that counts in this family. And they were never really interested in how Martin was doing. Martin often wished that they could spend more time together, do something, just have fun together. Just like in other families, where parents are there for their

children. But his parents were only ever interested in their jobs and his school grades, he told me.

An acquaintance once took him to a meeting of such a group, where he immediately felt quite welcome. The people there were interested in him and offered him the opportunity to come by more often. So, Martin went there more often because he usually was all alone at home anyway. He told me that he had found the family there that he had always wanted.

They also explained to him why his parents had to work so much. Because our country willingly takes in so many foreigners and more and more of them flood our country, they told him. And it all costs a lot of money that should actually go to the decent people who are from here.

At first, Martin thought that his parents wouldn't be forced to work so much. But Martin really wanted to belong to them. And as time went by, he believed them more and more. Actually, he thought, they were right. And the more he said the things he heard there, the more recognition he got from them.

Now, in retrospect, he wonders himself why he let himself get so worked up. And where all his aggression came from. But if he wanted to belong, he had no choice but to join in. So he joined in. We then researched together on the internet which countries people are fleeing from, why they are fleeing in the first place and what atrocities are happening in their countries. And then we researched how much money refugees really get in our country.

Martin is a really clever guy. So a lot of things became clear to him. And that was really hard for him when he realised how these people had exploited him for their own purposes. In my counselling sessions, that's always the point where it gets tricky, because a world collapses. We then thought together about what Martin really likes to do and where he can find real friends. And I have to say that his parents have really contributed to making things better for Martin. They were quite shocked anyway when they were summoned by the school for an urgent meeting.

Now Martin goes to a sports club where he has found real friends and his parents also take more time for him. His teammates stand by him even when he fails at a match.

- What needs have we been talking about here?

- Now it's up to you! Go on a search and see where this story is about the following basic needs:
  - Belonging
  - - Fun
  - - Power
  - - Freedom

We have another example for you that makes it clear how important basic needs and especially their fulfilment can be in our lives:

## 6.4 Divorcing parents - security and belonging

### Summary

**Rebekka's parents are divorced. They have often quarrelled. But unfortunately the arguments continue even after the divorce. And Rebekka is caught between her parents, although all she really wants is peace and quiet. Luckily there is her best friend Rea and her parents.**

### The whole story

Hello, I'm Rea! I'm Rebekka's best friend. For a very long time! And I have to say that we really know each other very well. We can often talk for hours and never get bored. And we can really have fun together. Although lately Rebekka has been feeling down quite often. No wonder! Rebekka's parents recently got divorced. And Rebekka is suffering a lot because of it. Her parents had been fighting for years before that. There was always trouble at home. Rebekka was already completely devastated because of them. And when her parents finally got divorced, she was totally relieved at first. But only at the beginning! Because the arguments between her parents didn't stop! And that's when the problems really began for Rebekka. Because her mother and father just can't let go of her and keep trying to get her on their side. I think that's really mean! My friend can't stand all these accusations that her parents make against each other anymore. She's had enough of it! She just wanted to be left

alone. She had to be careful what she says at home. She felt very insecure! She lived alternately one week with her mother and one week with her father. But it didn't matter who she was with! She was really afraid that she'll only get into big trouble if she said something about her father to her mother, or vice versa if she wanted to tell her father something about her mother.

They have no place for me because it's always about them and their stupid arguments and never about me, she always told me. And yes, I think so too. To be honest, I've been quite worried about Rebekka lately. I've noticed that she's really not well. At night she often couldn't sleep for hours, and during the day she was often really exhausted. And it is quite clear that this is not necessarily great for school!

And I also wanted to be there for her, because she really needed me. Thank God my parents are really different! At least they're interested in me and all that! And they usually leave me alone when I really don't feel like talking. Actually, they're pretty cool - and this at their age! And of course I often took Rebekka home with me. She had enough stress at home with her parents anyway!

My parents are also really nice to Rebekka. They're very interested in her. They've also noticed what's going on at home. Sometimes I really have the impression that Rebekka somehow belongs to us. Some kind of family or something! And I think she feels quite comfortable with us! No one gives her a hard time.

The other day, my father even called Rebekka's father and then her mother and suggested that they get their daughter a dog for her 14th birthday - she had wanted one for a long time! And you know what? Her parents both said yes, too! And that, although they didn't want to know anything about a dog beforehand, when Rebekka had asked them for it. Astor, Rebekka's dog, is really so cute! And he's always with her now when she's with her father or her mother. And her dog really shows her all the time that he likes her a lot. I think Rebekka feels a bit more secure in her skin now that she has Astor with her, because her parents have also started to show more consideration for her.

She sleeps much better now, too. Thank God for that! It's about time her parents minded their own business and left her alone with their problems!

- What needs have we been talking about here?

- Now it's up to you! Go on a search and see where this story is about the following basic needs:
  - Survival and security
  - - Belonging

And here we have one last success story for you. It is about a topic that affects some people: shyness. Let's think together about which needs are affected and what possibilities there are to deal with one's own shyness.

## 6.5 Shyness - security, love and belonging, power

### Summary

**Bernd is really a great musician. He plays the keyboard and has a really nice teacher. He is, of course, a professional musician. Actually, it all sounds quite good, if it weren't for Bernd's shyness, which causes him a lot of trouble, and the thing with his classmate, who just won't leave him alone. But his teacher has a plan.**

### The whole story

Hello, my name is Ludwig. I am a musician. A professional musician. I play piano or keyboards, depending on the project. You can find me on bigger and smaller stages and meanwhile I am also a studio musician in demand, supporting bands on recordings. And - to have a regular income - I also teach classical and jazz piano in a music school.

One of my students is Bernd and Bernd has really great talent. If he continues like this, he could really make a career for himself later on. But Bernd has a problem: he is very, very shy. And he also suffers quite a lot from it.

Especially bad for Bernd are exam situations or when he has to give a presentation in front of the whole class. These situations almost hurt him physically. Bernd feels the tension in his whole body, especially in his neck. This tension is sometimes so great that the energy tied up by it, which Bernd could actually use to simply say what he would have to say - and that is really a lot - then stupidly drives into his feet. Then he fidgets restlessly and that makes him even more insecure. It really is to grow out of!

And then there was that day when Bernd came to my lesson all depressed. What's wrong with you, I asked him. But he didn't want to tell me anything at the beginning, he was just pushing around. And when he took out his sheet music, I knew that something was really wrong. Because his sheets were smeared all over and all kinds of nonsense was scribbled on them. He was really ashamed, the poor guy! But I knew it was never Bernd himself who had messed up his music sheet like that. Of course, I couldn't think of teaching him, he was much too confused, poor Bernd! So, I asked him again what had happened and then he gradually came

out with it. He had felt threatened for a long time, because Max, who is also in the class with him, has been after him for some time. He stalks him at break time and Bernd can't find a safe place anywhere in the school where this guy doesn't get close to him. And of course it was also this Max who messed up his sheet music so badly.

You can't put up with that, I told him! Why don't you yell for help the next time he does something like that? And that's what Bernd really did. I would say that was an important turning point in Bernd's life. His maths teacher, who was supervising the gang, came to his aid and Bernd realised that it's perfectly OK to ask for help. And you're not a coward and certainly not stupid!

Of course, Bernd's shyness also prevents him from giving a really good performance as a musician. He wishes so much that he could just stay cool in such situations.

And that's what we're working on regularly now. So, it's not just that he's getting better and better at his instrument - that's totally important too, of course. But as a musician, it's just as important to have stage fright under control. Even the best artists get stage fright when they go on stage. When I told Bernd about it, he got very curious, so I told him some tips my teacher had given me when I was a music student.

I then advised Bernd to make a list of all the things he is really good at, a so-called competence list. He made this list and hung it up at home. And it reminded him of his strengths quite often during the day, namely whenever he saw it.

Since Bernd is already an ace at playing the keyboard, I got him together with other music students and the boys formed a band with the one goal of making music together ... and yes, to perform together. Bernd quickly made friends in the band and his band colleagues can fully accept Bernd as he is.

And now Bernd really has something to say, he can fully contribute. Namely when it comes to arranging his compositions in the band. They listen to him, the other band members, because he is really good and has a plan of what everyone should play so that it sounds really good.

Bernd is also less and less bothered by the fact that he wears braces. After all, he's the keyboard player in the band and not the singer. And after a few months Katrin joined the band as the new singer. And Katrin also thinks Bernd and his compositions are really cool. That makes him a little proud of himself.

- What needs have we been talking about here?
- Now it's up to you! Go on a search and see where this story is about the following basic needs:
  - Survival and security
  - Power
  - Belonging

## 7 FAQ (Summary)

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### *What are the five basic needs?*

The five basic needs are

- Survival
- Fun
- Love and Belonging
- Power
- Freedom

### *Why is it important to know about these needs?*

Surely you have often experienced that an unpleasant feeling arises in you and occupies you for a while. Basically, there are four different ways to deal with this unpleasant feeling:

1. you find it annoying and suppress it.
2. you let it ruin your day.
3. you blame someone else and are angry (this is almost the same as option 2)
4. you see it as an indication that a basic need of yours is not fulfilled, you follow up on the feeling and become active in order to fulfil the corresponding need again.

Maybe option four seems to be the best, but you ask yourself if it is not too complicated.

Like everything that is new, you have to become familiar with it first. But once it becomes a habit, we can promise you that you will develop a better relationship with yourself and others and go through life with more self-confidence.

### *What exactly do I get out of working with the five basic needs?*

You have more possibilities to deal with stress and unpleasant feelings.

You will strengthen your personality and self-confidence by better understanding your basic needs and then developing positive strategies to meet them.

You improve your social skills by understanding others better.

You gain more self-determination by learning to recognise and critically question emotional messages.

You learn to deal better with conflicts.

### *Are there other needs, too?*

Absolutely! In this concept we only talk about the basic needs, but beyond that there are many other needs. A few examples are the need for closeness, for harmony, for independence, for peace, for clarity, and so on. It would certainly be an exciting task to try to classify these many needs into the five basic needs! In the chapter "Links" you will find some interesting addresses where you can browse further if you are interested in this topic.

### *On what scientific theory are the five basic needs based?*

They are based on the Choice Theory of William Glasser. In the chapter "Links" you will find a few interesting addresses where you can browse further if you are interested in this topic. Also have a look at the book tips.

### *Do these basic needs apply equally to all people?*

Do all people have the same basic needs or are these dependent on where a person lives, what religion she/he is, how old he/she is and whether it is a man or a woman?

The concept assumes that all people have the same basic needs.

Therefore, everyone can understand these basic needs very easily - in themselves and also in other people. What distinguishes us from each other are the different ways in which someone reacts to his/her needs.

Here is an **example**:

One of the five basic needs is to be safe and to survive.

When one is hungry, the need for survival wants to be fulfilled.

Felix and Claudia are hungry.

So, if the two were asked if they were hungry, they would agree.

While Felix prefers to satisfy this need with pizza, Claudia prefers stir-fried vegetables.

So, if it were a question of whether they go out to eat at an Italian restaurant or a Chinese restaurant to satisfy this hunger, they would have to discuss in order to agree.

### *I heard about the Maslov Pyramid of Needs - What is the difference?*

People have not always had it as good as we Europeans do nowadays. Unfortunately, there are still people in other parts of the world whose lives are threatened, who are starving and do not know where they will sleep. Maslow wanted to show with his pyramid that it is very unlikely that these people will have their minds free to think about their self-realisation. As a psychologist and humanist, however, he was concerned to improve the situation of all people and not to resign himself to this deplorable state of affairs. In Glasser's view, the five needs are of equal value, which shows that all five needs must be fulfilled for a person to be satisfied and fully in his or her power.

## 8 How to continue

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Are you curious and want to continue working with the 5 Basic Needs?  
Check out the other materials on the topic:

### **Human needs and strategies - Strategies to fulfil basic needs**

In the Booklet “Strategies to fulfil basic needs”- you will learn more about how people behave when their needs are not met. There are behaviours that are positive and beneficial, and behaviours that seem to lead to success, but also bring disadvantages. Which behaviour would you choose?