

Humanist, Behavioral and Sociocultural Personality Perspectives

Learning Targets

1. To identify the Humanist Personality perspective
2. To define the behaviorist personality perspective
3. To apply Rogers' & Maslow's theories to real life.

Behaviorist Theory of Personality

- The way most people think of personality is meaningless.
- Personality changes according to the environment (reinforcers and punishments).
- If you change environment then you change the personality.



Behaviorist Theory

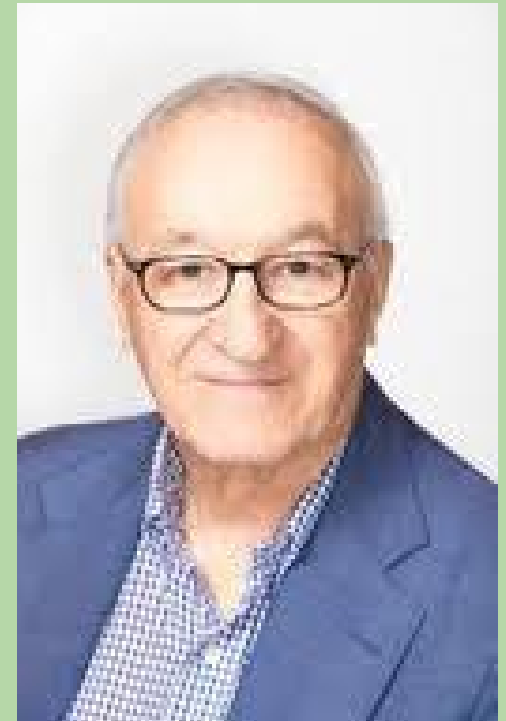
- Watson claimed that external forces/influence shape our preferences and behavior, not internal traits
- Skinner said that you should only study what you can observe. Environmental influences like parental approval and social custom shape us into wanting some things and not others.
- **socialization** is how we learn the socially desirable behaviors and adopt as our personalities

Problems with the Behavioral Approach

- Doesn't describe, explain, or even suggest the richness of inner human experience
- Does not deal with thoughts, feelings, and people's complex inner maps of the world.

Social Learning Theory

- Albert Bandura (Mr. BoBo Doll)
- Focuses on the importance of learning by observation
- argue that people can act intentionally to influence the environment



internal factors influence how we act:

- *Skills*: include physical and social abilities
- *values*: the value we put on the outcome of a certain behavior affects how we act. If you value \$, you will work a lot and work hard
- *goals*: we regulate ourselves by setting goals, we then plan the most effective way to reach it
- *expectations*: predictions of what will happen in certain situations
- *Self-efficacy expectations*: if you believe yourself to be good at something, you will seek opportunities to do things you are good at

Problems with Social Learning

- no satisfying explanation for the development of traits
- doesn't pay enough attention to the role of genetic variation in determining individual differences

Humanistic Psychology

- Perspective that focuses on the study of conscious experience, the individual's freedom to choose, and capacity for personal growth
- Studies fulfilled and healthy individuals rather than troubled people

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970)

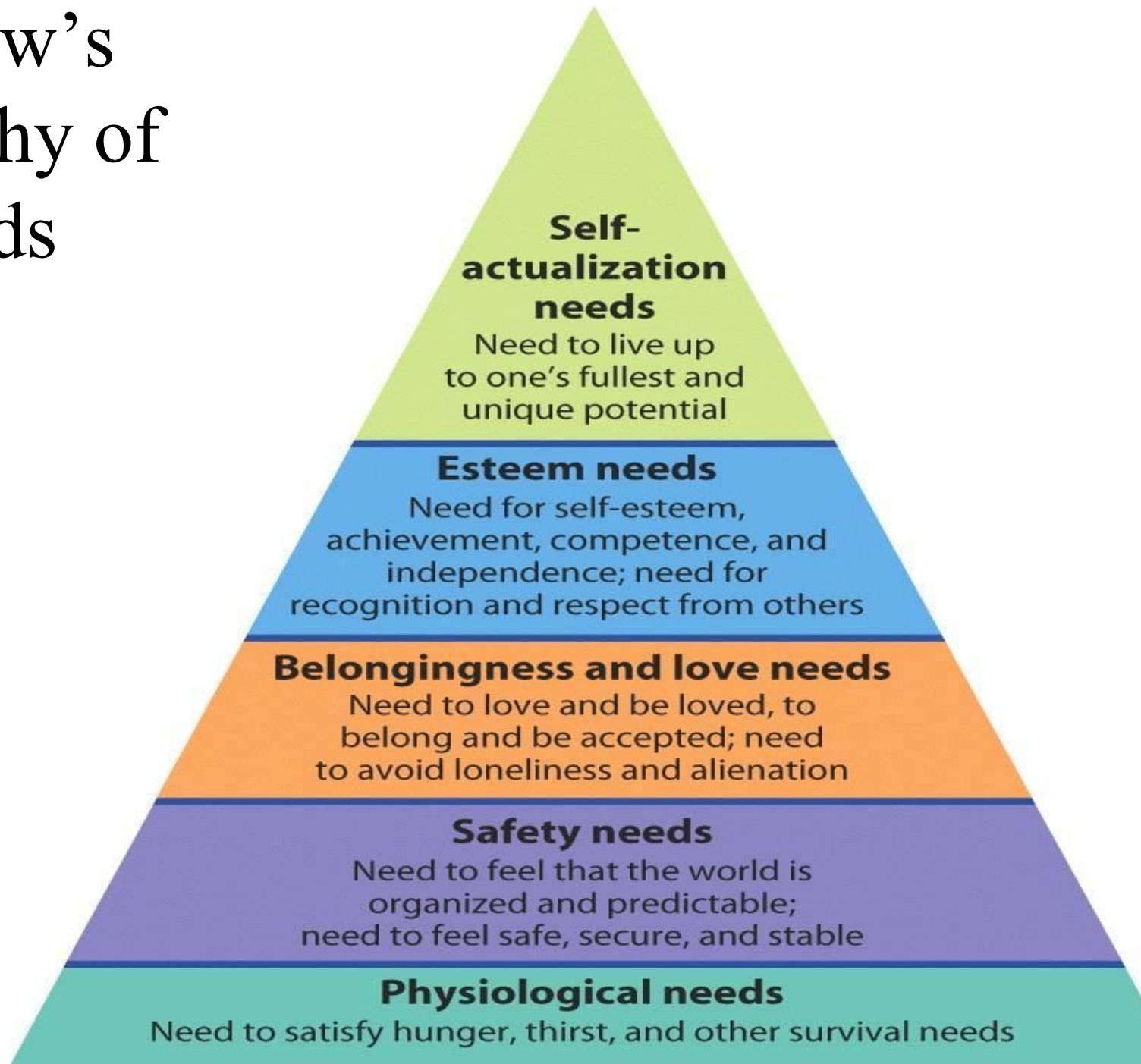
- Humanistic psychologist who proposed the hierarchy of needs
- Believed self-actualization is the ultimate psychological need



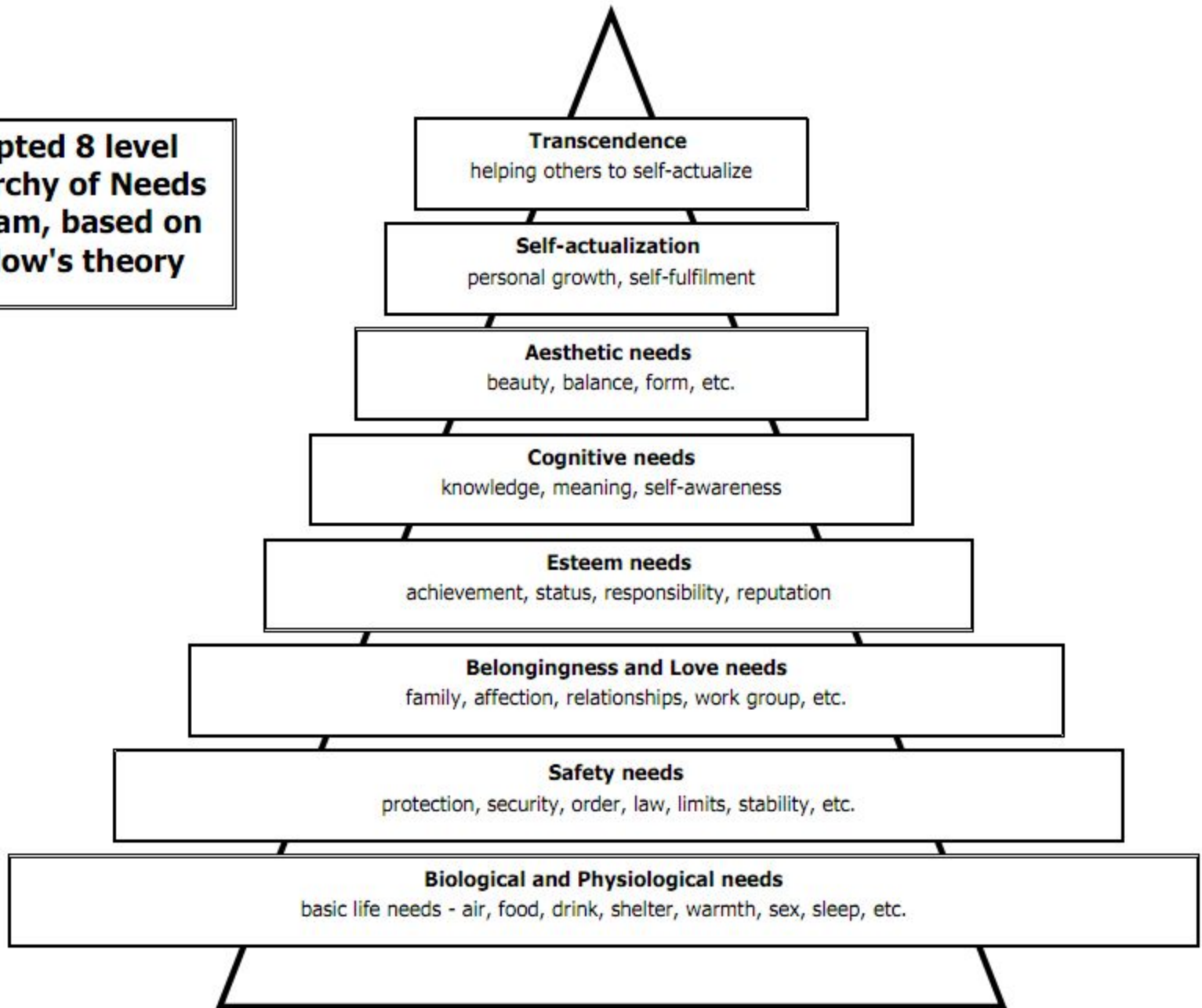
Hierarchy of Needs

- Maslow's pyramid of human needs, beginning at the base with physiological needs, proceeding through safety needs and then to psychological needs
- Higher-level needs won't become active until lower-level needs have been satisfied.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



**Adapted 8 level
Hierarchy of Needs
diagram, based on
Maslow's theory**



Carl Rogers (1902-1987)

- **Humanistic psychologist who stressed the importance of acceptance, genuineness, and empathy in fostering human growth**



Roger's Theories

- Unconditional Positive Regard
 - According to Rogers, an attitude of total acceptance toward another person
- Genuineness
 - Freely expressing one's feelings and not being afraid to disclose details about oneself
- Empathy
 - Sharing thoughts and understanding
 - Listening and reflecting the other person's feelings

Be careful of the Barnum Effect!!!

- People have the tendency to see themselves in vague, stock descriptions of personality.
- Horoscopes, astrologers and psychics all use this concept.



Social Cognitive Perspective

also called cognitive-behavioral
approach

Albert Bandura

Theorized that we learn by observing and modeling the behaviors of others by having certain behaviors rewarded or reinforced

to understand personality, we have to understand the situation the person is in, how the person thinks and how the person interacts socially.

Interacting with our environment

- **reciprocal determinism**- personality and environmental factors mutually influence one another
 - your thoughts/cognitions
 - your environment
 - your behaviors

Personal control factors

- **external locus of control-** perception that chance or outside forces determines your fate
- **internal locus of control-** perception that you control your own fate

Those with an internal locus of control are: less depressed, more likely to be healthy, achieve more in school and act more independently, cope better with stress

Learned Helplessness

- hopeless feeling that one experiences when you can't avoid repeated bad events

If we have an **optimistic explanatory style** we look for more positive explanations of temporary nature when something goes wrong, a **pessimistic explanatory style** would blame themselves, or see the problem as beyond their control, or as a permanent situation

Strengths of Social Cognitive Perspective

- examines learning and cognition research
- it is objective and scientific
- it makes researchers aware of the importance of considering a situation in the assessment of personality

Criticisms of the Social Cognitive Perspective

- it ignores the role of emotions in guiding our behavior
- it discounts the role of unseen motives, like guilt, on our behavior
- it doesn't fully consider the existence of consistent personality traits