

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

PEELING BACK THE LAYERS

Asking the right questions with
students at risk

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Peeling back the layers

- The philosophy
- Building a relationship
- Asking the questions
- Continuing the conversation
- What next?



Meeting the student with academic difficulty

Important to:

- Assess what's happening in the student's life
- Take a holistic approach
- Gain a fuller understanding of the person



Is that the job of an academic advisor?

NACADA says:

Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes.

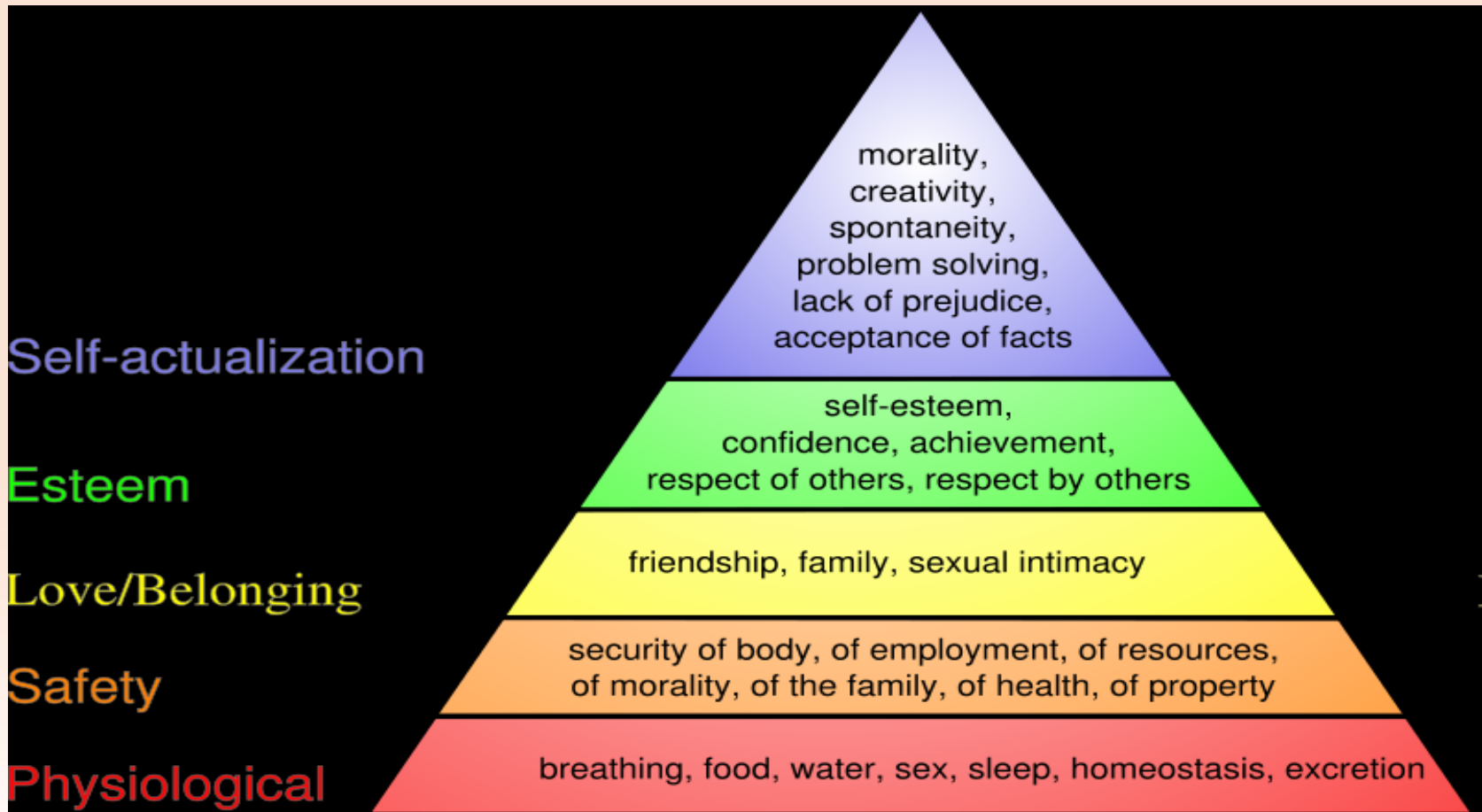


The philosophy

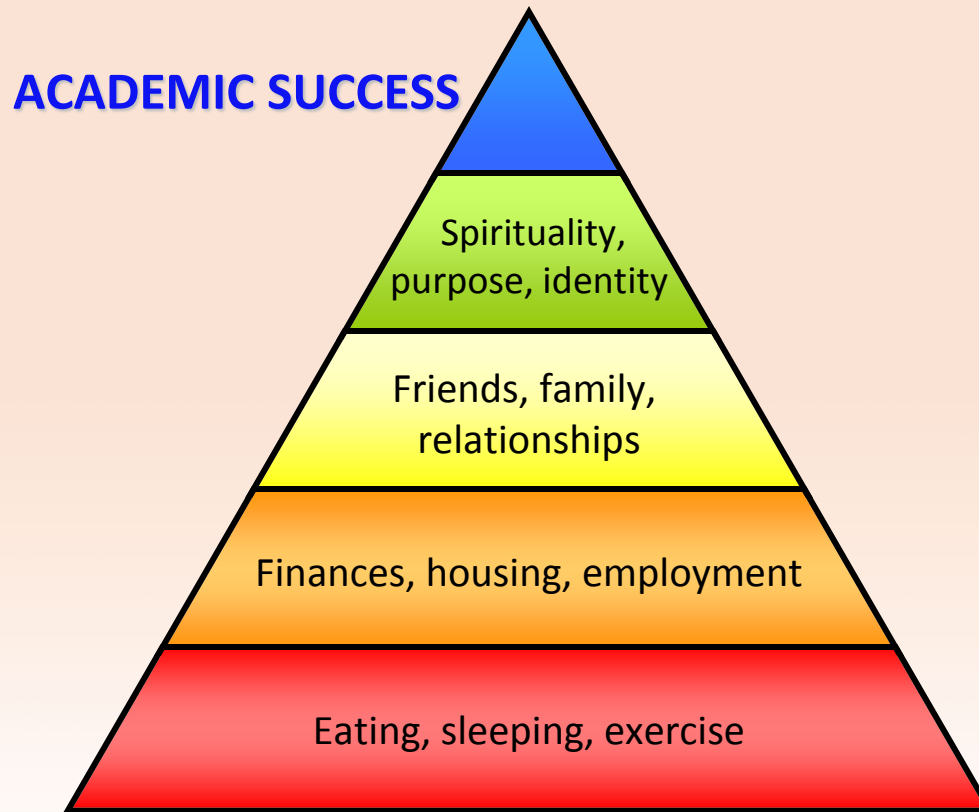
Poor academic performance is **ALWAYS** a symptom of something else



Maslow's Hierarchy



An advising hierarchy



Students with academic difficulty may...

- feel ashamed
- have been reluctant to schedule
- be nervous about talking with you
- be fearful about the reality of their academic situation
- have learned from mistakes (and may have not)



Person-centered therapy

- Unconditional positive regard (acceptance, regardless of approval or disapproval)
- Rapport building
- Comfortable environment
- Non-judgmental approach
- Empathy
- Appropriate self-disclosure



The questions to ask

- Tell me about last semester.
- What happened?
- How do you feel about it?
- What are some of the primary factors that impacted your progress last semester?
- What was your biggest challenge last semester? What are some of the challenges you anticipate this semester?
- Outside of school, how are things going? How are you eating? Sleeping? How are your friends? Your family? What keeps you busy?



Tools for asking the questions

- The hierarchy
- The personal assessment
- The Foundation for a Balanced Life



Then what?

- Make referrals
 - You mentioned [enter] is a concern. I wonder if you have ever considered ... [enter resource]?
- Set goals
 - What will it take for you to be successful this semester?
 - Reflecting on your areas of concern last semester, what are some goals you'd be willing to set now?
 - What are 5 or 6 goals to which you'd be willing to commit this semester in order to get back on track?



Motivational interviewing

Counseling approach designed to elicit change talk and behavior change.



Practitioner behavior that increases resistance

- Trying to convince clients that they have a problem
- Arguing for the benefits of change
- Telling clients how to change
- Warning them of the consequences of not changing



Principles of MI

- Understand the client's motivation
- Listen to the client
- Empower the client



Microskills

- Open ended questions
- Affirmations
- Reflective listening
- Summarizing





Reflective listening

Are you concerned about your grades?

vs.

You're concerned about your grades.

- So you feel...
- It sounds like you...
- You're wondering if...
- You...



Open-ended questions



- What do you think you will do now?
- So, how will you proceed?
- What do you plan on doing tonight?





Affirmations

- You are really determined to get this under control, despite the setbacks.
- You are a loyal friend.
- You are someone who makes up your own mind and doesn't cave for others.
- You are..
- You believe...
- You feel...



Examples of change talk in clients

- I wish things were different.
- This is not what I expected.
- I'm going to prove everyone wrong.
- My parents would be a lot happier if I did better.



Setting boundaries

- Advisor: My role is to help you with the academic piece. I need you to use your resources in these other areas of your life so that we can focus on the academic part. Does that make sense?



Recommended resource

Building Motivational Interviewing Skills: A Practitioner Workbook

David B. Rosengren

