



In the Face of DISASTER

Navigating Trauma After a Natural Disaster

Definitions Guide

Trauma

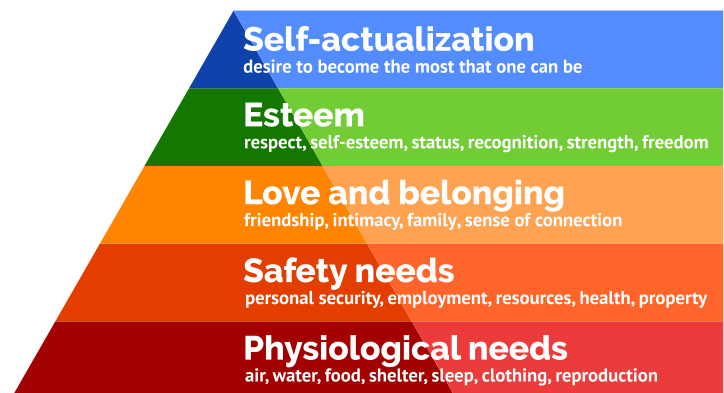
Trauma is your body's response when you experience an event that is life-threatening or emotionally hurtful. When you experience trauma, it can leave lasting effects on your mental and physical well-being. It could produce warning signs of physical or mental changes that you might not immediately recognize. A simple way to think about trauma is to consider the most stress you can handle in response to an uncontrollable event. In many cases, the event disrupts your ability to cope because of the significant loss of relationships and things necessary to meet your physical and emotional needs.

Sympathetic Nervous System (fight-flight-freeze)

The sympathetic nervous system involves part of our brain and spinal cord. We can think of it as our survival system. The survival system is responsible for our survival against things considered threatening. When activated, the survival system triggers a fight, flight, or freeze response in our body. A way to think about how the survival system functions is to consider the last time something scared you. During that time, you either jumped, ran, or stood still.

Basic Needs

Basic needs are the materials and resources needed to survive. Basic needs involve food, water, clothing, shelter, and safety. Basic needs also include relationships to help us cope with our problems and obtain materials and resources to survive. In the image, you can see how our needs should be prioritized with basic needs serving as the foundation for our life.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

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