

Providing pastoral care for academic success in a tertiary environment

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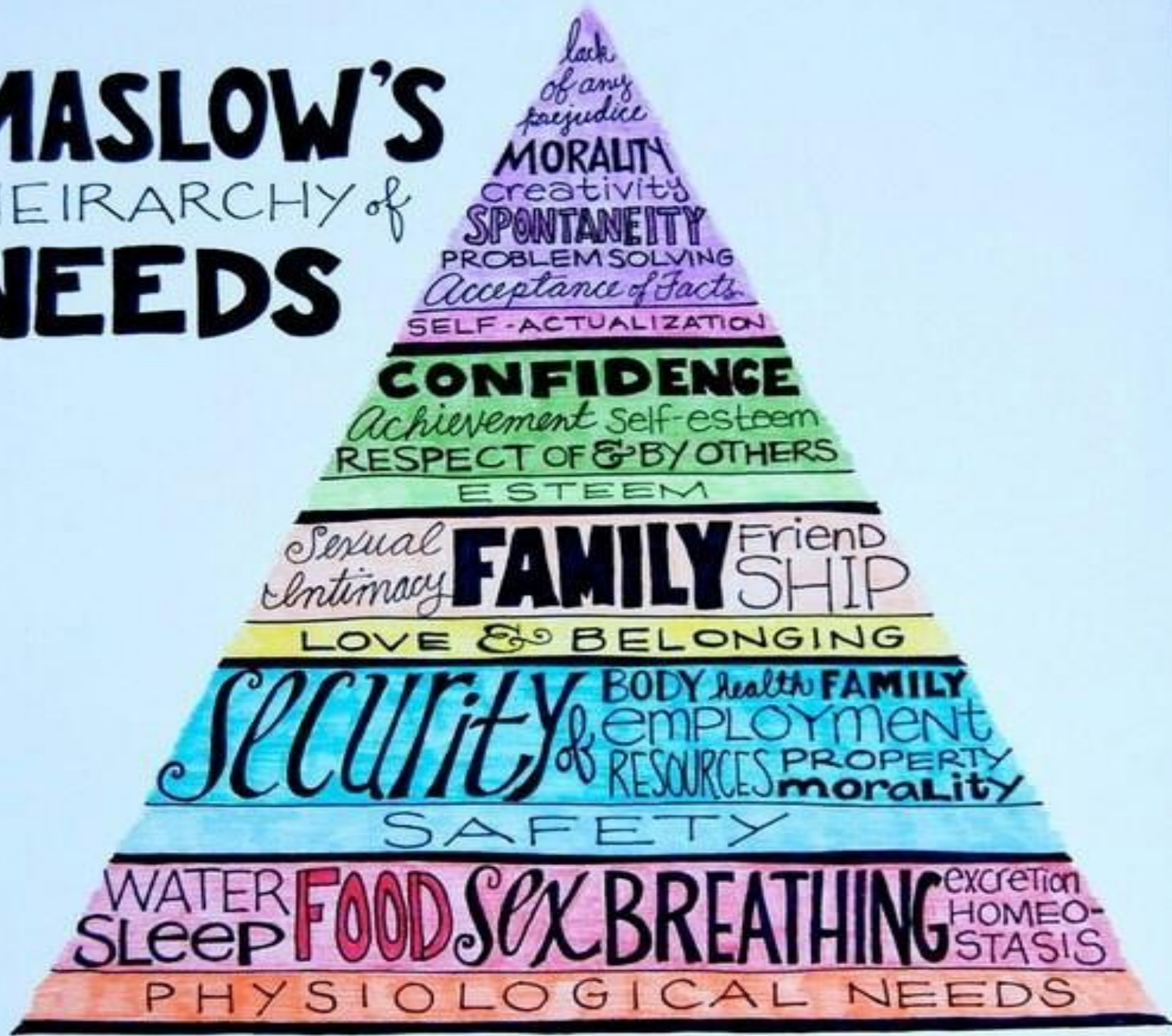
Outline

- Introduction
- Beginnings of the Academic Counsellor role
- Current practice
- Positive results
- Your experiences
- Questions

Who we are

- Combined 18 years at Centre for Languages
- 6 years as Academic Counsellor
- 0.4 position
- Qualified ESOL teachers
- Not trained counsellors

MASLOW'S HEIRARCHY of NEEDS



- “...a student who receives relevant and timely support in dealing with the problems of everyday life is more likely to have the energy and motivation to do well in their studies.” *Equality Challenge Unit 2013*

- “Teaching at any level is intensely personal by nature at any level and there are those minor or major glitches that means students need our proactive help to support their wellbeing” . *Senior Lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University*

What is Pastoral Care?

- An ancient model of *emotional and spiritual support*.
- Relating to or denoting a *teacher's responsibility for the general well-being* of pupils or students.
- *Person-centred, holistic approach* to care that *complements the care offered by other helping disciplines* while paying particular attention to *spiritual care*. The focus of pastoral care is upon the *healing, guiding, supporting, reconciling, nurturing, liberating, and empowering of people* in whatever situation they find themselves.
- *Individual and corporate patience* in which trained pastoral carers *support people* in their pain, loss and anxiety, and their triumphs, joys and victories.

The Centre for Languages, Wintec

- 513 learners
 - 297 domestic students (migrants and former refugees)
 - 216 International students:
- Programmes
 - Non-formal part-time programmes, 6-10 hrs/week (120 students)
 - Full-time NZCEL programmes Level 1F to Level 5 (393 students)
- 28+ nationalities, 17–72yrs

Centre for Languages - Academic Counsellor

Beginnings - 2011

- 1 Team Manager and over 300 students (domestic and international)
- Challenges in meeting ALL student needs based on numbers
- Gap in support between international and domestic students (based on low language learners and an internal 'first point of contact')
- Diversifying student body (i.e growing number of U18 internationals)
- More inclusive support to bridge between Health Centre, Student Learning Services, SEIC (future study sessions)

Academic Counsellor Profile 2011

Starting point for position:

- identify students of concern based on academic performance
- identify students of concern based on attendance, classwork, participation
- attend meetings that directly affect Centre students to support and report
- offer office hour drop-in hours (building trust takes time)
- work collaboratively to modify/create: future study information sessions, induction events, Centre for Languages study agreement (separate from the Wintec agreement)
- bridge other support available
 - Guidance Counsellor
 - Academic Advisor

Identifying students of concern

- The 'what if's'
 - not attending regularly, arriving late, leaving early
 - distracted in class, sleepy or withdrawn
 - copying work from other students / not progressing as expected
 - missing assessment deadlines
- Check-in sheets Weeks 6 and 12 identify students at risk
 - self-assessment, teachers discuss and provide feedback, copy to AC
- Self-referrals

Initiatives

- Future Study session
 - meet with mainstream tutors, develop study pathway
- Healthy Lifestyles sessions
 - healthy food, sleep, drugs, sexual health, stress, physical safety
- Study Skills sessions
 - International U18s

Features of Academic Counsellor role

5 key aspects that are always important:

- Don't presume ANYTHING
- Be approachable
- Don't be afraid of tears (works both ways!)
- Be understanding - but don't go out of your depth
- Think practically about how you can help

Positive results

Example A

Domestic student - call her 'Linda'. Made good start to the semester. Started missing classes, was tearful, withdrawn and unfocused when in class. Decided to withdraw.

1. Made and appointment to meet. Found out problems with young child and sister gravely unwell in home country
2. Referred to trained Wintec Counsellor
3. Spoke to teachers and TM - Linda to attend when she feels able. Provided flexibility around assessment dates
4. Student reports feeling understood and supported - passes programme

Positive results

Example B

- International student – call him ‘Tom’
- Completed 6 week Summer School with glowing reports
- Commenced NZCEL Level 4, making great progress
- Early Term 2, notified teacher he is returning home on Friday
 1. Made contact
 2. Talked through his decision - found out he was profoundly homesick
 3. Obtained permission from TM to return home for two weeks
 4. Student returned to Wintec much more settled – passed programme

Your experiences – pastoral care issues

How does your school/centre approach pastoral care? Do the processes discussed today sound familiar?

Would you make any comments or suggestions about processes not mentioned today that work well in your school/centre?

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING AND PARTICIPATING TODAY

Sources

Definitions

- 'An ancient model of emotional and spiritual support'. *Wikipedia* - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastoral_care
- 'Individual and corporate patience in which trained pastoral carers support people in their pain, loss and anxiety, and their triumphs, joys and victories. *University of Canberra* - <http://www.canberra.edu.au/current-students/canberra-students/student-support/multi-faith-centre/pastoral-care/pastoral-worker>
- Relating to or denoting a teacher's responsibility for the general well-being of pupils or students. *The Oxford Dictionary*
- A person-centred, holistic approach to care that complements the care offered by other helping disciplines while paying particular attention to spiritual care. The focus of pastoral care is upon the healing, guiding, supporting, reconciling, nurturing, liberating, and empowering of people in whatever situation they find themselves. *Bruce Rumbold, La Trobe University School of Public Health.*
<http://pastoralcareact.org/pastoral.html>

... there is a greater need for “consistent and thought-through transition” from school to tertiary study. “We all know school and college leavers do not magically turn into fully fledged adults the minute they step out of the classroom and into the lecture hall. Leaving school, leaving home and creating a new life at 18 is bound to be a time of acute anxiety”.

Headmaster of Uppingham School and Chair of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference