Maslow’s Hierarchy – Activity Outline

Introduction
• Brief overview of meeting visitor’s needs
• Play the game ‘Mas-high, Mas-low’

Materials
*Abbreviated activity (abbr.) – for shorter training sessions or inadequate playing space
• Game cards
• Flip chart/markers
• Candy abbr.
• Game Board abbr.

Activity Prep
• Create game cards
  o Each participant receives one batch of 5 game cards, representing a visitor’s experience at your park/institution. For a successful activity, all three of Maslow’s needs (i.e. basic, intermediate & growth) should be represented in every batch.
  o Cards should include a scenario that represents one of Maslow’s needs and an assigned amount of steps (forward or backwards) based on how positive or negative the scenario (see Example Activity Scenarios below). Thus, a positive experience results in steps forward and a negative experience results in steps backwards.
    ▪ Color-coding is a helpful technique to insure every participant is on the appropriate card during the game, and can be easily referenced during the discussion portion (see Activity Recap).
• Find a space that is large enough to have participants stand side-by-side and move several steps forward and backwards (i.e. parking lot, outside field, large auditorium, etc.).

Abbreviated Activity Prep
• Create game board
  o Mark off a piece of poster board to represent the maximum number of forward/backwards steps participants will make throughout the game. The center of the board should be marked as the start line.
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Activity Rules

- Tell the participants they will be playing a game called “Mas-high, Mas-low”. This game is very similar to the children’s game “Red light, Green light”.
  - Each participant will receive a batch of game cards facing down. Tell each player that the game cards showcase a visitor’s experience at your park/institution.
  - When you call out “Mas-high”, participants should turn over their first card and read the scenario on the card to themselves. When everyone has read their card, you will then call out ‘Mas-low’. At that point the participants should take the designated steps forward or backwards. Remind participants to be courteous to their neighbors and keep their hands to themselves. Running, pushing, or foul play is not allowed.
    - If you’re playing in a parking lot, remind the participants there will be cars going in and out, so everyone should be aware of their surroundings and move to the side if needed.

Activity

- Ask the participants to line up next to one another. Hand a batch of game cards to each individual. Remember, each batch as a whole makes up a visitor’s experience, so be sure the group has a nice variety of “excellent”, “good” and “bad” experiences.
- Once everyone has a set of cards, place yourself on the opposite end of the participants. You should give yourself enough space so on the last game card, the players having an “excellent” experience will have reached you. If you feel like participants will pass you too soon, feel free to adjust during the game.
- Start the activity by shouting out “Mas-high”. When it appears all of the participants have read their scenarios, shout out “Mas-low”. You should notice a variety of people moving forwards as well as backwards. If you have a large enough space, it is okay for participants to create how large or small their steps will be. If you are working with a small space, give your participants an example of how big their steps can be (ex. no more than a foot, etc.)
- After you have called out “Mas-high, Mas-low” enough times to get through all of your scenarios, you should see a clear separation between participants. Acknowledge the person(s) who made it to the finish line and then head back to the classroom for discussion.
Abbreviated Activity

- Participants will be given a game piece (i.e. piece of candy) and asked to place it on the center of the game board next to their fellow participants. Hand out game cards randomly to each individual.
- Once everyone has a set of cards, place a handful of candy on the very top half of the board.
- Start the activity by shouting out “Mas-high”. When it appears all of the participants have read their scenarios, shout out “Mas-low”. You should notice a variety of game pieces moving forwards as well as backwards.
- After you have called out “Mas-high, Mas-low” to get through all of your scenarios, you should see a clear separation between participants. Acknowledge the person(s) who made it to the finish line and then discuss.

Activity Recap

- Ask those who had “Bad” experience, or were farthest from the finish line, to tell you how they felt during the activity.
  - Ask a few participants to share cards of their choosing aloud.
- Ask those who had an “Excellent” experience, or passed the finish line, to tell you how they felt during the activity.
  - Ask a few participants to share cards of their choosing aloud.
- Ask the class to raise their hands if they have ever heard of Maslow. Give participants a chance to explain Maslow’s study or give a brief overview of Abraham Maslow yourself.
  - Maslow did a study of human behavior in 1954 and found that in order for people to attend their “higher selves” their basic and intermediate needs must first be met. At self-actualization people can achieve higher level thinking, opening up an opportunity for appreciation and growth.
  - Because our goal as an interpreter is to evoke emotional, behavioral, and psychological responses in our guests, we can use the hierarchy of needs as a guide.
- Draw a pyramid on the flip chart paper, separating it into 3 categories. Have participants determine the “need” each game card referenced. Write down each need in the pyramid as they answer. Reference p.17 in the workbook.
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- When you are done filling out the pyramid, tell the participants that as an interpreter they will eventually want to invert the pyramid. Ask why this is.
  - An interpreter can help guests spend less time concerned with basic needs, ultimately giving them a greater chance to achieve higher level thinking.

![Maslow's Hierarchy Diagram]

Example Activity Scenarios

Excellent Experience
Total Steps: 14 forward

**Basic – Food**
- You’re looking for the cafeteria and the zoo has really great signs to get you there.
  - Take 2 steps forward

**Basic – Safety**
- You notice an area of the walkway is blocked off because someone is trimming the trees. You walk around it.
  - Take 1 step forward

**Intermediate – Esteem**
- A keeper compliments you on your alpaca knowledge.
  - Take 4 steps forward

**Intermediate – Knowledge**
- You find out Lincoln Park Zoo has been around since 1868. You’re surprised!
  - Take 2 steps forward

**Growth – Self-Actualization**
- You apply for a job as an interpreter because you hear a great interpretive program!
  - Take 5 steps forward

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Good Experience
Total Steps: 8 forward, 6 back

Basic – Food
• You’re hungry and ask a zoo employee where you can get something to eat. They point you to a café.
  o Take 1 step forward

Basic – Safety
• You’re at an animal encounter and the interpreter takes out a snake without warning you prior. You hate snakes!
  o Take 3 steps back

Intermediate – Esteem
• No one remembers your name at the zoo donor event.
  o Take 3 steps back

Intermediate – Knowledge
• You learn to identify a rare bird!
  o Take 3 steps forward

Growth – Self-Actualization
• You learn that buying products with the ‘FSC’ logo helps conserve wild gorillas. You start looking for the logo when you shop.
  o Take 4 steps forward

Poor Experience
Total Steps: 2 forward, 12 back

Basic – Food
• You packed your lunch, but forgot it on the train.
  o Take 4 steps back

Basic – Safety
• The tornado sirens start going off and you don’t know where to take shelter.
  o Take 2 step back

Intermediate – Esteem
• You walk into the ape house and exclaim “Look at the monkeys!” A zoo employee laughs at you and says “Those aren’t monkeys, they’re apes!”
  o Take 5 steps back

Intermediate – Knowledge
• You wonder why the African Lions are always sleeping, but there is no one around to ask and you can’t find a sign.
  o Take 1 step back

Growth – Self-Actualization
• You find out the public can help the zoo identify wildlife in Chicago. You think it’s a cool concept.
  o Take 2 steps forward

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