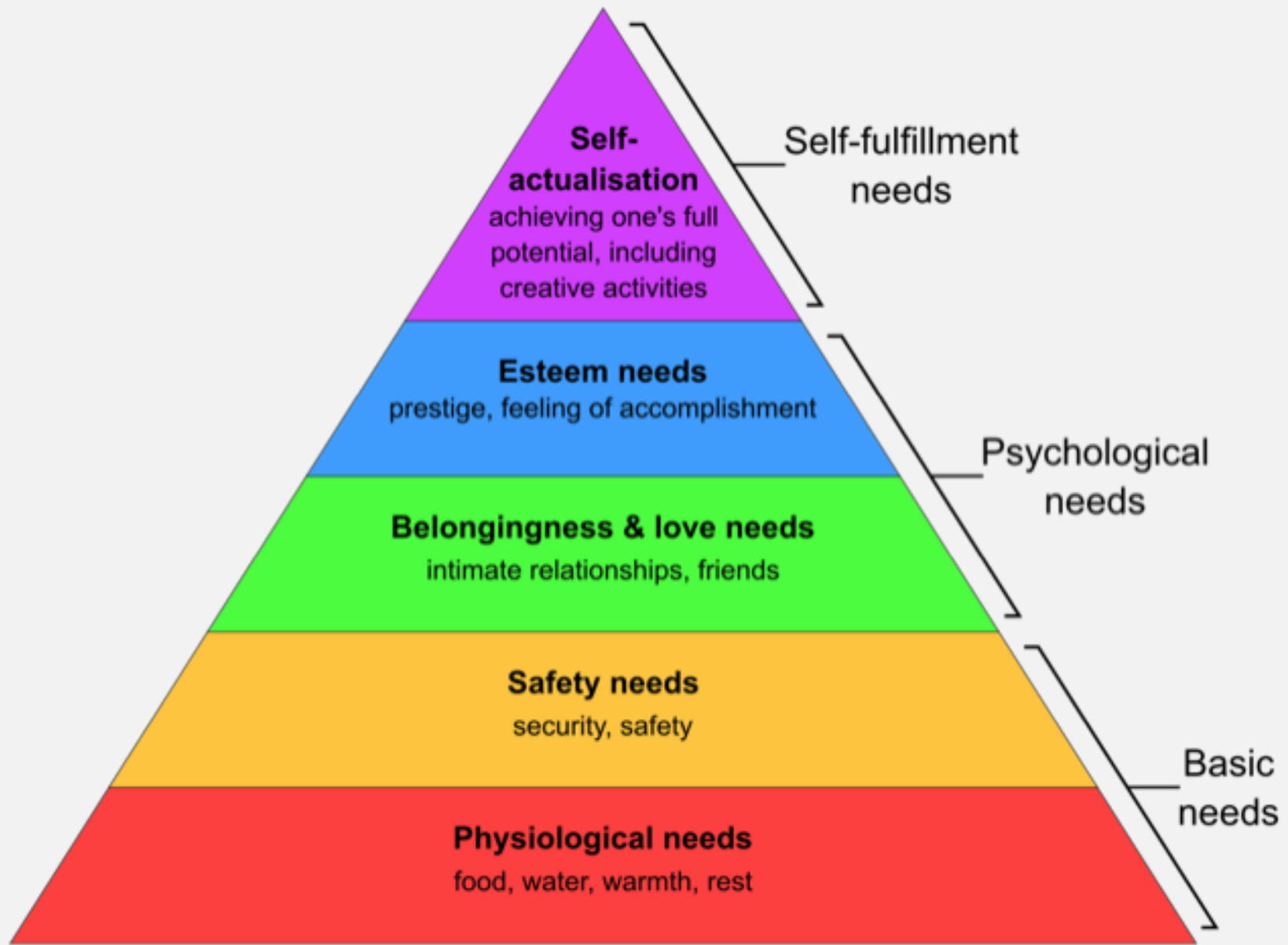


# BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF CONNECTION AND CARE

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MicroSociety Conference 2021 Keynote



## **Transformative Dialogue: Cultivating Equity, Community, and Collaboration**

Transformative Dialogue is process that engages all who are affected by a complex problem or challenge in a shared process for generating mutual understanding and joint solutions.

### Key characteristics:

- ❖ Begins with fostering curiosity and interest in different perspectives and lived experiences
- ❖ Is furthered by questions of inquiry and deep listening
- ❖ Leads to empathy, appreciation for the complementarity of difference, and a recognition of interdependence
- ❖ The process results in the emergence of new and creative solutions that are co-created and co-owned

## Ground Rules for Dialogues

***Purpose: To create and protect a safe space***

Constructing the boundaries of the conversation—the limited context and manner in which it will take place—is a big part of what allows participants to open and deepen into new awareness.

Establishing ground rules by group consensus involves the whole group in creating optimal conditions for freedom of expression and exploration. The ground rules express the spirit of the discussion, which is based on listening respectfully and without argument while discussing issues that may tempt us to argue. The ground rules provide a container that encourages everyone to take an active part, even those who tend to hold back.

The group creates the ground rules; the facilitator makes sure that there is agreement, that the list is complete, and the rules are followed.

Basic ground rules to include:

- ❖ Honor confidentiality
- ❖ Respect differences
- ❖ Speak in the first person and from individual experience, not as a representative of a group
- ❖ Describe experiences, not opinions
- ❖ Do not try to persuade or change others
- ❖ Listen openly and without interruption
- ❖ Share speaking time; be aware of those who are more quiet or have a language barrier
- ❖ Avoid cross talk and side conversations
- ❖ Keep all electronic devices out of sight and silenced

# Debate versus Dialogue

Debate	Dialogue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal is to win</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal is to discover common ground</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One listens to find the opponents weak points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One listens to understand</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One criticizes other points of view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One openly considers all points of view</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes one right answer to a question or problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes that many different ideas can contribute to a fuller solution</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comes from a position which one defends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expresses feelings, concerns, fears, and uncertainties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposes faults in the positions of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates strengths on all sides of an issue</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks to strengthen a predetermined position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncovers brand new possibilities and opportunities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further polarizes antagonistic positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds bridges of understanding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes collaboration</li> </ul>

## Crafting Dialogue Questions

The middle, core phase of a dialogue is usually launched with a question. The nature of the question and how it is phrased will profoundly affect the tone and shape of the ensuing dialogue.

A question designed for a debate helps to sharpen and differentiate positions. A question designed for a dialogue will allow for difference, but also helps illumine unexplored common ground.

A good dialogue question:

- ❖ Is open-ended and cannot be answered with a yes or no, I agree or disagree response
- ❖ Takes participants deeper than the level of opinion or position
- ❖ Encourages participants to delve into their experience and to explore their thinking in a fresh manner
- ❖ Allows for ambiguity or ambivalence
- ❖ Calls forth new, unrehearsed responses