

An Introduction to the Human Givens Approach

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The Basic Emotional needs

These are the foundations of good mental health.

There are physical needs like having food, water, shelter, etc and also emotional needs. These needs are very basic and the same for all people independent of culture, upbringing or age. When the emotional needs are met in balance we are mentally healthy.

1. Safety

Do you feel confident and safe? Do you feel comfortable at work and in social situations? Are you able to do what you need to do without fear?

2. Friendship and intimacy, i.e. having people in your life who are important to you and to whom you are important

This is about having an emotional connection to at least one person with whom you can be yourself –“warts and all”, have fun, share your joys and anxieties and feel understood and supported?

3. Having wider connections

Do you know people outside of close family and close friends? Are you involved in activities in the neighbourhood, doing voluntary work, involved in church, politics, any community activities e.g. drama group, football club etc?

4. Status

Do you feel good about the way you see yourself and the way you think you are seen by other people? Do you feel suitably rewarded and appreciated for what you do for example at home or at work?

5. Sense of competence and achievement

Are you doing what you want to do with your life? Do you feel satisfied, challenged and motivated? Have you achieved or are you working towards something that you consider important to achieve?

6. Sense of autonomy and control

Do you feel in control of your life situation? Can you take sufficient responsibility for important decisions in your life?

7. Attention

We all need to receive and give attention in the right measure. Do you receive good quality attention? How much sincere attention do you give to other people?

8. Meaning and purpose

This comes from making an effort to do things. Do you have activities that interest you and continue to challenge and stretch you? Are you still learning? Are you developing new skills? Do you put yourself out for other people who need you? – “By helping others we help ourselves.” Do you have a philosophy or approach that helps you see life as meaningful? Do you have commitment to something bigger than yourself: a cause, a sport, a school, a community activity or political movement, music, art or a spiritual orientation towards life? Meaning in life comes from being stretched and engaged with the world.

9. Privacy

Do you have time and space for yourself to look at your life situation, reflect and consolidate experience and plan for the future?

Resources

The ability to develop **complex long term memory**, which enables us to add to our innate knowledge and learn.

The **ability to build rapport**, empathise and connect with others.

Imagination, which enables us to focus our attention away from our emotions, use language and problem solve more creatively and objectively.

A **conscious, rational mind** that can check out emotions, question, analyse and plan.

The **ability to 'know'** — that is, understand the world unconsciously through metaphorical pattern matching.

An **observing self** — that part of us that can step back, be more objective and be aware of itself as a unique centre of awareness, apart from intellect, emotion and conditioning.

A **dreaming brain** that preserves the integrity of our genetic inheritance every night by metaphorically defusing expectations held in the autonomic arousal system because they were not acted out the previous day.

Websites

Human Givens Institute: <http://www.hgi.org.uk>

MindFields College: <http://www.mindfields.org.uk>

Human Givens Publishing: <http://www.humangivens.com>

The online register of other human givens therapists: <http://www.hgi.org.uk/register/>

The Emotional Needs Audit (ENA): <http://www.enaproject.org>

The MindFields College Blog: <http://www.mindfields.org.uk/blog/>

The Emotional Needs Audit

How well are your innate emotional needs being met?

Nature has programmed all of us with physical and emotional needs. These are the 'human givers' that cannot be avoided. How stressed we are depends on how well they are being met now, and how well we deal with the situation when they are not. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now, on a scale of one to seven (where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met), by ticking the appropriate boxes.

	NO	SOMETIMES					YES
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel secure in all major areas of your life (such as your home, work, environment)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel you receive enough attention?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you think you give other people enough attention?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel in control of your life most of the time?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel part of the wider community?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Can you obtain privacy when you need to?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have an intimate relationship in your life (one where you are totally physically and emotionally accepted for who you are by at least one person, this could be a close friend)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel an emotional connection to others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel you have status that is acknowledged?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you achieving things and competent in at least one major area of your life?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you mentally and/or physically stretched in ways which give you a sense of meaning and purpose?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- If your scores are mostly low, you are more likely to be suffering stress symptoms.
- If any need is scored 3 or less this is likely to be a major stressor for you.
- Even if only one need is marked very low it can be enough of a problem to seriously effect your mental and emotional stability.

Stress, anxiety, anger, depression and addiction are the result of our innate needs not being met, either due to environmental factors, harmful conditioning or a misuse of imagination (worrying). People do not have mental health problems when their innate needs are being met in balanced, healthy ways. By highlighting areas in your life where your essential needs aren't being met as well as they could be, you can use this questionnaire to help you think constructively about how your life could be improved.