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The Four Faces of “Need”: Bradshaw’s Taxonomy of Social Need

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Suppose a neighborhood community center decides to start a new care service for older residents. The first question the person in charge runs into is surprisingly simple: who actually needs this service, and how many of them are there? The answer is not easy, because the people who look at risk to an expert, the people who say they are struggling, and the people who actually show up at the application desk are not all the same people. The framework that sorted out this confusion is the Taxonomy of Social Need, published in 1972 by the British social policy scholar Jonathan Bradshaw. Put simply