



Smith College

**Leading the Buried
in Treasures
Workshop**

Facilitator's Guide

To be used with Tolin, Frost & Steketee [2013; 2nd ed.] *Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding.* NY: Oxford University Press

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Introduction

Your role as facilitator and the significance of the Buried in Treasures Workshop

The aim of the facilitator's guide for the Buried in Treasures Workshop is to provide the structure, insights, and organizational tools needed to run a successful self-help group for people who accumulate and save more stuff than they have room for. If this is your first time facilitating a group like this, you may find it helpful to follow this guide very closely. If you're a more seasoned facilitator, you may simply follow the structure while creating your own script. However you use this guide, you should let your own voice and experiences come through.

The sessions for this workshop are highly structured, each one focusing on material from Tolin, Frost, and Steketee's book *Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding* (2nd Edition, 2013). This manual is meant to assist you in prompting honest, informed conversations based on the information and exercises found in *Buried in Treasures (BIT)*. Homework for each week includes readings and exercises from *BIT* as well as goal-setting. Our assumption is that everyone will be doing their best to come to class prepared. This means that aside from specific questions and concerns, the group will all have familiarity with a common vocabulary and skill-set. Our research has indicated that participation in the BIT Workshop decreases symptoms of hoarding, helps to reduce clutter, and improves people's ability to use their homes (Frost, Pekorava-Kochergina, & Maxner, 2011; Frost, Ruby, & Shuer, 2012). See Appendix O for findings from these studies.

The Buried in Treasures Workshop is about more than clutter...

As the workshop progresses and group members become more comfortable with each other, deep feelings will bubble to the surface and tears may flow. Having a box of tissues available is a must, even for tears of relief and success.

You will see that "getting rid of stuff" is not the hardest part of beating hoarding tendencies. The "stuff" is the tip of the iceberg; it's what's beneath the surface that makes overcoming this challenge so complicated. Overcoming hoarding is more than a change of lifestyle; it's a change of life.

The assignments in *Buried in Treasures* can take people to very personal places. They are forced to acknowledge, perhaps for the first time, the emotional and physical obstacles that are hindering their progress.

Beyond "getting rid of stuff," this class is also a celebration of choosing what to keep! Every item has a story behind it and a special value. It can be anxiety-provoking for the class to focus merely on discarding, so keep the flip side of the coin in mind and refer to it often.

Too much of anything, no matter how special and unique, is a problem. Prioritizing what to let go of means that the person is left with only their favorite possessions and the room needed to enjoy and use them. For many, the light at the end of the tunnel burns more brightly when their focus is brought back

to this reality. The goal is not to get rid of everything, but rather to make their homes comfortable, safe, and functional.

How to use this guide

Each session follows a similar outline which includes:

- A summary of the day's focus and teaching goal (*in italics*)
- A checklist of what you need to bring to each session
- A checklist of what needs to be set up in the "classroom"
- Check-in questions to get up-dates on each person's experience during the week
- Topics to be covered during the session (**in bold**)
- Brief instructions regarding each topic (*in italics*)
- Talking points in the forms of questions, interspersed with background for the facilitator
- Blank lines to write-in your own questions for the group
- Homework assignment and collection of homework completion forms

Texts in italics are meant to give you insight and a sense of what's to come in the next conversation. Questions are suggested prompts for each topic. Note that there are blank lines under the questions; they are there for you to create your own questions. After reading the chapter, you may have questions of your own based on the specific needs of the group. Feel free to use as many or as few of our suggested questions as you see fit. Remember, each group is unique and should follow its own flow.

Please don't feel compelled to ask every single question. There are more questions in this guide than you'll have time to ask, so choose wisely! Remember to keep an eye on the clock---time flies! You can use the time suggestions for each section to help keep you on pace to cover all of the information you want so that the participants leave with as thorough an understanding of the day's focus as possible.

In order to make sure that you have everything you need for the next class, read a week ahead in the guide to see the "bring to the session" and "setting-up the classroom" sections. These sections will list all of the supplies you will need for the day. You should read the set-up list ahead of time so that you have everything you'll need. For example, in Session 11, you will need something with which to cart-away the participants' discarded items. You will request that people bring in small items, but you never know exactly what you'll get, and some things could be heavy! If you don't plan ahead, you'll end-up with a pile of stuff and no way to haul it!

Getting the most out of *Buried in Treasures*

Many participants of the Buried in Treasures Workshop have stated that the book, *Buried in Treasures*, along with the support of their group and facilitator, changed not only the state of their home, but the state of their mind as well. One participant said that she had read the book on her own a year before she took the class, and although it helped some, after reading it a second time with her peers, it was transformative.

The syllabus follows the chapter order of the book. We will address excessive acquiring first, before we tackle discarding. We know that trying to make progress with discarding before learning how to stop

acquiring is like trying to dig a hole under water. As long as more items are coming into the home than going out, the problem will persist.

Ask the class to be faithful to their reading and exercises. If they don't do their homework, they will be unprepared to contribute to the next class and will miss-out on the full benefit of the workshop. They should also be reminded that the only thing they really *need* to remember to bring to class is their book, unless they've been assigned to bring in items from home.

As the facilitator, you should also read *BIT* from start to finish before the first meeting. If you don't, you won't be able to anticipate questions, nor will you be able to reassure the class that questions they have will be explored in the text with confidence. Reading the whole book ahead of time will give you a sense of what your ultimate vision is for the group. If you aren't familiar with the book, you might feel un-prepared when someone asks, "Will the book help us with..." We want you to feel prepared!

Supplies that you'll need for the class

Basically, everything you need, besides copies of this facilitator's guide and *Buried in Treasures*, can be found at an office supply store. You will need the following:

- This facilitator's guide.
- Enough copies of *Buried in Treasures* (the Second Edition published in 2013) for everyone.
- Enough pens for everyone.
- Name tags or place markers for everyone (a folded-over 5"x7" index card works great)
- A watch or clock that's easy to see.
- A container to carry paperwork for the class, i.e., a plastic file bin with a handle
- A pencil.
- A pad of large presentation paper (we recommend the self-adhesive kind, but tape works too)
- Brightly-colored, large markers for writing on presentation paper (poster markers).
- Folders to keep the homework sheets organized.
- Enough graduation certificates for everyone.
- A means of hauling-away items, i.e., plastic bins and a dolly, or rolling luggage.
- A highlighter.
- A blank notebook.
- Access to a computer and printer.
- Access to a photo copier.
- Scissors.
- Tape.
- A box of tissues.
- Enough extra copies of the Non-Acquiring Card on p. 120 (Figure 8.1) so that everyone can have extras to post.

“...and it makes a great cat toy, too!”

Time management is an important part of your role as facilitator. Be prepared to re-direct conversations to get back on topic. An example of a conversation that began to wander in one of our groups had to do with a plastic bottle cap. Someone brought it in as an example of an item they have difficulty letting-go of. They explained that it had many uses and listed a few. The rest of the group then jumped-in with the reasons why they would keep the bottle cap too, culminating in the gleeful interjection, “And it makes a great cat toy, too!” The conversation could have gone on and on, but about 30 seconds of verbal pig-piling was tied-up nicely with the statement, “.....so it’s clear why she has difficulty letting that bottle cap go. It’s creative thinking like yours that makes the decision so hard. Let’s move on to the next item.” A facilitator could feel boxed-out by this banter, but it’s important to be assertive, supportive, and positive at all times. It can feel rude to interrupt a lengthy story or side conversation, but you risk losing people’s attention and not covering all of the material if you hesitate for too long. Rather than thinking of this action as interrupting, consider it your opportunity to move-on to the next important topic. We have had to remind people that this isn’t our favorite responsibility as facilitator, but it is crucial. Consistency in this action tends to lead to people redirecting themselves before you have to.

Everyone is the expert on themselves

Whether you know what it’s like to deal with a hoarding issue or not, you only really know yourself. People are very sensitive to being told what to do by a facilitator who comes-off as an expert. Effective facilitating is not as much about giving all of the best answers as it is about asking the best questions and allowing people to come together to answer them. Perhaps you have your own first-hand experience with this problem, maybe not. Either way, this guide will provide you with enough background about the material to anticipate the emotional ups and downs of the workshop, even if they are not your own.

You don’t have to be someone who over-accumulates to run this group. If you are someone with this challenge, you don’t have to be totally over it to help your peers. Providing an environment that is non-judgmental, supportive, and hopeful is your job, as opposed to being “a perfect example” of recovery. It’s all about the effort that everyone’s putting in that makes the class work.

As for the weekly assignments, we would *strongly* encourage you to do them, even if you don’t have a hoarding problem. Completing all of the exercises will help keep you in tune with what the group is experiencing. Whether you’re using the skills in *BIT* to clear that cluttered corner of your desk, or your entire house, there’s always room for improvement. If you don’t do the homework, you won’t know what it’s like from week to week, and the class members will feel like you’re detached. Doing the work creates ownership and mutual accountability. It also means that you are an active participant, and can contribute to the conversations from real, rather than hypothetical, experiences.

Goal-setting for success

Although this guide does not include goal-setting for each session – there are already so many things to talk about – you may want to consider doing so on occasion. We’ve seen people make great progress when they commit to setting weekly goals and check-in with the group about their progress. The maintenance workshop, which is designed to follow this one (“Unburied From Treasures” see Appendices I & J), begins and ends each session with goals. The members attempt to set realistic goals

for the week at the end of class, and start the following week with a report of how they did. Experimenting with this will get a sense of how helpful it is to your *BIT* Workshop, and how often you want to use this as the ice-breaker and check-out. As you will see, there are always opportunities to customize your curriculum. If you find that the group is enjoying and benefitting from weekly goals, you may want to incorporate them more frequently. You may also feel that it would be best to do it on a bi-weekly or tri-weekly basis. You will see that there is a place at the end of the weekly homework where participants track their success in meeting their week's goal, if they set one. We have received tremendous narratives in this section of the homework sheet, and you may emphasize this section when you explain how to complete the worksheet.

We have come to appreciate that there are positive take-away lessons from this exercise, even when the answer to the progress is, "not at all." You see, simply sticking with this goal process is something to commend, and embracing the positive aspect of their efforts can help keep people going, even when they feel like they are failing. You can make even the most discouraged person smile if you can help them to see that by just being present, they are showing a will to learn, change, and succeed.

We have had participants arrive at groups looking worried. It's often an indicator that they didn't achieve their goal, and are worried about admitting it. Time and again, their class-mates have helped them to feel comfortable by pointing-out the fact that they are in a safe, non-judgmental space, and that no one is perfect. It's gratifying to have people come to class even when they feel bad, because you know that they expect to feel better by the end of the session. The camaraderie and peer support are like a safety net for the vulnerable.

Appendix "H" will highlight some key points to keep in mind as you facilitate the group's goal-setting.

It's an emotional ride

Every week will present unique emotional challenges, and they may come when you least expect them. Tears may flow, followed by laughter, followed by a serious silence, followed by a collective sigh of relief. The participants will almost certainly be making deeply personal connections with their past, present, and future as they work through the book. Some people will be getting support from professionals, friends, and/or family between classes, but others are not so fortunate. Those who are in it alone will be relying on the weekly group for all the support they can get. Being a consistently positive, encouraging facilitator will keep people coming back, even when they feel bad.

Taking attendance

Keeping track of attendance will help you to know who missed which discussions, in case you feel they're not keeping-up with the material: you'll know exactly what they missed, and you'll notice trends more easily as well.

"That awkward first moment"

No matter how long you've been facilitating groups, the time when participants begin to arrive, before the first session, can be awkward for everyone, because you don't know each other yet, and because this is a new experience for everyone involved. Appendix "C" details some helpful approaches to get you

and your co-facilitator through this period of time, when minutes can feel like hours if you're not prepared. It's your one chance to make a first impression. Embrace the moment, and turn mutual anxiety into mutual excitement!

Thank you for committing to facilitate this workshop

Facilitating The Buried in Treasures Workshop is a unique experience. Thank you for creating the opportunity for people with this incredibly frustrating problem to come together to learn how to overcome it. This workshop has the potential to make deeply positive impacts on peoples' lives, and you are the one who will keep hope alive for everyone, even when they feel overwhelmed.

You may be surprised by how much you learn about yourself during the class. Witnessing peoples' stories of despair and courage, frustration and triumph, week after week, requires you to take good care of yourself emotionally as well as physically. Get the support you need after an intense session, and get the rest you need before the next one. The group will go through emotional ups and downs, and you will be along for the ride. It will be up to you to keep the group's eyes on the prize.

You're about to make a big difference in peoples' lives, and yours is about to change too...

Session 1: Getting to know each other

This session outlines the structure, support, and emotional culture of the class, introduces *Buried In Treasures*, and helps participants get to know each other and the facilitator(s.) Refer to Appendix

Bring to the session:

- ___ Signs to direct participants to the meeting space
- ___ Blank phone/email contact sheet (see appendix B).
- ___ Box of tissues
- ___ Watch or clock
- ___ Copies of *Buried in Treasures (2nd edition)*
- ___ Blank name tags or signs (folded 5"x7" index cards are re-usable and work well)
- ___ Pens
- ___ Copies of the syllabus
- ___ Attendance sheet
- ___ Measures of Hoarding self-assessment sheets if you plan to capture before/after data
- ___ Homework completion sheet for session 2

Setting-up the classroom:

- ___ Hang plenty of signs to direct participants to the meeting space
- ___ Place chairs in a circle, or around square table(s) so that everyone will be able to see each other and you, rather than rows.
- ___ At each place, put a blank nametag, a pen, a copy of *Buried in Treasures*, a copy of the syllabus (if printed on 8.5"x11" paper, it will fit into their book when folded)

Before we get started, let's create a Group Comfort Agreement - 15 minutes.

After introducing yourself, and before having people introduce themselves, explain that you're going to create a "Group Comfort Agreement." You can explain that before getting started, you'd like to create this Agreement to make sure that everyone is involved in setting the ground rules for the group, all of which are meant to help participants feel that their privacy, dignity, and boundaries will be respected by you and their peers.

Go over the Agreement, and then ask if there are any other rules that anyone would like to propose before moving on, even if all of their input seems to be exhausted. If your group becomes difficult to facilitate in the future because this Agreement is not being adhered to, you may refer back to it. You may write it on a poster paper that you can hang on the wall before group starts so that it's always a part of the learning environment. This Agreement can be modified or added to at any time in the future if participants feel it should be amended.

Examples of ground rules that we would suggest:

- No “cross talk” – This means that participants will not address each other during group. They won’t ask each other follow-up questions after they’ve shared. This can lead to boundaries being crossed, and people feeling defensive if they feel judged. (This is something that we often need to re-direct. It is a major difference between BIT and group therapy.)
- What’s said here, stays here.
- The facilitator will only call on people that are raising their hand. Nobody will be asked a direct question if they are not asking for it.
- The group will begin at _____, and end at _____, with a 10 minute break at _____.
- Cell phones should be set to silent or vibrate, important calls taken outside of the room.
- Please be punctual, communicate with facilitator(s) regarding absences or late arrivals.
- Group cancellation calls/emails/texts (due to weather, illness, etc) will be made by such-and-such time (ie. “noon the day of group.”)
- No interrupting of speaker.

The benefit of having the group create this Agreement together is that they feel ownership, responsibility, and a sense of empowerment. The responsibility is shared, and you’re not “in charge.” You are “in charge” of re-enforcing their rules through re-direction and modeling.

...and now, welcome to the Buried in Treasures Workshop! 10 minutes.

Since this is the first session of the Buried in Treasures workshop, we want to make the participants feel welcomed, safe, and supported. Today will focus on preparing the group to commit themselves to the optimistic, supportive culture we aim to foster, and to the many personal challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Due to the nature of the problems of hoarding and cluttering, participants are expected to be in all stages of readiness for the class. Some people will be ready to start for the first time, some may have been working with little progress for many years, and still others may be quite ambivalent (not necessarily a bad thing!) about changing their mindset and behavior around this challenge.

Ask everyone to share their name and something interesting about themselves that doesn’t relate to hoarding. After doing this, follow-up with the following ice breaker:

Ice Breaker: “What super power would help you beat your clutter?” - 10 minutes.

This may seem like a light-hearted and somewhat random question, but it is actually meant to help you as a facilitator to see what people think is beyond their capabilities. Many people with this problem feel powerless in one way or another when it comes to their clutter. Part of the facilitator’s responsibility is to foster hope and encourage the confidence to develop new skills. An example of one person’s answer was, “I wish my super power was the power to make more space.” We want to introduce the idea that it’s possible to have this power! By organizing and discarding excess clutter, this person will indeed create more space for themselves.

Write down their answers. You will refer back to them in the final session. *At the end of the workshop, recalling their original answer may give them a better sense of their new abilities.*

Questions:

Did you hear any super powers that you think you might also like to have?

Does anyone know why I might be asking this question?

Explain that in the final class, we'll review their answers and see if they've achieved their super power!

Discussion of motivation for joining class and how they refer to their problem - 25 minutes.

Everyone will have different reasons for joining the class; several will overlap. This discussion will help people in the class to see that they're not alone in their struggles, and that there will be a great deal of peer support in the room. Knowing why people are joining the class also helps the facilitator to understand where people are coming from: were they faced with eviction or court intervention if they didn't seek help; did their family beg them; did they just decide it was time?

We also want to discuss the language that we're using in the class. Not everyone is comfortable with the term, "hoarder," due to the stigma generated by TV shows and negative self-talk.

Questions:

What motivated you to join the class?

Have other people encouraged you to work on this issue?

Is anyone here because they are in trouble with a landlord or health department?

How hard do you think this class will be for you?

Have you ever been in another class, group, or 1-1 intervention?

How do you refer to this challenge? How do you feel about the word "hoarder?"

Do you use a different term or expression? Maybe one that you created?

10 Minute Break

Discuss *Buried in Treasures* and the syllabus - 15 minutes.

At this point, have people take out their copy of BIT and recommend putting their name on or in it somewhere. Explain that they'll need to bring the book every week. Then have them refer to

the syllabus that you handed-out, and briefly discuss the content of each week's class. Explain the layout of the syllabus and how to read it.

Encourage them to write directly in the book and date the exercises as they complete them. This will reduce the risk of losing separate papers and create a journal-style reference so that they can look back to see what their progress has been.

Questions:

Does everyone understand how to use the syllabus?

Are there particular sessions/chapters that sound really exciting?

How about sessions/chapters that sound like they'll be particularly challenging?

How long has it been since you've been in a classroom?

What are the challenges you've faced in classes, i.e., keeping-up with reading

Can anyone here provide some ideas for folks that are concerned about being back in the classroom?

What is "Hoarding Disorder" (p. 13-16) - 15 minutes.

Popular culture presents us with many images of what hoarding "looks like," but the media's versions are usually "furthest-case" scenarios and misrepresent what most folks actually deal with. In 2013, The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), published by the American Psychiatric Association, states that Hoarding Disorder is present when the following criteria are met:

- 1. Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value. **(Difficulty discarding)***
- 2. This difficulty is due to a perceived need to save the items and distress associated with discarding them. **(Strong urges to save things)***
- 3. The symptoms result in the accumulation of possessions that congest and clutter active living areas and substantially compromise their intended use. **(Excessive clutter)***
- 4. The hoarding causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. **(Distress or impaired functioning, reduced quality of life.)***

Regardless of how we feel about the language, the BIT Workshop is designed to address all four criteria of Hoarding Disorder. Label or no label, BIT can be helpful for people who experience this challenge set.

The DSM-5 also lists two characteristics that may or may not be present:

- 1. Excessive acquiring*

2. Poor insight

So long as it's done without judgment, discussing these criteria can allow for a more objective appraisal of the situation. It may also help people look at their situation in a less hopeless and more empowering way, knowing that there is help, and that they're not alone. Appeal to people's strengths, since these are the qualities that will make their personal decluttering goals attainable.

A frequent response to the media's portrayal about hoarding is, "My home is bad, but it's not as bad as the people on TV." We want to discourage these kinds of comparisons, because some people in the class may have homes as cluttered as what we see on TV, and we don't want them to feel even worse. "War stories" should also be discouraged. An example of this might sound like, "Yeah, you can't use half of your rooms, well I can't use any of mine." We want everyone to remain focused on their own individual situation and avoid making judgments about other people.

Questions:

What kinds of images of HD have you seen, and where did you see them?

Did you think it was a fair and dignified portrayal?

Do you feel that you meet all four criteria, or are there one or two that concern you the most?

Which of the four are you most looking forward to overcoming, or do they all sound like priorities?

Do you acquire excessively?

What kinds of impacts has your clutter had on your life?

Has anyone had a disruption to his or her personal relationships or jobs?

Closing thoughts, questions/answers about the workshop - 20 minutes.

The Buried in Treasures Workshop is about more than simply getting rid of stuff. The "stuff" is just tip of the iceberg. The hardest work is buried under the surface, in deep places that the participants themselves may never have thought about. This class will deal with the practical, tangible aspects of the issue, but the true work will be done on the inside. Histories of trauma, grief, poverty, mental health challenges, low self-esteem, etc., may have led to the group members' current states of affairs. They will need to confront some difficult issues while they are in the class.

A word to the wise: tears will be shed during the course of this class. However, this class is as much a celebration of what people are saving as it is a course in how to reduce their accumulation. As people declutter, they will create new space where they can create, recreate, and enjoy their belongings. It's an exhilarating experience to have success in seeing the floor in a room, or the far wall, or the back of a closet for the first time in years. It's exciting to find

belongings that had been lost or even forgotten. It's exciting to visualize being unburied from treasures!

Something to point-out to the group is that they don't have to live in clutter. They can start by imagining life after clutter; they might not remember what life was like before clutter, and some may have even been born into clutter.

Questions:

Are there any final thoughts or reflections about what we talked about today?

Are there any concerns that anyone wants to share?

What are you taking away from today's conversation?

Is this class what you expected?

What do you hope to learn/discuss in this class that you might not have seen on the syllabus?

Homework for next class:

1. Read chapters 1, 2, and 3 of *BIT*. Explain that you'll be going-over the chapters each week, and everyone will have plenty of chances to get clarification on what might have confused them.
2. Complete the self-assessments in *BIT* in chapter 3.
3. Bring to the next class an item or photo that represents some of the stuff they collect. *They will not be asked to discard it.*

Distribute Homework Completion Sheet for Session 2. Explain that they will hand-in their sheet at the next class each week. The homework to be completed for the week is written at the top of the page.

Have the group look at the sheet with you, and let them ask questions about what the various questions mean.

Also, emphasize that the workshop is structured around the skills and challenges explored in *BIT*, so they should keep up with the homework so that they can participate fully in the class, which includes having their questions answered.

Lastly, you may explain that you'll be collecting the Homework Completion Sheets so that you can read about their progress and concerns so that they can be addressed anonymously in the group.

Homework for facilitator: Type-up the Group Comfort Agreement, trim it so that it will fit inside the participants' cover of *BIT* and they can tape it there. It will be helpful in the future if you need to refer to it with them on the phone between sessions to address any specific concerns that come up.

Session 2: Do I Have A Problem?

Today's session will focus on chapters 1, 2, and 3 in *BIT*, pages 1-34. The discussion will focus on the criteria and features of Hoarding Disorder and the results of the assessments in chapter 3.

Bring to the session:

- ___ Pens
- ___ Box of tissues
- ___ Watch or clock
- ___ Homework completion form for Session 3
- ___ Attendance sheet
- ___ **Copies of the comfort agreements, trimmed to fit inside BIT books**
- ___ A roll of clear tape to tape the comfort agreement into the inside cover of their book
- ___ Signs to direct students to meeting place
- ___ Name tags or markers
- ___ Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- ___ Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 3
- ___ Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins - 20 minutes.

You may start by asking people to repeat their names, then hand-out and review the comfort agreement. Ice-breakers are almost always welcomed and may become a weekly part of your group, if they enjoy it. Try keeping your ice breakers light-hearted and possibly unrelated to the content of the workshop. (Examples: What was your favorite cartoon as a kid? What animal would you be? What's your favorite kind of music?)

You will also ask them if they'd like to "show and tell" about the item or photo they brought in as part of their homework from last week.

Questions:

- How did your week go?
- Any questions about what we discussed last week?
- Any questions about the reading?
- Any questions about using the syllabus?
- Questions about the Homework Completion Sheet?

Who would like to briefly share the item that they brought in? What is it, why do you like it?

How did it feel to have a homework assignment? – 20 minutes.

Because it may have been a long time since some of your participants were assigned homework, it's worth talking about. Homework completion is very significant in the BIT Workshop. Every conversation that you will facilitate has to do with the information found in BIT, and the results of the exercises that they are asked to complete in BIT. Therefore, it's important to both emphasize the importance of the assignments, while at the same time acknowledging the difficulty of keeping-up with them.

The potential of this workshop to help people is directly related to the amount of time they spend working on their assignments.

Lastly, regarding homework, participants may fall behind during the workshop. Encourage them to focus on completing the assignments for the upcoming session. Rather than trying to catch-up by reading/doing earlier assignments, they'll have more to contribute and process if they have the most recent assignments completed since your conversations will be directly based on them. Remind everyone that they will have plenty of time to go back and complete anything they missed, as well as repeating exercises that they need more practice with.

Questions:

Are you concerned that you'll have trouble keeping-up with the homework?

When was the last time you had a homework assignment?

Does anyone want to brainstorm approaches to getting the work done on time? (i.e., Read the chapter(s) the day after class so that you'll know how much time to set aside for the exercises during the week.)

Discussing the diagnostic criteria of Hoarding Disorder, part 1 (pages 13-16)

The diagnostic criteria for what is now called Hoarding Disorder (HD,) as they are found in the DSM-5, will be our next subject of conversation. The four behaviors that must be present are:

- 1. Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value. (**difficulty discarding**)*
- 2. This difficulty is due to a perceived need to save the items and distress associated with discarding them. (**strong urges to save things**)*
- 3. The symptoms result in the accumulation of possessions that congest and clutter active living areas and substantially compromise their intended use. (**clutter**)*
- 4. The hoarding causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. (**distress or impaired functioning**)*

Two “specifiers,” behaviors that may be present but are not required for the HD diagnosis are:

1. Excessive acquiring
2. Poor insight

As you may have found during Session 1, most people with this challenge would prefer to avoid talking about it using clinical terms. Some people may find the clinical approach to this work offensive, but others will embrace it. We can’t assume that we know how people will respond. For some, a diagnosis of HD will feel like, “So there’s another thing wrong with me.” Others may feel that they’re not alone, and that help is available for people who struggle with these challenges.

What we emphasize is that regardless of how people in the group feel about the inclusion of HD in the DSM-5, our workshop will be helpful in working on all of the individual criteria. Even if they don’t accept or value diagnostic language, they are still in the right place, as long as they can identify with at least one of the criteria.

Difficulty discarding (p. 14) – 10 minutes

Questions:

Who can relate to having difficulty discarding?

What sorts of things do you find yourself accumulating?

Do you remember when you started having trouble letting things go?

Do you feel like you don’t have trouble letting things go, you just don’t know how or where to start?

Strong urges to save things (p. 14) – 10 minutes

Questions:

What are some reasons that you save things?

What feelings do you think you’d experience if you let the “wrong item” go?

Does it feel like you’re doing the right thing when you save stuff?

Do you worry about feeling bad if you let things go?

Do you feel good when you save something?

Break – 10 minutes

Discussing the diagnostic criteria of Hoarding Disorder, part 2 (pages 13-16)

Clutter (p. 14) – 10 minutes

Is your home cluttered?

Do you have other spaces that are cluttered?

How does clutter affect your life?

Are there areas of your home, etc., that you can't use because of clutter?

How has your clutter impacted other people?

Is reducing clutter one of your main goals?

Did you always clutter, or were you organized at one time in your life?

Distress or impaired functioning (p. 15) – 10 minutes

How stressed-out does your clutter make you feel?

Does clutter make you feel better?

Does clutter make it hard to have good relationships?

Does clutter get in the way at work?

What else does clutter make more difficult?

How do you think you'd feel if you didn't have so much clutter?

Discussing the two “specifiers” (p. 16) – 10 minutes

Excessive acquiring:

Does anyone feel that it's impossible to stop acquiring new things?

Where/how do you tend to acquire new things?

Does anyone feel like treasure hunting is your best coping tool to deal with stress?

Do you have enough space for everything you bring home?

Poor insight:

Does anyone feel that their problem is being blown out of proportion by other people?

Does anyone feel that they don't really have a problem?

How do you know if you have a problem with HD?

Do I Have a Problem with Hoarding? (chapter 3, pages 27-34) – 15 minutes

At this point, we've established that everyone in the group is struggling with at least one of the diagnostic criteria for HD. Chapter 3 provides scales for rating the difficulties experienced in different areas of life due to HD. You may encourage people to date the scales as they complete them so that they can see their progress over time. These scales will be revisited at the end of BIT, so completing them now will give participants a "before and after" point of reference. The scales will also help participants to identify where their greatest challenges lie.

There won't be enough time to review every scale in Chapter 3 in detail, but we would suggest starting by reviewing the Hoarding Rating Scale (pages 27-28,) then letting participants volunteer to discuss their results on the other scales.

Questions:

Of the five questions in the Hoarding Rating Scale, are there some that are more difficult than others?

Were you surprised by your answers?

Did it feel overwhelming to answer these questions?

Are there questions that you'd rather not ask yourself?

Who would like to share their answers from another scale?

Which scale would you like to discuss?

What is significant about this one for you?

Did it help you gain new insight?

Wrap-up and homework assignment

Ask people to make sure to go back and complete any of the scales that they might not have done in chapter 3, so that they can get a good sense of their progress when they complete them again in a few months.

Encourage them to take photos of their personal spaces as they work on reducing their clutter, if they have a camera. Encourage them to label the photos with the date so that they can have further insight into their progress and process

Homework for next week: Read chapter 4

Collect Homework Completion Forms for Session 2, handout Homework Completion Form for Session 3.

Session 3: Meet the Bad Guys

Today's session will focus on chapter 4 (pages 35-52) in BIT, where the "Bad Guys" are introduced. The discussion will focus on the five Bad Guys: not my priority; unhelpful beliefs; over-thinking; avoidance/excuse-making; short-term payoff. The Bad Guys make it difficult to overcome hoarding.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Box of tissues
- Watch or clock
- A large presentation paper/poster that lists the 5 Bad Guys (pages 43-58)
- Poster markers
- Homework completion sheet for session 4
- Attendance sheet
- Name tags or markers
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- Post or tape the 5 Bad Guys poster on the wall.
- Hand-out Homework Completion Form for session 4
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins - 30 minutes.

After reading about the Bad Guys, the participants might start to feel like they're not so alone after all! Many people have remarked that the book "could have been written about them" after reading this chapter. There are a lot of "A-ha" moments to be discussed during this session. Many of the people in your group may have been struggling with their hoarding and cluttering for years and never felt that they had the words to describe what they were feeling, and now they have them. What tonight's conversation does is it gives the class a common vocabulary regarding the most frequent challenges they will face during this workshop. Many people with this problem isolate themselves and talk very little about their problem. Being amongst peers gives them an opportunity to connect and talk about the Bad Guys in a guilt- and judgment-free zone. Many people have said that they always felt "lazy" or "messy," but now they have more productive and constructive ways of breaking-down those beliefs and moving forward.

Questions:

How did your homework go?

Anyone read anything that sounded a little familiar?

How does it feel knowing you're not alone in your stress and worry about this issue?

Any questions about what you read in chapter 4?

Here come the Bad Guys, ...

There is often a lot of guilt, shame, and self-blame associated with hoarding. The Bad Guys chapter gives participants a chance to step away from the emotional nature of their problem and make a fresh start at turning things around.

There is a questionnaire following the description of each Bad Guy. We'll ask participants if they were at all surprised by their scores. Sometimes the score is not what people expected.....

Bad Guy #1 is "It's not my priority" (pages 35-39) - 15 minutes.

Any time someone is faced with a challenge, it's easy to let it slide to the back burner and let other activities get in the way. Hoarding is no exception! If people don't keep it in the foreground of their thoughts and plans, they can lose any progress they've made. Making and keeping de-cluttering a priority is crucial to success.

Questions:

Is beating hoarding and clutter your priority?

What else competes for your time and energy?

Do different needs compete for your attention from day to day?

What do you tell yourself to get yourself back on track?

Do you feel that you have more reasons to change than *not* to change?

Based on your scores on page 38, what stage of readiness might you be in?

Bad Guy #2 "Letting unhelpful beliefs get in your way" (pages 39-45) - 15 minutes

The unhelpful beliefs listed in BIT are: perfectionism; responsibility; attachment; source of identity; memory; and control. Sometimes people aren't aware of how much or how little trouble they have with a given belief. For example, when it comes to the questionnaire, someone might think they are a perfectionist but score very low in this area, while scoring very high in the memory area or some other place that surprises them. This is a good opportunity to try to open up the conversation about their beliefs about possessions and how that affects their decisions to save things. People seem to gain great insight from this exercise.

Something to keep in mind is that these numbers (scores) may not change over time, but our coping skills will, and our ability to deal with certain challenges will evolve. Someone might always be afraid of forgetting what's on papers, but it doesn't mean they can't create a good

filing system to put them in. This program isn't about changing who they are, or rating them as good or bad people; it's about helping them to deal with the tendencies they have that make it hard to stay efficient and in control. It's about gaining more time to enjoy being who they are and spending less stressed-out by the state of their home.

Questions:

What kinds of unhelpful beliefs get in your way?

The questionnaire on pages 43-45 asked you about these beliefs, how did you score?

Were you surprised by some of your answers?

Who had some numbers that were higher than they expected?

Anyone have numbers that were lower than they expected?

Break - 10 minutes.

Bad Guy #3 is over-thinking or confusing yourself (pages 45-48) - 15 minutes. (also referred to as overly-creative thinking, or complex categorizing.)

An example of this is asking for someone to describe how they organize their silverware drawer. Most people will have one slot for spoons, one or two for forks, and one for knives. The over-thinker/complex categorizer might have ten slots for spoons, ten for forks, and ten for knives. It's hard for this person to get anything done because they have such a hard time making a decision, and because they see so many unique qualities and differences in their items. It's not a negative attribute, but it does make it difficult to be productive when sorting and discarding.

Questions:

By a show of hands, how many people in this room consider creativity to be a positive attribute?

How many of you think that being a creative thinker who can think of a million ways to use an item might make it difficult to make a decision as to what to do with it?

How many of you feel you have this quality?

How does over-thinking make your life harder?

Bad Guy #4 is avoidance and excuse making (pages 48-49) - 15 minutes.

For those who struggle with hoarding, hearing the words "avoidance and excuse-making" can trigger a negative reaction and send-up defenses. They've felt, or have been made to feel, like they've avoided responsibilities and made up reasons for not meeting them. In fact, the reasons their stuff is still in disorder and so hard to manage are much deeper. Avoidance and excuse-

making are not the cause of hoarding, but attempts to cope with the unpleasantness associated with trying to manage it.

Questions:

Has anyone ever been told, “You’re just making excuses for your mess.”

Has anyone ever been told that they seem to do anything to avoid reducing their clutter?

Does anyone feel that they really do make excuses and avoid the work?

How does that factor-in?

Have you done that all your life?

Are there other activities that you avoid?

Bad Guy #5 is the short-term payoff (pages 50-51) - 15 minutes.

How many times have you been on a diet, found out you lost five pounds, then went out and ate a hot fudge sundae? In the de-cluttering world, the equivalent is having a really great week of sorting and discarding, say, thirty minutes every single day, then on Saturday spending five hours going to tag sales. It might have been fun, but the aftermath is painful. The quick fix is a short-term payoff that doesn’t hold-up in the long-run. It un-does all of the hard work that’s been done.

Questions:

What are some examples of Bad Guy #5 that have gotten you in trouble, and when was the last time you did it? Anyone brave enough to admit it?

How did you all do on the questionnaire on page 59?

How hard is it to resist temptations?

What might the statement, “...the right balance between what *feels* good and what *is* good” mean?

How do you stop yourself from going for the short-term payoff?

How does it feel when you walk away from temptation without giving-in? What’s an example of this?

Homework for next week: 1. Complete any remaining questions from chapter 4
2. Read chapter 5.

Collect Homework Completion Forms.

Pack a magazine to bring for Session 4’s Downward Arrow exercise

Session 4: The Good Guys!

Session 4 will focus on chapter 5 (pages 53-63) in BIT where the Good Guys are introduced. The Good Guys will help the class to meet the two main objectives of this program: discarding and non-acquiring. Last week the group discussed what makes this problem so hard to overcome. This week they'll focus on solutions and their personal goals for the workshop.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Box of tissues
- Watch or clock
- Magazine
- Poster paper
- Homework Completion sheet for session 5
- Poster Markers
- Attendance sheet
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting-up the classroom:

- Put up a poster listing the 6 Good Guys.
- Put up a poster displaying the 6 goals of the program (on pages 60-61 of *BIT*).
- Place a magazine/catalogue at your seat for use during the Downward Arrow exercise.
- Hand-out Homework Completion Form
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome back, and check-ins - 15 minutes.

Questions:

How did your week go?

How did you like the Good Guys chapter?

Did it give you hope?

Did it make sense?

Are you all ready to start practicing and using the Good Guys?

Good Guy #1 is “Eyes on the prize” (page 54) - 15 minutes.

One of a good facilitator's greatest attributes is their ability to help the participants to keep their “eyes on the prize.” Sporadically during the next several months, you may find it helpful to revisit this exercise. If the group seems to be having a particularly hard time, or someone in particular seems to be losing hope, it helps to redirect their attention back to this element.

The people in your group have come because they believe that there is a better way to be living life than the way they are now. They believe that this could be the time that things finally change for them. They know what their prize is, and it's different for everyone. That prize is what keeps people going when they get discouraged.

Questions:

Let's go around the room and say what our prize is...(start with a volunteer, and try to get everyone to share)

How will your life be different when you achieve this prize?

Good Guy #2 is The Downward Arrow (pages 54-55) - 15 minutes.

The Downward Arrow exercise is a strategy for challenging unhelpful beliefs and attachments to an object. It can be done alone or with a coach. It's sort of a "what if" conversation, and a way of working through the "worst-case scenarios." So what if I don't read every article in this magazine before I recycle it? What's the worst that will happen?

Questions:

Does the Downward Arrow exercise make sense?

Have you ever thought something would turn out worse than it did, only to find that it wasn't so bad after all? What was that like?

Who would like to help me demonstrate the process? *Now is the time to take out the magazine that you brought with you. Ask someone else in the class to work with you as your coach. Tell them that you would like help in discarding the magazine, and that you'd like them to do a Downward Arrow with you. If they get stumped, let them have the magazine and switch roles. Help them discard the magazine instead.*

Good Guy #3 is the process of "thinking it through" (page 55) - 15 minutes.

"Thinking it through," means asking yourself questions during sorting or possible acquiring moments like the questions on page 55. "How many of these do I already have?" "How many would be enough?" "Do I have a specific plan to use this item within a reasonable timeframe?" Before the session, think of a couple of questions that are helpful to you in discarding and non-acquiring moments. You can begin this segment by reading the following story to the group.

A Non-Acquiring Moment of Clarity

(you may read this aloud)

By Lee Shuer, collector, group facilitator

*One evening I stopped at a pharmacy to pick-up some hand soap to re-stock the bathroom for one of my clutter self-help groups. In *Buried In Treasures*, the authors talk about avoiding acquiring situations like thrift stores and tag sales as not being a solution to the problem, but that you need to be able to go anywhere and “just say no.” The meaning of this was about to become all too clear...*

So there I was on the way to clutter class, soap in hand, in line for the register, when a pair of Pez candy dispensers caught my eye. They weren't just Pez dispensers, they were Super Mario Pez dispensers! They were doubly collectible! My mind began to race, I began to shift my weight from foot to foot, swaying side to side as my mind raced.

“They're cheap, they're small, I've been so good lately, I don't have them yet, I love Nintendo stuff, the packages are in perfect shape.....”the reasons to buy these treasures started to flood my mind. But then the switch flipped, and I started to “think it through.”

“I'm trying not to buy extra things, where would I even put them? What would the class think? I'm trying to be a role model! What would my wife think? I can do this, I know I can, just hold on....”

“Sir? Sir?” Suddenly, the line ahead of me had cleared and it was my turn to step up to the cashier. I snapped-back to reality. I put the hand soap on the counter, turned away from the Pez dispensers with a smile, and paid the clerk. I drove to class happy that night and couldn't wait to share my victory.

I still think about those Pez dispensers. As I write this it's been five months. I miss them, but it doesn't hurt like it did for the first few days. It really did hurt, like a break-up, right in the heart. Yes, Pez dispensers broke my heart. But my heart healed.

(Update!!! A year later, while organizing a shelf in my home office, I came across this same model of Pez dispenser---I had already bought it! And based on the shopping bag that it was in, I had purchased it during a trip to the Nintendo World Store in Manhattan, NYC, about a month before running into it at the store. It illustrates how mindless my shopping could be, considering I didn't even recall purchasing something that seemed so impossibly cool and hard to live without. When I found it my stomach turned a little, and my plan is to sell it at my next tag sale or give it to the right person. What a difference a year makes!)

Questions:

Has anyone here ever been in a situation like that where they found a treasure and were able to walk out of the store without buying it?

How did you do it?

Did you think about going back?

Has there been a time when you just couldn't talk yourself out of buying or taking something?

Did you find the questions on page 55 helpful? What others can you think of for yourself?

Break, 10 minutes.

Good Guy #4 is Testing it Out (Pages 55-57) - 10 minutes.

What these experiments are designed to do are test beliefs about attachments to possessions. It can be a turning point when a person first experiences letting-go of something that they never thought they could, and realize that it's okay, and it doesn't feel terrible; in fact, after a while, it might even start to feel good!

There are all sorts of Behavioral Experiments to be found in BIT that participants can use to gently push themselves, test themselves, ease themselves out of their comfort zone and into a new place of achievement where they can start to beat their clutter. For example, if they leave a store without buying something they really-really-really want, they will learn something valuable in the days that follow. They will prove to themselves that they can in fact overcome the need for the short-term payoff and enjoy the long-term gains.

Questions:

On page 56, "If and Then" experiments---predicting outcomes of actions. Did anyone try this?

Discuss If/Then experiments on pages 56-57 "Make a clear prediction, try doing the thing you're afraid of, and see whether the prediction comes true."

What can be learned from this experiment?

How might a successful experiment help reduce your anxiety about decision-making?

Have you ever pushed yourself to "just say no," and not go for the short-term payoff?

How did that feel?

Did the feeling last?

What are some behavioral experiments you can do this week?

Good Guy #5 Developing the Right Skills (page 58) -10 minutes.

If beating hoarding was as easy as just picking stuff up and throwing it out or putting it away, the group would be much smaller. Our group will stick to the visual clutter rather than delving into peoples' emotional clutter.

Questions:

Which skills do you feel you need to develop most?

Four weeks into this class, what sorts of skills are you already developing?

Good Guy #6 Your Practice Muscle (pages 58-59) 10 minutes

Working up to a pace that helps you to see progress is one goal of BIT Workshop. With practice, participants will work on building-up their stamina for working on their clutter issue. You will be there to support them, even when they don't feel like they're doing a good enough job. "Practice makes progress."

Questions:

On page 59, we were asked to circle our ability to work on our "stuff" each day, by minutes. How did you score?

Are you worried that you'll never be able to work for longer sessions?

Goals of the Program (pages 65-67) - 15 minutes.

We want to use the "eyes on the prize" Good Guy to finish this class. We want to have the participants look at the "Goals" poster as a list of prizes and examples of things they can achieve.

Now you may draw the group's attention to the poster that you hung with the following "Goals of the Program" listed on it:

1. *Understand why you hoard*
2. *Create living space you can use*
3. *Find your things*
4. *Improve your decision-making skills*
5. *Reduce acquiring and enjoy other activities*
6. *Reduce clutter*
- 7.

Questions:

Which of these 6 goals excite you the most?

What are your priorities?

Which do you think will be most difficult?
Are you already making progress that you can see?
What do these goals mean to you?

Wrap-up and Homework - 5 minutes.

Any final questions or comments?

Homework for next week: 1. Read chapter 6 “How did this happen?”
2. Be sure to complete figure 6.2 (page 85), because it will be the focus for next week.

Collect this week’s Homework Completion Form for session.

Session 5: How did this happen?

Today's session will discuss "brain scan" findings from fMRI's and then focus on helping participants understand why they have a clutter/hoarding problem by looking at three problem areas: unhelpful attachments, processing information, and reinforcements for avoidance and acquiring (Chapter 6, pages 65-82). The exercise on p. 85 of BIT is designed to aid individuals in determining what the biggest challenges are in these three areas. Understanding this exercise may unlock the door that's been preventing participants from successfully decreasing their saving/acquiring.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Poster paper
- Homework Completion Form for session 6
- Poster markers.
- Nametags
- Box of tissues
- Watch or clock
- Attendance sheet
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- Put three poster-papers on the wall: 1 with the image on p. 83, and two posters with blank flow charts based on p. 85 of *BIT*
- Post the Comfort Agreement
- Hand out Homework Completion Form for session 6

Welcome and check-ins - 10 minutes

Questions:

What have been the best things about this group so far?

What's difficult about it?

How did the reading go this week?

What did you learn from the discussion about "Hoarding in Your Brain," and brain scan results (pages 66-68.) - 10 minutes

Part 1, “Hoarding in Your Thoughts” Emotional Attachments and Unhelpful beliefs about possessions (pages 71-73). – 20 minutes

The main goal for today is to interpret Figure 6.1 in chapter 6 and complete Figure 6.3 on p. 85 of BIT. If nothing else, we want the participants to leave the session understanding the concept that there are three main barriers to their success in this area; emotional attachments/unhelpful beliefs about belongings; problems processing information; and reinforcement for avoidance/acquiring. Most people with this problem are so overwhelmed by it that they can't figure out why they have this problem. This exercise can give them a clearer understanding of why they acquire so much and have difficulties with letting things go.

The top-left hand box on the flow chart on p. 85 is labeled, “Emotional attachments and unhelpful beliefs about possessions.” The first step in understanding a hoarding problem is understanding why things are collected and held-onto. The sub-categories in this box are perfectionism, sentimental attachment, identity beliefs, and feelings of safety/security/control. As we said earlier, this class isn't just about the stuff on the surface, it's about the stuff below the surface too. There's a good chance that the majority of the participants in the class have never thought about the psychological roots of their habit. Confronting concepts like identity and control in a public setting might be somewhat uncomfortable for some people, but it may also be a real bonding moment for the group. People's vulnerabilities will slowly be revealed as they head to the heart of their difficulties.

To keep things as simple as possible, encourage participants to choose just one of the above categories for this box. If they say that they can't narrow it down, ask them to just consider one item or collection, and try focusing on it. One reason is enough to start with!

Questions:

Does anyone have *beliefs about usefulness, waste, and responsibility*?

What sorts of things might you save if this was an issue?

How does it feel when you throw something away—do you have second thoughts?

Overly creative thinking

Does anyone keep items because they can think of better things to do with them than throw them away?

Does anyone feel like they make more projects for themselves because of their creative thinking?

How often do you follow-through with your plan/idea?

Who feels that their *perfectionism* makes it hard to make a decision about what to do with an item?

For example, does anyone get overwhelmed when trying to decide whether to donate, sell, or give away an item?

If you decide to give it to a friend, how hard is it to decide whom to offer it to?
Does your desire to always do the right thing lead to procrastination and giving-up?
How much do you worry about making a mistake?

Who feels that their *sentimental attachments* make it hard to let things go?

Can someone share an example of a type of sentimental object you would tend to save?
Is it harder to let something go if the person it belonged to is no longer alive?
Why is it hard to let sentimental objects go?
Do you feel that you'll forget someone or something if you let an item go?
Would you feel guilty letting something go that was given to you as a present?

Does anyone experience "*anthropomorphism*?" (The belief that inanimate objects have human-like traits.) What is that like? Can you share an example?

Does someone feel that *identity beliefs* are the reason you collect certain things?

What do your possessions say about you?
Do you feel that you "are what you have," or that, "you are what you *do*."
Have you ever gone through phases where you let things go based on your personal identity changing too? Or do you still have everything, even if it doesn't represent who you want to be anymore.

How about needs for *safety, security, and control*?

What do your items keep you safe from?
How does it feel if someone touches your belongings without asking first?
Do you feel uncomfortable if you don't have clutter around you?
Does the thought of your environment changing disturb you?

Part two, "Hoarding in Your Brain" Processing information (p. 68-70) - 20 minutes

People often spend lots of time de-cluttering and organizing, but don't seem to get anywhere. Problems with information processing are often to blame: problems with attention, problems with categorization, difficulty making decisions, and problems with memory. Difficulties with one or more of these can bring progress to a standstill and be demoralizing. This section helps the individual to say, "Oh, okay, this is what gets in the way. I have a really hard time concentrating. I need to learn how to focus and just try to do one thing at a time." That person realizes that a key to making headway will be to work on that skill. Getting better at concentrating will give them the ability to accomplish much more than they used

to in the same amount of time. For someone who fears they will forget about things unless they see them, it can be very worrisome to put paperwork away in a filing cabinet. Once that person becomes confident in their ability to find papers using their filing system, they will have more success in clearing areas of paper clutter.

Without an explanation for why managing possessions is so difficult, hoarding can feel like a monster that can't be tamed. This exercise provides some clarity about why this is so hard. By coming to understand which of these difficulties are problems for them, they can get a sense of control and develop some skill at coping with them. Once this happens, work sessions are more effective and efficient.

Questions:

Who has difficulty keeping their *attention* focused on de-cluttering and organizing?

What tasks are hard for you to focus on?

What sorts of things distract you when you're working?

What sorts of things are hardest to focus on? Easiest?

Are you able to focus on things you enjoy doing, like acquiring?

Does anyone have problems with *categorization*?

Does anyone have the problem that they make too many categories for things, like having a different category for every color of sweater, rather than just having a "sweater" category? Why might this slow someone down?

How about *decision-making*?

What sorts of decisions are difficult for you when you're trying to discard items?

How long do you find yourself taking to decide whether to give something away or not?

For trouble sorting mail, what sorts of questions go through your mind as you hold a piece of "junk mail?"

Does anyone have a problem *with memory*?

How do memory concerns affect you?

Do memory concerns change the way you store things?

Do you fear that you'll forget about something if you can't see it?

Do you worry that you'll forget a time of your life if you throw-away a photo or erase a home video?

Break – 10 minutes

Part 3, “Hoarding in Your Behavior” Reinforcement for avoidance/acquiring (p. 76-77) - 10 minutes.

Sometimes people acquire things because it makes them feel good. It’s difficult to change any behavior that makes you feel so good, even if the feeling is fleeting. People who really want to change their saving and acquiring will need to find new ways to make themselves feel good. Sometimes the “high” of finding a treasure creates a momentary escape from facing something unpleasant, so they want to do it again. Letting go of something feels bad, so it’s easier to hold on to it.

Questions:

Who can identify what the reinforcements are for “treasure hunting?”
Who can tell me what feelings you might be avoiding by keeping something you don’t need, or acquiring that same item?
Are there better ways of dealing with these feelings?

The center box in Figure 6.3 is labeled “*behavior patterns.*”

What sorts of “behavior patterns” do your attachments, processing difficulties, and reinforcements lead to?

Acquiring?
Difficulty letting-go?

“An Experiment for You to Try” (pages 78-83) – 10 minutes

Having read the various reasons why they might save something, have difficulty processing it, and what feelings reinforce their decisions, they have a chance to put those ideas into practice.

Would someone be willing to share their results from one of the questionnaires on pages 78-83? You can choose the easiest, moderate, or difficult item to share.

What did you learn about your attachment to this item?
Were you able to let it go?
Why did you let it go, or why did you keep it?

Putting it all together—on paper (p. 85) - 25 minutes

At this point, we want to put this information together using the flowchart on p. 85. You may refer to the poster you have with the image on p. 83. Using this as the template, fill-in a blank chart representing either yourself or “an example person.”

If you’re sharing information about yourself in the flowchart, you may share how you came to choose what you’re writing in each box, otherwise you can give examples of why your fictitious person might have chosen theirs.

Upon completing your example, ask for someone in the class to share what they wrote on their chart. Write their answers in the blank flowcharts.

Questions:

Is there someone who would like to share their flowchart?

What did you learn about yourself from doing this exercise?

Were you surprised by your answers?

Do you think this will help you have more success with reducing your clutter?

If there’s time, Would someone else like to share their chart?

How about you, what did you learn?

Does everyone understand the exercise now? Is there anything here you want to know more about?

Wrap-up and homework – 5 minutes

Encourage anyone who had difficulty with this exercise to go back and try it again for themselves.

Homework for next week: Read chapter 7, “Enhancing Motivation” and complete the exercises

Collect the Homework Completion Form for Session 5

Session 6: Enhancing Motivation

Today's session will focus on self-awareness and perception, motivation, readiness, ambivalence, and reward (chapter 7, pages 87-105). The chapter starts with the highlighted statement, "Even the most highly motivated person will eventually reach a point where his or her motivation wavers." This will be a recurring theme throughout the remainder of your groups; the class will need on-going encouragement to stay focused and positive. Today's check-in will be a good opportunity to begin to do that.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Watch or clock
- Box of tissues
- Homework Completion Forms for Session 7
- Attendance sheet
- Name tags
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- Hang two poster papers on the wall
 - Label one "Reasons to Change" at the top
 - Label the other "Reasons not to change" at the top
- Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 7
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins, 15 minutes.

Questions:

How was everyone's week?

Victories?

Set-backs?

Perception (pages 88-90) - 25 minutes.

We'll begin by discussing the exercise on pages 88-90. The purpose of this exercise is to help people talk to each other about their situation and become open to another person's opinion about their situation. In some cases, the other person's rating of the clutter problem will be harsher than the participant's, and in other cases they will be gentler. If they are the same, it

means these two people are pretty well in tune, and honest, with each other. If the answers are way off, we have a great conversation starter.

The first question to ask is if anyone filled-in the questionnaire on someone else's behalf. You might have someone who did. They will probably tell you that, "They know how they'd answer it, so they didn't want them to come back over," or, "I didn't want to bug them." Encourage them to follow-through and find out what the person would actually have to say, then they'll have three answers, which should be very interesting. Now ask for a volunteer who talked to someone else.

Questions:

Okay, let's start by talking about the perception exercise on pages 88-90. How did it go? Who'd like to talk about their results?

Did anyone do their friend the favor of filling it in for them? Why did you do that?

Maybe you can follow-up with them for next week and tell us how it goes.

Okay, now does someone have one or more answers on this questionnaire that are wildly off from what your partner put?

Was anyone surprised by how their partner answered any of the questions?

Do you think that you value your possessions differently than the people that you talked to?

They might have a different opinion of how disruptive your clutter is to your life, like in question 4, but for question 3, if they feel your possessions have little value, they might say you have a bigger problem than you do. How does that feel?

Do people often say that you overestimate the value of your stuff?

Readiness and Ambivalence (pages 91-93) - 20 minutes.

Ambivalence is when a person has two conflicting feelings about something at the same time " I want to get rid of this sweater, but I think I might miss it, so maybe I should keep it."

Ambivalence is normal, but when things get out of balance, life becomes difficult. Figure 7.1 on page 94 gives people a place to write their "reasons to change" vs. "reasons not to change."

Before we move on to goals, explaining ambivalence and taking a moment to hear from someone about this exercise will be helpful.

Questions:

Can someone explain ambivalence? (Please *don't* accept an inaccurate definition just so you can move on!)

Who filled-in the chart on page 94 and can share their answers with us.

If the reasons not to change started to out-weight the reasons to change, do you think you'd start to backslide?

How do you feel your scale is weighted right now?

More reasons to change or not to change?

Break - 10 minutes.

Personal Goals (pages 95-99) - 25 minutes.

This next part of the conversation should be light and energetic. ☺ We want to focus on how much better life can and will be when we overcome clutter and hoarding difficulties.

Here's a sample list for you (the facilitator) to look at from a former group:

Feel more in control of my life.

Enjoy my home and enable my family to enjoy being there also.

Have friends over without having to do a massive cleaning project first.

Enjoy having a nice space to do my projects.

I want to make space for a washing machine and a dryer.

I want to be able to invite people over, thinking they'll find a welcoming environment.

Get rid of all things I do not use and will not use.

I want balance, order, routine, schedule, simplicity.

There is a season to keep, to throw away, to give away.

To not be afraid of change.

To show hospitality to family, and friends and cook some home-cooked meals.

Gain and maintain control of hoarding behaviors.

Be able to calmly think through and make a decision whether or not to make a purchase.

Sort through mail on a daily basis.

Keep only the things I need.

Learn how to organize.

Learn how to change myself.

Want to have a comfortable place to live.

Learn to be able to make decisions.

I want to be happy.

I want to set up a scrapbook area.

Have a functioning big room.

Get my paperwork in order.

Have peace and order in my home.

Have a healthier home for kids and me.

Be able to paint my big room.

Clear out basement clutter.

Have organized bedroom.

Have kids' rooms in order.

Clear clutter of things I don't use or have a need for.

Be able to park my car in garage.

Setting realistic goals and expectations.

Be honest with myself.

*Deal with mail on a daily basis.
Living and dining rooms clutter free.
Set-up craft work area.
Get rid of piles of paper, clothes, boxes.
Develop outline of summarized strategies.
Be proud of my new learning and coping---white journal of process---draw it, the feelings.
Have my 'projects' for outside world to share, use more time, joy.
Keep surfaces cleaned.
Understand my thinking patterns, accepting myself more because improvement is visible!
Get better at organizing.
Increase stamina for sorting.
Chip away, don't give up.
Stay positive.
Be objective.
Free my life from clutter.
Save money.
Organize my papers.
Decrease acquiring.*

As you can see, this class compiled a long, creative, heart-felt list of personal goals. It becomes the identity and driving-force of the class. If the class starts to feel down at some point, we can take it out and read out loud from it. It may inspire them to hear their peers' goals again. They often identify with almost all of them, but may not remember any of them on a difficult day.

Questions:

Would someone like to read their list of values on page 94?

How does it feel to read these out loud?

For the rest of you, how does it feel to hear your peers express their values?

Did you hear some of your own values?

Which ones matched your own?

Next, would someone like to share their list of personal goals on page 97?

How does it feel to read these out loud?

For the rest of you, is it inspiring and reassuring to hear someone else share their goals?

Did you hear some of your own personal goals listed?

Now I'd like to hear why someone wants to beat hoarding on page 98.

Who can read that list?

Doesn't it feel empowering to say these things out loud?

Can we hear another list?

Next, what's likely to happen if you overcome the hoarding problem?

Who'd like to read their list on page 98?

Next, what's likely to happen if you *don't* overcome the hoarding problem?

Who'd like to read their list on page 98? (*You may consider skipping this list if doing so will keep the positive energy flowing.*)

Visualization Exercises (pages 99-100) - 10 minutes.

These exercises can trigger some unpleasant feelings for some, but can be encouraging for others. A show of hands can show you who's who.

Questions:

Who found the visualization exercises triggering?

Who found them encouraging?

Did your anxiety level change when you went from seeing the room how it is to imagining it empty?

Who would like to share their answers?

Contract (page 101) - 10 minutes.

The session will end with a review of the Treatment Contract on p. 101.

Questions:

Did everyone fill out the "Contract With Yourself" on page 101?

Anyone have difficulty with commitment?

Does someone have a contract they can share?

Homework for next week: Read chapter 8, Reducing Acquiring, in *Buried in Treasures*, and complete all exercises.

Collect this week's Homework Completion Forms for Session 6.

Session 7: Help With Reducing Acquiring

Session 7 will explore the materials in chapter 8 of BIT, Reducing Acquiring (pages 107-120.)

A major step in recovery from hoarding is learning to stem the flow of items coming into the home. If someone is acquiring more than they're letting go of, they will not be able to reduce their clutter.

Today we'll discuss what triggers acquiring, make rules for acquiring situations, discuss alternative sources of enjoyment and coping with life-stress, and check-in with the non-acquiring help card on the page following 119. We'll also discuss why avoidance isn't a solution.

Three things are necessary in order to begin reducing the amount of stuff coming into the home:

- 1. Participants must become more self-aware of their acquiring habits*
- 2. Participants must recognize the situations in which they are more likely to acquire excessively*
- 3. Participants must have a plan ahead of time for entering situations where acquiring is more likely*

Bring to the session:

- Pens.
- Watch or clock
- Name tags.
- Copies of Non-Acquiring Help Card from page following 119.
- Box of tissues.
- Homework Completion Forms Session 8
- Attendance sheet
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting-up the classroom:

- Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 8
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-in - 15 minutes.

Questions:

How did the reading for this week go?
How's everyone feeling about the class?
Any big successes or little successes to share?

Understanding compulsive acquiring (page 111) - 15 minutes.

Would someone share how they filled-out the exercise on 111?

How long ago was this situation?

Is it pretty representative of a vulnerable moment?

By the time you get to your car with your acquisition, how do you feel?

How do you feel by the time you get home?

Someone else want to share?

Setting rules and asking questions while acquiring (pages 112-114) - 20 minutes.

People in this class often talk about being indecisive. Rules help! If someone finds themselves in a vulnerable moment, like the one just talked about, it helps to have a reality check, in the form of a list of rules for acquiring.

Questions:

Under “I cannot get this unless,” did anyone find any of the rules particularly helpful? Why is it helpful?

Can we share some examples of when these kinds of questions helped?

Can someone share what their inner-dialogue might sound like if you were holding something you wanted, but didn’t need, and were trying not to buy?

How about under “here are some more examples” on p. 113, again, were there favorites?

Have you generated any of your own award-winning questions?

Taking a look at the example, “Will *not* getting this help me solve my hoarding problem,” and tell me what you think. Is there anyone that has used that one?

Creating a non-acquiring hierarchy (page 116) - 10 minutes.

There isn’t room in BIT for people to write down their non-acquiring hierarchy, but some may write in the margins. This exercise is helpful in the process of figuring out where, or during which activities they are most triggered. In conjunction with the emotional triggers, a person will be able to tell which are the worst places and the worst times.

Questions:

Did someone create a non-acquiring hierarchy?

Let's go around the room and share our biggest triggering activity, for example, Bill said that his most distressing situation would be to leave a treasure behind that he'd picked-up.

Break - 10 minutes.

Non-acquiring activity p. 116-117 - 15 minutes.

One of the exercises in chapter 8 is a non-acquiring shopping trip. People may have found this very stressful, some may have been too fearful to attempt it. It's the first time the class has been asked to get physically involved in a really challenging way.

Questions:

Who tried the non-shopping trip?

Where did you go?

Did you drive-by, stop and look, or actually touch items?

Walk us through the experience:

How did it feel when you left your home to go?

How did it feel when you arrived at the parking lot?

How did it feel as you went in the entrance, if you did?

How did it feel to look at something and not touch it?

How did it feel to hold something you didn't want to buy?

Were you able to put it back down?

How did you feel when you got home, whether or not you had success?

Someone else?

BACKTRACK TO PAGE 109: Everything you brought home, the list -15 minutes

What did you put on your list?

What did you learn from this exercise?

Were you surprised by how many items actually came into your home?

Anybody acquire things that haven't come into the house yet? Why?

So.....what else is there to do besides acquire more stuff? (page 117-119) - 15 minutes.

We're hoping that when the participants get ready to leave their home and go out acquiring again, that they will stop and think about doing something else instead. As we'd said before, it's a big deal to take away someone's favorite activity or "best" strategy to make him or herself feel better. We don't want to leave them without alternatives. Whatever pain, boredom, or other emotion they are feeling that compels them to acquire, we want to help brainstorm some alternatives.

Questions:

What are some activities you've come up with to substitute for acquiring?

Have you done it since starting the class?

Has anyone made the conscious decision to use a replacement activity, only to be sidetracked and diverted back to a store on their way?

Would someone like to share their list of activities?

Where might you keep your list of activities so that you can see them, because in the moment when you need those ideas the most, your mind might go blank.

Non-acquiring Help Card (page "120" following 119, figure 8.1) - 5 minutes.

People who hoard seem to focus their attention so intently on something they want to acquire that they forget that they don't need it, can't afford it, or already have several of them. The Non-acquiring Help Card can help to bring their life into focus while they are in an acquiring episode. Remind everyone to make sure they complete the card from page 120. Offer them an extra copy if they don't want to cut theirs out of their book. Encourage them to keep it somewhere that they'll be likely to see it when they go to acquire, like in their wallet with their credit cards.

Questions:

Will this help you keep your goals in focus when you're deciding about acquiring?

Would someone like to share what they wrote on the card on page 120?

Does anyone want a second copy?

Homework for session : Go on at least TWO non-acquiring shopping trips of increasing difficulty. Don't read the next chapter of *BIT*

Collect Homework Completion Form for Session 7

Session 8: Help With Reducing Acquiring, Part 2

Today's session will conclude our discussion on chapter 8 (pages 107-120), which deals with acquiring. Last week participants were asked to go on two "non-shopping" trips. These trips will be a major focus of our discussion. We'll also discuss our vulnerabilities and replacement activities for acquiring. Because reducing one's acquiring is at least half the battle when it comes to reducing clutter, we want everyone to feel like they've got a good grasp of what drives them to acquire and what will help them stop. It's a matter of mathematics; no matter how big, bad, and overwhelming a person's clutter is, if more stuff is leaving the house than is going in, eventually it will be the way they want it to be.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Box of tissues
- Watch or clock
- Homework Completion Forms for Session 9
- Attendance sheet
- Name tags
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- Put out name plates for participants to take to their seats
- Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 9
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins - 15 minutes.

After weeks of being encouraged to avoid going out to stores when they didn't need to buy something, you've asked them to go out not once but twice and do exactly that! But this time, you've asked them to draw upon all of their good skills to go in, find the inevitable treasures, and walk out empty-handed. When you ask them how their week went, expect some eye-rolling. Hopefully they had success, but what if they didn't? You're about to find out... For some people, the experiment may not have gone well. If so, keep in mind that there is no failure in these experiments. If they bought things they didn't intend to, yes, they did not succeed in leaving empty-handed, but they hopefully can learn why that happened. Perhaps it was that they have very little control over their urges to acquire. This can be the most valuable lesson, one that leads them to rely on these techniques to gain control.

Questions:

Welcome back everyone, so how did this week go for you? Breakthroughs? Break-downs? How about this – did anyone do a replacement activity instead of going out to acquire new stuff? That is, except for the homework of course! Did anyone have the urge to go out and shop, and say to themselves, “You know, I think instead I’ll _____.” Did anyone fill in the blank?

The non-acquiring shopping trips - 30 minutes.

Sometimes people might say that they went to a store and they didn't buy anything for themselves, but they bought something for someone else, and they want to know if this counts. What do you think? Perhaps not. For this exercise, we wanted people to come home with nothing, that includes things acquired for someone else. In the heat of the moment, when triggered, it's convenient to use the excuse of "This isn't for me, so I'm not acquiring," but we want to be purists about this.

Some people might talk about having pulled into the parking lot and driven away without going into the store. You can ask if anyone had this experience. This might be an excellent decision for them. They felt the rush of being close to their place of compulsion and knew they couldn't handle non-acquiring. This action might help them in the future. But remember that we said that simply avoiding the situation wasn't the solution. Ask that person if they tried a second store and encourage them to feel good about their first bold step.

Many people cyber-shop. They sit on the computer and browse the virtual aisles for hours and hours, mesmerized by the flickering screen. Just like in a real store, they put things in their "cart," and before leaving the "store", they have the option to "check-out." Because many people who hoard isolate themselves, this is a common experience. You might ask if anyone went cyber non-shopping.

Non-shopping questions-to-self - 15 minutes.

Questions:

This would be a good time to ask people what they did when they found things they wanted.

For those who put back an item, how the heck did you do it?

Did you ask yourself non-shopping questions like those found on pages 113?

For those who did, what questions worked for you?

Did anyone use a magic question that you came up with that wasn't in the book?

For those who use these questions to help them put items back on the shelf, in the free box, or on the curb, the skill gets honed with practice. They might start out by having to ask themselves several questions, but over time there may be one or two that do the trick. Take the question, "Would not buying this help me overcome my clutter problem?" The answer to this question is usually, "Yes." For the person who is really dedicated to winning this battle, that "Yes" could be the word that gives them the strength they need. After all, this class is teaching us to leave things behind that would add to the clutter.

Break - 10 minutes.

The vulnerable acquirer - 30 minutes.

It's helpful to think about times when we're more vulnerable to acquiring things we don't need. For those who practice "retail therapy" as a coping tool, this is especially important to identify and name. Much like going food shopping when you're hungry, there are certain emotional or physical conditions that make it more difficult to fight-off compulsive acquiring. Keep in mind that these are not just negative emotional experiences. Positive emotional experiences can trigger acquisition as well.

Questions:

Would someone like to share what they wrote on p. 111?
Why is it important to think about this aspect of our acquiring cycle?
Has anyone gained new insight into this aspect?

Would someone else like to share what they've written down?

Coming to terms with the fact that acquiring is actually adding to our problems, and not helping, is significant. It can be a turning point for someone who only connected positive feelings with their retail therapy and was blind to the negative after-effects. For someone who is "always" feeling bad, a strategy that temporarily numbs the pain is powerful, even if it backfires later. When they start to connect the dots and see the behavioral pattern, they may feel ashamed and lost before they find a healthier replacement for this self-defeating coping strategy.

Workshop participants sometimes ask if there would be discussion of other topics like grief in this class. The class will involve discussions of a wide range of emotions, and this is a time when these often occur. By this session the classmates are hopefully very comfortable together and able to share sensitive, personal things about themselves. Histories of suicide attempts, grief, shame, guilt, mental health issues, and many other deeply personal topics have come to light during this discussion. It's good to make sure the group is ready to move on before going to the next topic.

Are these exercises bring-up difficult topics for you?
What might the difficult topics be?
Are they reminding you of hard times that you'd forgotten?

Have these exercises taught you something about your acquiring habits?

Now for a lighter topic, have these exercises brought-up good memories?

Questions:

Was there someone special in your life who you collected with?
Was there someone special who enjoyed learning about your collections?

Do you have good memories of people connected to your possessions?

Wrap-up. Any last questions about chapter 8? - 5 minutes.

If you have time and feel that the following story would be helpful, you can share it with the group to end the session:

When I Had Nothing Better to Do

(feel free to read aloud)

By Lee Shuer, collector, facilitator

In the past, when I was having a really bad day, I would call my boss and take a personal day. I'd go to the gas station, fill my tank, buy a couple of bottles of cola and a candy bar, and commence a several-hours-long shopping spree. I'd drive from thrift store to thrift store to dollar store to record store to collectibles store to clothing store; you name it. If they had cool brick-a-brack or a long sale rack, I was there. I'd drown my depression in caffeine, sugar, and treasures. I'd fill my truck with stuff. I'd shop in a daze, unable to stop until the sun was going down and reality started to trickle back in. This was how I coped with my really sad days, days when I was feeling grief, guilt, or remorse. Days when I couldn't seem to perk myself up any other way. I did manage to find a healthy replacement. I started to go out to the woods and sit in a scenic place, far from the cash registers and show cases. I found peace in the practice of watching a single leaf fall from an autumn tree or the snap of twigs as a squirrel ran by. I found that I could still call in for that personal day, but what I did with the day made a big difference the morning after.

Homework for next week: Read **chapter 9** and complete all exercises

Collect today's Homework Completion Form for Session 8

Session 9: Sorting and Discarding: Getting Ready

Focusing on chapter 9 in BIT, pages 121-144

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Box of tissues
- Watch or clock
- Homework Completion Forms for Session 10
- Attendance sheet
- Name tags
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting-up the classroom:

- Hand out Homework Completion Forms for Session 10
- Put up two blank posters: you will write the class's categories on one, and where they want to put them on the second poster
- Have large markers ready
- Name tags
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins, 20 mins

Today's class will focus on systematic approaches to sorting, organizing, and discarding excess clutter. You will refer to Richard and Helen's techniques as points of reference. You will help participants devise a systematic way of problem solving, show them strategies for sorting, organizing, and discarding, walk through the "decision-making flowchart" on p. 134, and discuss the merits of a routine, and lastly, choose rewards for jobs well-done.

Questions:

Now that we've attempted to turn-off the acquiring tap, who's ready to work on sorting, organizing, and discarding?

Thoughts about the "Practice Muscle" on p. 121?

Does it make you anxious to think about this process?

Initial impressions of chapter 9?

Reviewing Richard's technique, pages 122-124, 10 mins.

Richard's "egg timer" technique for dealing with his distractibility may be particularly helpful to participants with this challenge. Discuss his process with the group. The following is a break-down of his plan for success:

1. *Buy an egg timer*
2. *Set the egg timer for 10 minutes*
3. *Remove distractions from environment (tv, phone)*
4. *Work for 10 mins, take break, return, break, return = 30 mins.*
5. *As stamina increases, set for 20 mins, then 30 mins*
6. *Once 30 mins felt do-able, he worked for as long as possible, then set the timer for additional mins. He also kept a note pad nearby so that if he thought of things he wanted to do while working, he could write them down for later*

Questions:

Richard was distracted by tv and phone. What sorts of things distract you?

Has anyone tried using a timer? How did it go?

For anyone who's used a timer, how does it help?

Who plans to try this technique?

Richard also made sure to work at times when he had the most energy and attention for the task.

Why does this help? When are your "power hours?"

Richard used a calendar like the one on p. 125. Did anyone fill theirs out?

Is there another step that anyone might add?

Helen's approach, pages 125-126, 10 mins.

One concern of Helen's was seeing all of her clutter at once. It helped her to turn her back to the piles and focus on one small portion of clutter at a time. This helped with her attention and made the situation feel less overwhelming.

Did anyone try Helen's approach of turning their back to the rest of the house and just focusing on one small area? How did it go?

Why might Helen's approach be helpful?

Helen was very afraid of throwing away something important. When she did it turned out not to be too big of a deal. Does anyone have this fear, and has it come true/not come true?

A systematic approach to problem-solving, 126-128, 20 mins.

As the expression goes, "Life happens." During the several weeks that participants are in your group, they will undoubtedly experience natural distractions of various intensity and significance, from a death in the family to a major holiday. Because these events can derail progress, we'll now discuss how to stay on track when life happens.

Identify the problem (p. 127):

What's an example of a "poorly defined problem?" How might you define it better?
Why is it important to be very specific about what the problem is?

Come up with as many solutions as possible (p. 127):

For the example problem provided above, what might be some solutions? Can we think of four?
Why might it be good to come up with more than one strategy?

Evaluate possible solutions and select one or two that seem best (p. 128):

Of the above solutions, can someone pick two to try?
When it comes to decision-making, how might this exercise be helpful?

Implement the solution (p. 128):

Making implementation of the solution your priority may mean cancelling something else to do your work first. Has anyone had to do this since the class started? How did it feel?

Evaluate the outcome (p. 128):

Success breeds success; when something works, you want to try it again! Can someone share a successful outcome to their problem-solving?
How does success feel?
If you don't succeed, how do you bring yourself to try and try again? Are there "Good Guys" that are helpful for your self-motivation?

Questions:

Does it feel good to have a structure for problem solving?
What kinds of things have come up for you in the past that derailed you, but might not effect you as much if you use this tool?
Does anyone have a variation to this plan?

Break, 10 mins.

Strategies for sorting/organizing/discarding, pages 129-144, 35 mins

Because many people who hoard have difficulty with decision-making, and get bogged-down when they try to work on sorting/discarding/organizing, the following exercises were created. When used properly, these exercises guide the participant through every step of the process, from gathering boxes for sorting, to organizing saved items.

Categorization and making “homes” for items by category (p. 129)

*For the first part of this discussion, **move to the blank posters.** Label one “categories,” and the second one, “locations.” Ask the class for some examples.*

This is an important organizational tool for people who feel like they are forever making neat stacks of their stuff, but that things never really get put away. It’s not enough to make a list like the following:

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Collectible toys | plastic bin |
| Art supplies | plastic bin |
| Tools | basement |
| Clothes | basement |

.....a proper list looks like this:

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Collectible toys | displayed on shelves |
| Art supplies | organized in art supply cabinet |
| Tools | toolbox |
| Clothes | hung in closet or folded in bureau |

The problem with the first list is that nothing ever really gets put away, and the job is never really completed. If items don’t have a home, they just get shuffled around from place to place; this leads to difficulty finding things, and clutter spilling back into living space when something from the bottom of a pile is needed.

Some people may say that they have never had final locations for their possessions, and that they don’t know what to list for the location column. Encourage them to visualize the ideal place for these things, and reassure them that it’s okay if they haven’t actually gotten that far in real life. We want them to start to imagine their home as functional and organized.

Questions:

On page 129, “Trash, things to recycle, things to give away, and things to sell” are four categories of items suggested for organizing. You can see on the flowchart on p. 134, that these categories belong in the “not wanted” box. On the “wanted” side of the chart, you need a list of categories for “things to save.” Let’s go around the room and share our categories, and final locations for these items, as listed on p. 133, and I’ll write them on the posters.

Is it difficult to imagine where you would put certain things? What things, and does someone have suggestions?

How many categories did you end-up with on p. 130-131? Why is it a problem if you have too many categories, or too few?

“My Preparing for Organizing Form,” p. 138

Questions:

Who would like to share their answers from the exercise on p. 138?

Did you feel more organized in your thinking when you did this visualization compared to if you hadn’t first considered what sorts of things you should do to prepare for the job?
Did you feel anxious just thinking about this?

Papers, papers, and more papers! Organizing paper, pages 138-141

Questions:

Who has trouble with paper accumulation?

What sorts of papers do you save? (i.e., Junk mail, bills, letters, other documents)

Did you find the categories on pages 139-140 helpful? Are there any other categories that you listed besides those in the book?

Where do you keep your important papers if not in a filing cabinet?

Why do you have trouble sorting papers?

Why do you have trouble discarding paperwork?

Are you afraid that you’ll forget about something if it’s out of sight?

Upkeep, p. 142

Many people who are overwhelmed by their clutter feel that they never seem to have free time because they are always churning their belongings. With determination and consistency, the clutter will eventually be reduced, and life can become more than dealing with the stress of having too much stuff. Eventually participants will move past the big jobs and move on to upkeep so that they don't backslide. Developing an upkeep routine is key to future success.

Questions:

Upkeep is important and becomes much easier as belongings get organized. From the examples on pp. 142-143, which suggestions from the list of maintenance activities are most helpful to you?

Do you have any other suggestions?

Reward yourself! p. 143, 10 mins

Many people don't feel they deserve rewards because they haven't finished de-cluttering their entire home. We want people to break the job into smaller pieces, and treat themselves well when they succeed in accomplishing their short-term goals.

Questions:

Who filled-out the reward agreement on p. 143? Could you share?

Solicit as many reward suggestions as possible.

Do you think this reward agreement will help you?

Encourage anyone who didn't do this yet to complete it for next week. They deserve it!

Read the professional organizer's suggestions on p. 143 and assign homework, 5 mins.

Organizer's suggestion:

If you take it out, put it back.

If you open it, close it.

If you throw it down, pick it up.

If you take it off, hang it up.

If you use it, clean it up.

Homework: for next week is to **read chapter 10** and complete the exercises. Encourage the group to read chapter 10 THE DAY FOLLOWING CLASS so that they can complete the exercises.

Collect Session 9 Homework Completion Forms

Session 10: Sorting and discarding: Let's go!

Today's class will explore the participants' first attempts at using their sorting/organizing/discarding skills from chapter 9 for the real work in chapter 10 (pages 145-156). Be prepared for widely varying emotional reactions to this work. We've now moved from conceptualizing the sorting process to the actual work, including a behavioral experiment. This week's reading instructed participants to develop lists of questions to ask themselves when "only handling it (objects) once," so that they can make an objective decision about it and move on to the next item.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Watch or clock
- Homework Completion Form for session 11
- Attendance sheet
- Box of tissues
- Poster with the Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 11
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins - 20 minutes.

Questions:

How did this week go? Victories? Set-backs?

Did you spend the time you pledged to spend and give yourself a reward for your work?

Did anyone feel they didn't deserve a reward? Why?

On a scale of 1-10, how much distress did this week's homework cause you?

What is "The OHIO" rule, and why might it be important?

Setting goals and choosing a place to start (pages 145-147) - 20 minutes.

Chapter 10 builds on chapter 9's prompt to choose an area of the house to begin working on and gives participants tools to begin the process. Hopefully people have taken the book's advice that they begin in an area that they will notice the difference the most, i.e., hallways or kitchen table and counters. Hopefully they will feel the benefit of choosing a popular area and working on it until it's completed rather than drifting from pile to pile.

Questions:

Who did the exercise on page 147 -- picking-up an object and moving it to its final location?
Did you follow the suggested decisions 1-3 on page 147?
Why did you choose the item and the location?
What complications did you encounter?
How did you deal with the complications?
Which Bad Guys/Good Guys reared surfaced during this exercise?
How did it feel to really put something away or let it go?
If it was really difficult, how did you make yourself feel better?
Anyone else do this exercise?

Decision-making questions and rules (pages 148-150) - 40 minutes.

The internal dialogue of a clutterer can be scattered and rapid. Training yourself to turn that circular chatter into an interview with reality is a big step towards overcoming the impulses that disrupt recovery. Choosing to use a series of questions that determine how good a decision is to keep, acquire, or discard an item represents a big milestone. Being able to follow-through with a good decision takes practice, and people slip, but progress is the process of making a greater number of good decisions every day.

Questions:

Were there specific questions on pages 148-149 that really spoke to you?
Have you had success with one or more of these questions?
Have there been times when you knew what you should do but couldn't follow through?
Does it feel empowering to have strong questions to ask yourself when you're trying to make a decision?
Has it started to get easier with practice?
How would you describe the internal conversation you have with yourself using these questions compared to how it was before?
How have you seen your decision-making improve with the use of this technique?
What is the OHIO rule, and how might it help?

Break - 10 minutes.

Rules for letting go of things (page 149) - 15 minutes.

For the items that still cause decision-making trouble, rules for letting go of things can be helpful. For the person who doesn't know if they should get rid of a certain sweater, for example, it might be helpful to use the rule, "If I keep this and don't wear it this winter, I'll

donate it.” Someone who is on the fence about an item will at least be able to test his or her feelings and set firm conditions for ownership.

Questions:

Who would like to explain why it’s good to have a set of rules for letting go of things?

Are there rules in the bottom paragraph of page 149 that are helpful?

Would someone like to share their rules on page 150?

Which of these rules do you find yourself using the most?

Do you have different rules for different categories of items?

How might a rule like, “Do I have room for this item?” be helpful?

How might this rule effect your decisions in regards to other items?

Does it help you to make choices based on your priorities?

Did you have success with this skill this week?

 What did you let go of?

 How did it feel?

Did anyone let something go that made them feel bad?

 Did it get better or worse with time?

 Did it feel the way you thought it would?

Experimenting with letting go (page 151-156) - 10 minutes.

For someone who’s having difficulty letting things go, the fear of making a mistake can be disabling. Next you’ll discuss the exercise on pages 152-154 that encourage participants to take a chance on letting something go that they think they might miss but are pretty sure they can live without.

The more times a person can challenge their anxiety and prove themselves wrong, the more confident they will become in their decisions. Hopefully this exercise was a positive, reinforcing experience for people, although for some it was surely very difficult.

Questions:

Who would like to share their results from the exercise on pages 152-154?

How difficult was it to choose an item?

Were you surprised with the outcome?

Will you be willing to try this again as you continue to discard items?

Did it give you a new way of looking at your attachments?

Hierarchy list (page 155) - 10 minutes.

We want people to start building their distress tolerance by letting “easier” items go first then working up to the more difficult ones.

Questions:

How can a “hierarchy form” be helpful?

Would someone like to share the one they created?

Homework for next week:

1. Select a goal for amount of time to sort/discard each day.
2. Bring in 3 items to session 11. One should be easy, the second of medium difficulty, and the third something more difficult.

Ask the participants to bring in three items next week. Explain that they should choose one item that should be easy to let go of, something of medium difficulty, and something more difficult. They will bring these items in with the goal of leaving them with you to recycle, throw away, or donate. They will have the option of having you hold on to the item for a week, and you will conduct a behavioral experiment with them to test their short and long-term responses. If they want it back in a week, they can have it. If they decide it’s okay to let it go, you will then take it away. Request that the items be on the small side, as you will have a lot of stuff to take away. Remember, you’ll need gear to carry everything. (We repeat: Request that they bring small items. Small. Items.)

Collect Homework Completion Forms for Session 10.

Session 11: Sorting and discarding: succeeding!

Today the group members will bring in three items, each with a different level of attachment. They will have three options when it's their turn to share an item: keep it, discard it to you, or ask you to hold onto it for a week and complete a behavioral experiment (page 156) with you. We hope that the group members will draw inspiration and comfort from seeing their peers work through the process, and that the experience will encourage those who think they're the only one still struggling. Today's exercise has the possibility of bringing the classmates even closer to one another as they support each other in their moment of triumph and/or frustration.

You will see in today's session description that for each round, you are given "up to 25 or 30 minutes." The time varies for different rounds. The reason this number is approximated is because your group may consist of 6 participants, maybe 12. In order to stay on track, you have an approximate time limit. However, if you don't use the full time, take your break around the half-way point of the session, as usual. You may take the break after the first round if it feels needed. If you have extra time left at the end of the session, you will have more time to process. If your group is very large, you may reduce the time spent on the "welcome and check-in," and move quickly to the exercise. It will be important to emphasize that you will be keeping close track of the time that is allowed for each item so that you can make sure that everyone has a chance to process all three items. Some people will know for sure that they want to discard their item and will only take 30 seconds. This will allow others to take a couple of extra minutes. If you don't mind the clock, you may have people still waiting to discuss an item when the session ends.

As participants arrive, ask them to keep their items hidden until the exercise begins and to check-out the ground rules poster. The poster should read as follows:

Ground Rules for Discarding Experiments

- 1. Keep items out of sight until asked to reveal them.*
- 2. Please don't touch other peoples' items.*
- 3. We're not going to trade with/give items to other participants.*
- 4. We won't try to convince someone that they should keep what they brought in.*
- 5. Respect each other's emotions, this can be unexpectedly difficult.*
- 6. Please don't interrupt the person who's working on their decision. Maintain silence.*
- 7. Be supportive of everyone's final decisions, regardless of your own opinion.*
- 8. Each participant will have approximately ____ minutes so that everyone has a chance.*
- 9. _____*
- 10. _____*

Bring to the session:

- ___ Pens.
- ___ Poster paper
- ___ Markers
- ___ Watch or clock

- ___ Blank note paper to write down results of “behavioral experiments”
- ___ Bring in something to haul away the participants’ discards: i.e., plastic bins, cardboard boxes, dolly, rolling suitcase: *these show more respect to participants than trash bags*. Try to avoid giving the appearance that you’re throwing everything away. You will want a way to separate the items people want back from the ones they want to give away.
- ___ Box of tissues
- ___ Watch or clock
- ___ Homework Completion Forms for Session 12
- ___ Attendance sheet
- ___ Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting-up the classroom:

- ___ Post “Ground rules for in-class experiment” on presentation paper before participants arrive (see above)
- ___ Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 12
- ___ Post the standard Comfort Agreement as well

Welcome and check-in - 15 minutes.

The class has been working hard to understand and support themselves and their peers. Some people might feel they’ve progressed to where they expected to be at this point, others may be far behind their goals and feeling blue. Tonight we should have the class talk about how they’re feeling.

Tonight everyone will be talking-through their decision to discard, keep, or relinquish for a week the item they brought in. The process of choosing the items themselves may have been difficult because of the pressure of knowing the class will be watching. After asking about peoples’ week, you can explain the in-class experiment.

Questions:

- How did this week go?
- Is everyone taking care of themselves?
- What did you do that was special to reward yourselves this week?
- Do feel good about where you are in your progress at this point?
- Does anyone feel like they’re still not meeting their goals?
- Does anyone have words of wisdom for the rest of us to help us keep going when it’s hard?
- What has this workshop been like for you so far?
- What are some of the most useful tools you’ve learned so far?
- Does anyone feel like their home is even messier than when they started? Is it because you start sorting projects and don’t complete them? Sometimes things do get more chaotic before they get better.

Explaining today's in-class experiment - 5 minutes.

The ground rules for today's activity should be written on poster paper and stuck on the wall for people to see as they arrive. It's crucial that the group follow the rules. Sometimes people underestimate the distress that this exercise can cause. It's important that people have a quiet, comfortable environment to process their decisions. Sometimes people get emotional even when they try to get rid of their easiest item. What we want to avoid is an atmosphere that is overly rambunctious. For example, in one group a participant shouted, "Who'll start the bidding," with a big grin, and held up an old shoe. When these things happen or when people get nervous, they react in unpredictable ways, including laughter, which can be experienced by other group members as degrading. Keep things serious -- but with a light hand. We don't want to put people off or on-edge before we even start!

Questions:

Could someone read the "Ground Rules" out loud?
Does anyone have any questions about what we're about to do?
Are there any other rules that you would suggest?

In-class discarding experiment - may last up to the last 25 minutes

Round 1: The easiest item first

Questions:

(You will go round-robin with this exercise. Ask each person the following set of questions each time it's their turn to share. We suggest you start each round to demonstrate.)

Please reveal your item.
What is it?
Where did you get it?
Why did you keep it?
Are you ready to let it go?

If yes, please place it in the bin (or whatever receptacle you brought)

If no, are you definitely taking it back home, or would you like to try "the experiment?"

If you'd like to try "the experiment," I'll write-down the following information, and we'll re-visit it next week:

Participant's name and type of item.
What the agreement is: Let _____ go for a week.

What the concern is about letting the item go.
On a scale of 1-10, how distressing is this for you? (10 being worst)
How sure are you that you'll keep feeling this way and want _____ back?

Please put your item in the container for "save" items. I'll keep it safe until next week, and we'll see if you want it back.

(Repeat this exercise until you've gone around to everyone.)

How was that for everyone?
Harder than expected? Easier?
Did you have a question that you asked yourself that really made a difference in your decision?
Ready to move on to the next item?
Let's take a break before we move on to the next round.

Take a break after round 1 - 10 minutes.

Round two, the medium-difficulty item (up to 30 mins):

Questions:

(You will go round-robin with this exercise. Ask each person the following set of questions each time it's their turn to share.)

Please reveal your item.
What is it?
Where did you get it?
Why did you keep it?
Are you ready to let it go?

If yes, please place it in the bin (or whatever receptacle you brought)

If no, are you definitely taking it back home, or would you like to try "the experiment?"

If you'd like to try "the experiment," I'll write-down the following information, and we'll re-visit it next week:

Participant's name and type of item.
What the agreement is: Let _____ go for a week.
What the concern is about letting the item go.
On a scale of 1-10, how distressing is this for you?
How sure are you that you'll keep feeling this way and want _____ back?

Please put your item in the container for "save" items. I'll keep it safe until next week, and we'll see if you want it back.

(Repeat this exercise until you've gone around to everyone.)

How was that for everyone?

Did it feel very different from the first round?

Why?

Ready to move on to the next item?

Let's all take a deeeep breath, stretch, and move on then...

The third and final round: the most challenging item (up to 30 mins)

Questions:

(You will go round-robin with this exercise. Ask each person the following set of questions each time it's their turn to share.)

Please reveal your item.

What is it?

Where did you get it?

Why did you keep it?

Are you ready to let it go?

If yes, please place it in the bin (or whatever receptacle you brought)

If no, are you definitely taking it back home, or would you like to try "the experiment?"

If you'd like to try "the experiment," I'll write-down the following information, and we'll re-visit it next week:

Participant's name and type of item.

What the agreement is: Let _____ go for a week.

What the concern is about letting the item go.

On a scale of 1-10, how distressing is this for you?

How sure are you that you'll keep feeling this way and want _____ back?

Please put your item in the container for "save" items. I'll keep it safe until next week, and we'll see if you want it back.

(Repeat this exercise until you've gone around to everyone.)

How was that for everyone?

Was your "#3" really the hardest to let go of?

Do you think that this exercise will help you to overcome your anxiety over letting something go that you aren't sure of?

Wind-down class with a conversation about the role that "stuff" plays in the participant's lives - 5 minutes.

After sharing this experience, allow the class to talk about how their relationship with stuff affects their lives, both positively and negatively.

Questions:

What role did the things you brought in today play in your life?

Will life be much different now?

Do you feel more hopeful about making choices about your belongings that will make life better for you?

Homework for Session 12:

1. Read Chapter 11 - Here Come the Bad Guys
2. Make mental notes about reactions to the in-session exercises during session 11.
3. Reward yourself for meeting goals!

Collect Homework Completion Forms for Session 11.

*****If people asked you to hold items for the week, make sure you bring them back in. Also, make sure you know which ones belong to which participants, so that you don't discard the wrong ones.*****

Session 12: Here Come the Bad Guys

Today's session will focus on chapter 11 in BIT (pages 157-167). This chapter helps bring the class back together to focus on motivating to beat the challenges that lie ahead of them, and in fact, all around them, as they move forward. Chapter 11 instructs the participants to take a look at the flow chart on page 158 of BIT and decide which of the "Bad Guys" remain most challenging for them. We want to empower them to focus on their biggest personal challenges so that they can embrace the time they have left in the class and make the most of the time to ask the questions that pertain most directly to them. This class will focus on questions related to the first three Bad Guys, while session 13 will deal with the fourth and fifth.

For each of the first three Bad Guys, you will ask who relates to each, and further, with which statements in the flowchart on p. 158 they identify.

We will also follow-up on items that participants may have left with the facilitator in Session 11.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Box of tissues
- Watch or clock
- Homework Completion Forms for Session 13
- Attendance
- Poster with ground rules for discarding session, if someone needs to review their item
- Poster with Comfort Agreement
- Items that participants gave you to hold on to (don't forget!)**

Setting up the classroom:

- Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 13
- Post the ground rules for discarding session
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins - 15 minutes.

The first order of business today will be to check-in with participants who left an item with you in session 11. You will want to keep the item out of sight rather than holding it up and asking them if they want it back.

Who left an item with me last week?

Have you decided whether or not to keep it?

If yes, I'll discard it for you.

If the answer is "no," or, "not sure," let's discuss it.

What was your item?

Did the worst-case scenario come true?

What did you miss about it/why do you look forward to having it back?

Did your estimate of the distress you would feel seem accurate? Worse? Better?

Today we want to draw some success stories out of the group. As an ice breaker, ask “Who had a victory this week, and which Bad Guy(s) did you beat to accomplish this task?” You can explain that the reason you ask is that this class and the next will focus on the five Bad Guys, and what it takes to beat them. There will be plenty of talk about what’s really difficult, so let’s start on a very positive note.

Depending on how much time the reviews of items from Session 11 required, you will have to be flexible with time spent on the check-in, so that you can get to the Bad Guys materials.

Questions:

Who had a victory this week, and which Bad Guy or Guys did you beat to accomplish it?

Which Good Guys were helpful?

Did you have a different approach that wasn’t in the book?

Let’s flip to the flowchart on page 158 of BIT - 15 minutes.

Based on the example statements in each column, which are still the biggest challenges?

Not my priority?

Avoidance and excuse-making?

Going for the short-term payoff?

Unhelpful beliefs about your stuff?

Over-thinking and confusing yourself?

For each Bad Guy mentioned by someone, see if you can find a second person who’s also struggled with it. This provides another chance to foster peer support.

If there’s a Bad Guy that isn’t mentioned, you can ask,

Nobody struggling with ____ or ____?

*All right, let’s move on and take a close look at the **first three** Baddies today. Next class we’ll focus on the last two.*

Bad Guy #1: It's not my priority- 20 minutes.

Life happens. We're human, and everyone goes through "stuff." Your class has been meeting for three months now. There may have been major holidays, deaths, hirings, lay-offs, births, weddings, illness, and final exams. We have to assume that everyone in the class has at some point had to deal with at least one major life experience during this period that competed with their de-cluttering efforts. Hence, "Bad Guy #1."

Let's look first at Bad Guy #1, "It's not my priority."

Now, even though the participants have all committed to this class and made it this far, some of them may feel that at times, reducing their saving/acquiring isn't their priority. Perfectly natural; life happens.

There are three main components to Bad Guy #1. There's the person who "doesn't see what the fuss is," there's the person who feels "they have better things to do," and there's the person who feels "they're not ready to work on this."

Who identifies with "I don't see what all the fuss is about."

When you feel this way, what might help to put things in perspective?

Have you already reached your goals?

How does it feel to be coming back to this class if it doesn't seem pertinent to your life?

Who identifies with "I have better things to do."

What competes for your time?

Are you able to forget about your clutter when you're doing other things?

Do the things you do instead of working on this problem make it worse?

Do you consider going out to acquire to be something you'd rather be doing?

What might help to get you back on track?

Who identifies with "I'm just not ready to work on this."

How did you feel when you started this group?

Can you remember when you started feeling less ready?

How do you regain confidence?

Why don't you think you're ready?

Re-focus the group on the task of reducing clutter - 10 minutes

Questions to the whole group:

Think back to what first inspired you to join this class. What was it about your life that made you decide it was time to make a change?

Does anyone feel that they're still not personally motivated to de-clutter?

Has this feeling of ambivalence gotten stronger as the weeks have gone by?
Do you feel like it just doesn't matter, or are you still going back and forth?

Remember we talked about ambivalence back on page 94, and you made a list of reasons why you might or might not want to change? Would anyone like to share their list?

It is critical to remain positive and motivated during the process of de-cluttering. If you don't have your eyes on the prize, you can get stuck in the moment with life events and forget why you're putting in the effort to change. We want to help remind people why they were motivated to change in the first place. Some people have said they want to have a nice home to invite guests into, some have said they want the landlord off their back, some have said they want a healthier environment for their children, and some have said they want to be free of the guilt of a chaotic life. Whatever their motivations, we want to celebrate them again today.

Break - 10 minutes.

Bad Guy #2, Avoidance and excuse-making - 20 minutes.

Who relates to the statement "This just feels too scary to do."

What is worrying you?
What's the worst thing that could happen if you didn't meet your goals as quickly as you'd hoped?
Has something happened during this process that made you afraid to move forward?
How do you think you can overcome this?

Who relates to the statement "It's such a pain; I can't deal with it right now."

Is it harder than you expected?
Do you think there will be a better time?
How long have you been feeling this way?

Who relates to the statement “I’m just too stressed out.”

What are you doing to take care of yourself?

What stresses you out the most about this process?

Is there something you do for yourself when you’re stressed-out in general?

Who relates to the statement “But I’m just so tired!”

Is it the work that you’re tired from?

Is it emotional exhaustion?

What can you do to regain some energy?

Self-esteem is fragile, and being in this class and revealing this private part of their life was probably difficult for most people here. We want to build them up, so look for language here that can be helpful. Words like “avoidance” and “excuse-making” can be triggering and make people feel hurt or defensive.

Depression is real. Anxiety is real. Stress really can take a physical toll on your body. People are not making these things up, and it’s not necessarily their fault that they feel the way they do. Still, if a person refuses to take personal responsibility for overcoming these conditions, they will never meet their goals.

Bad Guy #3: Going for the short-term payoff - 20 minutes.

We all have a tendency to do what feels best at the moment. But sometimes what feels best at the moment is the worst thing in the long run. The exhilaration of finding a new treasure can completely obliterate plans to reduce acquiring and clutter. The good feelings produced by the find are typically followed by distress that results from a life too full of stuff.

Another short-term payoff is avoiding the discomfort that accompanies getting rid of treasured things that clutter one’s life. Whether it’s throwing away a sentimental item or missing an opportunity, discomfort is a guaranteed part of this process. The short-term payoff would be to avoid discarding to prevent the distress. The long-term consequence is a life of finding and keeping.

Can someone explain what “Going for the short-term payoff,” means?

Who can relate to the statement “I just love the way it feels to find a treasure!”

How do you feel when you find something great?

How long does the feeling tend to last? Does it depend on the object?

How do you feel if you leave the treasure where you found it?

Do you have times when you forget to ask yourself questions about the acquisition?

Who can relate to the statement “I can’t bear the thought of being uncomfortable!”

Are there other challenges that you’ve overcome that were uncomfortable at the time?
Are you more uncomfortable resisting an urge or suffering the result of giving in?
Is it ever worth being uncomfortable?

It’s hard to pass-up an opportunity, that’s for sure. But it’s the only way to beat this issue. After years of not being able to “say no,” the participants are trying to do that now. It’s hard, but it’s so worth it! It’s so easy to undo tons of progress with one hardcore day of acquiring. In one day you can hit-up a couple thrift stores, a few tag sales, and go to an auction for desert. When it comes to going for the short-term payoff, it’s a matter of keeping our eyes on the prize and staying focused, even if it means gritting our teeth and clenching our knuckles white.

There’s also the issue of the discomfort of change.

Questions:

What’s been the most uncomfortable part of this class for you?

Remember, one of the agreements we committed ourselves to on Day 1 was that we would accept that change would be uncomfortable, and that we would not give up in the face of this. Has anyone found that this process has become too uncomfortable? Any thoughts from the rest of you on how to deal with this?

Again, it might help to turn back to pages 78-79 for some personal inspiration. You can do it! It will be so worth it in the end.

Some day you will live a life less cluttered. Some day you will wake up in a house that is orderly and peaceful. You will have a home that is comfortable to entertain in. You will not be under the thumb of guilt that makes you feel like you don’t deserve to have any fun. You will be in control of your life, and you will no longer be a person who lives in chaos. You can beat this, you can live a new way, you can live the life you want to live because you have the time, space, and peace of mind to do so.

Wrapping-up, final questions, homework - 10 minutes.

Are there any final questions or thoughts about today’s discussion?

Homework for Session 13: Read chapter 12 in *BIT*.

Collect Homework Completion Forms for Session 12.

Session 13: Bad Guys #4 and #5: Taking on your brain

Today's session will focus on chapter 12 of BIT (pages 167-186), Here Come the Bad Guys part 2: Taking on our Brain. This chapter focuses on the last of the five "Bad Guys" from chapter 4. In Session 12's conversation, we focused on the flow chart found on page 158, which lists the five Bad Guys. We talked about difficulties we may have had during this class related to: #1 It's not my priority; #2 Avoidance and excuse-making; #3 Going for the short-term payoff.

This week we'll focus on #4 Unhelpful beliefs about your stuff and #5 Over-thinking and confusing yourself. If individuals in the class have developed strong skills and come to understand their motivations for hoarding items and the difficult mental processes that make discarding difficult or impossible, they are overcoming #4 and #5. However, we can't expect people to make this sort of perfect progress in just a handful of months. We want to encourage everyone to focus on the success they have had and bolster their self-esteem in this area. We also want to focus on lingering problems that they're having.

Bring to the session:

- Pens
- Box of tissues
- Watch or clock
- Homework Completion Form for session 14
- Attendance sheet
- Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 14
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins - 15 minutes.

How is everyone today?

Anyone have an accomplishment they're really proud of?

How are you dealing with the stress?

Follow-up on reactions to in-class discarding experiment - 15 minutes.

Even though the class will have had time to mentally prepare themselves for discarding, the exercises will still be difficult and emotional. It's important at this point to ask the class if they still think about the discarding experiences and if they'd feel comfortable sharing them.

For participants to hear their peers discuss these thoughts out loud serves several purposes. For those who still hurt from the loss, they have a chance to get it off their chest and hear that they're not the only ones feeling bad. For those who feel pride or amazement at their success, it allows them to celebrate their accomplishment!

Questions:

Let's talk today about how you feel about the items you discarded in class:

Does anyone still miss things they turned-in?

Does anyone still feel good? A combination of the two?

Who turned-in all of their items, and how do you feel?

Who turned in an item and let it go after a week? Did anyone decide to take their item home?

Who wishes now that they'd made a different decision, either that you had or hadn't turned something in?

Bad Guy #4, "Unhelpful beliefs about your stuff" (page 167-181) - 30 minutes

For this segment of the class, we'll talk about Bad Guy #4. Under each of the difficult and unhelpful beliefs, you'll see examples of how to use the Good Guys to deal with them. You don't have to cover all of them, but if you don't hear these solutions brought-up and the class seems stuck, you might use them as prompts. However, we don't want to lose time on things that aren't priorities for this particular class, so don't worry if not all of them are covered. Every group will be different, so be prepared to talk about any given combination of strengths and weaknesses.

Questions:

Let's flip back to page 158 in *BIT*. Under "Unhelpful Beliefs about your stuff," there are seven sample statements made by people who struggle with Bad Guy #4. Do any of them ring true for you? This Bad Guy refers to issues revolving around usefulness, responsibility, identity, memory, and control.

Who can relate to the statement, "But all this stuff is useful!"

Do you save things "just in case" you might need them?

Have there been things that you've let go of in the past that you ended up needing after all?

Who can relate to the statement, "What if I make a mistake?"

Have you ever made a mistake with either letting something go or not acquiring something?

What happened when you made a mistake?

Was it as bad as you expected it to be?

Were there times during this class that you challenged a belief about making a mistake

and it turned out better than you expected?

Who can relate to the statement, “How do I know everything will be disposed of properly?”

Who has trouble with taking responsibility for how their belongings are discarded?
Has anyone found a good system for recycling?
Anyone do any re-gifting?
Anyone sell anything?
Can you share an example of something you’ve been holding onto because of this concern?

Who can relate to the statement, “I feel so attached to these things!”

Can you share an example of something that you want to let go of, but you’re still too attached?
Can you share why you are ambivalent about letting it go?
Is there another way you can think about these things that helps you detach from them?
Does it help to think about your goals and compare them to your attachment?

Who can relate to the statement, “My stuff is who I am!”

Do you feel that you wouldn’t be the same person without your stuff?
What would that be like?
Do you like what all of your possessions say about you, or could you let some of them go?
Has anyone found that their identity has shifted since beginning the BIT Workshop?

Who can relate to the statement, “I need to keep things in sight!”

Have you found a way to store things so that you know you can find them again?
Have there been things that you filed in a system, and then found them when needed?
Is the way you’re handling your items now helping you to keep track of them?
Have you tried storing or organizing things, and it was a disaster? What happened?

Who can relate to the statement, “No one’s gonna tell me what to do with my stuff!”

How do you feel when someone tells you what to do about your stuff?

Has anyone gotten into arguments because someone else wanted to get involved?

Did anyone ever move/organize/discard your things without permission?

How did that go?

Is there a way that people can approach you to be helpful, or should they just keep away?

If there’s time.... Is anyone looking for any more help with this Bad Guy?

Break – 10 minutes

Bad Guy #5, “Over-thinking and confusing yourself” (pages 182-186) - 30 minutes.

Bad Guy #5 has to do with the mental processes that get in the way when we try to discard things. These things make discarding take forever and can be very frustrating.

Who can relate to the statement, “But I have so many clever ideas!”

Who’s still feeling like when they pick up an item, their mind starts to get flooded with ideas for how to use it?

How do you stop this flood?

Have you tried using a list of questions to help make a decision?

Has anyone tried setting a time limit for how long to ponder an item?

Who can relate to the statement, “I don’t know where to start!”

Where have you tried to start?

What factors make a place a good place to start?

Are there places where you’ve made progress?

Who can relate to the statement, “It all just seems so complicated!”

Have you considered flipping back to page 85 to figure-out what aspects of the challenge might need to be addressed to have success?

What part of this seems most difficult?

Reducing acquiring?

Letting things go?

Or just lots of things?

Has it gotten more complicated as you’ve learned more about yourself?

Who can relate to the statement, “How do I know what category to put things in?”

Who has trouble making clear categories for their items?

Looking back at page 130 in *BIT*, how many categories do you have?

Are you still making a separate pile for every color of sweater, or just one?

Do you think you have too many categories?

How long do you spend on a typical item before you choose a category for it?

...if time allows, Any final questions about Bad Guy #5?

“Do I want this thing, or do I really need it.” - 20 minutes

One deciding factor that we all need to consider during this process is “Want vs. Need.” Do I want this item, or do I really need it? At different times during our life we go through phases of acquiring different types of items. As our priorities change, so may our decisions about discarding or keeping items. When people look at the clutter in their homes, it’s easy to see the forest, but not the trees. But if they really start to look at the individual items, it becomes clear that some of the things that we once felt we needed maybe we don’t even want anymore. Maybe some of the things we have we really do need, and we must find a home for them.

Questions:

What questions do you ask that help to make this decision about “need vs. want?”

How do you decide if something is worth keeping, even if it’s “just a want?”

Do you have trouble knowing what you need to keep in a specific category?

Do you agree that you’ll have to let a lot of “want” items go to overcome your clutter issue?

How hard will it be to stop bringing in items that you just “want?”

Any final questions regarding the Bad Guys in the flow chart on p. 158?

Homework for Session 14: 1. Read chapter 12 in *BIT*.

2. Continue sorting and discarding.

Remember, we’re skipping a week, so that will give you a lot of time for sorting and discarding. Keep track of your time and good luck!

Collect Homework Completion Form for Session 13.

Session 14: Maintaining Success!

The goals for tonight are to talk about the potential anxiety of the group ending, discuss rules for letting-go, sure-up skills around organization, and reinforce a vision of a life less cluttered (chapter 13, pages 187-202)

Bring to the session:

- ___ Pens
- ___ Box of tissues
- ___ Watch or clock
- ___ Homework Completion Forms for Session 15
- ___ Attendance sheet
- ___ Poster with Comfort Agreement

Setting up the classroom:

- ___ Hand out Homework Completion Form for Session 15
- ___ Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome and check-ins - 20 minutes.

How did your weeks go?

How does it feel to have finished reading *BIT*?

What was your favorite part of the book?

Was there something in the book that you still want clarification about?

Hoarding Severity Scale (pages 188-194) - 20 minutes

Way back in chapter 3, the participants were asked to fill-in the “Hoarding Rating Scale” questionnaire. This exercise appears again in chapter 13. The hope is that there has been improvement since then.

Questions:

Who completed the Hoarding Severity Scale on pages 188-194?

Did you compare your results to the Scale you completed in chapter 3?

If so, did you see improvements?

Are there areas that got more cluttered or didn't change?

Do you have any idea why the results weren't better?

What area did you seem to improve most in?

What area do you figure will be most difficult to get a handle on?

“Clutter is a magnet for clutter” (page 195) - 20 minutes

We'll base the next part of our conversation on the lesson highlighted on page 195 of BIT. The “Broken windows theory” proposed by social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling in the 1980's relates closely to the state of affairs often observed in the lives of people who over-collect. It's almost like, “see a mess make a mess.” When people see part of their environment become run-down, the tendency is to allow it to get worse. The challenge in our group's instance is cleaning-up an area and keeping it this way so that they don't end up with a “broken window” in their own home.

Questions:

Let's turn to the “Broken Windows Theory,” on page 195 of *BIT*. Can someone explain how it may apply to your life? Anyone else feel that there's a connection to this theory and your life?

In what ways might it be helpful to complete specific areas before moving on to another part of your home.

Cleared surfaces often seem to be a magnet for clutter as well. Have any of you noticed this?

What should you do if you see an area that you'd cleared start to become cluttered again?

What happens if you don't do this?

How long should you wait to clear clutter when it starts to accumulate again?

How does it feel to have a clean area, and to keep it that way?

Break - 10 minutes.

Rules for organizing and letting go (page 196) - 20 minutes.

Maintenance is the end-goal for clutterers in recovery. The vision is to get one's home back to functionality, and then being consistent enough to keep it that way. Because this is such an important issue, we'll spend the next segment of our class reflecting on it.

Questions:

Would someone like to share their list from p. 196?

Does anyone have other rules?

Why is it advantageous to have rules and structure in place?

Do you remember what it was like to be without a strategy?

What was that like?

Do you feel more confident now that you've developed skills and personal rules for maintaining order?

The following example illustrates why it's so important to count organization as a main priority for maintaining success. If you consider how much you can accomplish in 30 minutes if you have homes for your possessions, versus not having homes, you can start to imagine why it's so important.

Let's talk about organization for a moment. How many of you have a silverware drawer? How many different slots do you have, i.e., forks and spoons?

Think about what it's like to put away your silverware once it's clean. There's a home for forks, spoons, and knives of various sizes. It takes mere moments to put these items back in their places. Imagine if you didn't have a silverware drawer? How long would it take to put the utensils away? How hard would it be to find them when you need them?

Questions:

Does anyone have an example of items that they've found homes for and what it's like to put those things away compared to items that don't have a place for?

Is anyone stumped on where to put a certain item?

Establishing a Schedule for Organizing (pages 194-195) - 10 minutes.

Does someone here have a schedule or specific timeframe (ie. Before going to bed) for organization?

Do you stick to this schedule, even if something else comes up?

How does having a schedule help?

Has anyone found that sticking to a schedule makes the job easier? If yes, why?

Identifying what has worked best (pages 197-199) - 10 minutes

Would someone like to share something that they wrote in the spaces on 197-199?

When did your Good Guys work?

How did you overcome the Bad Guys?

Wrap-up - 10 minutes

*Next session is the last class. There will be a **4 week break** before it happens, so there will be a LOT of time between now and then for the participants to put their skills to the test without the weekly support that the class has provided. Take the remaining time to talk about nearing the end of the workshop and the month that lies ahead before you meet again.*

Questions:

You've finished *BIT*, and we have one class left. How do you feel about what you've accomplished here?

Are you concerned that we won't be meeting again for a whole month?

How will you keep yourselves motivated when you're out on your own?

Do you all have your phone contact lists in case you want to call someone for support?

Ask the class if they'd like to do a potluck celebration during their last session. Make note of who's bringing the plates/bowls/plastic ware, beverages, and snacks. If they don't want to, that's okay too, but putting out the spread of food at the beginning of class as people arrive is a fun and festive way to end the class and relieve stress that people might be feeling that they're about to go out on their own. Be sure to write down what everyone is bringing, and call a week before the last class to remind them what they promised to bring.

- Homework for Session 15:
1. Continue sorting and discarding.
 2. Set a goal to clear an area of your home of clutter.
 3. Bring an item for potluck if volunteered.

If you volunteered to contribute something to the pot luck next class, please do bring it. Keep working on your sorting and discarding and keep track of the time.

Collect Homework Completion Forms for Session 14.

SEE YOU IN A MONTH! Remember; remind folks that this means skipping four weeks. It is helpful to write the date of the final session at the top of their homework completion sheet for Session 15 before you hand it out.

Session 15: Re-uniting for success!

Seeing as this is the last week of class, there are probably a lot of emotions in the room. As the facilitator, you have your own. You may feel relieved that it's over, sad that it's the last time you'll be with this particular group, satisfied that you've done a good job, or concerned that you didn't. On the other hand, the participants have their own thoughts and feelings. Some may feel like they're on cloud nine, having achieved more than they thought possible and full of hope. Others may be depressed and full of negative self-talk if they feel they fell short of their personal goals. Anxiety, elation, jubilation, concern, and pride are emotions that will be bouncing around people's hearts and minds. Our plan today will be to let those emotions out and plan for future success.

Bring to the session:

- Certificates of Achievement (prepared and ready to hand-out at the end of class)
- Pens
- Blank pieces of presentation paper on the wall
- Large markers.
- Watch or clock
- List of super-powers from the first class.
- Attendance sheet
- Poster with Comfort Agreement
- Tape, to stick certificates inside of books, if that's what people choose to do with theirs

Setting up the classroom:

- Put the blank poster papers up on the wall, start with 5, though you may need more
- Have table space available if you're planning on having a pot luck
- Post the Comfort Agreement

Welcome back, check-ins - 30 minutes.

(If there's a pot luck, did everyone have a chance to get the food they want?)

How are we doing today?

What sorts of things were you thinking about in terms of the class for the last month?

Did the time go quickly for you, or did it seem to take forever?

Reading the list of super-powers from the first session's ice breaker - 15 minutes.

For each person in the group, remind them of what their super-power was.

Way back on the first day, I asked each of you what super-power you wish you had so that it would be easier to deal with your clutter problem.

Person A, do you recall your super-power?

It was _____.

Do you feel like you have that power now in some way? *(remember the example of the person who wanted the power to “make more space?” Once she got better organized and let some things go, she did develop that super power.)*

What super-power would you choose today?

...go around the room until you’ve asked everyone the questions.

What did this seemingly silly exercise show you about yourself?

Sharing emotions exercise - 20 minutes.

At this point you’ll grab your markers and approach the first of the poster papers. What you’ll be doing is asking the class, and you can contribute as well if there’s a lull, to volunteer one-word responses to describe how they feel as they move forward to work on this without the weekly support of the group. We want everyone to have a chance to see that they’re not alone in their thoughts, and that we’re all feeling many emotions. Examples of responses have been, “overwhelmed, worried, hopeful, skillful, determined, and unsure.” The list goes on, but this will give you a feel for what to expect. Some of the words will be downers while others will be energizers. It’s good to have a healthy mix, so if you feel you’re not getting enough of one or the other, feel free to contribute. If people aren’t expressing concern because they don’t want to look weak, help them out by writing what they’re probably thinking! You’ve got pieces of big paper on the wall – write on!

I’d like to move to the blank posters now. What I’d like you all to do is work together to create a list of the feelings you’re having right now as the class ends. You may feel “excited,” you might feel “worried.” *You can write those on the first poster to get things started.* What other emotions are you feeling?

After putting all the words up, read them aloud as a list. Then ask the class how it feels to hear others’ responses.

How does it feel to see all these emotions in writing? Are you surprised that so many of you feel similarly? Are there any responses up there that you are just realizing now are familiar to you?

Does anyone have any ideas for how to deal with any of the unsure feelings?

Break, extended for socializing - 20 minutes.

Reading the last paragraph together (page 202) - 5 minutes.

You may read the last paragraph of the book, or ask for a volunteer. This reading is a nice way to formally “finish” reading the book, and the message reinforces the idea that this battle has just begun.....

Let's turn to the last page of *BIT*, page 202. We've come to the end of the book now, and the final paragraph is a nice way to tie-up this 15-session conversation that we've had. *You may read it or ask for a volunteer.*

.....and now, Certificates of Achievement!

I'm going to hand-out your Certificates of Achievement now! Feel free to say a few words when you accept yours. You can tape them to the inside of your book, or put them on the wall.

Read the text off of the certificate and distribute.

Questions:

Does anyone have final thoughts?

How does it feel to have completed the Buried In Treasures Workshop?
What did you learn about yourself that you didn't know before this class?
Do you feel more hopeful about your future now?

You should all feel really good about what you've done here!

Our eyes on the ultimate prize

As we've seen all along, when people are motivated by a positive vision of their future, it's more natural to keep this task at the top of their list of priorities. However, even now, there may be people in the class wrestling with the concern that they may never achieve order in their home. Let's take a moment to bolster their confidence. The following is an example of some closing thoughts, followed by space to create notes for yourself on how you would like to end the final session of your Buried in Treasures Workshop. Or.....you can just wing it.

“So the ultimate prize that we have our eyes on is a life less cluttered, right? A home that's functional, organized, and inviting, as well as a life free of the stressful consequences of unending acquiring and saving.

By now I hope that you all see yourselves as having a future that is bright and uncluttered. That vision of the future will help you get through the process of letting things go, it will help you fight the urge to acquire, and it will allow you the strength to follow through.

Many of you have probably lived in clutter for years, if not your whole life. You would probably have doubted that life could be lived any other way. But it's true, it's totally possible that you will be a person that lives an uncluttered life. You can have your space back, have your time

References

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- Tolin, D.F., Frost, R.O., & Steketee, G. (2013; 2nd Ed). *Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Hoarding, Saving, and Acquiring*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Appendix A:

BURIED IN TREASURES WORKSHOP Syllabus v 2.0 (2013)

_____ Session 1: Welcome to the Buried in Treasures Workshop!

Homework to complete for Session 2: **read chapters 1, 2, and 3 (Introduction, What is Hoarding, Do I Have a Problem With Hoarding)** and complete the exercises. Also, please bring an item to class for “show and tell.” Something that you want to keep---*this is not a discarding exercise*. It’s an opportunity to give us a sense of the sort of things you like to keep, and why.

_____ Session 2: Do I Have a Problem With Hoarding?

Homework to complete for Session 3: **read chapter 4 (Meet the Bad Guys)**

_____ Session 3: “The Bad Guys:” What factors may hinder success?

Homework to complete for Session 4: **read chapter 5 (Meet the Good Guys: Strategies for Beating Hoarding)** and complete the exercises

_____ Session 4: “The Good Guys:” What factors may contribute to success?

Homework to complete for Session 5: **read chapter 6 (How Did This Happen?)** and complete the exercises

_____ Session 5: How did this happen?

Homework to complete for Session 6: **read chapter 7 (Enhancing Motivation)** and complete the exercises

_____ Session 6: Enhancing motivation

Homework to complete for Session 7: **read chapter 8 (Reducing Acquiring)** and complete the exercises

_____ Session 7: Help with reducing acquiring

Homework to complete for Session 8: **go on at least 2 non-shopping trips (Don’t read chapter 9 yet)**

_____ Session 8: Help with reducing acquiring, part 2

Homework to complete for Session 9: **read chapter 9 (Sorting/Removing Stuff: Getting Ready)** and complete the exercises

_____Session 9: Sorting and discarding: Getting ready

Homework to complete for Session 10: **read chapter 10 (Sorting/Removing Stuff: Let's Go!)** and complete the exercises

_____Session 10: Sorting and discarding: Let's go!

Homework to complete for Session 11: continue to sort and discard, and try more behavioral experiments, also: **bring in 3 items for next week.** You will be attempting to discard them and leave them with the facilitator, so make sure they are things you want to let go, but not things that you've already thought a lot about. Let one item be an "easy" one to let go, the second one should be of "medium difficulty," and the third item should be "very difficult" to let go. You will have the option of taking them back, if you decide you can't part with them. **(Don't read chapter 11 yet)**

_____Session 11: Sorting and discarding: succeeding!

Homework to complete for Session 12: **read chapter 11 (Here Come the Bad Guys: Part 1. Motivation and Working Time)** and complete the exercises

_____Session 12: Here come the bad guys again: motivation and working time

Homework to complete for Session 13: **read chapter 12 (Here Come the Bad Guys: Part 2. Taking on Your Brain)** and complete the exercises

_____Session 13: Here come the bad guys again: taking-on your brain

Homework to complete for Session 14: **read chapter 13 (Maintaining Your Success)** and complete the exercises

We will take-off 1 week now between sessions 13 and 14 and return on: _____

_____Session 14: Maintaining Success!

Homework to complete for Session 15: you will be taking a 4 week break, now that you've completed the academic portion of the Buried in Treasures Workshop. **For the next 4 weeks, use all of the skills you've learned to make as much progress as possible. Acquire less, discard more, organize, and de-clutter.** □

We will take-off 4 weeks now, then return for the final session on: _____

Do we want to bring in food to celebrate? If so, don't forget your goodies of goodness!

_____Session 15: Re-uniting for success

Appendix C That awkward first moment.....as people arrive for Session 1

It's session #1....your participants are arriving, one by one. You don't know anyone. You're sitting there, watching the clock as it nears time to begin. Silence. Thumbs twiddling. Anxiety rising. Awkward. Very awkward.....so what do you do?

There are a few suggestions that we can give you for this situation.

1. Welcome people as they arrive. Ask them their name, bring them their materials, ask them how their commute/parking/finding the location went. Comment on the weather, the time of year, cheerful current events.
2. Have soft music playing, this can be relaxing and break the spell of silence.
3. Ask them how they heard about the group, or how they enjoyed your event if you had a public forum to tell people about the group.
4. Discuss how they're feeling as they prepare themselves for the group. Try to keep it light and steer anxious feelings in a positive, hopeful direction.

We would suggest that you don't:

1. Leave them alone
2. Look down and totally avoid eye contact
3. Talk or whisper to your co-facilitator in front of them
4. Hand-out paper work for them to work on before the start of class
5. Talk on the phone or text instead of engaging

The reason that we provide some suggestions for you is that no matter how long you've been facilitating groups, this time can feel uncomfortable, if you don't have a plan. You may have your own way of engaging people, and you can go with your own style/plan. These suggestions are in no way rules. Following them in such a way would probably look and feel unnatural. But if there's a suggestion that sounds like your style, give it a whirl!

If you're working with a co-facilitator, discuss your plan before people begin to arrive. Know who's going to facilitate first contact. One of you might be more comfortable with this. A plan for engagement might look like, "Hi, I'm _____, and this is _____. We'll be co-facilitating this workshop." They will probably greet you both, and conversation can flow.

You might also have participants who arrive and want to do all of the activities that we discourage you from doing in the above list. That's okay, because they are creating comfort for themselves. If they seem busy with a conversation, reviewing notes, checking text messages, etc., you can allow them their space. Please don't feel that it's your job to force engagement. It's your first opportunity to demonstrate your intention of meeting people where they're at. It's the folks that are looking around, or at you, that you want to connect with.

You may also place the blank name cards in front of empty seats with markers in reach so that people can make their name card. In addition to providing an outlet for fidgety fingers, it will help you to start learning names, and helping the participants get familiar with each other's names as well.

An effective facilitator is someone who can connect with participants, and forms relationships based on unconditional high regard, positivity, and mutuality. As people arrive, your BIT Workshop officially begins. Please don't miss this opportunity to start on the right foot....with a warm welcome.

Appendix D

Group Comfort Agreements for the Buried in Treasures Workshop

- 1) Be on time. Class begins at _____, and ends at _____
- 2) Bring your copy of *Buried in Treasures*
- 3) Be present...call or email the facilitator if you can't make it to the group
- 4) Be prepared...do the homework
- 5) Be engaged
- 6) Speak one at a time...be mindful of raised hands
- 7) No cross-talking
- 8) Share the speaking time
- 9) Don't generalize...only speak about yourself
- 10) Confidentiality...What you see here, what you do here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.
- 11) Set realistic goals...changing is a process that takes a lot of time and hard work.
- 12) Cell phones off...vibrate for emergencies. Leave room if you must answer the phone.
- 13) Be respectful of others
- 14) Be flexible
- 15) Acknowledge and accept the discomfort of change
- 16) _____
- 17) _____
- 18) _____
- 19) _____
- 20) _____

Appendix E

Confidentiality Agreement

By signing this agreement, I am making a commitment to maintain the privacy, and not reveal the identities, of my fellow workshop participants. I understand that if I do break confidentiality, that there will be appropriate consequences, up to and including being asked to leave the group.

Participant

Date

Appendix F.

Homework Completion Form for Session 11

Name _____ group location _____ date _____

Homework for Session 11: Bring 3 items to Session 11: each item should be one that you want to let go of, but need to think it through. Bring an “easy, medium, and hard” difficulty item to discard. You will have a week to consider letting them go if you aren’t sure; your facilitator will keep them safe for you. Choose 3 items that you haven’t considered yet. We will process these items together during session 11. The group will observe your individual process. You will not be interrupted or judged.

1. How much time did you spend on the following tasks this week?

Sorting/organizing/discarding _____

Active planning, visualizing, and strategizing _____

Maintenance of progress _____

2. How much time did you spend on the assigned homework? _____

3. If you set a decluttering goal that was not a part of the assigned homework, what was it? _____

Did you complete your personal goal? (circle one) totally partially not at all

4. How did you feel about your decluttering work this week? Would you like to describe any special successes or challenges? Was there a unique item that you didn’t acquire?

Appendix G: BIT Graduation Certificate

This certificate can be printed 5"x7", and cut-out to fit inside participant's books, or for them to hang on their wall. Printing it in color is a nice touch.



Appendix H: Tips for Goal-Setting in a Group

Goal-Setting for clutter self-help and maintenance groups

A key component of our de-cluttering groups is the setting of weekly goals. These short-term goals are meant to help participants stay committed to de-cluttering, as well as remaining accountable to each other. Appropriate, attainable goals help to bolster a group's confidence and progress. Unreasonable goals can be a group's downfall. We will try to give a few pointers to help you guide participants in creating helpful goals.

1. People are the experts on themselves:

The first time someone sets a goal for themselves, even if you think it sounds unreasonable, it's a good idea to accept it and not give resistance. You don't know how much that person can do. If they say, "I'm going to clear-out my whole garage," you might be inclined to say, "How about doing just one corner of it?" You may be pleasantly surprised when the person actually completes it! Let the individual decide how high they're setting the bar before assuming that you know what's best for them. If they meet their goal, wonderful. If not, refer to #2.

2. Biting-off more than they can handle:

When someone first joins your group, they are going to be very enthusiastic about setting the bar high for themselves, but maybe it's too high. If we find that someone isn't meeting their goals because they are too lofty, we may want to help them bring it within reach. It's much more empowering to meet and exceed a goal than it is to fall short, even if it's only by a little bit. You may broach the subject with them the first time they report not meeting one of these big goals, and suggest that you will help them to be more specific next time. For example:

The person who set the goal of cleaning their entire garage reports during check-in that they opened the garage door and got overwhelmed when they realized how much there was to do. Suggest to them that you appreciate their enthusiasm, but prompt them to choose a more specific part of the area to work on. For example, remove all refuse from the first two feet of the pile. If they say, "Okay, I'll just start with the trash, but I want to do all of it," encourage them to bite off a smaller piece. If they do more, that's great! But we want them to have success, and not get discouraged because they never seem to be able to meet their goals.

3. Helping someone to be more specific about their goal:

Someone might say that they want to organize their whole kitchen. Helping them to think of the space in terms of zones might be helpful. Ask them to identify the part of the area that they would like to use the most. If they say the kitchen table, have them specify how much of that one place they're going to commit to. Let them know that they can keep going if they finish that portion of the table, and encourage them to stick with the kitchen. Maybe they head for the

refrigerator next, then the sink/dishes, then put clean dishes in cupboards, then counter tops, then floor, then sweep/mop, etc.

If they try to do the whole kitchen at once it may be too much. We tend to see people get discouraged when this happens, and you can help to prevent that. You won't stand in the way of someone doing all they can, but you won't let them do less than they can, either.

4. The person that doesn't want you to help revise their goal:

There might be someone in the group that resists your attempts to help them make their goals more manageable. You may take a hands-off approach, and hope that the person learns from watching their peers, or that they learn from their own mistakes. You may want to take a more heavy-handed approach and insist that you know what's best for them. We would suggest taking the middle ground; be supportive without being overbearing, but firm enough in your guidance towards a goal that's both meaningful *and* attainable. Just keep in mind that your role isn't to fix or someone's problem for them, your role is to help them to fix the problem themselves. It's a collaborative process, and one that requires patience and good listening skills.

5. The person has the same goal week after week, and never seems to accomplish it:

In this situation, consider suggesting that they shift their attention to another area. It's demoralizing to feel like the only person who's not meeting their goal week after week. It can be refreshing to focus on a different area when you've been stuck on something.

After a while, it can feel like a power struggle between the person and the area that they're trying to organize. Allowing them to take a step back and re-focus their attention on something else has led to renewed energy and success.

6. Secondary goal:

Someone might say, "I want to clear-off my bathroom counters, put my winter clothes away, and organize the junk drawer in the kitchen." Each of these sound like a reasonable goal, but have them choose one. Let them know that you'll keep track of what their primary goal is, and that they can let you know if they accomplish the secondary goals as well.

7. "I did this other stuff, but not my goal, does that count?"

Of course it counts, but it doesn't equal meeting the primary goal. Many people will put-off working on their goal by doing other tasks which are important as well, but seem like less of a power struggle. Suggest that they try to stick with their goal, and do those other things in addition, rather than instead of it. We want to support ALL progress, because all progress is positive. But for the purpose of this goal-setting exercise, we want to encourage a certain level of discipline.

8. Embracing a spirit of success, even when a goal is not met; the positive process of remaining engaged in goal-setting, no matter the results!

“How is this possible?” you may ask. Well, the fact that this participant is showing-up week after week is a testament to their desire to make healthy change in their life. They clearly want to succeed, but they are still having trouble meeting their goal. Recognizing and emphasizing the fact that they are not giving up, and that they are resilient and honest with the group, may help keep them motivated. We should offer them support, and rally the group around them when they are feeling down or defeated. This peer support within the group, and the modeling of success by participants who are meeting their goals, can help people stay on track. So, we say, it’s impossible to be completely un-successful when working on goals.

In conclusion:

As you can see, goal-setting is something that both you the facilitator, as well as the participants, will get better at creating, with experience. You’ll start to notice red flag behaviors that consistently get in the way of progress for people, and you’ll also get a feel for what helps them. Helping the group to remain positive and forward-moving is our goal. And it’s no small thing.

Appendix I. The Unburied From Treasures Maintenance Group

What is the focus of the group: The Unburied from Treasures Workshop (UFT) is a maintenance, skills-sustaining, and support group for people working to reduce clutter in their lives.

Who is UFT for: People who have graduated from the Buried in Treasures Workshop, or who can demonstrate a strong dedication, knowledge of, and commitment to the process of reducing clutter in their life. It is *not* for people who are resistant to the process, or who do not already have a working knowledge about the process. Ambivalence does not disqualify them, as long as they want to work through it.

Who may facilitate the group: We recommend that graduates of the Buried in Treasures Workshop (BIT,) at least two, facilitate the group together. They may take turns facilitating, or having a primary and secondary facilitator. This better ensures consistency of scheduled groups, a division of labor, and peer support between facilitators.

When: We suggest that this group be offered weekly, for one hour per session. (see structure below)

Where: The UFT is usually held in a private location, but this may be determined by the group. Groups have also met at coffee shops, etc.

Why: UFT was created by and for people who find that the ongoing support, accountability, and structure that this group provides is a key to their long-term success.

How many people in a group: It is suggested that the group exceed no more than 10 people at any time so that everyone has a chance to share.

What materials are needed to run the group: It's recommended that the facilitators have a notebook to record the participants' weekly goals. Presentation boards/poster paper, dvd players, and refreshments have been used to enhance the experience, but are not required. A way to remove items discarded during in-group exercises, such as a dolly and cardboard box, are sometimes needed.

Open or closed group: The group can decide whether they want to invite new members to join the group when space is available (open group,) or if they want to limit enrollment to the original members (closed group.)

Rules/guidelines for conduct: Groups that create their own guidelines together, as a group, have the best adherence. This is often called a "comfort agreement." (see example below)

Duration: UFT may be run for as long as the group decides to meet. Groups may run for any length of time, from a set number of sessions, to unlimited sessions. This may be determined by the facilitators' commitment and group consensus.

UFT Group Structure:

In a one hour session, the following timeline is recommended:

10 minutes: check-ins regarding small goal progress (see examples of goals below)

40 minutes: discuss a skill from *Buried in Treasures*, or a topic that is of interest to the group (see examples below)

10 minutes: check-out with setting of small goals to be completed by the next session (see suggestions for setting goals below)

Examples of topics to discuss:

How to get unstuck during discarding sessions

Questions to ask ourselves during urges to acquire/save items

What motivates us to reduce volume of possessions?

Consequences of too much clutter: financial, relationship, housing, safety hazards

How clutter affects family life, relationships

Self esteem

Finding places to make donations, recycle, discard items

How to talk to family about your efforts to declutter and request being given material gifts

Examples of small goals:

Clearing the trunk of my car

Clearing a portion of counter space in kitchen

Preparing to have a tag sale

Use art supplies to do a project

Donate a bag of clothes

Having a friend over for dinner

Putting an item on Craig's List or Freecycle

Goal-Setting for Buried in Treasures and Unburied from Treasures Workshops

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Comfort agreement sample:

Group will start at __:__, and end at __:__

Arrive on time

Judgment-free zone

No cross-talk

Supportive and positive comments

No interrupting

Not bringing things to the group to give to group members

Allow people to complete their thought

During in-group discarding exercise, don't encourage people to change their mind about discarding their item

As stated above, allowing the group to create their own Comfort Agreement is suggested. If there are items that you'd like to see included that aren't mentioned, you may suggest them.

UNBURIED FROM TREASURES

A SELF-HELP AND SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE
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Would you like to learn tips on how to de-clutter and stop over-acquiring from people who know what it's like? Join us for this group created by and for people who are ready to live a life less-cluttered!

Each week we'll either discuss a skill from the book, *Buried in Treasures*, or discuss a topic that is important and interesting to the group. We'll also check-in with our individual progress, challenges, successes, and goals.

We will meet at (enter location,) from (enter day and time.)

This group offers a judgment-free environment for people ready to make a change in their life.

Contact facilitators xxxxxxxx (xxxx@xxxx.org) or yyyyyy (yyyy@yyyy.org) for more information.

Appendix L. Measures of Hoarding

Saving Inventory – Revised (Modified Format)

For each question below, circle the number that corresponds most closely to your experience **DURING THE PAST WEEK.**

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|------|----------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| | None | A little | A moderate amount | Most/ Much | Almost All/ Complete |
| 1. How much of the living area in your home is cluttered with possessions? (Consider the amount of clutter in your kitchen, living room, dining room, hallways, bedrooms, bathrooms, or other rooms). | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. How much control do you have over your urges to acquire possessions? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. How much of your home does clutter prevent you from using? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. How much control do you have over your urges to save possessions? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. How much of your home is difficult to walk through because of clutter? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

For each question below, circle the number that corresponds most closely to your experience **DURING THE PAST WEEK.**

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|------------|------|----------|----------------------|---------|
| | Not at all | Mild | Moderate | Considerable/ Severe | Extreme |
| 6. To what extent do you have difficulty throwing things away? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. How distressing do you find the task of throwing things away? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. To what extent do you have so many things that your room(s) are cluttered? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. How distressed or uncomfortable would you feel if you could not acquire something you wanted? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. How much does clutter in your home interfere with your social, work or everyday functioning? Think about things that you don't do because of clutter. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

11. How strong is your urge to buy or acquire free things for which you have no immediate use? 0 1 2 3 4

DURING THE PAST WEEK:

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|------------|------|----------|----------------------|---------|
| | Not at all | Mild | Moderate | Considerable/ Severe | Extreme |
| 12. To what extent does clutter in your home cause you distress? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. How strong is your urge to save something you know you may never use? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. How upset or distressed do you feel about your acquiring habits? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. To what extent do you feel unable to control the clutter in your home? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. To what extent has your saving or compulsive buying resulted in financial difficulties for you? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

For each question below, circle the number that corresponds most closely to your experience **DURING THE PAST WEEK.**

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|-------|--------|------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes/Occasionally | Frequently/ Often | Very Often |
| 17. How often do you avoid trying to discard possessions because it is too stressful or time consuming? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. How often do you feel compelled to acquire something you see? e.g., when shopping or offered free things? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. How often do you decide to keep things you do not need and have little space for? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. How frequently does clutter in your home prevent you from inviting people to visit? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. How often do you actually buy (or acquire for free) things for which you have no immediate use or need? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. To what extent does the clutter in your home prevent you from using parts of your home for their intended | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

purpose? For example, cooking, using furniture, washing dishes, cleaning, etc.

23. How often are you unable to discard a possession you would like to get rid of? 0 1 2 3 4

Frost, R.O., Steketee, G., & Grisham, J. (2004). Measurement of compulsive hoarding: Saving Inventory-Revised. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 42, 1163-1182.

SI-R (Modified) Scoring Subscales:

Clutter Subscale (9 Items):

Sum items: 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 20, 22

Difficulty Discarding/ Saving Subscale (7 items):

Sum items: 4 (reverse score), 6, 7, 13, 17, 19, 23

Acquisition Subscale (7 items):

Sum items: 2 (reverse score), 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21

Total Score = sum of all items

Interpretation of Scores - Cutoff scores for significant hoarding problems:

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Acquisition | 9 |
| Difficulty Discarding | 14 |
| Clutter | 17 |
| Total | 41 |

Activities of Daily Living in Hoarding (ADL-H)

| Activities affected by clutter or hoarding problem | Can do it easily | Can do it with a little difficulty | Can do it with moderate difficulty | Can do it with great difficulty | Unable to do |
|---|---------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Prepare food | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Use refrigerator | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Use stove | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Use kitchen sink | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Eat at table | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Move around inside the house | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Exit home quickly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Use toilet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Use bath/shower | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Use bathroom sink | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Answer door quickly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Sit in sofa/chair | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Sleep in bed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Do laundry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Find important things (such as bills, tax forms, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix M

Facilitator Evaluation

Facilitator's Name (first and last): _____

Date of completion: _____

Location of workshop: _____

Please rate the following qualities of your workshop experience. This will help your facilitator understand what was effective about their style of facilitation, and where there is room for improvement. Your honest feedback will help them to grow and improve in their work to help future participants of the Buried in Treasures Workshop. This evaluation is voluntary and anonymous.

Please circle the answer that best describes your experience:

How challenging was the BIT Workshop?

Very challenging

Somewhat challenging

Not challenging at all

How helpful was the *Buried in Treasures* workbook?

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not helpful

How helpful were the exercises that you practiced together in class?

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not helpful

Did the facilitator seem prepared for class?

Very prepared

Somewhat prepared

Not prepared at all

Did the facilitator seem to complete the homework assignments?

All of them

Some of them

None of them

Did the facilitator seem knowledgeable about the subject of hoarding and cluttering?

Very knowledgeable

Somewhat knowledgeable

Not knowledgeable at all

Did the facilitator seem comfortable keeping the group focused and on topic?

Very comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Not comfortable at all

Did the facilitator make sure that everyone had a chance to share?

Everyone had a chance

Some people seemed to get called-on more than others

Nobody had a chance to share (why?) _____

Did the facilitator share their personal experiences appropriately?

Very appropriate

Somewhat appropriate

Totally inappropriate (how?) _____

Did the facilitator cover all material on the syllabus?

All of the material

Some of the material

Very little of the material

Did the workshop sessions feel organized?

Very organized

Somewhat organized

Not organized

Did the facilitator give you positive support and encouragement?

I felt very supported

I felt somewhat supported

I felt no support

Did the facilitator give you a sense of hope that you can beat your clutter challenge?

Yes

Sort of

No

Did the facilitator enforce the ground rules of the Comfort Agreement that you helped create?

Yes

Sometimes

No

Did the facilitator explain the topics clearly?

Yes

Sometimes

No

Did the facilitator start group on time?

Always
Usually
Rarely

Did the facilitator end the group on time?

Always
Usually
Never

Did the facilitator have a positive attitude?

Yes
Somewhat
No

Did the facilitator give enough time to answer your questions?

Yes
Sometimes
No

Did the facilitator have good presentation abilities?

Excellent
Good
Fair
Poor

Did the facilitator return your phone calls or emails if you had questions?

Yes, quickly
Yes, eventually
No

Did the facilitator use positive, strengths-based language?

Yes
Sometimes
Never

Was the facilitator able to respond to questions from the group?

Always
Sometimes
Rarely

Did the facilitator ever get angry with the group or an individual?

Never
Sometimes
Often

Would you attend another workshop with this facilitator?

Yes

Maybe

Absolutely not

Would you recommend the Buried in Treasures Workshop to a friend?

Yes

No

Did the workshop meet your expectations?

Totally

Somewhat

Not at all

Did the facilitator treat the participants with respect?

Always

Usually

Not at all

What was your overall rating of the facilitator?

Excellent, they did a great job!

They did an “okay” job

They did a poor job

What was your favorite aspect of the Buried in Treasures Workshop that you attended?

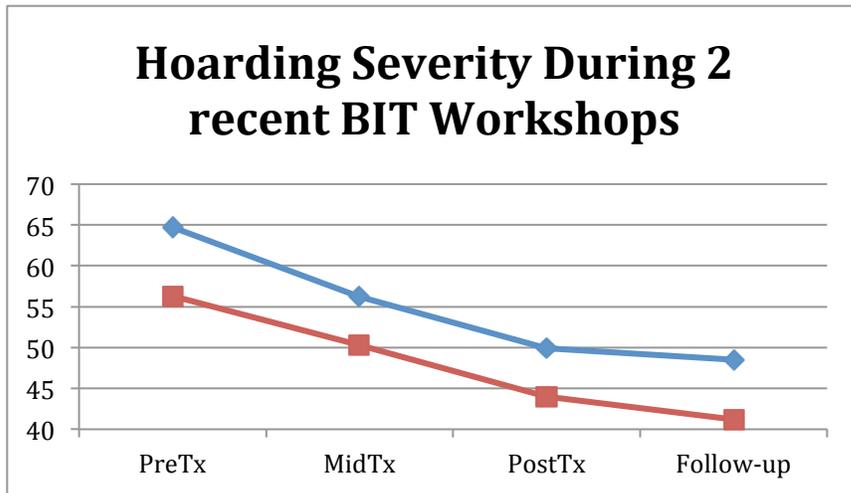
What could make the Buried in Treasures Workshop better?

Is there anything else you’d like to share?

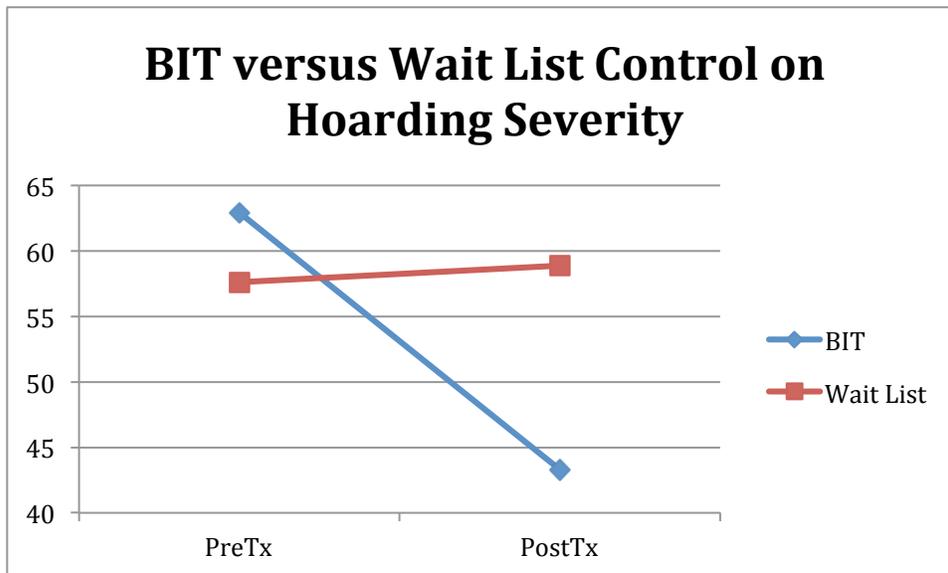
Thank you for your participation!

Appendix N: Research on the effectiveness of the BIT Workshop

So far, several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of the BIT Workshop. The figure below reflects Saving Inventory - Revised scores during the first two 13-week BIT Workshops (as reported in Frost et al., 2011).



BIT workshops have also been compared to a wait list control group. As can be seen below, BIT participants improved significantly more than people on a waiting list (as reported in Frost et al., 2012)



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