Understanding Hoarding Behaviors: A Brief Overview

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Objectives

1. Participants will gain a better understanding of the mental health aspect of hoarding disorder.
2. Participants will become familiar with practical assessment tools used in hoarding situations.
3. Participants will learn how value-based goals impact motivation and outcomes.
Hoardig, Clutter, Collecting, or Squalor?

- The next four slides have no audio.
- Each slide will not advance for 60 seconds to allow time to read information.
- Resource link: https://hoarding.iocdf.org/about-hoarding/is-it-hoarding-clutter-collecting-or-squalor/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Hoarding, Clutter, Collecting, or Squalor?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hoarders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Items do not have a specific theme, usually many different types of items.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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## Hoarding, Clutter, Collecting, or Squalor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Type</th>
<th>Types of Items</th>
<th>Method of Acquiring</th>
<th>Appearance of Home</th>
<th>Life Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal Clutter</td>
<td>Items may or may not have a specific theme.</td>
<td>Items are not acquired in a planned fashion; acquisition is not excessive.</td>
<td>Disorganized clutter, generally located in storage spaces (e.g. attic, basement, etc.). May also occur in living spaces, but does not prevent them from being used as intended.</td>
<td>Items may cause mild distress, but generally do not have broad or lasting impact on finances, work, social life, etc. The thought of getting rid of items or not acquiring any more does not cause distress.</td>
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<td><strong>Collecting</strong></td>
<td>Items center around a specific theme, e.g. stamps, models, figurines, etc.</td>
<td>Items are acquired through planned searches. Items are mainly purchased and are limited in number.</td>
<td>Items are arranged, stored, and/or displayed in an organized fashion. Items do not take over living spaces.</td>
<td>Items usually have a positive or pleasurable impact. Collecting usually does not cause financial distress, nor impairment in work, social life, etc.</td>
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<td><strong>Squalor</strong></td>
<td>No intentional saving of items.</td>
<td>Home is generally in a state of disrepair, may look unclean or unkempt.</td>
<td>State of home may or may not cause distress, depending on the individual’s mental status. State of home has a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of all inhabitants and may have a broader impact on surrounding homes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perfectionism and Hoarding
FAQs

• Most frequently hoarded items:
  – Paper
  – Clothing
  – Gifts

• Most prevalent careers:
  – Teacher
  – Attorney
  – Social Worker
Prevalence of Mental Health Issues

Annual prevalence among U.S. adults, by condition:

- Major Depressive Episode: 7.8%
- Anxiety Disorders: 19.1%
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: 3.6%
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: 1.2%

(NAMI, 2019)
A study by John Hopkins showed that an estimated 3 – 5% of the population suffers from Hoarding Disorder however; it is considered a low representation of the actual percentage.
Types of Attachments

• **Sentimental** – representation of self and life memories (grief attachment)

• **Instrumental** – item has value for future use, could be repaired

• **Intrinsic** – seeing the beauty in an item
Excessive Acquiring

Bought something you didn’t need or really like or more than you needed because:

• It’s such a great deal!
• It’s too good to pass up!!
• I could wear it at some point.
• Aw, I know who would love this.
• It’s brand new!
• I could sell it and make money!
Active vs Passive Acquiring
Mental illness is often hard to consider when faced with a hoarding situation.

Why Can’t You Just.....
Clean Up Get Rid Of It Just Throw It Out
Hoarding Disorder

A. Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with personal possessions, even those of apparently useless or limited value, due to strong urges to save items, distress, and/or indecision associated with discarding.

B. The symptoms result in the accumulation of a large number of possessions that fill up and clutter the active living areas of the home, workplace, or other personal surroundings (e.g., office, vehicle, yard) and prevent normal use of the space. If all living areas are uncluttered, it is only because of others’ efforts (e.g., family members, authorities) to keep these areas free of possessions.

C. The symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (including maintaining a safe environment for self and others).

D. The hoarding symptoms are not due to a general medical condition (e.g., brain injury, cerebrovascular disease).

E. The hoarding symptoms are not restricted to the symptoms of another mental disorder (e.g., hoarding due to obsessions in Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, lack of motivation in Major Depressive Disorder, delusions in Schizophrenia or another Psychotic Disorder, cognitive deficits in Dementia, restricted interests in Autistic Disorder, food storing in Prader-Willi Syndrome).
Example of Hoarding Behavior
Research shows that over 53% of individuals suffering from hoarding disorder are also diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder, approximately 40% are diagnosed with ADD or ADHD, and another 27% are diagnosed with Social Anxiety Disorder...

(Steketee, 2007)
To complicate things more, individuals with hoarding disorder experience trouble in processing information. These processing deficits affect attention, memory, categorization, and decision-making. (Frost, 2008)
How does it get that bad?

• Hoarding is a progressive and chronic disorder.
• Level of insight.
• Hoarding behavior can start in early adolescence.
• Hoarding behavior is triggered or exacerbated by trauma or loss.
• Isolation
• Embarrassment
• Shame
When trying to understand hoarding, imagine an iceberg.
Assessment Tools

• Clutter Image Rating
  – Assessing ‘volume’

• Uniform Inspection Checklist – Quick Reference
  – Minimum safety and sanitation standards
As humans, we respond to situations based on our perceptions of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.
Clutter Image Rating: Bedroom
Please select the photo that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.
Hoarding vs. Squalor
# Uniform Inspection Checklist - Hoarding/Excessive Clutter - Quick Reference

**For Additional Information and Support visit the following page:** [http://www.centerforhoardingandcluttering.com/uniform-inspector-checklist-2](http://www.centerforhoardingandcluttering.com/uniform-inspector-checklist-2)

**Date Completed:**

**Person Completing This Form:**

**Address:**

**Town:**

**Resident Instructs:**

The purpose of inspection is to ensure housing is decent, safe, sanitary, & in good repair. Inspector must be able to view, reach, and test all items on inspection checklist.

**Instructions:**

For STATUS, use P to indicate Pass if item MEETS STANDARD or F to indicate Fail if the item DOES NOT MEET STANDARD. Use UNK if item unobserved or N/A to indicate if item Not Applicable. Use column on right for specific.

## HARM REDUCTION TARGETS

### STEP 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>The following items must be UNOBSSTRUCTED ~ completely clear of any items ~</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egresses - means of exit - must be unobstructed, egress doors must open full 90 degrees or from door frame to door stop, whichever is wider</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pathways - Minimum of 36&quot;91cm wide unobstructed and continuous pathways throughout residence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staircases - must be unobstructed (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke detectors, CO detectors, sprinkler heads - (all that apply) must be unobstructed with front &amp; surrounding clearance of 18&quot;91cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Doors - must be unobstructed - (Applies primarily to residences requiring inspection for tenancy) closet, cabinet, pantry, etc. Inspector must be able to open &amp; close doors fully &amp; freely, &amp; be able to latch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows - 1 window per room must be unobstructed. Includes every room with a window measuring over 20'/51cm with x 24'/61cm height</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating &amp; Electrical Sources - stove, oven, refrigerators, washing machine/dryer, a/c units, heat thermostats (all that apply) must be unobstructed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating &amp; Electrical Sources - clearance requirements - open flame heat sources, fireplaces, furnaces, oil tanks, water units, electrical panels must be unobstructed with front and surrounding clearance of 36&quot;91cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Pull Cords - (if applicable) must be unobstructed, end of cord must be no more than 18'/48cm distance from the floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PRIMARY INSPECTION TARGETS

### STEP 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>The following items must be ACCESSIBLE ~ easily able to be reached by inspector ~</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows - must be accessible (any window not included above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical outlets - must be accessible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing fixtures &amp; pipes - must be accessible, including under sinks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets, sinks, bathtubs, &amp; showers - must be accessible</td>
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Harm Reduction Approach
Engagement and Motivation

1. If you woke up tomorrow and your home was just the way you want it to be, how would your life be different?

2. What is something you want to do that you currently are not doing or cannot do because of the clutter in your home?
Example of Motivation
OZ vs. Kansas
What we want success look like.
What success really looks like.
What success really looks like.
RESOURCES

• Center for Hoarding and Cluttering

• Facebook Groups:
  – Hoarding Task Force Network
  – The Clutter Movement Individual Support
  – The Clutter Movement Family Support

• www.masshousing.com/hoarding

• International OCD Foundation Hoarding Resource