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HOARDING DISORDER IN THE COMMUNITY

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WHY ARE YOU HERE?

Does Hoarding really have an impact? Does it matter?



What is Hoarding Disorder?

- Excessive Acquisition
- Failure to discard
- Clutter makes living spaces unusable
- Distress or impairment resulting from behavior

(Frost & Hartl, 1996)

Elements of Acquisition

- Free samples
- Items discarded by others
- Compulsive shopping (“Retail Therapy”)
- On-line
- Infomercials
- “Good Deals”
- Hand-Me-Downs
- Items left behind by family
- *Gradual accumulation over years*

Failing to Discard Items

- Items *appear* useless to *others*
- Identifying value
 - *Instrumental*
 - *Sentimental*
 - *Intrinsic*
- This results in the growth of items and interferes with the functionality and use of living spaces.

Avoidance Behaviors

- Discarding
- Decision-making
- Uncomfortable emotions
- Fear of making a mistake
- Loss of self

Consequences of Hoarding

Self

- Health Problems
- Safety threats
- Social isolation
- Self-esteem problems
- Interpersonal difficulties
- Legal conflict
- Financial conflict

Community

- Fire
- Infestations
- Legal – Violation of codes and HUD regulations
- Financial – Clean-up efforts

Co-Occurring Diagnoses

- Major Depression (57%)
- Social Phobia (29%)
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (28%)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (17%)
- Specific Phobia (12%)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (6%)
- Dysthymia (4%)
- Panic (2%)
- No Other Diagnosis (8%)

Frost, Steketee, Tolin, & Brown, 2006

When Does The Community Become Aware?

- Complaints
 - *Concerns about exterior of property*
- Crisis
 - *Medical emergency*
 - *Fire*

Individual's Right to Privacy

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated....”

- The Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution

Assess and Intervene

- Evaluate the physical space
- Evaluate the individual
- Identify available resources
- Develop effective contracts
- Monitor and maintain environmental changes

Signs of Hoarding

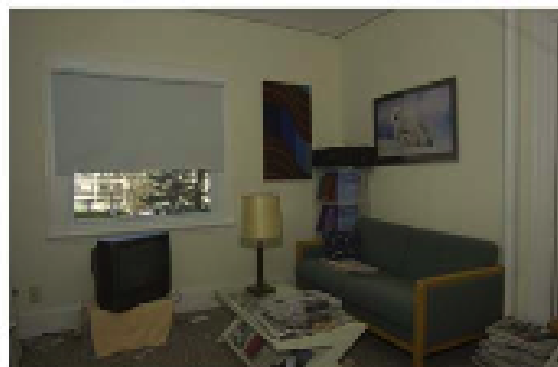
- Blocked access or exit to any door or window due to clutter
- Clutter that impedes or prevents movement in and around residence;
- Clutter that prevents any part of the inside or outside of a dwelling to be used for its intended purpose
- Trash and garbage inside or outside residence
- Signs of infestation or health concerns for resident or neighbors
- Visible damage stairs, ceilings, floors or walls
- Kitchen and bathroom appliances are not usable

Signs of Hoarding (continued)

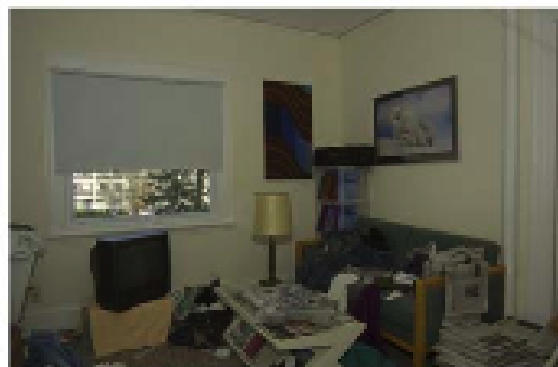
- A large number of animals that are not being cared for and cause a health risk for the occupants, neighbors, and/or general public
- Combustible materials stored too close to a source that could ignite it or potentially ignite it, i.e. stove, over heater vents, portable electric heaters, furnace, gas cans, fireplaces
- Look for existence of working smoke detectors
- Gas cans or other noxious materials, stored in a residence, of which the fumes become a potential health hazard
- Look for evidence for running water, heat and electricity

Clutter Image Rating: Living Room

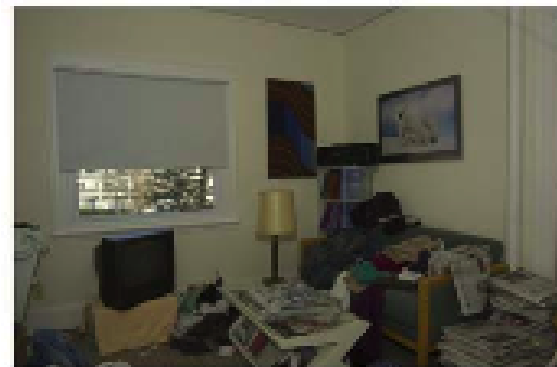
Please select the photo below that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.



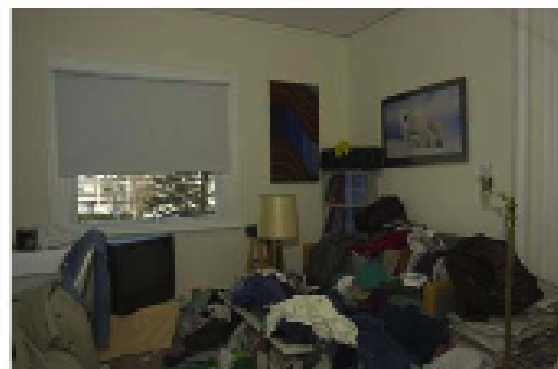
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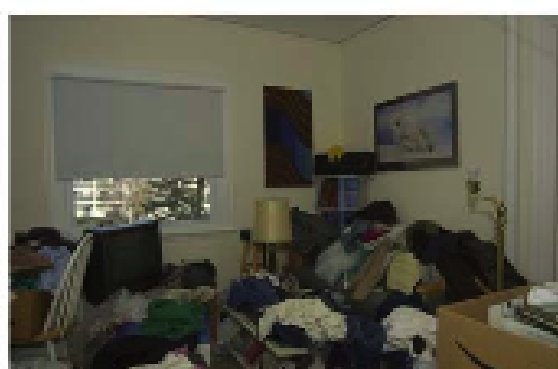
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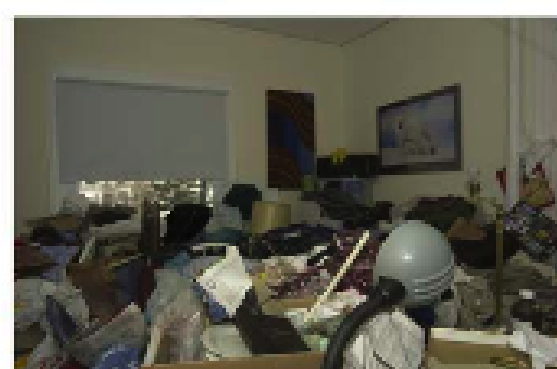
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Evaluation Process: Assessment of Individual

- Appearance
- Cognitive status
- Executive functioning ability
- Medical and mental health symptoms
- Insight into hoarding behaviors
- Motivation to address hoarding behaviors
- Relations with others
- Family history - mental health and hoarding behaviors

Evaluation Process: Risk to Individual or Others

- Local ordinances and codes
 - ◆ Fire and Safety
 - ◆ Housing Code (utilities, water and sewer)
 - ◆ Animal
- Risk to health and well-being (individual and others)
- Level of urgency
- Unsafe or unsanitary conditions resulting from clutter
 - ◆ Structural integrity of the property
 - ◆ Fire code violations
 - ◆ Water/sewer functioning
- Community standards
- Individual's ability to consent to interventions

General Goals of Hoarding Interventions

Physical Space

- Increase usable living space
- Reduce risks to health and safety
- Declutter living spaces
- Store kept possessions in systematic way
- Reduce excessive acquisition

Individual

- Address related medical and mental health symptoms
- Develop skills and alternative behaviors
- Establish functional support network
- On-going services
- Relapse prevention

Resources and Services

- Therapists - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Pharmacotherapy
- Professional Organizers
- Coaches & Clutter Buddies
- Case Management
- Hoarding Task Forces
 - ◆ Adult Protective Services
 - ◆ Law Enforcement
 - ◆ Animal Control
 - ◆ Fire and Rescue
 - ◆ Health Department
 - ◆ Housing
 - ◆ Mental Health

When Intervening...

- There is no easy answer!
- Remember that decluttering...
 - ◆ Takes time and is slow-going
- Clarify the expectations
 - ◆ For identified individual
 - ◆ For community
- Determine boundaries
 - ◆ What you *can* and *can't* give
 - ◆ Learning when to say “no”
- It's okay to feel frustrated, irritated, or angry
- It's never too late to start changing patterns!

Challenges To Clean-Up Efforts

- **Thought Processes**
 - ◆ Perfectionism
 - ◆ All-or-Nothing
 - ◆ Missed opportunities
- **Information Processing**
 - ◆ Categorizing
 - ◆ Churning
 - ◆ Determining importance
 - ◆ Assumptions about items
 - ◆ Distraction from decluttering
- **Emotional Attachment**
 - ◆ Comforted by possessions
 - ◆ Exaggerated loss
 - ◆ Attach greater sentiment
- **Difficulty making decisions**
- **Avoiding decisions and discarding**

“Do” and “Don’t” Guidelines For Inside The Home

DO:

- Model positive, adaptive behaviors
- Provide emotional support
- Share your opinions
- Believe in the individual’s ability
- Stay calm
- Take care of yourself

DON’T:

- Declutter behind the individual’s back
- Minimize the challenges faced
- Make decisions
- Equate the clutter with the person
- Become a therapist to the individual
- Argue

Dangerous Approaches

- Quick cleanouts
- “Interventions”
- Unrealistic time frames
- Having others do the work
- “Ambushing” the individual
 - *Inspections*
 - *Cleanout efforts*

Steps For Effective Change

- **S-M-A-R-T**
 - *Specific*
 - *Measurable*
 - *Attainable*
 - *Realistic*
 - *Time-Limited*
- Consider contracts
- Use CONCRETE guidelines
- Short-term goals and deadlines
 - *Build toward ultimate goal*
- Accountability
 - *Check in frequently*
- Reliable Resources

Effective Communication

- Clear and Consistent
 - *Between meetings*
 - *Among involved parties*
- Document Communications
 - *Share these documentations with the individual*
- Confirm that the individual understands
 - *Ask for the individual to verbalize the details of communication*
 - *Record the agreement and consent*

Focus on the Big Picture

- Don't get overwhelmed by the clutter
 - ◆ Break it down into smaller pieces
- Simply reducing the clutter will not change the underlying hoarding behaviors
- Create change by building skills
- There is more to an individual than clutter
- Don't underestimate the power of support and encouragement

In Conclusion...

- Identify the context in which the hoarding behaviors are occurring
 - ◆ Mental health
 - ◆ Medical issues
- There is more to the individual than the physical clutter
- Hoarding screening
 - ◆ Individual
 - ◆ Physical space
- Interventions
 - ◆ Pharmacotherapy
 - ◆ Professional Organizers
 - ◆ Collaborative Therapy for Clutter Management
 - ◆ Coaches & Clutter Buddies
 - ◆ Case Management
 - ◆ Hoarding Task Force
 - ◆ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- An effective treatment intervention begins with a thorough assessment of the individual, looking beyond the clutter



THANK YOU!

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