

# Hoarding... How Much Is Too Much?

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# Today's Goals:

1

**Identify what *IS*  
Hoarding Disorder –  
and what it is not**

2

**Learn what you can  
do – and not do to  
help someone who  
hoards**

3

**Offer some tools you  
can use today**



## Language Matters:

### People First Language

Person who hoards ✓

~~HOARDER~~





Clutter



Collecting



Hoarding

# What is Hoarding Disorder?

With the DSM5 hoarding disorder commonly has a four-part definition:



1. Excessive acquisition of stuff
2. Difficulty discarding or parting with possessions regardless of their actual value
3. Living spaces can't be used for their intended purposes due to clutter
4. Causing significant distress or impairment

# How Many People Have Hoarding Disorder?

Meta-Analysis Study showed **2.5%**, with similar rates for male and females (Postlethwaite, 2019)

*Question to Ask Yourselves? Is the rate of HD higher in people who are previously homeless?*



Why do  
people  
save  
things?

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Emotional attachment

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Utility – Opportunity

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Comfort and Safety

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Identity and Self Worth

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Environmental Stewardship

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Mistake

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Other reasons?

# Executive Functioning Deficits (esp age 50+)



Planning



Organization



Decision Making



Purposeful  
Action



Attention



Categorization



Prioritizing

\*Working Memory

\*Flexibility

\*Self Control



# Common Sights:

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- Empty Containers
- Multiples of the same item
- Areas of home not being used for their intended purpose
- One clear chair by the TV



A large orange circle graphic on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

# Safety Risks Associated with Hoarding

- Fire Hazard
- Blocked exits
- Risk of falls/ items falling
- Lack of routine maintenance
- Structural damage to building
- Risk of eviction/ homelessness



# Health Risks Associated with Hoarding

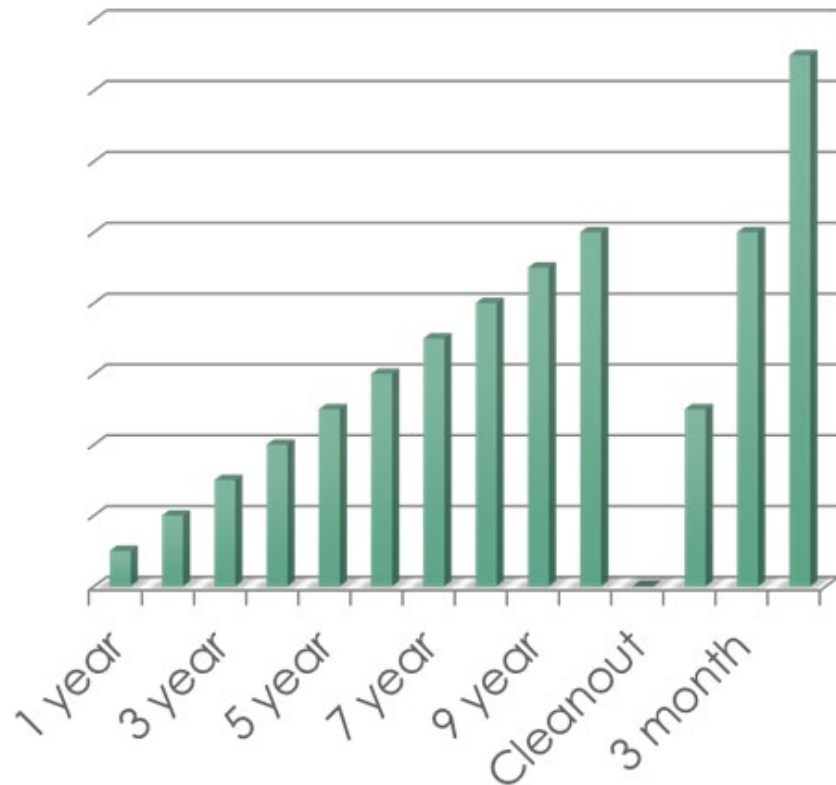
## For the Individual:

- Poor hygiene and grooming, poor nutrition
- Inattention to medical needs
- Inattention to financial management
- Increased isolation
- Worsening mental health

## For Individuals and their Community:

- Mold, dust, dirt
- Rodent and Insect infestation
- Odors from animal / human feces/ remains

# Traumatic Impact of "Clean Outs" is Great



## WHY THINK TWICE ABOUT CLEAN OUTS?

- Can ruin a relationship with a trusted provider
- The event is traumatizing – even to point of death
- Threats of Clean outs can also traumatize and destroy trust
- Extremely expensive in cost and labor
- They don't actually work

*"In all three instances of going in and cleaning these places up, within weeks of relocating the individual back into a clean environment, the individual passed away...it was such a dramatic change for them because we didn't realize the impact of the sociological change." (Brace, 2007)*



## How you can help:

- ▶ **Listen;** match *their* language
- ▶ Avoid making suggestions about the person's belongings:
  - ▶ Table the judgement!
- ▶ Avoid touching objects in the home; if it is necessary, **Ask Permission**
- ▶ Avoid focusing on removal; instead,
- ▶ Help identify a vision for what future life might be like
  - ▶ Daughter to visit? Grandchild?
  - ▶ Space to make art?
  - ▶ Better health?
- ▶ Encourage connection to mental health

# Harm Reduction How To's:

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- Attitude is important
- Goal is finding common ground and establishing trust
- Let go of past conflicts (you, not them)
- Practice active listening
- Focus on areas of agreement
- Understand problem from PwH's perspective
- Be assertive and set limits



# What are the benefits of a Harm Reduction Approach?

- Mediates harm to the community and to the individual
- Is less stressful to the individual
- Does not require behaviors to stop – so more probability for buy in from people who hoard
- Can start with small goals and work up from there
- Preserves relationships

# “Safety Day”

## A Harm Reduction Approach to Clean Outs



- ❖ Bring the home to safety to comply with housing codes using a Harm Reduction Approach
- ❖ Work closely with an organizer and mental health professional
- ❖ Keep Resident out of bodily stress responses



# Safety Day: 4 Phases

## Preparatory Phase

- Logistical planning of each step, anticipatory planning too!
- Agree on specific decisions for the day (e.g., Will toss magazines pre 2017)
- Teach – and practice - stress management techniques

## Critical Phase

- Stress management by assigned staff – guard from further trauma
- Coordinate clean out efforts to reach harm reduction goals

## Inventory Phase

- Anticipate concerns about location of their stuff, may second guess decisions
- Make plan to be available for de-escalation as needed

## Recovery Phase

- May see process as a crisis; anticipate waterfall of emotions – excitement and appreciation turn to anger and blame
- Confirm ongoing Mental Health care

# C.R.E.S.T. Model

## Cognitive Rehabilitation & Exposure to Sorting Therapy

### Elements of the program:

 Evidence Based Program for treating Hoarding Disorder

 26 weeks weeks

 Combines Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and

 Exposure Therapy

 Benefits: proven to work,

 Challenges: Consent, training needed

# Tools to use with People who Hoard



Uniform Inspection Checklist



Clutter Image Rating Scale (CIRS)



HOMES® Multidisciplinary Hoarding Risk Assessment



Pathways to a Healthy & Safe Home  
(Philadelphia Hoarding TF)

# Hoarding Tools and Checklists

## Resources:

- ▶ Northwest Hoarding Coalition: (PROVIDERS ONLY) <https://www.fulllifecare.org/northwest-hoarding-coalition/>
- ▶ Clean outs needed? Refer to any CCG agency for assistance getting Service Master in the space.
- ▶ Engage BH support at the same time.
- ▶ International Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Foundation (IOCDF) [https://iocdf.org/find-help/?\\_listing\\_types=iocdf\\_clinic%2Ciocdf\\_support\\_group%2Ciocdf\\_provider&\\_provider\\_specialty=hoarding](https://iocdf.org/find-help/?_listing_types=iocdf_clinic%2Ciocdf_support_group%2Ciocdf_provider&_provider_specialty=hoarding)

Questions?



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