

HOARDING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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Session Objectives

- Identify the resident's hoarding behaviors through the assessment process
- Understand the struggles associated with hoarding and decluttering efforts
- Identify effective and ineffective strategies when developing plan for the resident
- Identify ways to be an effective coach when assisting with decluttering efforts
- Develop an organizing toolkit
- Understand collaborative interdisciplinary work and know when to refer elsewhere

My Mother's Garden Trailer

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILFXcPjU5k>

Compulsive Hoarding: DSM-V Criteria

- 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
- 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 from possessions

What is Compulsive Hoarding

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

What can be done?

- Each situation is different
- An accurate assessment is essential
- In most situations, hoarding does not have a cure - it is a chronic condition
- Research shows that a multidisciplinary approach is the most effective method of intervention.
- Some therapy techniques (CBT) have been successful in reducing hoarding behaviors. This is a long term treatment, which requires insight and motivation.

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
- Ability to consent to and participate in treatment interventions
- Existing and potential support systems

Clutter Image Rating



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

H.O.M.E.

- HOMES multi-disciplinary Hoarding Risk Assessment provides a structural measure through which the level of risk in a hoarded environment can be conceptualized
- It is intended as an initial and brief assessment to aid in determining the nature and parameters of the hoarding problem and organizing a plan from which further action may be taken-- including immediate intervention, additional assessment or referral.

H.O.M.E.

- HOMES can be used in a variety of ways, depending on needs and resources. It is recommended that a visual scan of the environment in combination with a conversation with the person(s) in the home be used to determine the effect of clutter/hoarding on Health, Obstacles, Mental Health, Endangerment and Structure in the setting
- The Family Composition, Imminent Risk, Capacity, Notes and Post-Assessment sections are intended for additional information about the hoarded environment, the occupants and their capacity/strength to address the problem

HOMES Multi-disciplinary Hoarding Risk Assessment

Health

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot use bathtub/shower | <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot prepare food | <input type="checkbox"/> Presence of spoiled food | <input type="checkbox"/> Presence of insects/rodents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot access toilet | <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot sleep in bed | <input type="checkbox"/> Presence of feces/Urine (human or animal) | <input type="checkbox"/> Presence of mold or chronic dampness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage/Trash Overflow | <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot use stove/fridge/sink | <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot locate medications or equipment | |

Notes: _____

Obstacles

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot move freely/safely in home | <input type="checkbox"/> Unstable piles/avalanche risk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inability for EMT to enter/gain access | <input type="checkbox"/> Egresses, exits or vents blocked or unusable |

Notes: _____

Mental health (Note that this is not a clinical diagnosis; use only to identify risk factors)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does not seem to understand seriousness of problem | <input type="checkbox"/> Defensive or angry | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaware, not alert, or confused |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does not seem to accept likely consequence of problem | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious or apprehensive | |

Notes: _____

Endangerment (evaluate threat based on other sections with attention to specific populations listed below)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threat to health or safety of child/minor | <input type="checkbox"/> Threat to health or safety of person with disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threat to health or safety of older adult | <input type="checkbox"/> Threat to health or safety of animal |

Notes: _____

Structure & Safety

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unstable floorboards/stairs/porch | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaking roof | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical wires/cords exposed | <input type="checkbox"/> No running water/plumbing problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flammable items beside heat source | <input type="checkbox"/> Caving walls | <input type="checkbox"/> No heat/electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> Blocked/unsafe electric heater or vents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storage of hazardous materials/weapons | | | |

Notes: _____



HOMES Multi-disciplinary Hoarding Risk Assessment

Household Composition

of Adults _____ # of Children _____ # and kinds of Pets _____
Ages of adults: _____ Ages of children: _____ Person who smokes in home Yes No
Person(s) with physical disability _____ Language(s) spoken in home _____

Assessment Notes: _____

Risk Measurements

Imminent Harm to self, family, animals, public: _____
 Threat of Eviction: _____ Threat of Condemnation: _____

Capacity Measurements

Instructions: Place a check mark by the items that represent the strengths and capacity to address the hoarding problem

- Awareness of clutter
- Willingness to acknowledge clutter and risks to health, safety and ability to remain in home/impact on daily life
- Physical ability to clear clutter
- Psychological ability to tolerate intervention
- Willingness to accept intervention assistance

Capacity Notes: _____

Post-Assessment Plan/Referral

Date: _____ Client Name: _____ Assessor: _____

Who should be involved?

- Housing Management
- Housing Inspectors
- Local jurisdiction's Social Services (i.e., APS, CPS, case management)
- Non-profits with a knowledge about clutter and hoarding
- Local jurisdiction's Code Enforcement and Fire Department
- Community mental health providers
- Professional organizers

Property Management

- Facilitate the maintenance in the unit
- Conduct inspections, as required
- Respond to complaints from neighbors
- Follow-up and document all contacts with the resident
- Managers have a relationship with the resident and express concerns directly to and with the resident
- Assist with other staff and resident to develop a service agreement which will define necessary steps to resolve situation
- PM can terminate lease for hoarding!! PM has the STICK

County Fire, Inspection, and Police

- Respond to calls from neighbors and Housing/Property Management
- If entry is permitted by the resident, by administrative search warrant or due to an emergency, enter the unit and inspect for compliance of all fire and life safety codes. This would include proper smoke detectors, access to and operation of egress (“escape”) windows or doors, as well as the safe operation of all water, heating, and cooking appliances.
- Inspect all common areas and act on concerns
- Can condemn a unit if conditions are unsafe. Work with case management and property management to address issues

County Services and Non-Profits

- Adult/Child Protective Services will only intervene in cases of abuse, neglect, self-neglect or when the loss of a home is imminent for a vulnerable adult. Most Housing Agencies have mandatory reporters but anyone can make a referral. Also check for resources and services in cases of imminent eviction
- If individual has Medical Assistance (Medicaid), refer to local mental health providers for an evaluation and treatment. The decluttering process is very stressful and may immobilize the person so s/he cannot move forward with a plan. Some mental health providers can have therapists/PRP programs go to the unit and assist with decluttering process

The Two “must haves” to move forward

Insight

- What is the person’s understanding of the situation?
- What is his/her ability to identify risk?
- What is his/her ability to understand what is expected?

Leverage

- What is the motivation behind the declutter?
- What are the positive /negative outcomes of decluttering or not?
- Find a personal motivation

Goals for working with chronic cases

- Prevent repeated crises (relapse prevention)
- Improve collaboration internally
- Collect data on prevalence and severity
- Foster a long term plan for stability
- Increase usable living space
- Reduce compulsive acquisition
- Improve decision making skills
- Develop replacement behaviors
- Explore personal goals

The Decluttering Process

- Let the person decide on a target area that is most important to him/her.
- *If there are health/safety concerns (cluttered stovetop, too many extension cords, flammables near furnace or hot water heater) tell the person that these need to be addressed first*
- **Stay in the same area. Do not be tempted to stray.**
- **Let the person assess possessions: Use a scale from 1-5 to assign importance**
- **Create categories: keep, recycle, donate, trash**
- **Be ready with bags/boxes**

The Decluttering Process

- Select a starting spot in the target area
- Start sorting and decluttering, sometimes piece by piece
- Continue until target area is cleared
- Items not being kept need to be removed immediately, if possible
- Start to use the target area appropriately
- Prevent new clutter

ORGANIZING TOOLKIT

- Contractor bags and boxes
- Gloves
- Hand Sanitizer
- Markers (to identify categories)
- Post-its (to assist with categorizing)
- OPTIONAL: booties, masks, bodysuits (in case of possible bedbugs)
- Have a 3 foot long measuring tape

- Wear hair pulled back or up, minimize jewelry, sneakers and washable clothes

DO

- Be safe (wear gloves, wash hands, look where you touch)
- Be positive
- Make supportive comments
- Foster self determination
- Be creative
- Let the person lead the process
- Come ready for hands-on experience
- Believe in the client's ability
- Highlight strengths
- Stay calm
- Take care of yourself
- Stay in touch with the Team and communicate

DO NOT

- Touch items without the person's explicit permission
- Be judgmental. Focus on the functional use of the home.
- Give negative comments
- Let the amount of stuff overwhelm you
- Declutter behind the person's back
- Minimize the challenges faced
- Make decisions
- Equate the clutter with the person
- Argue or try to persuade

“Rules of Engagement”

- Helper/coach will not touch possessions without *EXPLICIT* permission
- Decisions are made by the owner of the clutter
 - Can be *guided* by the coach, not *decided* by the coach

Proceed systematically

- Agree on a “Plan of Attack”
- Establish categories in advance
- OHIO rule (Only Handle It Once)

Be flexible and creative

Practice, Practice, Practice

- Sorting, Decluttering, Non-Acquisition

Challenging, not Confronting

- How many do you already have? Is that enough?
- Do you have enough time to use, review, or read it?
- Have you used this in the past year?
- Do you have a specific plan for this item? By when?
- Is it important because you're looking at it now?
- Is it current, of good quality, accurate, reliable?
- Would you buy it again if you didn't already own it?
- Do you really need it?
- Could you get it again if you really needed it?
- Do you have enough space for this?

Collaboration with a “Coach”

- Family or Friend
- Professional Organizers
- Faith Based Organizations
- Job Boards/Craig’s List
- Contractor/Home Cleaning Company
- Community Service Volunteers
- “Clutter Buddies”

Referring to a Mental Health Professional

- Work through the significance of the items
- Address underlying beliefs and feelings that arise in the decluttering process
- Help resolve familial conflicts that may be exacerbated by clutter
- Treat co-morbid conditions
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
 - Intense Anxiety
 - Debilitating Depression

Anytime a “Heavy Chore” Service is being used

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