

Hoarding: A Collaborative Approach

*Perspectives and approaches for
working with those who hoard*

Minnesota Hoarding Task Force
September 20, 2017

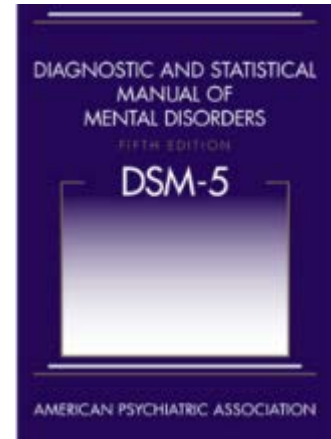
Background and Public Health Perspective

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What Is Hoarding Disorder?

American Psychiatric Association (APA):

- Excessive **acquisition/ saving** of items
- **Difficulty parting** with possessions
- **Inability to use living spaces** for their intended purposes
- Unusual **attachment** to items
- Significant **distress or physical impairment**



(American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Prevalence

2-5% of U.S. population



Hoarding can affect ANY:

Age

Gender

Race

Income level

Marital or living arrangement
status

Mental or physical health status

(Chapin et al., 2010)

Why Do People Hoard?

Usually related to unresolved **grief, loss or trauma.**

Other contributing factors include:

- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Dementia
- Genetics



(Steketee & Frost, 2003); (Tolin et al., 2008)

Why Should We Care?



- Danger
- Public nuisance, public health, public safety
- Cost
- We will be asked to help

(Sorrell, 2012); (Hogstel, 1993)

Service Worker Perspective

Listen and support –
act against stigma

Give time



Be specific

Encourage counseling and/ or support groups

Tools For Success

1. Collaborative approach

2. Develop a procedure

- Standardize terminology
- Standardize assessments
- Strengthen ordinances
- Track complaints and cases
- Follow up

3. Stay connected

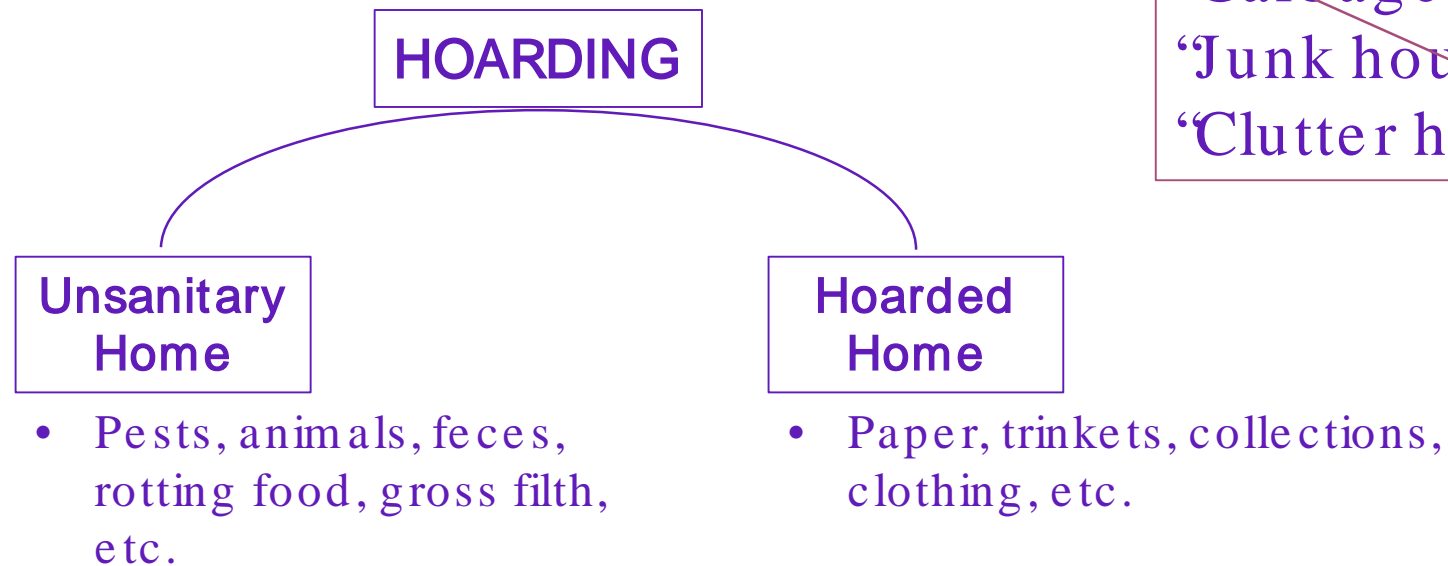
- Minnesota Hoarding Task Force

(Lauder et al., 2005)



Terminology

Use term “heavy content” to describe homes with a lot of stuff



~~“Garbage houses”
“Junk houses”
“Clutter homes”~~

A client is a **person who hoards**,
NOT a hoarder!

References

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Collaboration: The Professional Organizer

Presented by Louise Kurzeka
Everything's Together®

Background

- Entered the organizing field in 1992
 - Consulting, Teaching and Training
- Challenging clients begin to surface
- Needed to be more educated



People and their stuff

- People who Collect



People and their stuff

- People who Clutter



People and their stuff

- People who Hoard



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The One on One Consultation

- **How we Interact with the Client**
 - Language is key - tone in voice
 - Respect for possessions & non-judgemental
 - Just the facts Ma'am
 - Establish specific and manageable goals
 - They always retain the power of choice

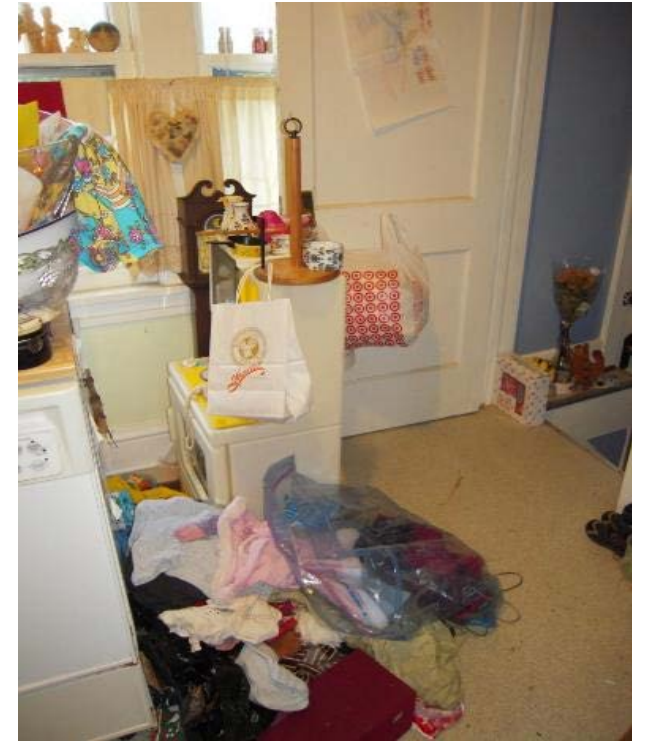


Safety first

- Hazardous items/locations



- Blocked Exits



- Pests



Easier to Discard Items

- Reading Material
- Excess Food
- Unused/Replaced Electronics
- Other



Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

ICD: Clutter Hoarding Scale

	Structure and Zoning	Animals and Pests	Household Functions	Health and Safety	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
LEVEL I	All doors, stairs and windows accessible; plumbing, electric and HVAC operational; fire and CO2 detectors installed and functional	Normal animal control (behavior/sanitation); approved number of animals; no evidence of rodents or insects	No excessive clutter; all rooms properly used; appliances functional; good housekeeping and maintenance	Safe, sanitary; no odors; medication control OK	OPTIONAL
LEVEL II	1 major exit blocked; 1 major appliance or HVAC device not working for longer than one season; some plumbing or electrical systems not fully functional; fire or CO2 detectors non-existent or non-functional	Evidence of inappropriate animal control; visible or odorous pet waste; visible pet fur/hair/feathers; light to medium evidence of common household pests/insects	Clutter beginning to obstruct living areas; slight congestion of exits, entrances, hallways and stairs; some household appliances not functional; inconsistent housekeeping and maintenance	Diminished appropriate sanitation; odors from dirty dishes, food prep, laundry, toilets; mildew present; medication control questionable	LIGHT PPE Medical or work gloves; caps (baseball or poly bouffant); first aid kit; insect repellent; hand sanitizer
LEVEL III	Outside clutter of items normally stored indoors; HVAC devices not working for longer than one season; fire or CO2 detectors non-existent or non-functional; one part of home has light structural damage (occurring within past six mos.)	Animal population exceeds local regulations; inappropriate animal control; inadequate sanitation; audible evidence of pests; medium level of spiders; light insect infestation such as bed bugs, lice, fleas, roaches, ants, silverfish, spiders, etc.	Clutter obstructing functions of key living areas; building up around exits, entrances, hallways and stairs; at least one room not being used for intended purpose; several appliances not functional; inappropriate usage of electric appliances and extension cords; substandard housekeeping and maintenance; hazardous substances in small quantities	Limited evidence of maintaining sanitation (heavily soiled food prep areas, dirty dishes, mildew); odors obvious and irritating; garbage cans not in use or overflowing; dirt, dust and debris; dirty laundry throughout house; Rx and OTC medications hazardous control (re children, pets, mentally impaired)	MEDIUM PPE Face masks or N95 respirator masks; eye protection; gloves; disposable coveralls; poly caps; work shoes/boots; first aid kit; hand sanitizer, insect repellent
LEVEL IV	Excessive outdoor clutter of items normally stored indoors; HVAC devices not working for longer than one year; CO2 detectors non-existent or non-functional; structural damage to home lasting longer than six months; water damaged floors, damaged walls and foundations, broken windows, doors or plumbing; odor or evidence of sewer backup	Animal population exceeds local ordinances; poor animal sanitation; destructive behavior; excessive spiders and webs; bats, squirrels, rodents in attic or basement (audible and visible); medium insect infestation	Diminished use and accessibility to key living areas; several rooms cluttered to extent they cannot be used for intended purposes; clutter inhibits access to doorways, hallways and stairs; inappropriate storage of hazardous/combustible materials; appliances used inappropriately; improper use of electric space heaters, fans or extension cords	Rotting food, organic contamination; expired, leaking cans or bottles, buckled sides and tops; dishes and utensils unusable; no linens on beds; sleeping on mattress; chair or floor; infestation of bedding and/or furniture; medications Rx and OTC medications easily accessible to anybody	FULL PPE Face masks or N95 respirator masks; safety goggles; medical or industrial grade latex or nitrile gloves; heavy duty work gloves; disposable coveralls; caps, work shoes/boots; first aid kit; hand sanitizer; insect repellent; headlamp or flashlight
LEVEL V	Extreme indoor/outdoor clutter; foliage overgrowth; abandoned machinery; ventilation inadequate or nonexistent; HVAC systems not working; water damaged floors, walls and foundation; broken windows, doors or plumbing; unreliable electrical, water and/ or septic systems; odor or sewer backup; irreparable damage to exterior and interior structure	Animals at risk and dangerous to people due to behavior, health and numbers; pervasive spiders, cockroaches, mice, rats, squirrels, raccoons, bats, snakes, etc.; heavy infestation of insects such as bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, etc.	Key living spaces not usable; all rooms not used for intended purposes; entrances, hallways and stairs blocked; toilets, sinks and tubs not functioning; hazardous conditions obscured by clutter; appliances unusable; hazardous and primitive use of kerosene, lanterns, candles, fireplace/ woodstove as primary source of heat and/ or light	Human urine and excrement present; rotting food; organic contamination; cans or jars expired, leaking or buckled; dishes and utensils buried or nonexistent; beds inaccessible or unusable due to clutter or infestation; pervasive mold and/ or mildew; moisture or standing water; Rx and OTC medications easily accessible to anybody; presence of expired Rx	FULL PPE REQUIRED N95 respirator mask or mask with organic filter(s); safety goggles; medical or industrial grade latex, or nitrile gloves; heavy duty work gloves; disposable coveralls, poly caps, work shoes/boots; first aid kit hand sanitizer; insect repellent; headlamp or flashlight

Set a Staging Area



Categorize, contain, label



Assess items one by one



One on One Consultations

- **Close of each session**
 - **Review the progress**
 - **Move items as close as possible to area of use**
 - **Eliminate trash/recycle**
 - **Have a plan for removing hazardous items**
 - **Confirm next appointment and area of focus**

One on One Consultations

- **Challenges will appear**
 - **Staying in same location over time**
 - **Co-morbid conditions add a twist**
 - **Client impatient with progress**
 - **Family impatient with progress**
 - **May stop as soon as “crisis” is averted**
 - **May need to change who they work with**

Helpful Resources

- **Education:**

<https://hoarding.iocdf.org/>

www.aarp.org (search hoarding for multiple articles)

www.childrenofhoarders.com

Helpful Resources

- **Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding**
by David Tolin, Randy O. Frost and Gail Stekedee
- **Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things**
by Randy O. Frost and Gail Stekedee
- **Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring: Therapist's Guide**
by Gail Stekedee and Randy O. Frost
- **Dirty Secret: A Daughter Comes Clean about Her Mother's Compulsive Hoarding**
by Jessie Sholl

Helpful Resources

- **Don't Toss My Memories in the Trash** by Vickie Dellaquila
- **Overcoming Compulsive Hoarding: Why You Save & How You Can Stop**
by Fugen Neziroglu, Jerome Bublick and Jose Yaryura-Tobias
- **The Hoarding Handbook: A Guide for Human Service Professionals**
by Christiana Bratiotis, Cristina Sorrentino-Schmalisch and Gail Steketee
- **Digging Out: Helping Your Loved One Manage Clutter, Hoarding and Compulsive Acquiring** by Michael A. Tompkins and Tamara L. Hartl

Legal and Environmental Health Perspective

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Public Health Nuisances (PHN) - Types

- **Private Nuisances** – disputes between neighbors
- **Public Nuisances** – concerns of cities, such as noise, junk cars, tall grass, etc.
- **Public Health Nuisances** – concerns of a Board of Health, or other delegated Health programs with an ordinance

PHN - Definitions What are the powers of a Board of Health

- **Stat.145A, Subd. 8. Removal and abatement of public health nuisances.**
 - (a) If a threat to the public health such as a public health nuisance, source of filth, or cause of sickness is found on any property, the board of health or its agent shall order the owner or occupant of the property to remove or abate the threat within a time specified in the notice but not longer than ten calendar days.

PHN - Definition

- MN Statutes, Chapter 145A states it is the *“act or failure to act”* that affects the public’s health
- Only a board of health can determine and order abatement of a PHN using 145A
- Non-board of health departments write orders based on their local ordinance
- Must be abated within 10 calendar days

PHN – Definition Continued

- Notices must be handed to the violator, sent by certified mail or posted on the property
- Depending on the condition the property may need to be posted “unfit for habitation” and entry (i.e. for clean up) may be restricted
- Police may need to monitor to ensure it is not occupied
- Clearance inspection is needed for re-occupancy

PHN – Practical “Working” Definition

- **Has the potential to make people sick.**
- **Provides harborage or attracts vermin.**
- **Can cause injury to those directly exposed.**

Who is involved?

- Police
- Child/ Adult Protection
- Animal Control
- City Housing Officials
- HAZ MAT Team
- Drug Task Force
- Health Agencies (Social Services)
- Fire Department
- Septic Company's
- Cleaning Company's
- City Councils
- Medical Responders
- Media
- Utility Company's (Gas and Electric)

Hoarding: Environmentally why is it a problem?

- Service workers not able to safely perform their job
- Clear access for emergency personnel
- Fire Load
- Infestations and vermin can migrate to neighbors' property
- Child and vulnerable adult health and safety

Hoarding: Why Do People Do It?

- Collections
- New Items
- Perceive Value
- Want to Recycle
- Great Deal



Hoarding

- Not able to use the room for the purpose intended.



Hoarding: Issues - Feces



Hoarding: Issues - Access

- Blocked Exits and Windows
- No Clear Paths to Doors and Windows



Hoarding: Clean Up



Hoarding: Clean Up (continued)

- Clean up in progress
- Sometimes it is a process



Hoarding: Cleanup Goal

- Hopefully We Go ...

From This



To This



Hoarding: Managing the Case and Clean-up

- Take a co-worker or go with the Police to every visit, *NEVER go alone!*
- Many need a search warrant
- Document with notes
- Label and date all evidence
- Document with photos

Hoarding: Managing the Case and Clean-up (continued)

- Ask everyone you deal with for a business card for your records, and also give your card out
- Keep copies of everything (i.e. invoices)
- Keep a calendar to track dates and time involvement, in case costs need to be assessed back to the property taxes, or for court appearances

Hoarding: Managing the Case and Clean-up (continued)

- Evaluate the risk of personal injury
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Tyvek suit
 - Boots or shoe covers
 - Niton 95 (N95) mask
 - Head gear (hard hat)
 - Eye protection

Hoarding: What if it is not clean after 10 days?

- Time may be extended (sometimes issues are beyond the control of the property owner)
- The Health Agency may decide to clean the property and assess the property taxes

Hoarding: Why is MNHTF and Env. Health Collaboration Important?

- Chance to discuss with other professionals who work with hoarding issues.
- Learn other's perspective on hoarding
- Finding out what each person's goals are and how we can help each other
- Support

Dale Fine

Family Member Perspective

Dale Fine

Thank you!

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