

Solving the Puzzle: Identifying and Understanding Hoarding Disorder



GMS

Presentations and Training

Goals

- Hoarding Disorder
 - Definition
 - Players Involved
 - Levels of Hoarding
 - Causes
 - Symptoms
 - Dangers
 - Resources
 - Best-Practices

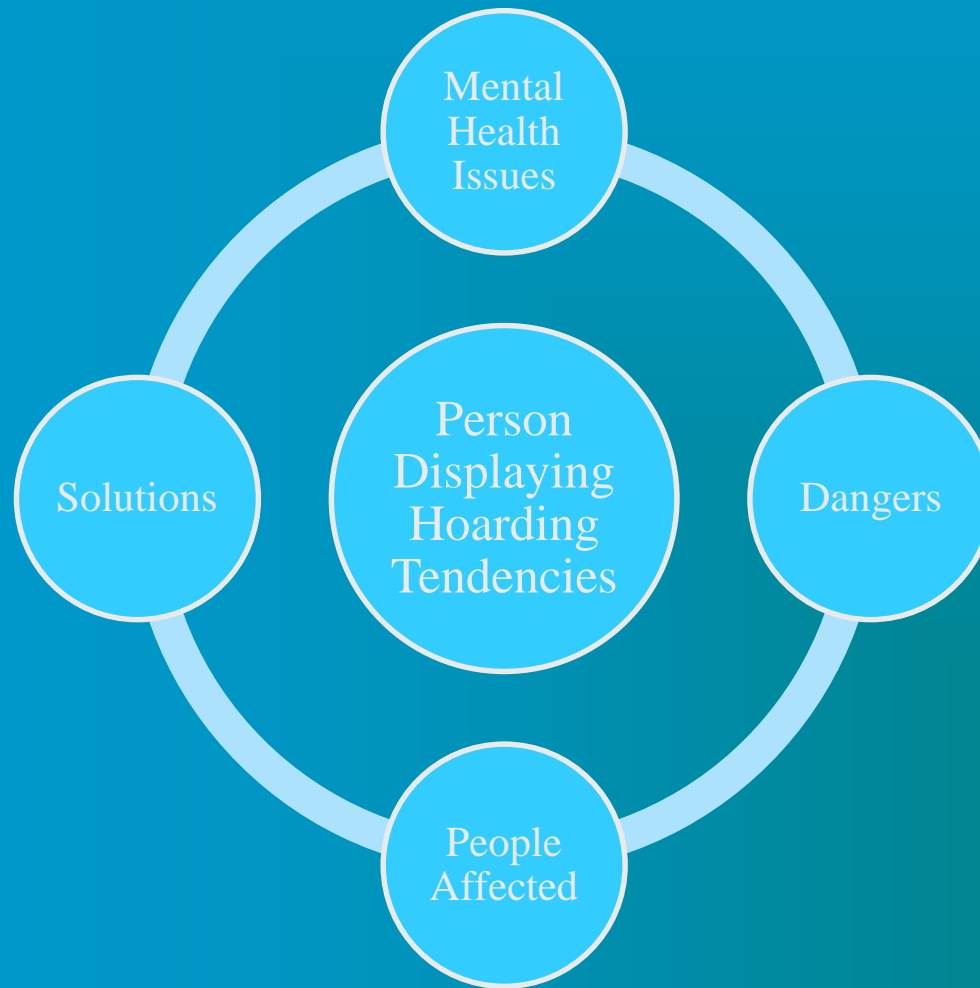


Background-Greg Smith



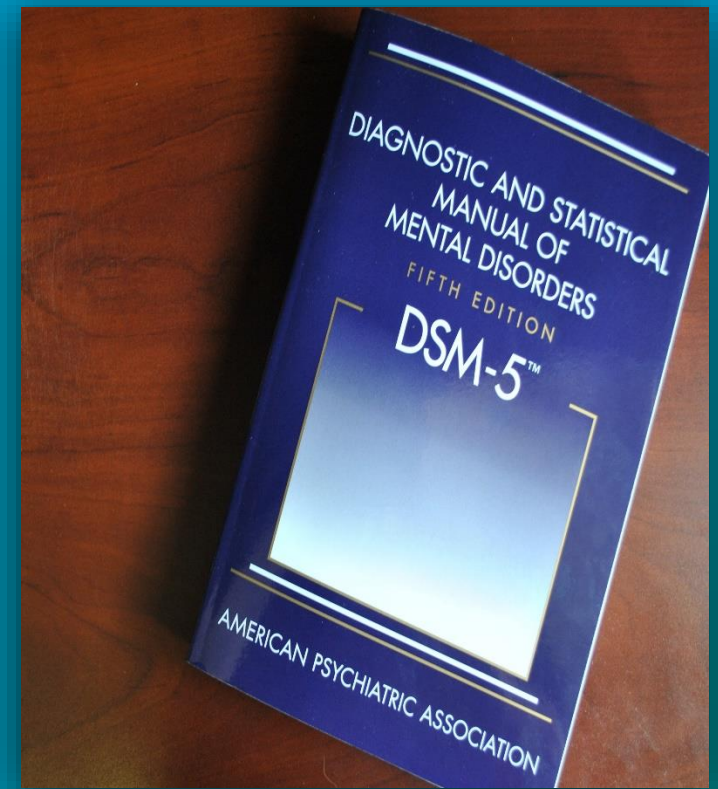
- Over ten years as a municipal inspector dealing with hoarding situations
- Current
 - Professional Educator
 - Housing Inspector-City of Duluth
 - President-Minnesota Association of Housing Code Officials
- Testified in court on hoarding cases for municipal enforcement efforts and evictions
- Taken extensive training on hoarding
- Unique understanding of hoarding: family member that has Hoarding Disorder

The Puzzle of Hoarding



Definition

- DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association)
- May 2013 defining “Hoarding Disorder”

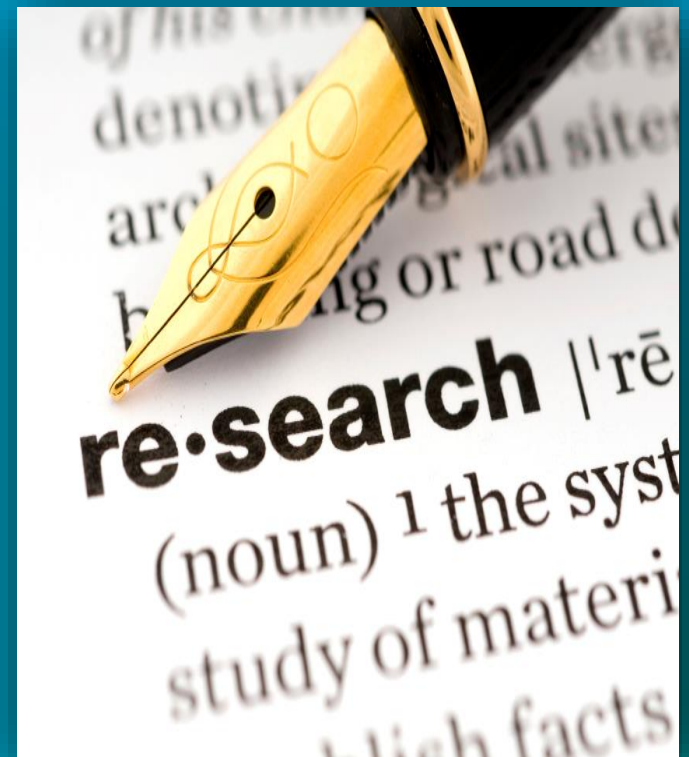


Who Hoards?

- Starts in childhood
- Men hoard more than women
- 5% of the general population hoard to some level (The Hoarding Task Force)

• People with lower income have shown to hoard more than people with higher income

• It is estimated that up to 1.2 million people suffer from compulsive hoarding in the USA



Symptoms



- Clutter will continue to build up and may get to the point that rooms and areas are no longer useable for living
- Indecisive, perfectionism, avoidance, procrastination and high intelligence.



Symptoms

- Persistent Difficulty discarding or parting with possessions because of a perceived need to save them
- Often Hidden from family, friends and neighbors
- Experiences Distress at the thought of getting rid of items





Why Do People Do It?

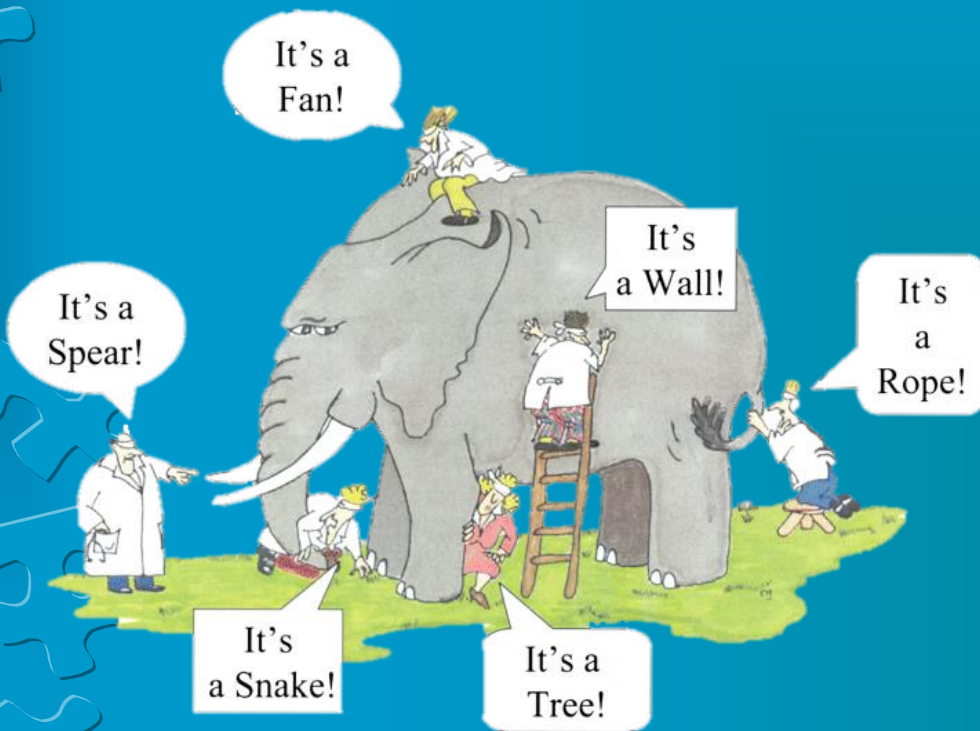
**NO ONE
WANTS
TO LIVE
THIS
WAY!!!!**

Why Do People Do It?



- Occurs in all cultures
- Trigger or Traumatic Event
- (Cromer, Schmidt, and Murphy, 2007)
 - Family History
 - Death
 - Divorce
 - Lost Job
 - Moment in History

Perspective



- Feeling: Items are unique or will be needed at some time
- Assigned emotional significance and remind the person of a better time or happy event
- Creates a “safe” feeling while surrounded by items
- They don't want to waste

Hoarding is NOT:

- Laziness
- Chronic Disorganization
- Lack of experience organizing



The stages of **HOARDING**

Scale developed by the National Study Group on Chronic Disorganization:

Level I

Standard household with a low level of clutter.



Level II

Household requires professional organizers.



Level III

Household requires organizers and possibly mental health providers.



Level IV

Household needs help from a team of service providers, including cleaners.



Level V

Help is needed from a range of agencies, including social services and fire safety.



Dangers



- Blocked egress
- Halls
- Stairs
- Windows
- Doorways
- Piles falling

Health and Safety Hazards

- Increased risk of falls
- Being Trapped



Health and Safety Hazards



- Un/In-Sanitary Conditions
 - Food waste
 - Pet waste
 - Human waste
 - Rodents
 - Insects



Emergency Personnel



- Dangers to First Responders
 - Excessive Fire Loading
 - Piles Falling (can't find patient)
 - Not being able to maneuver in the unit

Addressing the Problem

- Communication
 - Don't use the words: "hoarder, trash, junk"
 - Be compassionate and understanding
 - **DON'T JUDGE**
 - Work with family members and loved ones



Best Practices

- Plan a visit
- Document everything!
- Create a plan with the tenant and stick to it
 - Written Agreement
 - Offer Services
- Assistance with Cleaning?
- Brief Monitoring Check-in's



Calling for Help



- Contact authorities when needed
 - Fire
 - Police
 - Attorney
 - **Mental Health**

Call for Help!!!



- If there is a threat to the health and safety of:
 - A child or minor in unsanitary conditions
 - Vulnerable adult
 - Animals
 - Disabled
 - Danger to other tenants in the building

To Clean or Not to Clean?

- Clean Outs
- Are they effective?
- Recidivism





Resources

- Minnesota Hoarding Task Force
 - <https://mnhtf.org/task-force>
- Clutter Movement
 - <https://www.facebook.com/cluttermovement/>
- The Hoarding Project
 - <http://thehoardingproject.org/home/>



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