



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Arizona Center
on Aging

Hoarding Disorder

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Definition

- The accumulation of and failure to discard a large number of possessions that would be deemed of limited or no value to others; significant distress, and/or indecision associated with discarding
- Excessive clutter that prevents normal activities for which rooms were designed
- Significant distress or impairment in functioning as a result of this accumulation



Squalor

- Filth – human waste, spoiled/rotten food, hazardous chemicals/materials
- Rare – only about 1% of object hoarding environments have squalor – but it is present in 100% of animal hoarding environments



Hoarding Disorder

- DSM 4: Previously listed as one of eight criteria for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- DSM 5: a stand alone diagnosis; 6 criteria must be met



Prevalence

- Estimated 5% of US population = 16 million
- Prevalence greater in men, but women seek treatment more often – average age in treatment = 50
- Average age onset = 11-20
- Family history is common
- Occurs in all cultures, income and education levels



How

- Acquired by

Compulsive buying

Compulsive acquiring of free things

Passive acquisition



Why

- Saving

Sentimental

Instrumental



What happens

- Disorganization

Fear of putting things out of sight

Fear of making the wrong decision

Random piles will include items of mixed importance

Health and Safety Issues

- Increased risk of falls, infections, respiratory problems
- Limited ability to move around in or access parts of the home
- High risk of fire / difficult to escape – can put first responders at risk
- Co-occurring mental illness

Health and Safety Issues

- Hoarding situations will continue to deteriorate until the health and safety of the individual and community are at risk



Emotions

- Suffer severe emotional distress when attempting to discard items
- Lack an awareness of the severity of their behavior
- May feel overwhelmed by the burden of their possessions
- defensive

-



Assessment Tools

- 15 published assessment tools, including:
 - Structured Interview for Hoarding Disorder (SIHD)
 - Hoarding Rating Scale
 - Clutter Image Rating

Structured Interview for Hoarding Disorder (SIHD)

- The questions contained in this interview relate to each of the six criteria listed in the DSM 5 needed to evaluate the presence of hoarding.
- For a diagnosis of hoarding disorder all six criteria must be endorsed. If any of the criteria are not met, the diagnosis can be ruled out.

Hoarding Rating Scale

Likert scale 0 (no problem) – 8 (extreme, daily); 4 or higher is considered a significant response



Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen



1



2



3

OCD Foundation: 9 photos (Kitchen, Living Room, Bedroom) to measure degree of clutter



Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen



4



5



6

Photo # 4 or higher impinges enough on people's lives that we would encourage them to get help for their hoarding behavior



Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen



7



8



9



Treatment Options

- Remember that Hoarding Disorder is a mental health issue
- Counseling MUST occur
- Forced clean ups cause serious anxiety – not recommended
- Medication has little effect on hoarding behaviors



Treatment Options

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT focuses upon creating a different relationship with one's possessions

The work focuses on organizing, sorting, discarding, decision making, and learning to control the urge to acquire new possessions



Treatment Options

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy paired with Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) Therapy



Communication

- Be respectful – nonjudgmental in words and behavior
- Use their language
- Value their belongings
- Initially, use harm reduction approach to ensure safety
- Do not impose your feelings – “you will feel better if...”
- Praise, frequently and genuinely

Communication – things to know

- Mental illness: motivation and insight can fluctuate
- Combine verbal and written communication
- Non-compliance may not be what it looks like

Reasons for Resistance

- Poor insight
- Afraid we will throw their stuff away – lack of trust
- Different solutions in mind
- We don't understand how valuable their stuff is

Possible Solutions to Resistance

- Help them gain insight
- Assign small achievable tasks / past achievements



Animal Hoarding

- Accumulation of more animals than a typical pet owner; not a breeder
- Failure to provide adequate facilities for the animals; overcrowded or unsanitary living conditions, inadequate veterinary care, poor nutrition, animals unhealthy
- Estimated 2,000 new cases each year – affecting 250,000 animals

Animal Hoarder – Types

Overwhelmed Hoarder

Rescue Hoarder

Exploiter Hoarder

Similarities with object hoarding

- Large volume of items / disorganization
- Normal movement through the home is restricted / rooms can't be used as intended
- Attempts to remove animals causes serious anxiety
- Low insight – lack of awareness of severity of behavior

Differences with object hoarding

- 100% of animal hoarded homes have squalor
- Animal hoarders typically concentrate on one species



Treatment Options

- Limited research on animal hoarding and treatment
- Counselors focus on building a trusting relationship; reducing social isolation; themes related to grief, loss and attachment
- DSM 5 Hoarding Disorder – Not enough research and prevalence data for full inclusion; animal hoarding is listed in the appendix



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Animal Hoarding / Cruelty to Animals

is

Against the law

REPORT IT

Call:

Police

Animal Cruelty Taskforce

Humane Society

Animal Care Centers

Interdisciplinary Approach to Hoarding Disorder

- Resources need to work together
- Depending on the mission structure can vary

Our Mission: to provide educational information and available resources related to Hoarding Disorder and related topics for working professionals and community members in Southern Arizona

Southern Arizona Hoarding Taskforce

Started February 2012

We are now 1 of 8 chapters across the state of Arizona – one of the few states with a statewide taskforce

Neighbors.... What to do

**If you are concerned about the welfare of anyone living in the home you can call:

Police ask for a welfare check

Adult Protective Services

Child Protective Services

Regarding the property: code enforcement

Concerns about a relative who lives out of state –

If you have a relative/friend who lives out of state and you are worried about their hoarding behavior –

- 1) Safety first
- 2) See if their region has a Hoarding Taskforce
- 3) Contact their local Area Agency on Aging
- 4) Research Web for hoarder support groups and family support groups (i.e.: Children of Hoarders)

Hoarding References

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Thank you

Questions?

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