

# **“Too Much Stuff”**

**Presented by:**

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Wellness & Spirituality) Program**



**Mental Health  
Association  
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# What is a Hoarding Disorder?

- Is there a large accumulation of possessions (regardless of value)?
- Are there rooms that cannot be used for their intended purpose due to the volume of possessions?
- Is anyone experiencing distress or impairment in functioning caused by the clutter?

*If you say yes to ALL THREE questions, then it is reasonable to conclude that there are hoarding related concerns that should be addressed.*

## Primary Characteristics of Hoarding

Three main types of problems:

1. Compulsive acquisition
2. Saving behavior or difficulty discarding possessions
3. Disorganization in many areas of life, but that mainly manifests in extensive clutter.

Determining the different type of hoarding that are going on in a particular situation is key to a successful recovery effort.

- Food
- Animals
- Garbage
- Waste
- Bodily Fluids

While cluttering and hoarding may differ, taking the first step to reclaiming a home is the same. Finding the right hoarding cleaning service is essential to the project and to living a happy, healthy life.

## Reasons For Hoarding

- Items are perceived as valuable
- Items provide a source of security
- Fear of forgetting or losing items
- Constant need to collect and keep things
- Obtaining love not found from people
- Fear others will obtain their personal information
- Physical limitations and frailty
- Self-neglect
- Stressful life events



# Beliefs around Hoarding Disorder/ Finding & Keeping

- I can't bear the thought of making the wrong decision.
- I'd better save this because I will probably need it sometime.
- If this possession may be of use to someone else, I am responsible for saving it for him or her.
- Throwing away this possession is like throwing away a part of me.
- I like to maintain the sole control over my things.
- It upsets me when someone throws something of mine away without my permission.

## Feelings Associated with Those Who Clutter/Hoard

- Anxiety
- Boredom
- Distractedness
- Fatigue
- Grief
- Hopelessness
- Resistance
- Anger/Rage Hostility
- Sorrow

## Negative Aspects of Persons Who Tend To Hoard

- Experience a high degree of shame and embarrassment
- They know something isn't normal
- Overwhelmed – Don't know where or how to start to think this through
- Feel out of Control
- Ask themselves “Am I crazy or not?”
- Fear of being found out
- They live in dread a repair person or paramedic may come
- They can't seem to initiate organizational behavior

## How Persons Who Tend To Hoard Perceive Professional Helpers

- At best, nice but not very helpful
- Judgmental
- Arrogant
- Pushy
- Impatient, Hasty
- Not understanding
- Disrespectful
- Invasive
- Threatening/bullying
- Overly serious “way, way too serious”

# What is Squalor?

- Degradation from neglect or filth.
- Examples:
  - *Rotting Food*
  - *Human or Animal Waste*
  - *Infestation*
  - *Mold or health hazards*
- Cluttered living can exist with or without poor sanitation



# Community Impact

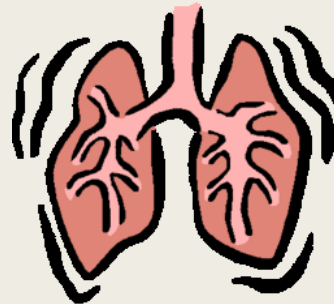
## Safety Concerns:

- Risk of inaccessibility to the home
- Risk of avalanche due to collapse of piles
- Exits that are obstructed
- Collapsing floors
- Faulty electricity



## Personal Health Effects:

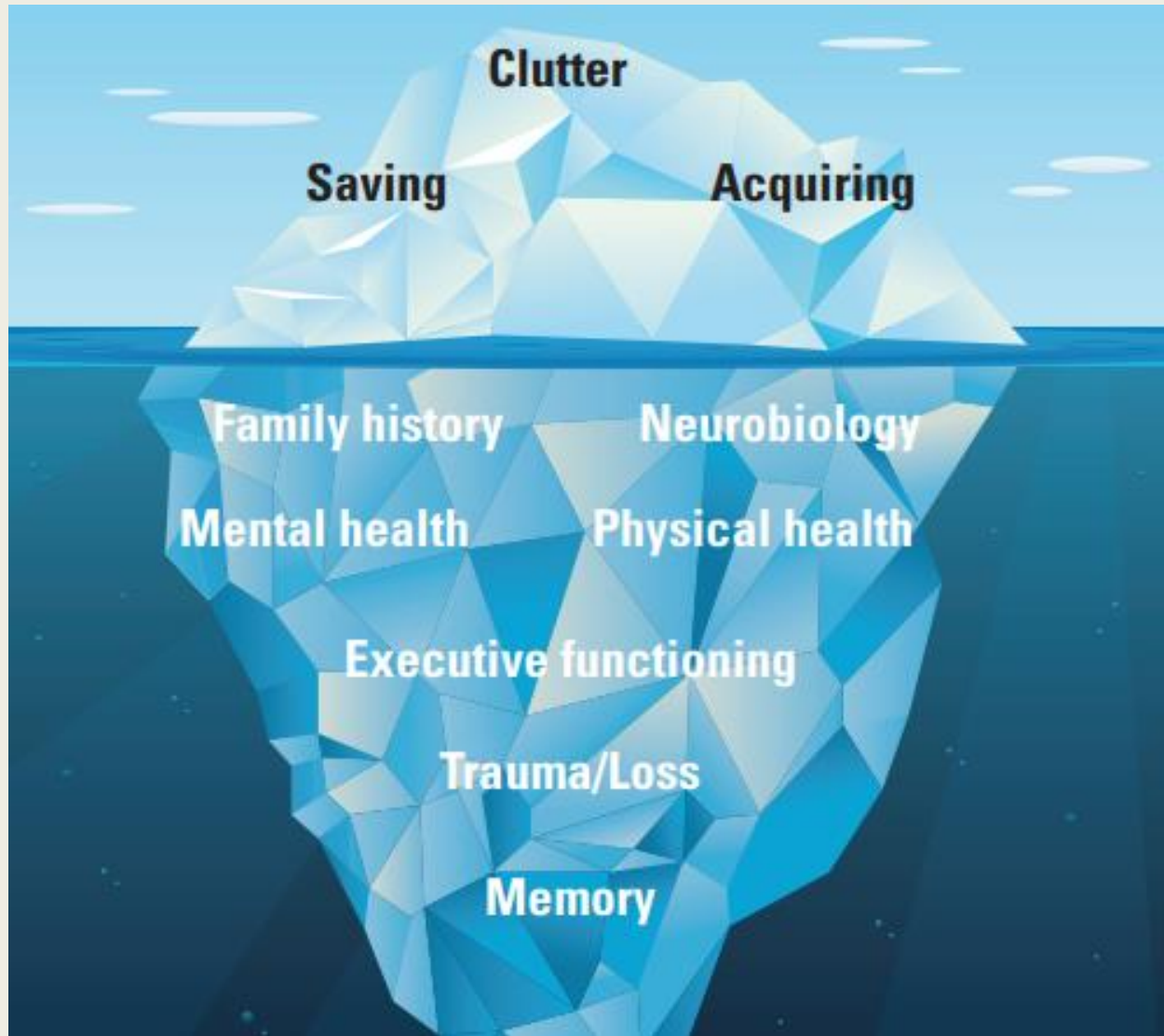
- Infestations
- Respiratory issues
- Fall hazards
- Inability to locate important items (medications)
- Inability to prepare healthy food



## Financial Burden:

- Professional clean-up services
- Removal or evicted costs
- Clean-out costs
- Cost to neighbors, friends, family...





# WHY?



*Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (2015). Rethinking hoarding intervention: MBHP's analysis of the hoarding intervention and tenancy preservation project. Boston: self.*

# Language Change





# Language Change



Person with too much stuff  
Person living with Hoarding Disorder

# How to speak to someone with *too much stuff...*

## Gather some information:

- Has anyone ever expressed concern about your safety due to the volume of possessions in your home?
- Do you have any concern over the number of items in your home?

## Ways to recommend support:

### *I am so concerned about YOU...*

- Did you know that there are a lot of people who struggle with stuff?
- Would you consider letting someone help you with your stuff?
- There are researched ways to help you...



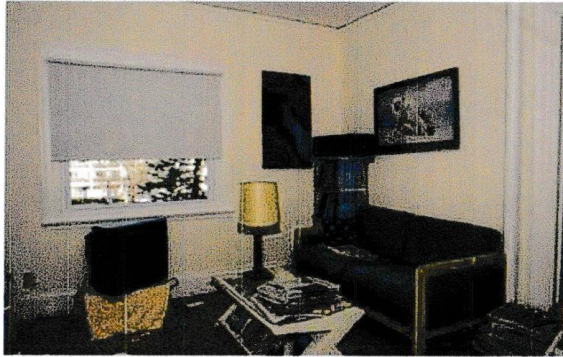
# Some Best Practices

- Cognitive Behavioral Treatment Model
- Harm Reduction
- Task Forces
- Groups (Support Groups, Educational Workshops, Buried in Treasures)
- Home Based Services / Case Management



# Clutter Image Rating: Living Room

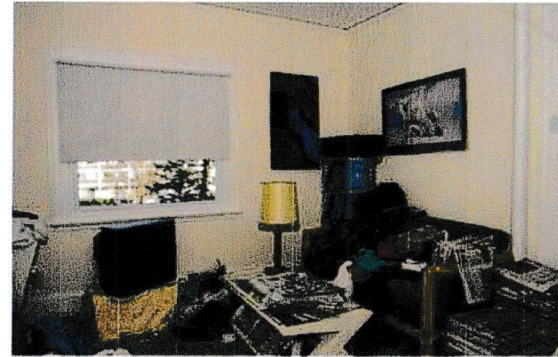
Please select the photo below that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.



1



2



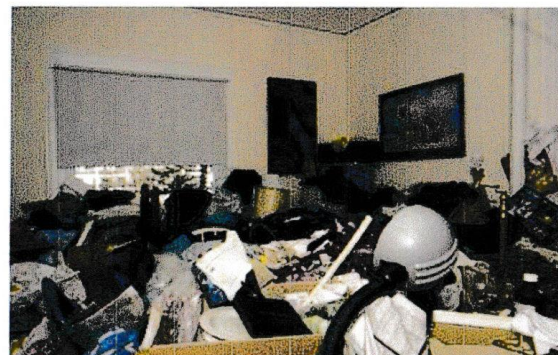
3



4



5



6



7



8



9

## Clutter Image Rating



[About](#)

Clutter Image Rating (CIR) is a pictorial tool to determine the amount of clutter in a person's home. The pictures are numbered from 1 = "no clutter," to 9 = "severe clutter" for the three main rooms (kitchen, living room, and bedroom) in a typical home. Please select the number of the picture that most closely matches the level of clutter in each room that you are rating. Human service professionals and clients can use this instrument to assess each room in a home and

[Begin Rating](#)

*CIR App Credits:*

Ann Ming Samborski  
Sophie Lehar  
Anyssa Buchanan  
Maggie Lehar  
Jordana Muroff, PhD  
Boston University

Frost, R.O., Steketee, G., Tolin, D.T., & Renaud, S. (2008). Development and validation of the Clutter Image Rating. *J Psychopathol Behav Assess*; 30, pp. 193-203.  
Steketee, G., & Frost, R. O. (2007). *Compulsive hoarding and acquiring: A therapist guide*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.



# HOMES<sup>®</sup> Multi-disciplinary Hoarding Risk Assessment

## ☐ Health

- ☐ Cannot use bathtub/shower
- ☐ Cannot access toilet
- ☐ Garbage/Trash Overflow

- ☐ Cannot prepare food
- ☐ Cannot sleep in bed
- ☐ Cannot use stove/fridge/sink

- ☐ Presence of spoiled food
- ☐ Presence of feces/Urine (human or animal)
- ☐ Cannot locate medications or equipment

- ☐ Presence of insects/rodents
- ☐ Presence of mold or chronic dampness

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## ☐ Obstacles

- ☐ Cannot move freely/safely in home
- ☐ Inability for EMT to enter/gain access

- ☐ Unstable piles/avalanche risk
- ☐ Egresses, exits or vents blocked or unusable

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- ☐ Does not seem to understand seriousness of problem
- ☐ Defensive or angry
- ☐ Unaware, not alert, or confused
- ☐ Does not seem to accept likely consequence of problem
- ☐ Anxious or apprehensive

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- ☐ Threat to health or safety of child/minor
- ☐ Threat to health or safety of person with disability
- ☐ Threat to neighbor with common wall
- ☐ Threat to health or safety of older adult
- ☐ Threat to health or safety of animal

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## ☐ Structure & Safety

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

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Bratitotis, C., Sorrentino-Schmalisch, C., & Steketee, G. (2011). *The hoarding handbook: Guide for Human Service Professionals*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Case Scenario

Mary's history of trauma, compulsive acquiring and difficulty discarding of her possessions has resulted in a clutter-filled home. She has experienced social isolation due to embarrassment about others seeing her house. Even Mary's adult children who live locally are not invited to visit.

Mary invites you to visit her home. And after weeks of reschedules and cancellations you finally arrive at Mary's front door. You knock and wait for several minutes, Mary finally answers the door. It is clear she is anxious, She comes outside and spends about 15 minutes talking to you on her front step. When she finally invites you in, she grabs her chest, gasps and says "okay welcome to the house of a hoarder"

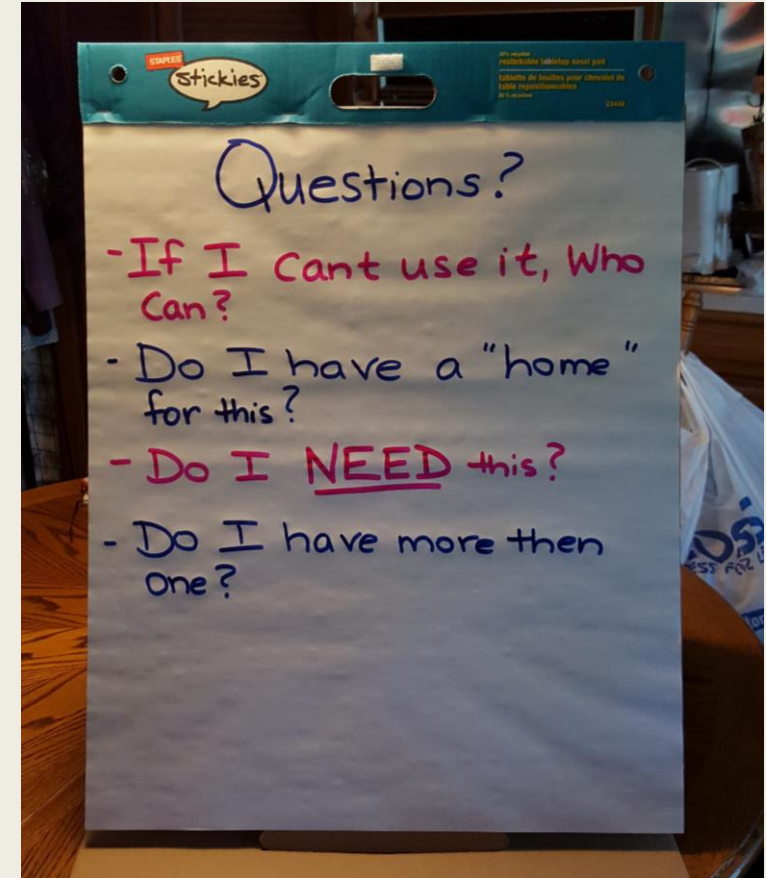
As you enter the home, you are surrounded by mountains of stuff...You've made it inside!

**What are the initial questions you would want to ask Mary to build rapport, and demonstrate understanding?**



# Potential Initial Questions

- How long has it been since someone has been here?
  - 10 years
- How many rooms/ houses/ layout?
  - 3 bed, 2 ½ bath, basement, sunroom, 4 car two story garage, two sheds
- Why are you willing to work on this now?  
(Identify the motivator)

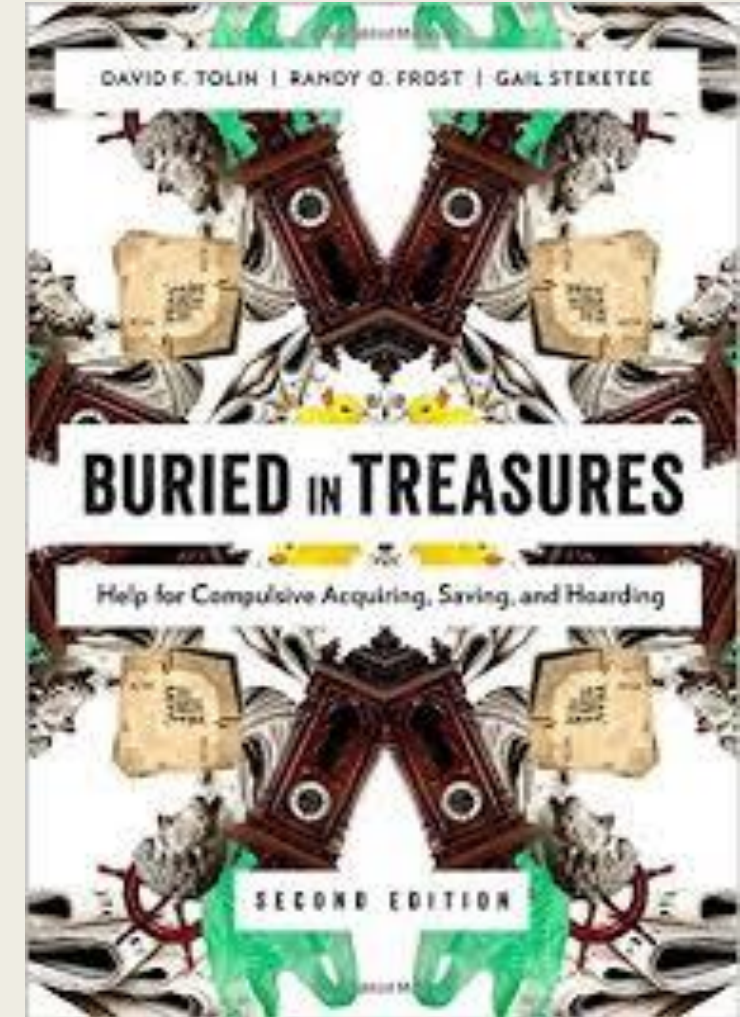


*All along remember you are a guest in Mary's house*

# Groups

## ■ Buried in Treasures (BIT) Workshop

an intensive sixteen-week action oriented workshop centered around building long term skills and strategies around hoarding disorder. The workshop is designed by Lee Shuer and Dr. Randy Frost to compliment *Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding* (Tolin, Frost,& Steketee, 2nd ed. 2013, Oxford University Press).



Mathews CA, Uhm S, Chan J, Gause M, Franklin J, Plumadore J, Stark SJ, Yu W, Vigil O, Salazar M, Delucchi KL, Vega E. *Psychiatry Res.* 2016 Mar 30;237:331-8. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2016.01.019. Epub 2016 Jan 21

Tolin, D. F., Frost, R. O., & Steketee, G. (2014). *Buried in Treasures: Helping for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

# Sorting & Discarding

Emphasis is placed on helping participants learn sorting/ discarding skills, develop organizational systems and strategies for reducing acquisition, understand their reasons for saving, and untangle the complex emotions tied to the objects collected.



*Edsell-Vetter, J. (2015). Effective Hoarding Intervention: Using a Case Management Model For Reducing Clutter and Changing Behavior (K. Fulton & L. Hacker, Eds.). Boston, MA: Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership.*



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**VOTE**

**2020  
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CALENDAR**

**General Election**

- Voter registration deadline: October 5
- First day of early voting: October 19
- Last day of early voting: October 30
- General Election Day: November 3

[https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/home/hotlines/MH\\_Dir\\_COMPLETE.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/home/hotlines/MH_Dir_COMPLETE.pdf)



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