

Southwestern Vermont Hoarding Task Force in Rutland County

Goals and purpose of the task force, rating scale, and basics about hoarding disorder



Presenter: Kate Tibbs
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Webinar Presentation

Content

- ❖ *Basics about hoarding*
- ❖ *What to look for*
- ❖ *Why people hoard*
- ❖ *Treatment*
- ❖ *Homeowners and hoarding*
- ❖ *Contact info.*
- ❖ *Resources*



Basics about hoarding / hoarding disorder

❖ What is hoarding?



Photo taken by BROCC Weatherization team

- Included in DSM-5
- Difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of the value
- Excessive clutter in the home to the point where it becomes unsafe & unhealthy for everyone (pets, too!) in the home

Basics about hoarding / hoarding disorder continued

- ❖ Affects approximately 2-5% of the population; more recent studies have calculated 5% or 1 in 20 people

- ❖ Has harmful effects for the person their family members
 - emotional, physical, social, financial, and even legal

- ❖ Compulsive hoarding – attempting to decrease stress & anxiety

- ❖ Clutter creates falls, health and fire hazards – negatively effects lifestyle

- ❖ Quantity of their collected items sets them apart
 - Excessive shopping, collecting trash, bargain shopping

 - Papers, books, clothes, food, furniture, etc.

Characteristics of hoarding

- ❖ Men and women of all socioeconomic status & ethnic groups
- ❖ The more isolated the person, the worse the hoarding will be (but just because a person is isolated does not mean they have a hoarding issue)
- ❖ Strenuous relationship with family/friends because of hoarding
- ❖ May have memory issues / short attention span
- ❖ Onset age can start as early as 10 years old
- ❖ Anxious, depressed, have social phobias, co-morbid diagnoses
- ❖ Experienced traumatic event(s)
- ❖ Progresses with age



Photo taken by BROOC Weatherization team

Characteristics of hoarding continued

❖ Signs to look for:

- Frequent conversations about possessions
- Will not allow you to enter the home, or will only allow you to enter parts of the home
- Puts off repairs/paying bills
- Shops often and acquires more items
- Believes cleaning/organizing as a *major* task
- Multiple ER visits due to falls or respiratory problems
- Frequent home shopping network shopper
- Their car may be filled with items
- Person may be “living” in their car



Photo taken by BROOC Weatherization team

Why do people hoard?

❖ Common themes of hoarding

- *Sentimental* – connection to important people, places, and events; brings up memories and emotions; may experience exaggerated attachment with inanimate objects and think they have emotions; becomes an extension of self
- *Instrumental* – “just in case items”, has a clear functional purpose, excessive collection; newspapers, flyers, magazines, shoes, toothbrushes, etc.
- *Intrinsic* – no particular use for item, seen as appealing, special, or has a unique craftsmanship, views item as beautiful or pretty



Photo taken by BROCC Weatherization team

Can people be treated for hoarding disorder?

- ❖ Person has to WANT help and be willing to change their behaviors
- ❖ Most common treatment: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) -- develops connections with the person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
 - Strong emphasis on changing the client's behavior, understanding the motive (increases functioning, rational thinking, and decreases negative feelings)
 - Challenges the thoughts and beliefs about the client's attachment to hoarded items, addresses the need to collect new items
- ❖ Group treatment can be more effective – support groups, Buried in Treasures workshop
- ❖ Motivational interviewing; learning new behaviors
- ❖ Client themselves should work on how they think, feel and act to have a positive effect on brain functions
- ❖ ★ Work with therapists & professionals to develop ways to maintain clutter and hoarding habits, & help prevent relapse into old behaviors ★

Can people be treated for hoarding disorder (continued)?

- ❖ Medications can be used – particularly used for depression – studies have found this is not very effective
- ❖ Support from family, friends, community, etc.
- ❖ Early treatment rules (examples)
 - Team does not touch/throw away without permission
 - Client makes all decisions about possessions
 - Categories are established before handling possessions
 - Client verbalizes decisions



Clutter Image Rating Scale

Clutter Image Rating: Bedroom

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Homeowners and hoarding

- ❖ When encountering a homeowner who has hoarding disorder, voice your concern about the conditions of their home and talk about the consequences of living in a hoarded home
 - If there are children in the home, DCF could be contacted and become involved
 - If there are elderly adults in the home, APS could be contacted and become involved
- ❖ Ask if you can take pictures or videos; the person may be “blinded” by the condition of their home and not recognize there is a problem
- ❖ Contact the town health and safety officer
- ❖ If the person has family members or community members who they trust and get along with to help encourage the person to change their living habits

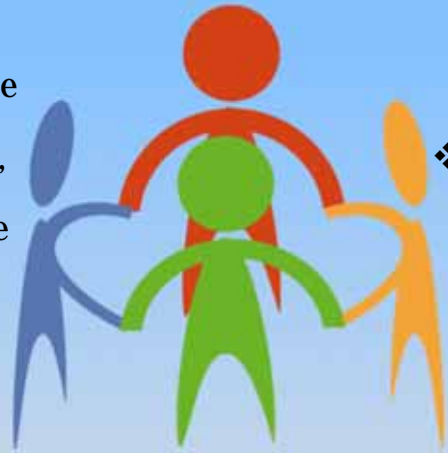


Goals & purpose for the task force

- ❖ Provide awareness and training opportunities to professionals and the public

- ❖ Identify best practices to improve services and eviction prevention, and to improve the quality of life for people with hoarding disorder

- ❖ Recommend and discuss changes to the task force



- ❖ Discuss cases to brainstorm ways to support people and certain situations with clients when needed

- ❖ Provide an inventory of resources that are available for people to get the help they need/want through <http://www.broc.org>

- ❖ Educate the community and public about hoarding disorder, the need for help, and the resources available to help

Southwestern Vermont Hoarding Task Force Info.

- ❖ Meets monthly; 4th Wednesday of every month
- ❖ 10:00am-11:00am at BROC (45 Union St., Rutland, VT)
- ❖ Contact information:
 - Kate Tibbs
 - BROC
 - 45 Union St., Rutland, VT 05701
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Sources cited

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Frost, R. O., & Steketee, G. (2011). *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*. New York, NY: First Mariner Books.

Books to read!

- ❖ Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding by David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost, & Gail Steketee
- ❖ Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things by Randy O. Frost & Gail Steketee
- ❖ The Hoarding Handbook: A Guide for Human Service Professionals by Christiana Bratiotis, Cristina Sorrentino Schmalisch, Gail Steketee
- ❖ Mess: One Man's Struggle to Clean Up His House and His Act by Barry Yourgrau
- ❖ Digging Out: Helping Your Loved One Manage Clutter, Hoarding, and Compulsive Acquiring by Michael A. Tompkins
- ❖ What Every Professional Organizer Needs To Know About Hoarding by Judith Kolberg
- ❖ Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring: Therapist Guide (Treatments That Work) by Gail Steketee