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HOARDING
CLUTTERED HOMES AND CHILDREN



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SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Identify possible indicators of Hoarding Disorder (HD)
- Describe the psychological toll that Hoarding Disorder (HD) can have on children
- Describe two strategies to support children when intervening in a hoarding situation

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HOARDING DISORDER: DSM-V CRITERIA

- Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with personal possessions, even those of apparently useless or limited value, due to strong urges to save items, distress, and/or indecision associated with discarding.
- The symptoms result in the accumulation of a large number of possessions that fill up and clutter the active living areas of the home, workplace, or other personal surroundings (e.g., office, vehicle, yard) and prevent normal use of the space. If all living areas are uncluttered, it is only because of others' efforts (e.g., family members, authorities) to keep these areas free of possessions.

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HOARDING DISORDER: DSM-V SPECIFIERS

- **Specify if with Excessive Acquisition**
 - If symptoms are accompanied by excessive collecting or buying or stealing of items that are not needed or for which there is no available space.
- **Specify whether hoarding beliefs and behaviors are currently characterized by:**
 - **Good or fair insight:** Recognizes that hoarding-related beliefs and behaviors (pertaining to difficulty discarding items, clutter, or excessive acquisition) are problematic.
 - **Poor insight:** Mostly convinced that hoarding-related beliefs and behaviors (pertaining to difficulty discarding items, clutter, or excessive acquisition) are not problematic despite evidence to the contrary.
 - **Delusional:** Completely convinced that hoarding-related beliefs and behaviors (pertaining to difficulty discarding items, clutter, or excessive acquisition) are not problematic despite evidence to the contrary.

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CO-OCCURRING PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSES

- Major Depression (57%)
- Social Phobia (29%)
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (28%)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (17%)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (16%)
- Specific Phobia (12%)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (6%)
- Dysthymia (4%)
- Panic (2%)

Frost, Steketee, Tolin, & Brown, 2006; Hall, Tolin, Frost, & Steketee, 2013

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ESTIMATED PREVALENCE RATES

- **26 in 1000 - Whole Spectrum of Hoarding**
 - 19,235 estimated cases in Alaska
 - 8.4 million estimated cases in US
- **.5 in 1000 - Diogenes Syndrome**
Gross self-neglect, domestic squalor, hoarding of trash
 - 370 estimated cases in Alaska
 - 162,850 estimated cases in US

(Based on overall populations of 739,795 for Alaska and 325.7 million for United States)

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**EVALUATION PROCESS:
ADLS, LIVING CONDITIONS, SAFETY**

- Activities of Daily Living
 - Use refrigerator, stove, sink
 - Move around inside the house
 - Exit home quickly
 - Use toilet, bath/shower, bathroom sink
 - Sit in sofa/chair
- Living Conditions
 - Structural Damage
 - Presence of rotten food items
 - Water/heat not working
 - Presence of urine or feces (human or animal)
 - Insect infestation
- Safety Issues
 - Fire hazard
 - Unsanitary
 - Access for medical emergency personnel
 - Blocked exits
 - Clutter outside house

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**EVALUATION PROCESS:
RISK TO INDIVIDUAL OR OTHERS**

- Local ordinances and codes
 - Fire and Safety
 - Housing Code (utilities, water and sewer)
 - Animal
- Risk to health and well-being (individual and others)
- Level of urgency
- Unsafe or unsanitary conditions resulting from clutter
 - Structural integrity of the property
 - Fire code violations
 - Water/sewer functioning
- Community standards
- Individual's ability to consent to interventions

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NEGATIVE IMPACT OF HOARDING BEHAVIORS - CHILDREN

- Embarrassment
- Social Isolation
- Helplessness
- Resentment
 - Accommodations made for clutter
 - Not valued as much as the possessions
- Boundaries
 - Lacking personal space
- Strained Relationships
 - Isolated from other family members
 - Caregiver burden
- Psychological toll
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Impaired coping

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UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS

- Why didn't I know about this?
- How could they "let" this happen?
- I am so frustrated
- I am embarrassed
- I hope this doesn't get out
- I don't understand how someone can be so lazy
- Why can't they just clean it up?
- I'm angry!
- I avoid because I am stressed
- Am I to blame?

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WHEN A HOARDING SITUATION COMES TO YOUR ATTENTION...

- Does the individual know this call is being made?
- What are the expectations of services?
- Why is the call being made now? Not a month ago or a month from now?
- What are the concerns or fears related to the physical environment?
- How much is known about the situation?

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GOALS:WORKING WITH CLUTTER

- Harm Reduction: address health and safety issues
- Increase usable living space
- Improve decision making skills
- Reduce compulsive acquisition
- Prevent repeated crises
- Improve individual's and family's access to self-care resources
- Foster a long term plan for stability

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DANGEROUS APPROACHES

- Quick cleanouts
- "Interventions"
- Unrealistic time frames
- Having others do the work
- "Ambushing" the individual
 - Inspections
 - Cleanout efforts

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WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR THE FAMILY?

- Be aware about ability (or inability) to declutter
- Pay attention to those involved (other than identified patient)
- Respect confidentiality
- Demonstrate confidence, kindness, and honesty
- Communicate positively and compassionately
- Be sensitive to others' emotions
- Offer strategies to be used in the future
- Build decision-making skills
- Offer support to those in distress
- Teach coping techniques
- Set and work toward achievable goals
- Limit enabling and accommodations
- Focus on 'harm reduction'


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WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR THE CHILD?


- Clearly defined homework assignments
- Establish "clutter-free spaces" in home
- Separate time with children, apart from other family members, to freely discuss their concerns
- Determine possible presence of child's own (non-hoarding) issues
- Connecting with activities outside of the home
- Building parenting/interpersonal skills

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REFERENCES/RESOURCES



• *Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding*
• David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost, Gail S. Sakuma



• *Digging Out: Helping Your Loved One Manage Clutter, Hoarding & Compulsive Acquiring*
• Michael A. Tompkins and Tamara L. Hard



• *Suff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*
• Gail S. Sakuma and Randy O. Frost

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REFERENCES/RESOURCES

- International Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Foundation
www.iocdf.org
- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
www.abct.org
- The Hoarding Project
www.hoardingproject.org
- Children of Hoarders
www.childrenofhoarders.com

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REFERENCES/RESOURCES

- Institute for Challenging Disorganization
www.challengingdisorganization.org
- National Association of Productivity and Organizing
www.napo.net
- Board of Certification for Professional Organizers
www.certifiedprofessionalorganizers.com
- Hoarding Clean-Up Nationwide Directory
www.hoardingcleanup.com

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THANK YOU!

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